

# NATO help obvious in Tripoli assault

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Advisers and military instructors from France, Great Britain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates started patronizing the Libyan opposition right after the coalition launched its campaign in that country. They trained up to 200 militants who helped task force soldiers occupy Tripoli. Now they are hunting for Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, his family members and associates.

It took the coalition three months to prepare this campaign titled Operation Mermaid Dawn, according to Britain's *The Daily Telegraph*. Writing that assault teams were trained in Benghazi by officers of the British MI6 Secret Intelligence Service, the newspaper confirmed the UK task force's leading role in the Tripoli attack. British media also declassified the involvement of Qatar and the United Arab Emirates in the operation. Dozens of bloggers, in their turn, said that troops of the French Foreign Legion landed outside the Libyan capital 24 hours before the assault began. Those were professional mercenaries who survived Afghanistan and Iraq, with NATO commanders only needing Libyan rebels for a mob scene. The latter were instructed to fire in the air and gleefully wave flags of Gaddafi's predecessor in front of Qatar TV cameras.

Rebels would never be able to seize Tripoli without assistance of the NATO command, as well as European and Arab mercenaries, believes associate editor of the *Independent Military Review* Viktor Litovkin.

"The military inexperienced opposition force was poorly equipped, scattered and weakly governed. In other words, it appeared as a wild guerilla mass having no idea about tactics and strategy. Without NATO instructors among their ranks and support of NATO aircraft and navy, rebels would definitely fail. So, we witnessed NATO member states engaged in military activities on one of the sides of the civil war," Viktor Litovkin said.

Now it is known for certain that the hunt for Muammar Gaddafi is guided by servicemen of Great Britain's 22nd Special Air Service regiment (22 SAS). Deputy Chairman of the military political analysts association Alexander Peredzhiyev does not rule out that the coalition resorted to every means available.

"A considerable role in Tripoli occupation and the triumph of rebel forces was played by their negotiations with Gaddafi followers. I assume we are dealing with corruption of top-ranking officials loyal to the Colonel. The lingering NATO operation in Libya prompted the need of taking specific measures. Therefore, I believe, Western instructors and advisers provided with much authority and financial assets decided to buy victory using the rebels' hands," emphasized Alexander Peredzhiyev.

This view of the Russian military expert confirms, in particular, confessions of an opposition member who said rebels were suddenly joined by a commander of troops defending Tripoli during the assault. Mohammed Eshkal, who has been harboring grievance against Gaddafi for some 20 years, is said to have come to terms with the National Transitional Council and yielded the city to the opposition.

The Western media also found information that Operation Mermaid Dawn was carried out not only in Tripoli but also in the Qatar-based special pavilions where the rebels' triumphant entry into the capital city was shot, cut and edited. These videos were broadcast by Arab TV channels at a high price to veil the West's direct involvement in the fall of Tripoli.

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