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Italy Sends Warships to Libyan Coast

In the absence of a unified European response to the refugee crises, Italy acts on its own.

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- [09-08-2017](#)

Italy's parliament voted on August 2 to dispatch its navy to the coast of Libya. Libya had reversed its previous policy of banning foreign warships from its territorial waters and had requested Italy's assistance for its coast guard, which is failing to deter people from trafficking humans out of Africa and into Europe. One Italian warship has arrived and a second is on the way. Notably, Italy's unilateral deployment of the warships comes in the absence of a unified European response to the ongoing refugee crisis.

Almost 95,000 refugees have landed in Italy this year. Tens of thousands of them have no place to go. Europeans are conflicted over the refugee issue: They do not want these people who are fleeing from Africa and the Middle East to die in the Mediterranean, nor do they want hundreds of thousands to continue to flow into their countries. The Europeans know that the problem has to be solved in Africa.

The European Union's navy mission Sophia was meant to prevent traffickers from bringing refugees to Europe. By stopping traffickers and destroying their vessels, the EU hoped to discourage the continued influx of refugees. Though some traffickers were stopped, the mission found itself also rescuing thousands of refugees and bringing them to the European coast, which actually encouraged refugees to risk the journey.

The success of the mission was significantly hindered because the EU lacked access to the Libyan coast. Libya denied foreign ships authorization to operate in its territorial waters, which extend 12 nautical miles off of its coast. This provided a safe haven for traffickers. Migrants that Libya intercepts within its waters can be returned to Libya, but under Europe's interpretation of international law, migrants picked up outside Libyan waters must be taken to Europe.

Libya alone is not capable of dealing with the problems the traffickers are causing. The country has been in a state of civil war ever since Muammar Qadhafi was overthrown and killed in 2011. The refugee crises, along with the spread of terrorism and the increase in traffickers, have only added to the problem.

As the crisis continued and refugees kept storming Italy's coast, Italy urged the EU to act. Other EU nations, however, have refused to take a share of the incoming refugees and have even prevented them from crossing the border. Italy implored the European Union to find a unified solution for the refugee crisis in the Mediterranean, and if the EU failed to act, the Italians threatened to implement their own plan b.

Other EU nations did not comply and continued their rescue missions in the Mediterranean as before. Italy demanded that humanitarian follow stricter guidelines in rescuing refugees and bringing them to their coast. Italy accuses these nongovernmental organizations (NGO) of aiding human traffickers. Whereas earlier traffickers had to transport refugees 160 miles to the Italian island of Lampedusa, today they only have to bring them 12 miles into the reach of the humanitarian organizations. The NGOs, however, say that Italy's rules would stop them from saving lives and are refusing to cooperate.

The conflict reached a new level on August 2 as a German ship from the organization *Jugend Rettet* was captured by Italian authorities and is currently being accused of cooperating with traffickers.

Very few nations are currently as hard-pressed as Italy when it comes to coping with the refugee crisis. Being located close to the hotspot of the crisis gives Italy a sense of urgency that the other European nations do not have, and it is motivating the Italians to do more to battle the crisis on their own.

As the deployment of Italian warships gets underway, Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni said that Italy's help could mark a "turning point" in the country's effort to manage the flow of migrants across the Mediterranean Sea. The development also benefits Libya, as it hopes to get control over the traffickers that continually plague the country.

But not all of Libya favors Italy's help. In fact, a majority opposes it, fearing that Libyan sovereignty is being threatened by Italian intervention. Less than 100 years ago, Libya was still a mere colony of Italy, and Libyans don't want to return to that dependency. Just as one of the Italian warships started sailing for the Libyan coast, Gen. Khalifa Haftar, head of the Libyan National Army, threatened to attack the mission with his own forces. Although that is likely to be an empty threat, it does illustrate how unpopular the Italian mission is among Libyans.

But Italy's deployment is not just an act of desperation. It also falls in line with its greater ambitions. *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry warned that this situation would again bring European combat boots to the North African shores that they were forced to leave at the end of World War II:

Since dictator Muammar Qadhafi was ousted by a Western bombing campaign in 2011, the northern African nation of Libya has been taken over by dueling militant factions and jihadist fighters. When Qadhafi was removed, I warned that what would take his place would be thousands of times worse.

Look at what has happened since! The resulting chaos has provoked hundreds of thousands of refugees to get on boats and head to Malta and southern Italy. Over 170,000 migrants landed in Italy in 2014! In 2015, the number of immigrants moving into Europe from Syria *surpassed* those from Libya. But now that the path to Europe through Turkey has been virtually closed, Europeans are once again seeing refugees move *through Libya*. Italian officials fear that as many as 270,000 migrants will try to get to Italy this year.

This is a major problem for Europe. The EU knows it needs to act! The situation in Libya is a good pretext for the Europeans to move down to secure this area so critical to controlling the Mediterranean.

Mr. Flurry then asked will "Europeans once again land on the shores of Libya?" During World War II, Germany and Italy tried to conquer North Africa with overwhelming force, today, the Italians have been invited in on a policing mission. What we are starting to see today is what Germany and the other European states were hoping for as they started the Mediterranean mission in 2015. Mr. Flurry continued:

According to a classified report obtained by Wikileaks earlier this year, Operation Sophia's last two phases will see EU military operations *inside* Libyan territorial waters—and then, finally, European boots on the ground in Libya.

The classified document also urges EU authorities to speed up the process of forming a "reliable" government in Libya, which would be expected to give permission to extend the EU military operations onshore. Maybe the GNA—a virtual creation of the EU and the international community—will serve that purpose. ...

The European Union and its Western allies have created a situation where German troops will once again set foot in Libya.

However, other prophecies also clearly show that it will be Iran that will succeed in drawing Libya into its camp. Many in Libya already sympathize much more with radical Islam than with their former colonial masters. Mr. Flurry continued to explain that as these troops land in Libya, they will be confronted by radical Islam led by Iran, prophetically known as the king of the south. This will lead to "the titanic clash of Daniel 11:40," he wrote. "However, the clash with the king of the south will not end with Libya. As the prophecies in Daniel reveal, more nations will fall in the whirlwind created by this king of the north [a German-led united Europe]."

To fully understand how Italy and Germany's dream to create a great empire that encompasses the Mediterranean continued to exist after World War II and where it will end, study Mr. Flurry's article "[*Mediterranean Battle Escalating Into World War III!*](#)" ■

