

Libyan rout in Chad sets back New Yalta

by Thierry Lalevée and Mary Lalevée

What has happened since the beginning of August in the central African nation of Chad, has an importance going far beyond Chad itself, even beyond Africa.

Libya's occupation of the northern province of Chad, the Aouzou strip, since 1973, was a blatant violation of the sovereignty of an African nation, and the West's toleration of that Libyan occupation was a clear signal that the West would do nothing to counter Libyan—and Soviet—efforts to undermine and overthrow African governments.

Now that has changed. The Chadian national army's decisive rout of Libyan troops occupying the town of Aouzou in the Aouzou strip on Aug. 8 means that for the first time for years, Libyan—and Soviet—dictates in Africa have been challenged.

Chad's armed forces conducted a brilliant flanking operation to seize the town of Aouzou, sending mobile units in to attack from the north, where the Libyan defenders were positioned to face attack from the south. Chad troops in Toyota trucks raced in from the northeast, having "annihilated" a Libyan column about 65 kilometers southeast of Aouzou. One Western diplomat was quoted saying, "They just blew in real fast, hell-bent for leather—God help anything that got in their way."

The Libyans lost 650 men in the battle, while Chadian losses were put at 17 dead and 54 wounded. Since the beginning of this year, Libya has lost 6,000 men, of whom perhaps one-third were non-Libyan members of the Islamic Legion, and two-thirds were Libyan.

A Chad diplomatic source commented that Libyan troops "have no will to fight," and that is why Libya has now altered its strategy, avoiding direct confrontation and relying on air bombardments. On Aug. 18, Chad announced that its forces had shot down a Libyan MiG fighter and a helicopter over Aouzou, and there are almost daily Libyan bombardments of Chadian positions. At stake in the complete rout of Libya's forces, is the ability of the West to upset Soviet diplomatic and military gains in the last month.

The Chadian victories will emerge as just as important as

the Western military build-up in the Gulf, aimed at checking Iranian terrorism. Indeed, behind the successful Chadian reconquest of the city of Aouzou, is a war for the future of the entire continent. Chad is the strategic center of Africa, a landlocked, largely desert nation, bordering Libya in the north, Sudan in the east, Central African Republic in the south, Cameroon, Nigeria, and Niger in the west. A long-discussed water project to bring water from the vast waters of the River Zaire up to fill the Lake Chad basin, now virtually dried up, could reverse the desertification of the entire Sahel and green the Sahara.

The significance of Aouzou

A rocky piece of desert, the Aouzou strip was forcefully annexed by the Libyans in 1973, using as a pretext the 1935 Rome Treaty between French Foreign Minister Pierre Laval and Benito Mussolini, which sold the land to the Italians. However, as the treaty was signed by the French President, Albert Lebrun, nor ever ratified by the Italian or the French parliament, it has no international value.

Its importance for Libya is twofold, from the Aouzou strip, Libya can control the Tibesti Mountains, hence the Northern Chadian desert. Secondly the strip is reportedly rich in uranium, a prime raw material for Qaddafi's dream of developing his own military nuclear capability. Following last February's successful Chadian offensive, which freed the entire national territory in the north from Libyan occupation, the liberation of Aouzou was the next target.

Chadian President Hissène Habré had two good reasons to launch the offensive now, despite calls by fellow members of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) or Western powers, to rely on international arbitration at the World Court of Justice in the Hague. In parallel with intensified talks between Washington and Syria in recent months, State department officials had also intensified indirect negotiations with Libya's Qaddafi, through the Algerians. Coherent with American-Soviet negotiations for sharing power in the Middle East, similar plans were being drafted for Northern and Central Africa.

In exchange for having the Soviets and the Algerians commit themselves to produce a new and moderate Qaddafi, American officials promised to stop any operations against Qaddafi. That has included exerting political, economic, and military pressures on Chad to stop claiming sovereignty over Aouzou.

Qaddafi back on defensive

Permanent Libyan occupation of the strip was being condoned by American officials, in the name of the Northern African deal with the Soviet Union under Gorbachov's "openness" (*glasnost*) policy. Other victims of such deals have been both the Egyptians and the Morrocans who have been ordered, with the threat of further cuts in the economic and military aid packages, to reconcile with the madman. In fact, Qaddafi has been using that diplomatic momentum to

rebuild his own forces. Libya is known to have planned an offensive against Chad, sometime in the fall. In recent months, it has built a new airbase at Mantah al Sarah close to Egypt, Sudan, and Chad. It also used economic blackmail against Sudan to strengthen its forces in its western Darfur region.

These were good reasons for Habré to call Qaddafi's bluff now. There are also indications that despite public statements to the contrary, large intelligence and military factions in both France and the United States, which disagree with a "New Yalta agreement" with the Soviet Union, helped Chad as much as they could. In the last two months, some Libyan opposition groups have also joined forces, at least politically, with Habré.

So far Libyan reactions have demonstrated that Tripoli was taken by surprise. Its army is still licking its wounds from last February's defeat. Furthermore, the Soviet Union has not yet replaced any of the millions of dollars worth of military equipment that the Libyans left behind in their hurried retreat.

Libya's inability to muster an immediate ground offensive has been shown by the exclusive use of its air forces against Chadian cities. Qaddafi knows that he has to retaliate. However the statement on Aug. 11 by French Defense Minister André Giraud has shown Libya's limits. Giraud underlined that, without getting involved in Aouzou, France "is committed to the national integrity of Chad" and would be forced to retaliate "including above the 16th parallel" (the former demarcation line between Chad and Libya-occupied Northern Chad) if the bombardment were to continue.

French President Mitterrand's position is not quite so clear. According to Arab League Secretary General Chadli Klibi, who was received by Mitterrand on Aug. 14, he and Mitterrand "reached agreement to consider that there were two distinct problems." The first was "the national unity of Chad," and the second was "the Aouzou strip, which is the subject of international documents, especially French-Italian, and which belongs to Libya according to these documents." This implies that Mitterrand accepts the validity of the Laval-Mussolini accord, flying in the face of Prime Minister Chirac's strong commitment to the territorial integrity of Chad.

However, on Aug. 19, while visiting French forces which are part of the "Epervier" force in Chad to assist the Chadian army, Mitterrand declared that since Chad had won back its sovereignty and unity, the concept of the "16th parallel" was no longer a "military fact," but merely a "geographical fact," i.e. that French troops were no longer restricted to acting south of the parallel.

Qaddafi is once again on the defensive. His failure to retaliate will provoke dissatisfaction inside his own army, but to do so could give Paris and N'djamena a good pretext to inflict another defeat on Libya. Once again, the Libyan army has been defeated by a black African army, no academic issue for the racist Libyans.

Project Democracy's new insights about

by an EIR investigative team

Georgetown University Labor Studies professor Roy Godson, a key figure in the U.S. "parallel, secret government," made a confidential trip to Great Britain during the month of July, *EIR* has learned.

Although Godson is under investigation in the U.S. for shady Iran-Contra financial deals, according to rumors printed in the U.S. press, it may just be a coincidence that in the weeks following his visit, a new round of back-channel hostage deals with the Khomeini regime has been launched from Britain, centered around Lonrho Corporation chief executive "Tiny" Rowland.

What has immediately drawn the attention of security experts is that Godson's visit to the U.K. coincided with a sudden, intense new wave of slanders in Britain against Lyndon LaRouche, labeling LaRouche a Soviet-connected "ex-communist." As editor of the curiously named magazine *Soviet Disinformation*, Godson has expended great energy in circulating the lie about LaRouche being some kind of "Soviet agent." Usually, wherever he goes, this filth follows.

One known fact about Godson's July visit, is that he met with three British leaders of an entity called the "Labor Committee for Transatlantic Understanding" (now in the process of changing its name to the "Trade Union Committee for Transatlantic Understanding"), including Alan Lee Williams, former president of the English-Speaking Union; John Flood, deputy chief of the Union of Shop, Distributive, and Allied Workers; and Peter Robinson, a top official in the U.K. National Union of Teachers.

Godson's connection to the "Transatlantic Understanding" group has recently been a subject of investigative exposés in the U.S. press. Nominally, the group exists to reinforce ties between pro-NATO and pro-defense trade unionists on both sides of the Atlantic. But, like many "Project Democracy" fronts, it actually serves as a policy vehicle for the British Fabian Society and for various social-democratic agencies with historical links to the Soviet ("Bukharinite" wing) intelligence services.

Roy's godfather

The key to the "Transatlantic Understanding" group is also, notHso coincidentally, the key to the career of Roy Godson: his father, Joseph Godson, was a highly influential figure on the British scene until his death last year. Social-democratic insiders in Britain refer to Roy Godson as "Joe's