



Ressort: Politik

Talks about the Libya crisis in Rome

Rome, 10.01.2020 [ENA]

Italian President of the Council of Ministers Giuseppe Conte and Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio met in Rome on Thursday for talks about the Libya crisis and the tension between the US and Iran linked to Iraq. Defence Minister Lorenzo Guerini also took part, over the phone.

The interior minister in the UN-recognised Libyan government of Premier Faeyez al-Sarraj, Fathi Bashagha, arrived in Rome from Tripoli

on 9th January to reportedly meet the US Ambassador to Tunisia, Donald Blome.

Sarraj himself was expected to come to Rome from Brussels on wednesday 8th of January evening but instead flew straight back to Tripoli, allegedly irritated after eastern Libyan strongman General Khalkifa Haftar had talks in the Italian capital with Conte. Haftar's forces have been engaged in an offensive on the Sarraj government in Tripoli since April.

General Khalifa Haftar's attack on Tripoli has dragged Libya into a new civil war. Between 3rd and 4th April, the self-proclaimed Libyan National Army (LNA) from Cyrenaica launched an offensive against the forces of Tripolitania and the UN-supported Government of National Accord (GNA).

In order for this operation to succeed, and for Haftar to take power, the General must necessarily build a form of legitimacy at both the local and international level. The war consequently takes place both on the military and on the political-diplomatic level. In this sense, the quality of propaganda and the evolution of online information flows related to Libyan events are of equal importance than developments on the ground.

Tripoli on Thursday agreed to a ceasefire for Saturday proposed by Turkey and Russia. But Haftar rejected the ceasefire peace mediation bid by presidents Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Vladimir Putin, the spokesman for his self-styled Libyan National Army, Ahmed al Mismari, told reporters.

The most important confrontation between Haftar and the GNA is played on the level of legitimacy. Indeed, in order for the LNA offensive to achieve its political goals, military victory must be accompanied by parallel international recognition of Haftar. The construction of a form of legitimacy is therefore one of the primary objectives of the General's offensive, and as much important as mili-tary operations and the maintenance of international support. Benghazi sources told Italian Press Agency ANSA "we thank Russia for its support but we cannot stop fighting terrorism".

Redaktioneller Programmdienst: European News Agency

Annette-Kolb-Str. 16
D-85055 Ingolstadt
Telefon: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.660
Telefax: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.661
Email: contact@european-news-agency.com
Internet: european-news-agency.com

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Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio said during a visit to Algiers on Thursday that "there is interference by foreign States" in Libya and added "we must find a solution with the EU for the adoption of an arms embargo". For Italy it's a national security problem.

Defence Minister Guerini said in a phone call on the Iran-Iraq-US situation with German counterpart Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer Thursday that "we must face the ongoing crisis with the necessary balance, in order to obtain a reopening of dialogue to lower tension. In greater merit, we'll have to weigh together the possibility of the reconfiguration of our commitment, also examining in depth the possibility of boosting the role of NATO and the European countries".

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Annette-Kolb-Str. 16
D-85055 Ingolstadt
Telefon: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.660
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