

[Eastern] CIA backed rebels backgrounded as Western Tribes take the Capital

by Paul McGeough via ali - SMH *Monday, Aug 22 2011, 10:52am*

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The World has learnt much since the Balkans while NATO and the US have learnt NOTHING!

WASHINGTON: Muammar Gaddafi seems all but done for as rebel forces snatch the capital from under his nose. The scenes in Tripoli are redolent of the April 2003 morning when a US-led invasion force entered Baghdad - the invasion was to be a "cakewalk" and the troops would be coming home in a matter of months.

The Libyan intervention has been different - and harder. While Baghdad fell in a few weeks, it took months of aerial bombardment by NATO air forces to clear the way for Libya's rebels - but the rebels entered Tripoli on their own, rather than on the heels of a foreign invasion force.

Because of Iraq and Afghanistan, Washington and the rest of the allied capitals, including Canberra, have been reluctant to be seen to be planning to "manage" the new Libya. On Sunday a senior American military officer shared his concerns with The New York Times: "There [is] no clear plan for a political succession or for maintaining security in the country. The [African and Arab] leaders I have talked to do not have a clear understanding how this will play out."

The rebel National Transitional Council, recognised by 32 countries, has undertaken to reissue their greenhorn fighters with a booklet on the finer points of human rights and laws of war.

The Americans disposed of the security forces in Iraq, but the transitional council says it plans to retain parts of the Libyan security machine. However, the rebels will want to run the show.

And even the transitional council remains an unknown quantity.

The murder of its military commander, Abdel Fatah Younis, remains unexplained, as does the dissolution this month of the rebel cabinet - and the failure to appoint a new one.

In a part of the world in which power brokers have mastered the art of telling the West what it wants to hear while getting on with their local agendas, it remains to be seen if signs of what has been read as evidence of common sense, democratic instinct, idealism and decency are to be deployed on behalf of all Libyans - or competing tribal blocks relishing a first opportunity in decades to test their relative strength.

Rebel forces in the western city of Misrata, Libya's third-biggest, have gone out of their way to register their contempt for the transitional council with foreign reporters, insisting that they refuse to take instructions from Benghazi.

And it is the rebels in the west of the country - from Misrata through to the Nafusa Mountains - who made the tactical gains that forced Gaddafi to his knees. If the rebel officers and politicians from the country's west get to Tripoli before the Benghazi caravan, the international community could find itself dealing with a very different transitional leadership. Shashank Joshi, of the Royal United

Services Institute in London, wrote at the weekend: "It is naive to imagine that long-simmering tribal grievances ... will not prove incredibly divisive. The Warfalla, Tarhuna, Magarha and Warshafana tribes have all made enemies, but their real or imagined mistreatment by the transitional council during a post-conflict period would be highly destabilising."

And what do the rebels inherit after 40-plus years of Gaddafi's iron fist? A shell of a country bereft of credible institutions and any sense of a civil society. And the transition plans devised by the council to quiet international anxiety? "Hogwash," says a foreign diplomat now in Libya.

NATO said last night it was ready to help build the new Libya - "a state based on freedom, not fear; democracy, not dictatorship; the will of the many, not the whims of the few."

That's all well and good, but we have yet to see what the Libyans want - or what their new leaders will allow them to have.

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<http://www.smh.com.au/world/libyas-future-far-from-guaranteed-20110822-1j6tx.html>

Cleaves Alternative News. <http://cleaves.lingama.net/news/story-2691.html>