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## U.S. analysts ponder Libya intervention

by Matthew Rusling

WASHINGTON, Aug. 28 (Xinhua) -- As the Libya conflict draws to a close, U.S. analysts are examining whether Washington's intervention was the right move or whether it should have stayed above the fray.

Since the United States embarked on a bombing campaign in March to support Libyan rebels's effort to topple Muammar Gaddafi's 41-year rule, critics at home have maintained that the war carries little significance to U.S. interests.

Christopher A. Preble, vice president for defense and foreign policy studies at the Cato Institute, said U.S. policymakers have learned what he deemed the "wrong lessons," and that the U.S. intervention has continued to promote a familiar narrative, in which it is unfavorably portrayed as uniquely suited to be "the world's government."

"Most Americans disagree. Such an approach to the world has taxed our military, and overburdened U.S. taxpayers, with no obvious benefit to U.S. national security," Preble argued.

Libya was clearly a European concern, and many of those countries chose not to take action themselves because they knew the United States would do it for them. "They knew the U.S. would do most of the heavy lifting," he said.

Critics of U.S. involvement in the Libyan conflict also maintain that the Obama administration has circumvented Congress. Indeed, there remain deep divisions among lawmakers over the legality of U.S. military actions in war-battered Libya.

At issue is whether U.S. involvement in the operation can be justified under a law known as the War Powers Act.

Still, other analysts said U.S. intervention seemed to be the right move.

Shadi Hamid, Director of Research at the Brookings Doha Center, penned in an Atlantic magazine article that "it is difficult to deny" that the alternative to doing something -- doing nothing -- would almost certainly have led to "massacres" in Benghazi and other pockets of resistance.

"Libya would have likely been held up as one of the great tragedies of Western neglect," he contended.

He added that it could be argued that Obama's "excessive caution made a bad situation even worse."

Paul Hughes, senior program officer at the U.S. Institute of Peace, said the U.S. military has certainly over the last decade placed a great deal of emphasis on its military to conduct humanitarian responses, combat operations and post conflict stabilization.

"It is difficult" for a country such as the United States to avoid taking an interest in such conflicts, as the country has so many broad economic interests worldwide, he said.

Hughes claimed that the stabilization of conflict zones is something in everyone's interest. "If the United States doesn't do it, who is going to stabilize those regions? No other country is capable of taking such action," he said.

### **Special Report: Foreign Military Intervention in Libya**



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