



FORWARD-LEARNING Global Security Report



Report 11-005
17 July 2011

PROPRIETARY CLASSIFICATION: BUSINESS-IN-CONFIDENCE

SPECIAL REPORT: LIBYA, AFRICAN MIGRANTS & THE SAFETY OF LIFE AT SEA

CLIFF'S NOTES: Last Sunday, a Spanish frigate rescued 111 African migrants from a small fishing vessel, adrift with engine failure, off the coast of Libya. For a week now, the skipper has wondered who might rescue him. Instead of the air defense frigate ALMIRANTE JUAN DE BORBÓN (F 102) heading to the Italian island of Lampedusa (88 miles from the rescue point), the ship went to Malta (141 miles away), ostensibly on instructions from NATO. Malta, however, refused her entry, and the frigate spent most of this week doing gator squares off the island, awaiting further orders.

Who, or what entity, ordered DE BORBÓN to Malta and why? Right now, we don't know. But a larger mystery looms in the weeks and months ahead: Does the international dispute over 111 African migrants aboard a Spanish warship tell us anything about how international leaders will handle the underlying immigration issue as they meet in Istanbul over a cease fire in Libya? If and when they reach an agreement, will those leaders set terms for resolving the human crisis at sea that flows outward from the Gulf of Sidra – from hazardous crossings and drownings to the increasing reluctance by coastal nations to accept refugees and asylum seekers from Africa?



Sailors and Marines aboard USS GEORGE H.W. BUSH (CVN 77) man the rails, rendering honors to ALMIRANTE JUAN DE BORBÓN (F 102) when the frigate departed the BUSH CARRIER STRIKE GROUP in early June. Since September 2010, BORBÓN participated in all pre-deployment work-ups for the BUSH CSG. We'd wager that CDR Benigno González-Aller, BORBÓN's skipper, wishes he spent the week operating with BUSH, rather than drilling holes in the Med off the coast of Malta, waiting for NATO's call. (Public domain photo by MC3 Billy Ho, U.S.N.)

As Malta sees it, ALMIRANTE JUAN DE BORBÓN rescued the migrants outside the maritime region monitored by the MALTESE RESCUE AND COORDINATE CENTRE that has already handled 54 SAR cases this year. Malta interprets the INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON SAFETY OF LIFE AT SEA as calling for refugees and asylum seekers to be taken to the closest port. That would be Lampedusa in the case of the migrants rescued Sunday. Actually, the **GUIDELINES ON PLACES OF REFUGE FOR SHIPS IN NEED OF ASSISTANCE** dictates a number of factors to consider, but Lampedusa is indeed much closer than Malta.

From the Italian perspective, Lampedusa is home to an overcrowded refugee camp and the *Centro Prima Accoglienza* (Primary Reception Center) through which all migrants are processed. The Italians remember well that the island was also the scene of a bloody riot by Somali immigrants in 2009.¹ In a single day last week, Lampedusa processed about a thousand African migrants who came ashore on 5 vessels.

LOOK FURTHER.

- **PREDICTED: “MASSIVE IMMIGRATION PROBLEMS.”** Sparked by the Arab Spring, the No-Fly Zone over Libya has thrown African migration into overdrive. Before the Libya operation ever began, we assessed “massive immigration problems” for Malta, Crete and Italy,¹ so neither this week’s dispute nor the growing dimensions of the problem are surprising.

Before the Libya operation began, however, Muammar Qaddafi made a promise that he would unleash a different sort of weapon in this asymmetrical conflict. He would essentially play a race card by opening the “floodgates” of immigration. There are signs he is keeping his word.



Libyan Television released a powerful regime propaganda video on 13 July with a message for Europe: **You need Qaddafi.** English speakers from Nigeria and a French speaker (probably from Cameroon) explain that Qaddafi is their leader and life in Libya is wonderful – if it wasn’t for NATO, that is. (In the opening seconds, they chant: “Long Live Africa! Victory to the Libyan Green Revolution under the guidance of Brotherly Leader Qaddafi! Down with NATO! Down with neo-colonialism!”) The video tells the story of their rescue at sea by a Libyan ship. The Africans claim they were happy working in Libya, but it became dangerous because of the bombing by NATO (they pronounce it “GNAT-o”). They say they bought passage on a ship to take them to Italy, but the ship broke down, and they were going to die. Then a Libyan ship happened along to rescue and return them to their beloved Libya, the nation they thought was too dangerous just days before. **Assessment: Rubbish, but the staged video conveyed Qaddafi’s overarching message to Europeans forcefully. It is the same racist message he conveyed to the EU last September: young, unemployed, black African males are rushing to Europe in droves, and only Brotherly Leader Qaddafi can possibly save you from them.**

¹ “G8 Protests: The ‘Summer of Rage’ in Italy is *This Week*.” **FORWARD-LEANING INSIDER** 09-139 6 July 2009. In February, Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini said he feared an influx of immigrants on a “biblical scale.” That was a month before the first Tomahawk was launched at a Libyan target. **“Flash:** Libya is Prime for Evacuation Ops” and “Evacuations and Exodus.” **FORWARD-LEANING INSIDER** 11-031 23 February 2011.

No one can swear to the figures, but the trend is obvious. During the first few months of 2011, the INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM) said the flow to Europe was overwhelmingly from Tunisia. That swung sharply toward Libya in March with “dramatic increases” reported in April. **To date, IOM now says, a total of 625,000 have left Libya for Europe.** The U.N. says refugees and asylum seekers who have reached Lampedusa alone number more than 40,000.

- **QADDAFI: SKILLED AT PLAYING THE IMMIGRATION RACE CARD.** To explain, Libya was more a destination point for migrants, as Qaddafi’s guest worker schemes attracted as many as 2.5 million laborers (25% of the Libyan population), many of them Egyptians. But Europeans feared that Libya was much more a *transit* point for Europe-bound immigrants, so Qaddafi positioned himself as a partner in the “fight against illegal immigration” by playing on European fears of a migration flood, specifically by black Africans. Hein de Haas with the INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION INSTITUTE explains:

Gaddafi has shrewdly exploited largely unfounded European fears of an African invasion to position himself as a partner in the so-called “fight against illegal immigration” ... European governments seem to be afraid of the immigration consequences of North African instability.

Leaving aside the fact that fear of an African 'invasion' is entirely unfounded, what Gaddafi has been much more keen to hide is that Libya is an important migration destination in its own right ... Most African migrants ... work as low-paid labourers in the oil industry, construction, agriculture and service sectors ... [and] tend to do the most dangerous and dirty jobs.

LOOK FURTHER.



Migrants and Malta put Spanish Defense Minister Carme Chacón under the lights in Madrid, but at the heart of this dispute, an Italian accent may have been the most prominent. *[Photo courtesy of the MINISTERIO DE DEFENSA DE ESPAÑA (SPANISH MINISTRY OF DEFENSE)].*

Qaddafi won millions in deals, not to mention respectability, for Libya’s role in “pilot projects” to stem the flow northward, but his crowning achievement came last September. In a meeting with the EUROPEAN UNION, he warned unashamedly that Europe would become “black” unless migrants were turned back. You can’t imagine the consequences, he told the E.U. breathlessly:

We don’t know what will happen. What will be the reaction of the white and Christian Europeans faced with this influx of starving and ignorant Africans?

Dismissing the evidence that his was a **destination country**, Libya *really* was a *transit country*, just as the Europeans feared, Qaddafi argued. Europeans needed help. His help. **Brotherly Leader could stem the migrant flow – for a mere 5 billion Euros – about \$7 billion dollars. Annually.**

After protests broke out but before the first bomb was dropped, Qaddafi continued to play the immigration card (read: race card) repeatedly, threatening to “open the floodgates” if European leaders voiced support for his opposition. The Libya operation began with a reported 1.5 million black Africans in Libya. Most were Qaddafi “guest workers,” but it was clear hired mercenaries were among them,² some of whom are called “black desert rats” by opposition fighters.³



During the first week in June, anti-regime fighters captured a man they claimed was a Qaddafi mercenary – they called him a “black desert rat” – in **Al-Kufrah** deep in the Libyan desert in the southeastern quadrant of the country. In the video, revolutionaries refer to him as a “Nigeri,” meaning a man from Niger. He is a Tuareg, the Nomads who roam the Northcentral Sahel⁴ (Algeria, Libya, Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali) and are intensely loyal to Qaddafi. **From this YOUTUBE video.**

• **A HOLLYWOOD STAR PUSHES BACK FOR HUMANITARIANS.** Last month, U.N. Goodwill Ambassador **Angelina Jolie** accompanied U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres on a tour of Malta and Lampedusa who appealed to all countries to keep their borders open. Even **the U.N.’s own coverage** of the Jolie/Guterres visit to Lampedusa implied openly that Italy should do more:

Guterres appealed [to] European countries to accept the people coming from Africa, especially those fleeing violence in Libya. “When we have so many conflicts at the gates of Europe, the most important thing a country can do is keep their borders open,” he stressed, while mentioning Italy by name....

[He said] about 18,000 people ... had reached Lampedusa by boat to date [mid-June] from Libya, while adding that this represented only 2 per cent of the people who had left Libya since conflict erupted there in February.

Assessment I: There is evidence that a growing number of migrants are being encouraged by the regime in Tripoli to make the crossing to Europe. Of all the Lampedusa arrivals they spoke to last week, BBC found that **not one of them paid for the crossing.** A migrant is expected to pay between \$850 and \$1,000 for a transit from Libya to Lampedusa. Qaddafi’s threat of “opening the

² Reports of Qaddafi “hired guns” were numerous beginning in late February, and many were corroborated by independent sources. During the week of 21 February, sources inside Tripoli, Az-Zawiya and Tajoura reported that “mercenaries continue to hunt” those who did not appear to be “People of the Tent,” meaning Qaddafi loyalists. The only question at that time was whether the hired guns were being directed or acting on their own, more or less autonomously. **INSIDER could get no opposition fighter to tell us if they saw radios or even phones in use that might suggest their movements were being directed. “Flash: Ground Truth from Libya at 1210 EST.” FORWARD-LEANING INSIDER 11-035 26 February 2011.** Regime loyalists call the hired guns Qaddafi’s “parallel army.” Flown in from Chad, Nigeria and elsewhere, they numbered an estimated 20,000. Prior to the No-Fly, they were bussed to the more populous coast from distant air bases or from Sabha and Sirte. While enroute in those busses, opposition forces said they were largely unarmed. See “The Ground Truth in Eastern Libya: From Desperation to Something Darker.” FWL 11-041 17 March 2011. See also “Tactical Note.” **FORWARD-LEANING INSIDER 11-035 26 February 2011.**

³ “U.K. Military Advisors Head to Libya; French Already on the Ground.” **FORWARD-LEANING INSIDER 11-056 19 April 2011.** See also photo/caption page 2 under “The Money Quote: ‘A Dim, if not Dismal, Future for NATO.’” **FORWARD-LEANING INSIDER 11-071 10 June 2011.**

⁴ Spanning north Africa from the Atlantic coast in the west to the Red Sea in the east, the Sahel region encompasses Senegal, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Chad and Northern Nigeria.

floodgates” of migration will probably not be discussed by the European members of the INTERNATIONAL CONTACT GROUP ON LIBYA meeting in Istanbul now – though the Spanish, Italians and Maltese may share a word or two on the sidelines – but African migration will not be far from their thoughts.



The migrant boat as the Spanish pulled alongside last Sunday morning. [Photo courtesy of the MINISTERIO DE DEFENSA DE ESPAÑA (SPANISH MINISTRY OF DEFENSE)].

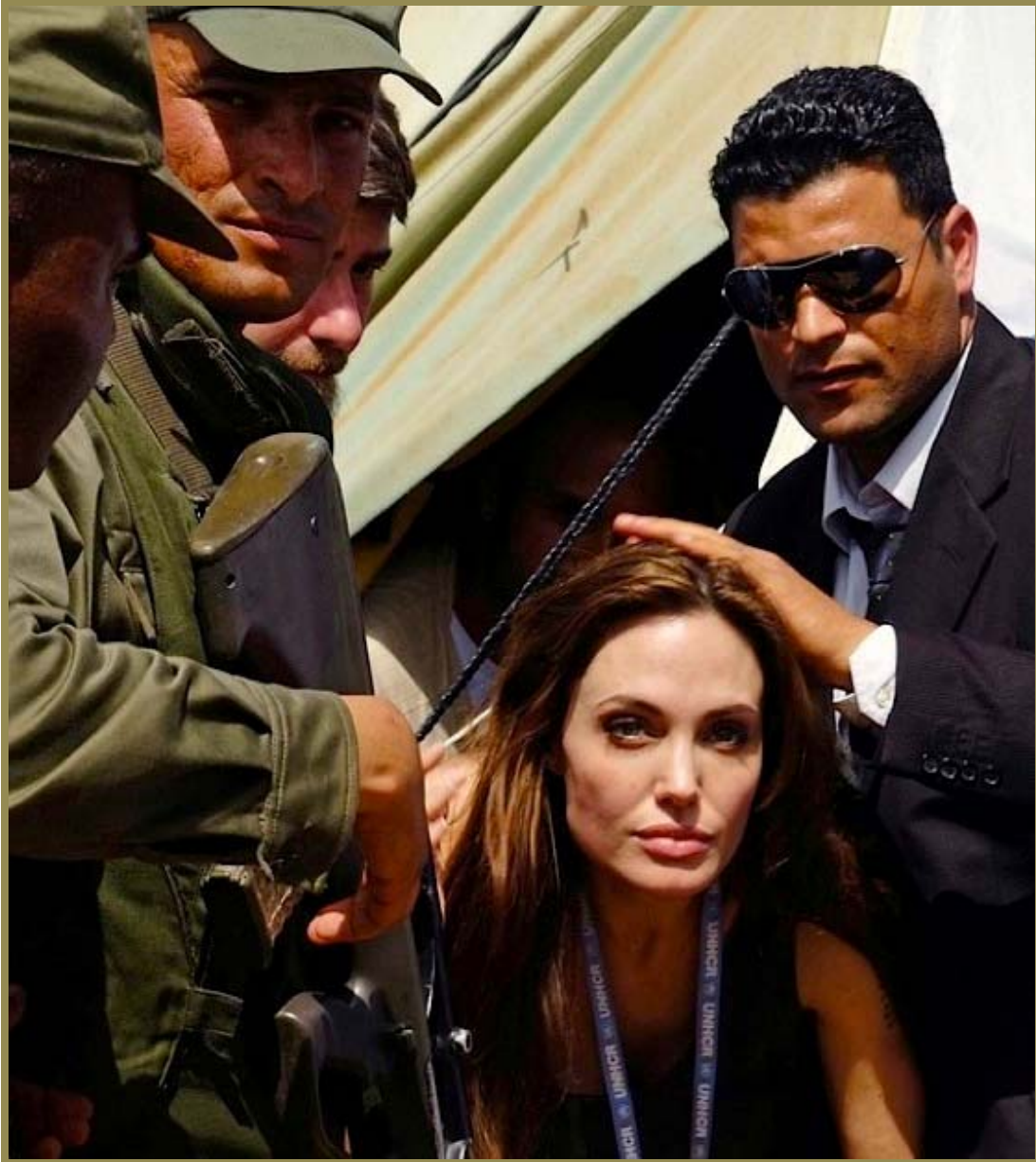
- **RESOLUTION FOR THE 111 MIGRANTS – DOUBT FOR THOSE BEHIND THEM.** At 0428 EST Saturday morning, *FORWARD-LEANING* friend Karl Stagno-Navarra reported in **MALTA TODAY** that NATO had directed **ALMIRANTE JUAN DE BORBÓN** to take the African refugees to Tunis. Aboard the frigate: 111 Ghanians, Tunisians and Libyans. Five or six hours later, the Spanish frigate transferred the refugees to a Tunisian warship. NATO still has not told Malta why it was chosen as the destination point when Malta when Italy and Tunisia were much closer.

The Stagno-Navarra report suggests that it may not have been a NATO agenda that sent the Spanish frigate to Malta. Italy’s interests may have played a role. The kicker in Karl’s story:

Military sources have confirmed that the Spanish warship **ALMIRANTE JUAN DE BORBÓN** rescued the migrants on Sunday morning from a drifting boat south of Lampedusa, but when the ship attempted to take the migrants to Lampedusa, an Italian aircraft carrier – the **GIUSEPPE GARIBALDI** – also active in the Mediterranean as part of **Operation Unified Protector** - was heard ordering the Spanish captain not to proceed towards the island.

Assessment II: In his seminal **WAR AND MIGRATION**, Alessandro Monsutti teaches that migration is an inevitable response to war, insecurity and poverty. Long before **Operation Odyssey Dawn** – an evolution launched to “protect civilians” – careful consideration should have been given to the most vulnerable of these – refugees and asylum seekers on the high seas.

The INTERNATIONAL CONTACT GROUP is working toward a Libyan ceasefire on 1 August to coincide with the start of Ramadan with the hope that a new government will haltingly take shape. In light of this week’s dispute between Spain, Italy and Malta, the Libyan migration issue and safety of life at sea in the Mediterranean will likely be marred by rancor, not eased by resolution, as more migrants follow in the wake of the 111 rescued by **ALMIRANTE DE BORBÓN**.



The migrants are believed to have been taken to the Shousha refugee camps where MÉDECINS SANS FRONTIÈRES (DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS) (MSF) say thousands are “stuck in limbo.” Thousands have passed through several transitory camps set up in Ras Ajdir, visited by U.N. Goodwill Ambassador Angelina Jolie in April.
(Un-marked photo believed to be courtesy of U.N.H.C.R.)

PROPRIETARY CLASSIFICATION: BUSINESS –IN- CONFIDENCE
TURN TIGHTER, GO FASTER, LOOK FURTHER™

© 2009 All rights reserved. International copyright secured. *FORWARD-LEANING INSIDER*, a proprietary business-in-confidence report, is the exclusive property of Osen-Hunter. Forwarding, duplicating or quoting all or portions of the document is prohibited unless expressly authorized by Osen-Hunter. We will respond to all requests for use as promptly as possible. Email tomwyld@osen-hunter.com and reaeveritt@osen-hunter.com with such requests. We will also welcome your input and suggestions. To the best of our knowledge, all copy and images are either public domain, not copyrighted, licensed by creative commons, or used in accordance with the fair-use doctrine. We make no assertions on the veracity of situations and individuals described and forward them to readers to enhance threat awareness only. Assessments and forecasts cannot be considered absolute but are based on the best (and almost always limited) information available at the time and are forwarded to Osen-Hunter family, friends and clients as our best estimate of situations described. We offer this information without any warranty of any kind, express or implied. Neither the contributor(s) nor Osen-Hunter guarantees the accuracy or completeness of any information contained herein and neither Osen-Hunter nor any contributor is responsible for any error or omission or for the results obtained from the use of such information, nor shall they be liable or responsible to any person or entity for any loss or damage caused, or alleged to have been caused, directly or indirectly by the information or ideas referenced or suggested herein.