

BULLETIN

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The Impact of a Possible Overthrow of Muammar Qaddafi on Africa

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The overthrow of Muammar Qaddafi can start out the process of democratization in Libya, which is beneficial for both Libyans and members of the international community. However, there are some short- and medium-term consequences of this event for the region. Following Qaddafi's surrender, the African Union probably would limit its activities for peace and stability on the continent. Therefore the international community, in particular the European Union, should take over the AU's role in bringing order to the region. However, in some cases, replacing Qaddafi may not help resolve regional and local conflicts.

Qaddafi and the African Union. Qaddafi is regarded as an architect of African integration modelled on the European experience of a regional union. At the summit of the Organization of African Unity (OAU, the predecessor of the African Union) in Algiers in 1999, the Libyan leader proclaimed the next stage of a continental integration, which would be a step forward to achieve the long-term goal of creating the United States of Africa. According to Qaddafi, the European Union is only a temporary phase between inter-governmental cooperation and a full federation such as the U.S. Recognizing the European model as efficient and functioning, Qaddafi suggested the creation of an EU model of the African Union, which would acquire the powers and competences of the OAU, much as the EU gradually has been taking over the tasks of the European Communities, and that would eventually lead to a pan-African federation. Following the signing of the Constitutive Act of the African Union in July 2000, the OAU was disbanded, and on 9 July 2002, its powers were assumed by the African Union.

Since its creation, the objectives of the organization and further impetus for closer cooperation between Member States of the African Union (AU) came out of Tripoli. Qaddafi was the main author of the institutional system of the AU, its catalog of objectives and measures for implementation. In 2009-2010 he chaired the Union. Like the European Union, the AU has a common parliament, a common court safeguarding the regional system of human rights protection and, ultimately, the Member States also will adopt a single currency (Afro) and set up a continental African central bank. The collapse of Qaddafi's regime may inhibit the political integration of the continent. Although the AU gathers 53 African countries (all except Morocco), Libya with less than 1% of the population of the continent covers 15% of the budget of the organization. The probability of the acquisition of any financial support to the AU from other African or non-African countries (coinciding with the still ongoing financial crisis) is now quite low. The overthrow of Qaddafi, therefore, would lead to a significant depletion of the AU budget, resulting in a significant reduction of projects undertaken by the organization. This scenario is especially detrimental to the future of joint military missions by the African Union, and all the initiatives taken in recent years by Libya aimed at sustaining peace on the continent.

Regional and Local Conflicts. Qaddafi was the mastermind of a joint AU-UN mission in Darfur (Sudan). Without the financial and operational support of Libya, the contingent of more than 20,000 troops would be significantly reduced. Because of internal conflict, Libya already has withdrawn its helicopters and frozen financial contributions that covered more than 10% of the UNAMID budget. Following the secession of Southern Sudan and the nascent conflict over Abyei province, an increase in social tensions in the disputed border areas between Sudan and Darfur as well as in the province itself is widely expected. Recently there has been a growth of separatist tendencies,

mostly among the animists and Christians of Darfur, supported by the militias of the former rebel Sudanese army high commanders (the so-called groups of Oliny and Gen. G. Athor). Limiting the UN/UA mission may therefore affect the deterioration of the security situation in the region.

Qaddafi's financial support for the rebels in the north of Mali in exchange for refraining from action against the government remains the guarantor of peace in a country of more than one million square kilometres and a key state in West Africa. Officially, funds have been transferred to the rebels under the aid programs of the African Union. Furthermore, Qaddafi also supported the peace process in Liberia. After years of debilitating internal conflict, the country is evolving into a constitutional republic, stabilizing the situation in the region. With the support of Qaddafi, the AU initiated reconstruction of Liberia's infrastructure and directly invested more than \$100 million, which made it possible to consolidate the rule of law and public confidence in central institutions led by President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. While the political situation in Sierra Leone and Ivory Coast—where President Johnson-Sirleaf and Qaddafi have acted as informal mediators—is becoming more tense, the overthrow of Col. Qaddafi and the withdrawal of financial support for the development of Liberia could destabilize the situation across the entire Atlantic region of North Africa.

Qaddafi's personal involvement in initiating the AU mission to Niger also gradually increased the chances for political stability in the country after the overthrow of President Mamadou Tandja in February 2010 in a military coup led by Maj. Salou Djibo. Thanks to the initiative of the government in Tripoli, African Union involvement also has led to the agreement between the parties to the conflict in Chad, and the signature of a peace deal in March 2008 in Dakar. The political and financial support of Qaddafi to the government in N'Djamena guaranteed stability in the country. At the same time, the above-mentioned AU-UN mission in Darfur provides relative calm on the border between Sudan and Chad. It has also limited the growth of the number of Darfur refugees in Chad. Already, the 1,250,000 inhabitants of Chad host more than 200,000 refugees, which is the highest ratio of refugees per citizens in the world.

Without the financial support of Qaddafi the African Union would radically reduce its military mission in Somalia. Numbering eight thousand soldiers, the mission allows the provisional government of President Sheikh Sharif Ahmed to exercise control over the metropolitan areas of the state, being an effective barrier against a re-takeover of Mogadishu by militants of the radical Islam Hizbul.

Conclusions. Muammar Qaddafi competently exploited the rebirth of African pride in the 1990s. Governments in many African countries have recognized that the economic and civil development of their societies should not be based on close relations with former metropolises. Qaddafi advocated a doctrine of pan-African integration and empowerment of a united Africa in global relations. After a failure of trade liberalization talks, in particular on exports of unprocessed agricultural goods from Africa to developed countries, the idea of creating a common block of African states was the only viable alternative. Being politically independent, especially from the U.S. and Europe, Qaddafi became the natural leader of the African unity movement. With steadily increasing income from oil extraction in Libya—despite UN sanctions in 1992-2003—he was able to finance the integration processes on the continent. Through sponsoring and sending mercenaries, paying bribes, but also legitimate investments Qaddafi effectively acted for the relative stability of African states and minimized the risk of local or regional conflicts.

Although primarily motivated by his own particular interests, Qaddafi's actions on the continent fostered peace and integration. His overthrow could stop the process of the further integration of Africa. Members of the Contact Group, particularly the European Union, should therefore seek to commit the leaders of the Provisional National Council in Benghazi to continue Libya's support to the African Union in the event of a takeover of Tripoli and to contribute further to continental integration. However, because of its close ties with the U.S. administration and European states, the Council will not be able to continue all previous Libyan government efforts for peace and stability in Africa, mainly due to the credibility Col. Qaddafi built up in African countries on the basis of independence from the major players in international politics.