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Bahrain-NATO Relations in Troubling Times

By: Cameron Becker

Calm appears to be returning to the streets of Manama following weeks of massive protests throughout the small gulf country of Bahrain. Since February 14th, when thousands of anti-government protesters converged on Pearl Roundabout, the symbolic center of Manama, a violent government crackdown on protesters has seen demonstrators forcibly removed from the streets and hundreds arrested or disappeared.

Security officers fired tear gas at short range towards protesters, and live ammunition was used to quell increasingly violent clashes. Footage of security forces firing into crowds of demonstrations and civilians being treated in hospitals for gunshot wounds has brought about international condemnation. Unlikely allies have united on this issue as both the United States and Iran have called for an end to the violence.

While the streets of Manama are now seemingly free of demonstrators, the predominantly Shiite villages surrounding the capital are experiencing continued unrest.

The al-Khalifa family, which has ruled Bahrain for over 200 years, has been the primary target of protests. Much like Egypt, Libya and elsewhere in the Arab World, Bahraini demonstrators have called for change, arguing that the policies of the ruling family are unjust. Observers worry that the unrest currently witnessed in Bahrain has taken an ugly turn towards sectarian violence. The ruling al-Khalifa family belongs to the country's Sunni minority while the protesters, for the most part, are members of the Shiia majority. Protestors argue that Bahrain's Shiia population has for too long been oppressed by the ruling Sunni elite.

Opposition groups have eased their demands on the Bahraini government. Following the surge of unrest in February and March, Saudi troops entered Bahrain to aid in the security crackdown which was immediately followed by the declaration of a three-month state of emergency by the Bahraini government. Before this crackdown, the main opposition groups called for the ousting of the al-Khalifa government. However they are now simply demanding an end to the state of emergency, withdrawal of all Saudi-led troops from Bahrain, and the initiation of political dialogue with the Bahraini government.

With continued repression of protests and fears of rekindled violence, the international community is looking for Bahrain to show restraint. Since protests began, US President Barack Obama has consistently condemned the use of violence on any peaceful demonstrator. The US State Department has been watching developments closely and has expressed deep concern about the arrest of opposition leaders, especially those openly identified by the Bahraini government. A State Department Spokesman, Mark Toner said on Friday March 18th that "the Bahraini government must ensure the safety of those arrested and commit to open legal proceedings that comply with the country's law and international legal obligations."

The violence in Bahrain has prompted questions about the importance of Bahrain to western powers and especially NATO. While not officially a member of NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue, Bahrain has been playing a more active role in NATO's Middle Eastern outreach initiatives. By contributing police trainers to the ISAF mission in Afghanistan, assisting with naval operations aimed at combating piracy in the Gulf, and increasing political and military cooperation with NATO, Bahrain has become a notable partner outside the Alliance.

In March 2010, NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen visited Bahrain for talks with King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa and Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa. Discussing ways of boosting relations, exchanging hi-tech expertise, intelligence and working towards improving regional security and stability, the talks ended with a positive outlook for the future.

However the force used by Bahrain's security apparatus against demonstrators threatens to undermine these ties, as NATO has taken active steps to counter government sponsored violence elsewhere in the region. Specifically, following weeks of violence against protesters and anti-government rebels in Libya, NATO forces have spearheaded efforts to enforce a No-Fly Zone over the country.

NATO Spokeswomen, Carmen Romero has said that the Alliance is following the latest developments in Bahrain with great concern and that they are "call[ing] for an open and inclusive political dialogue as the only way to address [the Bahraini] people's legitimate aspirations for democratic change." For Bahrain the most positive way forward would be that of democratization, an end to the security crackdown and continued cooperation with NATO and her members.

Further Reading: [Arrests Follow Deadly Bahrain Crackdown](#), [Amnesty Condemns Bahrain Crackdown as EU NATO Urge Restraint](#), [Bahrain Imposes State of Emergency](#), [Bahrain Unrest: King Hamad says Foreign Plot Foiled](#), [Bahraini Protester Found Dead after Government Crackdown](#), [Saudi Deployment in Bahrain risks Sectarian Conflict](#),

Resolution 1973, the Coalition Operation and the Role of NATO in Libya

By: Chelsea Plante

The Situation, in Brief

After popular movements ousted the rulers of Tunisia and Egypt, Libya experienced a full-scale revolt beginning in February 2011. While much of Libya has tipped out of Gadhafi's control as of early March 2011, Gadhafi forces have been able to forcefully respond to recent rebel pushes in Western Libya and counterattack strategic areas. Small towns around Tripoli have been bombarded by planes and tanks and seized by Gadhafi troops exercising levels of brutality that had not yet been seen in the conflict. International organizations, NGOs, and the broader international community have condemned the crackdown as violating international law.

The Resolution

The United National Security Council Resolution 1973 on the situation in Libya, was adopted on March 17, 2011. Proposed by France, Lebanon, and the United Kingdom, the Resolution demands an immediate ceasefire, including an end to the current attacks against civilians, which, it said, might constitute crimes against humanity. It goes on to authorize the international community to establish a no-fly zone over Libya, and to use all means necessary short of foreign occupation to protect Libyan civilians.

Adopting Resolution 1973 by a vote of 10 in favour (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Columbia, Gabon, Lebanon, Nigeria, Portugal, South Africa, and permanent members France, the UK, and the US) to none against, with 5 abstentions (Brazil, China, Germany, India, Russian Federation), the Council authorized Member States, acting nationally or through regional organizations or arrangements, to take all necessary measures to protect civilians under threat of attack in the country.

The Council also recognized the important role of the League of Arab States in the maintenance of international peace and security in the region, and keeping in mind Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, the Council asked the League's Member States to cooperate with other Member States in implementing the no-fly zone.

In addition to the points mentioned above, the Resolution also;

- strengthens the arms embargo and particularly action against mercenaries, by allowing for forcible inspections of ships and planes;
- imposes a ban on all Libyan-designated flights;
- imposes an asset freeze on assets owned by the Libyan authorities, and reaffirms that such assets should be used for the benefit of the Libyan people;
- extends the travel ban and assets freeze of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1970 to a number of additional individuals and Libyan entities;
- establishes a panel of experts to monitor and promote sanctions implementation.

The Coalition Operation

Since the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1973, the operation has seen air strikes from American, French and British fighter jets as well as artillery barrages from offshore warships. The air strikes targeted Libyan air defence sites and hardened aircraft shelters.

On Monday March 20, 2011, four Canadian CF-18 fighter jets and two CC-150 Polaris refueling planes joined the operation, flying their first mission into Libyan airspace from a base in Trapani, Italy. Over the last two days, Canadian jets have successfully targeted military sites near the besieged coastal city of Misrata. Canada has a total of 6 CF-18s and two CC-150s deployed to the Libya mission, as well as about 140 Canadian Forces personnel from CFB Bagotville in Quebec.

In addition, the frigate HMCS Charlottetown has been deployed to the region as part of a NATO humanitarian mission, and a set of C-17 heavy-lift and two C-130J Hercules transport aircraft were dispatched earlier to assist in evacuating Canadians from the unsettled Libya. Another half-dozen CF-18 fighters are on standby for deployment to the Mediterranean if needed by coalition forces.

Key Military Assets to Help Enforce UN-Sanctioned No-Fly Zone

The United States has conducted missile attacks on Libyan air defences, and has contributed two guided missile destroyers in the Mediterranean, two amphibious warships and a command and control ship, as well as five F-18s, two C-17s, and a C-130 cargo plane. France deployed a dozen Mirage and Rafale jets to survey rebel held Benghazi, one of which fired on Libyan military vehicle on the first strike of operation. France also deployed the Charles de Gaulle aircraft carrier from Toulon. Denmark has six F-16's deployed to the US airbase in Sigonella, Sicily, along with 132 support staff. Italy offered use of seven military bases, and proposed that the NATO base in Naples serve as coordination point for the operation. Spain sent four F-18s and a Boeing 707 refueling plane to a base in Italy base, is deploying a submarine, naval frigate and surveillance plane, and has placed two bases at NATO's disposal. Britain said it would send Typhoon and Tornado jets to bases, but no fighter aircraft have been deployed so far. Two British frigates, HMS Westminster and HMS Cumberland are in the Mediterranean off Libya's coast. Norway offered six F-16's, with around 100 support staff, and is considering offering an Orion Maritime surveillance plane. As of March 24, ten Allies (Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Greece, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States) had pledged more than 25 ships and submarines, as well as over 50 fighter jets and surveillance planes to monitor and enforce the Resolution.

A Role for NATO

NATO warships and aircraft have been patrolling the approach to Libyan territorial waters as part of the UN Mandated arms embargo since March 17, 2011. On March 24, NATO decided to enforce the UN-mandated no-fly zone over Libya, and on March 27, 2011, NATO Allies decided to take on the whole military operation in Libya under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973. The Operation, termed operation Unified Protector, is aimed at the protection of civilians and civilian-populated areas under threat of attack in Libya.

The first NATO sorties to implement the no-fly zone over Libya flew on Sunday, March 27. NATO expects to have complete command and control of all aspects of the Libyan mission by week's end, allowing the United States to step out of its lead role and more into a supporting one, as requested by the Obama administration. "Our mandate is very clear: We are there to protect civilians against attacks, no more, no less and that will be our focus," said NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen.

Lt.-Gen. Charles Bouchard of Canada will take over command of the NATO mission in Libya, Canadian Defence Minister Peter MacKay said on Friday, March 25. In a statement from Naples, Bouchard said that "the Alliance will do everything it can to deny any use of air power and it will do so with care and precision to avoid harming the people of Libya." Although the air raids have tipped the balance in favour of the rebel forces, the two sides remain at a stalemate in key Libyan cities.

Further Reading: [Gadhafi Loyalist Clamp Down on Libyan Capital as Protests Spread](#), [Gadhafi Vows to Stay In Power Until the End Of Time](#), [Ottawa Condemns Gadhafi: Plans Evacuations](#), [Key Libyan Diplomats Disown Gadhafi's Regime](#), [Statement by NATO Secretary General On the Events In Libya](#), [Canadian Fighter Jets Fly First Mission in Libyan No-Fly Zone](#), [Canada to Lead NATO's Libyan Mission](#), [NATO: Libya Mission will be to Protect, Not Arm](#), [Security Council Approves No-Fly Zone Over Libya](#), [Statement by NATO Secretary General Following the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973](#), [NATO and Libya – Operation Unified Protection](#), [Operation Unified Protector](#)

Phase Four of NATO's ISAF Operation: Transition

By: Chelsea Plante

At the Kabul Conference in July 2010, President Karzai publicly stated his desire to see the Afghan National Security Forces take the lead in carrying out security operations across Afghanistan by the end of 2014, an Afghan ambition which NATO fully supports. NATO has been working closely with Afghanistan to establish the security conditions and necessary capacity by which the Government of Afghanistan is able to exercise its authority throughout the country. In addition to this, the International Community committed to provide the support and the resources necessary for Afghans to gradually take responsibility for security, governance and development.

At the Lisbon Summit in November 2010, Heads of State and Government recognized the progress made in Afghanistan that has allowed for a transition to Afghan security responsibility and leadership, beginning in early 2011, following a joint Afghan and NATO/ISAF assessment and decision.

Successful transition of security responsibility requires that Afghan Security Forces (ANSF), under effective Afghan civilian control, are capable of tackling security challenges albeit with some level of support from NATO.

Authorities from both Afghanistan and NATO have assessed, and will continue to assess, the conditions on the ground and the readiness of areas for transition through the Joint Afghan-NATO Integral Board (JANIB). Based on the assessments, the Board sets recommendations on which provinces qualify for the initiation of transition. The first set of criteria for transition of a particular area were decided in February, they include:

- ANSF are capable of shouldering additional security tasks with less assistance from ISAF
- Security is at a level that allows the population to pursue routine daily
- Local governance is sufficiently developed so that security will not be undermined as ISAF assistance is reduced
- ISAF is postured properly to thin out as ANSF capabilities increase and threat levels diminish

The transition assessments also consider the authority of the Afghan government to provide the rule of law and manage public administration at sub-national and local levels, as well as the capacity of an area to sustain socio-economic development.

Once the transition implementation begins, it follows a four-stage process in all areas of security, governance, development and rule of law. Progress through the stages is dictated by conditions on the ground, and could take up to 18 months to be fully completed, depending on how well the ANSF and civil institutions demonstrate their ability to take on more responsibility.

At their meeting in Brussels on March 11, 2011, NATO and ISAF Defence Ministers approved the recommendations enclosed in the February JANIB report, meaning the ISAF mission would begin the transitional phase in specific geographical areas once those areas were approved by President Karzai and the Afghan government.

On March 22, 2011, President Karzai approved the recommendations, and announced the beginning of transition to Afghan lead for seven districts and provinces in the country: Bamiyan province, Herat city, Kabul province (except Surobi), Lashkar Gah (Helmand), Mazar-e-Sharif (Balkh), and Mehtar Lam (Laghman).

"We understand taking complete responsibility of governance, security and reconstruction in our country is not an easy task in a situation in which, on one hand we suffer from the legacy of 30 years of war, and on the other hand destruction and interference is still going on," Karzai said. "We have agreed with the international community that the Afghan government responsibilities should be handed over to Afghans," he stated.

ISAF's operations in these seven districts will move to the transition phase, and will eventually evolve towards a more supporting and advisory role, allowing for a rebalancing of responsibilities. ISAF operations in areas not yet identified for Phase Four of the operation will remain in Phase Three, Stabilization, and assessment of other areas will continue under the auspices of the JANIB. NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen congratulated President Karzai stating that the decision is a "critical decision which paves the way for Afghans to take charge of their own destiny."

Further Reading: [Transition Backgrounder](#), [NATO Secretary General Welcomes Afghan Transition Announcement](#), [Speeches: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan](#), [Declaration by the Heads of State and Government of the Nations contributing to the UN-mandated, NATO-led International Security Assistance Force \(ISAF\) in Afghanistan](#)

NATO's Secretary General Visits Ukraine

Vera Fonseca

During a recent visit to Kyiv, Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen stressed that "Ukraine's security is critical to Europe's stability." He spoke at the Taras Shevchenko National University in Kyiv, where democracy, the rule of law and co-operation were the main topics of discussion.

Since gaining independence following the end of the Cold War, Ukraine has been challenged to define its own foreign policy and its place in Europe. Formal NATO-Ukraine relations started when the country first joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council in 1991. Since that time, Ukraine's progress towards Euro-Atlantic integration has been in flux. Currently, Viktor Yanukovich's position is one of non-alignment, preferring that Ukraine follow a path of co-operation without integration in any military bloc. This means putting NATO membership on hold but keeping the goal of European integration an ambition.

Rasmussen made it clear that the Alliance respects the country's new foreign policy and reaffirmed NATO's goal of continuing a constructive partnership for Ukraine's integration in the "European family". NATO recognizes Ukraine's geopolitical importance and the impact that Ukraine-Russia relations can have on the rest of Europe. Further, NATO members know that Russia is not keen to have a military block approaching its borders. Ukraine and Russia share strong historical, linguistic, and cultural ties that define Russia's interests in this former Soviet state. Aggravating Russia on the issue of Ukrainian integration could have negative consequences for Europe as 40% of the natural gas that it consumes comes from Russia and half of that amount runs through Ukrainian pipelines. As a result, Europe remains dependent on Russian energy exports and is therefore vulnerable to fluctuations in gas prices.

At the same time, NATO understands that democracy and good governance in Ukraine are essential to long-term stability in the region. As the Secretary General stated in his speech, “democracy is the strongest foundation to long-term security” and the “key dimension to NATO-Ukraine relations.” Rasmussen’s comments come as Ukraine’s progress towards democratic consolidation has been slowed. According to the Freedom House, Ukraine has taken steps backwards, especially in regards to issues of media and press freedom. The recent asylum granted by the Czech Republic to a former Ukrainian minister of economy and issues involving missing court witnesses are also indicative of an overall regression.

In dealing with Ukraine, NATO must therefore strike a balance between competing interests. NATO-Ukraine relations cannot be viewed in isolation from Ukraine’s relationship with Russia. Failing to account for Russian interests in Ukraine could, for instance, have a heavy impact on energy prices in Europe. On the other hand, neglecting Ukraine’s interests could have negative implications on Ukraine’s young and rather untested democracy. How NATO juggles these issues will be particularly important as Ukraine struggles to define its non-aligned position. According to Vladimir Socor, the country has no “clear definition of the non-bloc status, or an international legal-political framework to ensure its observance” and it may be a factor of instability.

Addressing the University students in attendance, Rasmussen reinforced that the Alliance aims to contribute to the retraining of Ukrainian military personnel, to safely coordinate the destruction of the country’s “dangerous obsolete ammunitions” and to improve interoperability within the Ukrainian Armed Forces. Ukraine’s contributions to the NATO missions in the Mediterranean were also referenced as was NATO’s willingness to extend operations to the Indian Ocean where Ukrainian ships have been attacked. Additionally, the Alliance is seeking closer cooperation with Ukraine on issues pertaining to energy security.

On missile defence, the waters are murkier. After the last NATO Summit in Lisbon, the United States changed its position on European Missile Defense to a “Phased Adaptive Approach.” Whereas the Bush Administration’s policy called for radar and missile defense systems to be built in Poland and the Czech Republic, the new American position calls for increased collaboration with Russia. One suggested plan under the Phased Adaptive Approach would see missile defence systems installed in Russian military bases in Ukraine. For some, this policy is seen as an opportunity to satisfy Russian interests while at the same time integrating Ukraine into Europe. However, others have voiced concern over investing money into military bases operated by Russian officials.

NATO also officially stated that, upon request, it is available to help Ukraine provide security for high visibility events like the Euro 2012 and a NATO-Ukraine Advanced Research Workshop on CBRN Defense Capabilities scheduled for May, 2011.

Further Reading: [The Key to Kiev](#), [Speech by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen at the Kyiv University](#), [The Key to Europe](#), [Cancellation of Broadcast Licenses in Ukraine Signals Continued Deterioration of Press Freedom](#), [Ukraine: Repressive Media Environment Threatens Free Elections](#), [Russian Black Sea Fleet Strengthens Presence in Ukraine](#).



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