

IAI OBSERVATORY ON EUROPEAN DEFENCE

MAY 2011

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

NATO "UNIFIED PROTECTOR" OPERATION CONTINUES IN LIBYA

MAY 1-31

During May 2011 NATO has continued the operation "Unified Protector" in Libya, officially launched according to the UN Security Council resolution 1973/2011.

NATO has continued the air strikes against military targets, like command and control centers, rockets and missiles launchers, exceeding 9.000 sorties since the beginning of the operation on March 31, 2011. The Gaddafi loyalists has unsuccessfully tried to attack the Alliance's fleet deployed off Libyan coasts. NATO deploys nineteen ships to enforce the embargo on arms, military materials and mercenaries to Tripoli's government.

The operation includes the maintaining of a no-fly zone on Libyan airspace, a naval embargo, and military operations aimed to protect the Libyan civilians and their populated areas from attacks and threats of attack..

In May NATO has also remained in contact with European Union and African Union about the Libyan crisis.

MAY 9-23

EU APPROVES SANCTION AGAINST IRAN

The EU Foreign Affairs Council took a set of measures against Iran in order to implement UN Resolution 1929/2010. EU sanctions concern trade, financial services, energy and transport. Moreover, the list of individuals and entities subject to the freezing of goods and capitals as well as to the prohibition of entry into the Union, has been extended.

MAY 9-23

EU IMPOSES RESTRICTIVE MEASURES AGAINST SYRIA AND STRENGTHENS THOSE AGAINST LIBYA AND BELARUS

On May 9 the EU Foreign Affairs Council has adopted a regulation and a decision on Syria, providing for an embargo on supply of weapons and equipments together with a visa ban and an assets freeze. In particular the latter two measures affect thirteen Syrian officials that the Council recognized as responsible of violence against the country's population.

On May 23 the Council has decided to increase by a further ten units the individuals affected by visa ban and assets freeze, as responsible for repression against the civilians; among them there is also the Syrian president Bashar-al Assad. On May 23 the EU Foreign Affairs Council has also decided to strengthen the restrictive measures against Libya and Belarus: one person and a company from Libya and thirteen Belarusian citizens have been included in the list of entities subjected to visa ban and assets freeze in the EU.

MAY 22

HIGH REPRESENTATIVE CATHERINE ASHTON INAUGURATES AN EU OFFICE IN BENGHAZI

High Representative Catherine Ashton has inaugurated an EU office in Benghazi, Libya, with the aim to increase EU commitment in the Libyan crisis, in coordination with other international organizations and member states. The office opening has been organized by Agostino Miozzo, EEAS Managing Director for Crisis Response and Operational Coordination.

During her visit in Libya Lady Ashton has met some representatives of the Libyan National Transitional Council established in Benghazi. This organization was recognized as the sole legitimate representative of the Libyan people by two EU states (Italy and France), by some Arab

(Jordan, Kuwait and Qatar) and African states, and by Turkey on May 23.

MAY 26

EU FOREIGN AFFAIRS COUNCIL EXTENDS FOR SIX MONTHS THE MANDATE OF “EU-BAM” MISSION IN RAFAH

The EU Foreign Affairs Council has decided to extend until December 31, 2011 the mission “EU Border Assistance Mission” (EU-BAM) in Rafah, on the borderline between Egypt and Gaza. The EU-BAM mission was created in 2005, to interpose a third party between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, to open a passage and, at the same time, to reinforce the trust between the parts.

MAY 26

FORMER GENERAL RATKO MLADIC, WANTED FOR CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY, HAS BEEN ARRESTED

Former Serbo-Bosnian general Ratko Mladic, wanted for genocide, crimes against humanity and the Srebrenica massacre in 1995, was arrested by the Serbian Authorities on May 26. On May 31 Mladic has been taken into custody by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, established in The Hague (Netherlands), where he will be put on trial. Mladic handover is unanimously seen by observers as an important step on the Serbia’ path to EU membership.