Written by **Alex Newman** on January 30, 2012

UN Report: NATO's Libya War Armed al-Qaeda

The UN report explained that "due to the Libyan upheaval … governments in the region are faced with the return of millions of economic migrants, the smuggling of weapons from Libyan stockpiles, terrorist activities, youth unemployment, trafficking in drugs and human beings, and a surge in criminality," the international body summarized in a press release on its findings.

But the international body carefully ignored its own obvious role in creating the tragedy. The UN, of course, first called for the "no-fly zone" over Libya and all measures necessary to "protect civilians" in March of last year. Western powers including the U.S. government promptly interpreted the international resolution as a green light for military strikes and eventually regime change.

Almost incredibly, the UN and some of its member governments are now calling for even more international intervention. To deal with the fallout crisis created by the previous round of failed intervention, a collection of regimes in the region seeking to quash rebel groups joined forces with various UN officials to seize on last week's report, demanding more support from the international body and the regional African Union (AU).

NATO and its Libyan "National Transitional Council (NTC)" ally on the ground — comprised mainly of known terror leaders, former Gadhafi officials, and assorted Islamic extremists — promised throughout the war to take steps to ensure that Gadhafi's massive stockpile of military weaponry did not fall into the wrong hands. But it did — almost from the beginning.

As *The New American* reported throughout the war and the UN's recent report confirmed once again, everything from machine guns and grenade launchers to anti-aircraft weapons, explosives, and even missiles have made their way out of Libya. Fears also exist about the possible proliferation of chemical agents or other Weapons of Mass Destruction Gadhafi may have hidden.

The UN investigation, which focused on the effects of the Libyan war on the Sahel region of Northern Africa, found that national governments ruling countries such as Chad, Mali, Nigeria, Niger, and others were having trouble dealing with the surge of arms. "The governments of the countries visited indicated that, in spite of efforts to control their borders, large quantities of weapons and ammunition from Libyan stockpiles were smuggled into the Sahel region," the report explained.

UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs B. Lynn Pascoe told the Security Council on January 26 that the surge in weapons and other problems linked to the Libyan war were exerting pressure on the already-struggling regimes in the area. Terrorist groups and criminal organizations, meanwhile, were

using and distributing military weapons smuggled out of Libya. And other arms stockpiles are likely still hidden in the desert for future use.

Pascoe admitted that many of the problems — especially with heavy weapons — were directly attributable to the Western-backed overthrow of the Gadhafi regime. Libya's new NATO-sponsored rulers, however, claimed that many of the concerns already existed before international military forces helped kill the Libyan dictator and topple his government, Pascoe told the UN Security Council.

But not everyone was entirely convinced. The Russian government, which claims it opposed the NATO war against Libya yet failed to block the UN resolution purportedly authorizing it, used the UN Security Council briefing to lecture Western powers and Libya's new regime. Other governments used the meeting as an opportunity to subtly gloat and criticize the NATO war.

The new UN report confirmed that the "real consequences of the Libyan crisis, the real scope of which is only beginning to come to light, are a serious threat to security and stability in the entire region," said Russian envoy Alexander Pankin, noting that his government was particularly concerned over "the uncontrolled spread of weapons in Libya and beyond its border."

Moscow also blasted the new Libyan rulers for failing to properly control the situation and for allowing weapons to flow toward terrorists and criminal organizations. The whole disaster greatly increased the risk of global terrorism, Pankin added during the Security Council meeting.

A representative for the Indian government echoed Pankin's statements, saying that "military operations carried out ostensibly to protect civilians had led to adverse consequences for millions in the Sahel," the UN summarized. He also pointed out that in a relatively short time period some three million people had lost their livelihoods with disastrous implications for the region.

South Africa's envoy emphasized that the UN resolution purporting to authorize military force against Libya was largely responsible for the crisis and for exacerbating existing problems. The new report confirmed his government's views that the NATO war would lead to arms proliferation and more terror, he said.

On the other hand, representatives of Western governments such as France, the U.K., and the Obama administration which participated in the war — like the new Libyan regime they installed — claimed the problems existed prior to NATO's intervention. But even more international intervention would be needed to solve the disasters anyway, they all agreed.

Other serious problems affecting surrounding countries resulted from the NATO regime-change operation as well, explained the UN report detailing the regional fallout from the Libyan war. Investigators working with the UN Inter-agency Assessment Mission to Sub-Saharan Region discovered, for example, that the collapse of Libya led to a mass influx of destitute civilians into neighboring countries.

The conflict and resulting chaos in Libya also dried up crucial remittances sent home by migrant workers from the once relatively prosperous oil-producing nation. According to the UN, a humanitarian disaster has been intensified as North African countries seek to feed and reintegrate the affected populations displaced by the fighting.

But the weapons are among the biggest concern, threatening to affect the security and stability of the whole region and possibly beyond. As always, the UN recommended supranational measures and international support to regimes in the area to deal with the problems.

Meanwhile, inside Libya, the bloody battles are still raging on. Competing militias, Gadhafi loyalists, and assorted armed factions are all vying for power in what some experts worry could easily become a second civil war.

The new rulers — terrorists, Islamists, Gadhafi officials, and a few individuals whom critics have dubbed "Western puppets" — barely hold sway even in the capital, where deadly clashes still continue adding to the death toll. But the new central bank which replaced Gadhafi's state-owned monetary authority is firmly in place.

Outside of North Africa, Western powers have toned down their bizarre celebrations over the alleged "success" of regime change in Libya against their former ally Gadhafi. But many are still openly pushing for more military intervention in the Middle East, apparently — on the surface at least — having failed to learn a lesson from the disastrous results of past operations.

Photo of unguarded mortar shells in Libya: AP Images

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