

Libya Evacuations

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BRO STEF COMMENTS:

As the Middle East continues to work through the events that have started, some countries, like Libya, are cracking down on their people through bloodshed. Kadafi is killing his people in an attempt to stop all uprisings.

I want us to look at this development from a Biblical perspective however. Libya is one of the largest oil producers in the ME. They provide large amounts of the world's oil supply. As the situation in Libya worsens, the world governments and the world's oil corporations like Shell Oil and BP are pulling their executives and employees out of Libya for now. What I see as a potential prophetic development is this, as the world sees more unrest there will be a cry for peace. The peace cry for peace will become not just a desire but a necessity. The EU, U.S., Russia, China and the Arab League will begin to point the finger at Israel. If you have been a subscriber of **The Middle East Peace Update Report** for any length of time you are aware of how the world uses Israel as the escape-goat for all the world's ills. As the pressure mounts from the world citizenry for peace, the world will look at Israel and say something like this, *"If you will give East Jerusalem to the PA and make peace with your Arab neighbors, the world will follow suit and you will be responsible for the calm in the world."* Israel will dig their heels in the sand and say, as they have recently, we will not surrender any part of Jerusalem. As the unrest continues and calamities abound it will be Israel that gets blamed and once again they will be in a no-win position. If they allow Jerusalem to be divided their citizens will be unhappy and they know full well God will be angry, they will be in an impossible predicament.

1Thessalonians 5:3 tells us that when we hear the cry for *peace and safety*, then destruction will come. Why? Why would God not want peace to abound on the earth? The answer is really simple. The world has denounced God the creator of the very people who have denounced Him. When witnesses are sworn in, in a court of law, God isn't used anymore in the swearing in process. The world has said we don't need you, you are not welcome. Therefore, all God will do is allow man's problems to take their natural course and that will be war, not peace. Without God man is incapable of true lasting peace. We all suffer from the finger pointing disease just like Adam and Eve. It's his fault, not it's her fault. The world is void of personal responsibility and it is always pointing the finger at someone else not itself. In this case it will be Israel who the finger and blame for the world's ills will point at.

Look to see a crafty, *smooth as silk politician* to come out of Europe who will have all the answers, one who will know how to get the Jews what they want, their temple, he will get the Arabs what they want, East Jerusalem and all of the ME struggles and strife will cease and the world will think the **Age of Peace** has arrived. When he comes onto the scene, this will signal the *seven year tribulation period* has begun and that means that Messiah's return is within 6.35 years or so. Don't forget the *seven months* it will take to clean up Israel after the Messiah destroys the armies of the world during the War of Armageddon that takes place in the valley of Jezreel or the Valley of Megiddo. That can be found in Ezekiel 39:11-15. The means by which they are burying the bodies and disposing of equipment outlined in Ezekiel is the techniques used in nuclear cleanup and disposal. This has been reported on extensively by prominent teachers like Chuck Missler of **Koinonia House** Ministries.

This my friends is where, I believe, all of this is leading. We must keep in mind that the ME will become the **flash point** right before Messiah returns. Therefore, it should be of no surprise to any of our subscribers that the ME is in fact now that flash point in world.

What does all of this mean? Be ready, be alert and be watchful! The Lord is surely coming to set all of this right.

LUKE 21:28; "NOW WHEN THESE THINGS BEGIN TO HAPPEN, LOOK UP AND LIFT UP YOUR HEADS, BECAUSE YOUR REDEMPTION DRAWS NEAR."



EU, oil companies begin Libya evacuations

Yves Logghe / AP

British Foreign Secretary William Hague speaks with journalists during arrivals for an EU foreign ministers meeting at the European Council building in Brussels, Monday, Feb. 21, 2011. Britain's government urged Libyan authorities on Monday to immediately end violence against pro-democracy demonstrators and open a genuine dialogue on reforms that would go much further than the limited concessions the government has offered. (AP Photo/Yves Logghe)

By NICOLE WINFIELD

AP Associated Press

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ROME — European countries sent planes and ferries to Libya to evacuate their citizens, and some oil and gas companies pulled their foreign staff out and suspended operations, as anti-government protests spread to Tripoli for the first time.

Many countries had already urged their citizens to avoid nonessential travel to Libya, or recommended that those already there leave on commercial flights. But as Libya's bloody crackdown against protesters moved to the capital, countries and companies alike stepped up their contingency plans.

Oil companies, including Italy's Eni, Royal Dutch Shell PLC, U.K.-based BP and Germany's Wintershall, a subsidiary of BASF, were evacuating their expat workers or their families or both. BP and Wintershall said they were temporarily suspending operations; Eni said production continued normally.

Libya is one of the world's biggest oil producers and has the largest proven oil reserves in the whole of Africa. Eni, Italy's largest natural gas and oil company, has operated there for more than 50 years and is the biggest foreign player in Libya.

Passengers returning Monday night to Rome aboard an Alitalia aircraft from Tripoli said they had heard gunfire through the night in the Libyan capital, but an eerie silence had blanketed the city as they drove to the airport in the morning.

"We had civilians with guns on every corner, so it is not safe at all," said Zoran Siljak, a Serbian working in Libya for a paint company. "Last night, there were shots through the night, there was fighting in the streets."

Portugal and Austria sent C-130 planes to pick up their citizens and other EU nationals, and Turkey sent two ferries to fetch construction workers stranded by the unrest. The Dutch government was seeking clearance to send a military plane to evacuate its citizens on Tuesday and Russian gas company Gazprom was dispatching a plane that was due to return Tuesday, a Russian news agency reported.

"We are very worried about the situation in Libya," Spain's foreign minister, Trinidad Jimenez, said at a regular monthly EU ministerial meeting in Brussels that was largely focused on the unrest across the Middle East. "At the same time, we are coordinating the possible evacuation of EU citizens from Libya."

Turkey was sending two ferries to Libya to evacuate Turks — mostly construction workers. The decision came hours after authorities at the airport in Benghazi, the country's second largest city and a center of the protests, would not allow a Turkish Airlines plane to land, forcing it to circle the airport and then return to Istanbul.

Turkish Foreign Trade Minister Zafer Caglayan said four planes were on standby, while Turkey is also considering evacuating some of its citizens by land, through Egypt. Turkey began evacuating its citizens after several Turkish construction sites around Benghazi were attacked and looted by protesters on Friday.

Seven people who said they were French citizens arrived unexpectedly in Malta on Monday aboard two helicopters in an apparent do-it-yourself evacuation that was carried out so quickly only one of them had a passport, a Maltese military source said, speaking on condition of anonymity. They were being questioned by Maltese immigration officials.

Austria, which had a C-130 Hercules on standby in Malta since Sunday, sent it into Tripoli on Monday with a psychologist on board. It took off Monday night with 62 evacuees from Austria, France the Netherlands and Germany, bound for the Maltese capital, said Defense Ministry spokesman Michael Bauer.

Croatian state television reported Monday night that the evacuation of some 500 Croat citizens from Libya had begun.

Serbia's foreign minister, Vuk Jeremic, said his country is preparing a plane to be sent to Libya, and that between 500 and 700 Serbian citizens have contacted the embassy in Tripoli. Meanwhile, a group of some 50 Serb construction workers wrote in an e-mail to media that they were attacked by a group of armed men and were cut off at a camp on the Mediterranean.

Britain said the families of its embassy staff, and some nonessential diplomats, would leave Libya on commercial flights when possible, though a British official said they are not considering any government-organized evacuation.

Italy hadn't ordered any evacuations for the estimated 1,500 Italians in Libya, but state-owned Alitalia was sending in larger aircraft on its routes to accommodate increased demand, a spokesman said.

One of the passengers aboard an Alitalia flight landing Monday at Rome's Leonardo da Vinci airport seemed relieved to get out. "This morning in the streets coming to the airport, there was an alarming silence," said Renato Pennino, an archaeological restorer. "It was deserted."

Italy's Eni, which produces 244,000 barrels of gas and oil a day, operating in six contractual areas, said it was evacuating nonessential personnel and family members of expatriate workers in Libya "as already scheduled following the early closure of schools in the country."

"At the moment, no problems at plants and operational facilities have been reported. The company's production continues as normal, with no effects on operations," Eni said, adding that it was reinforcing security measures for remaining employees and plants.

Wintershall said it was closing down its oil operations in Libya "given the current developments" and was in the process of evacuating its 130 international staff members to Germany and elsewhere in Europe. Wintershall operates eight onshore oil fields in the Libyan desert, about 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) southeast of Tripoli, producing 100,000 barrels of oil a day.

"Safety is our company priority," said spokesman Stefan Leunig.

He said the company's office in Tripoli would be shut down, but that a "handful" of international staff members would remain on hand in the country for the time being. Wintershall has a total of about 400 employees in Libya, mostly local nationals.

BP suspended some of its operations and is planning to take out its nonessential staff and their families Monday and Tuesday, spokesman David Nicholas said. BP has about 140 staff members in Libya, about 40 of whom are expats.

The company is in the early stages of exploration in Libya. BP's onshore drilling preparations have been suspended in light of the protests, while other activities are unaffected, the spokesman said.

Shell temporarily relocated the families of expat staff out of Libya, spokeswoman Kirsten Smart said. She declined to give further details of the number of employees the company has in Libya or how many people were evacuated.

Shell's operations in Libya, like those of BP, are limited to exploration.

Norway-based Statoil said it is pulling a "handful" of expatriate workers out of its office in Tripoli, and Austria's OMV oil and gas company was pulling out 11 of its 15 Libya-based expatriates and their families.

Poland's state gas monopoly PGNiG said it is evacuating 30 employees.

German industrial giant Siemens AG said it was evacuating about 100 international employees. Siemens' three main divisions — industry, energy and health care — are active in Libya with annual revenue of about €160 million (\$220 million), a spokesman said.

Russia's state rail monopoly said it was evacuating its 204 employees who are building a 550-kilometer (340-mile) coastal railroad from Sirt to Benghazi.

Poland said it was considering a possible evacuation, but that it wasn't necessary yet because anyone who wants to leave can still do so on commercial flights. Of the more than 500 Poles there, 31 have expressed interest in leaving Libya, said Piotr Paszkowski, head of the political section of the Foreign Ministry.

Associated Press reporters across Europe contributed to this report.