

West's action in Libya in 2011 was a 'mistake' - Italy's foreign ministry

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Reuters / Esam Omran Al-Fetori

Western countries made a 'mistake' three years ago, when they intervened in Libya to overthrow the Gaddafi regime, according to Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs. The statement came amid reports of the US discussing airstrikes on Libya's territory.

"Three years ago we might have made a mistake, when international forces interfered without thinking through the scenario, what will happen afterwards. Italian voice was too weak," Italy's Minister of Foreign Affairs Paolo Gentiloni said in a TV interview with national broadcaster RAI, as quoted by Tass news agency.

While meeting international journalists on Friday, the minister said that stabilizing the situation in Libya - which at the moment is an

uncontrollable land of "*chaos*" - and in the whole Mediterranean region was a key priority of Italy's foreign policy.

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French Rafale fighter jet from the Istres military air base approaching an airborne Boeing C-135 refuelling tanker aircraft (not pictured) during a refuelling operation above the Mediterranean sea as part of military actions over Libya. (AFP Photo / Gerard Julien)

Meanwhile, the US has plans to expand its anti Islamic State military campaign to Libya, The Times [reported](#) on Friday. Amid western countries' concerns over Libya's political instability, that could possibly be used by the IS terrorists in their favor, a top US general has confirmed the Islamic State runs jihadist training camps in eastern Libya.

Now "*an American commander has acknowledged that discussions are under way in Washington about broadening the anti-Isis campaign to Libya,*" The Times wrote.

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The fall of Muammar Gaddafi's regime back in 2011 and the turmoil that followed it has provided a fertile ground for extremism. Since August, Libya’s capital of Tripoli has been in the hands of Libya Dawn - a coalition of Islamist-backed militias who appointed their own administration, while the internationally-recognized government and parliament have been pushed a thousand kilometers away to Tobruk.



AFP Photo / Mahmud Turkia

The UN has condemned the recent fighting - the worst since 2011. An international contact group, which gathered in Addis Ababa earlier this week to discuss the Libyan crisis, has rejected the use of force to

solve it. But the country's officials have ruled out peace talks after Libya Dawn allied itself with jihadi groups.

"*We cannot continue with two governments, two parliaments, so Libya Dawn should end or we are going to arrest them all,*" Libya's military commander, General Khalifa Hiftar told RT.

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Moscow has said only neighboring countries in the region should participate in stabilizing the situation in Libya, while others stay put. When meeting his Sudanese counterpart earlier in the week, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said that "*interference from overseas assuming a leading role in settling sovereignty issues*" that has been witnessed in Iraq and Libya, and now is being attempted in Syria, leads to tragedy and a state's breakup.