



Libya - Assault on the Mellitah Energy Site: Why North Africa is Italy's True Strategic Destiny

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The recent news from Libya — with the protesters' assault on the **Mellitah** energy complex and the consequent shutdown of the **El Feel** and **Wafa** fields — represents much more than a simple local crisis. They are a deafening wake-up call that Italy can no longer afford to ignore.

The chaos that periodically sweeps through Tripoli, Benghazi, and the energy hub areas reminds us of a fundamental truth, too often forgotten or sacrificed on the altar of short-sighted foreign agendas: **the true and only vital strategic area for Italy is North Africa.**

Energy Fragility and the Lesson of Mellitah

The Mellitah complex is not just any site: it is one of the beating hearts of Mediterranean energy, a crucial hub managed in a joint venture between the Libyan National Oil Corporation (NOC) and **Eni**, which not only powers the local electricity grid but represents a fundamental

route for the security of the Apennines.

When pipeline flows are interrupted due to political instability, the impact immediately affects Italian national security. The lesson from this latest episode is clear:

- **Energy dependence requires presence:** It is not enough to buy energy or rely on supply contracts; without political and military stability in the countries of origin, every infrastructure is hostage to the local powder keg.
- **The Enlarged Mediterranean is our primary border:** The security of Rome is not defended only within national borders or along the eastern European flank, but is played out on the southern shores of the Mediterranean.

Beyond the Emergency: A 360-Degree Cooperation Strategy

For too many years, Italian foreign policy in North Africa has oscillated between diplomatic immobility and emergency management (mainly related to migration flows). It is time for a radical paradigm shift, based on two essential pillars: **greater military cooperation** and **massive civilian investments**.

1. Military and Security Cooperation

Stability is not built on goodwill, but on the construction of shared security architectures.

- Italy must intensify active cooperation with reliable local security forces, offering training, intelligence, and technical support to protect critical infrastructures (such as pipelines, ports, and oil facilities).
- A credible military presence, based on partnership and not imposition, is the only deterrent against the interference of third powers (such as Russia and Turkey) that in recent years have filled the void culpably left by the West.

2. Civil and Economic Cooperation

Military security is sterile if not accompanied by real socio-economic development.

- **Structural investments:** Funds allocated to civil cooperation must be increased tenfold, focusing on projects for clean energy transition, water resource management, agriculture,

and civil infrastructure.

- **Training and employment:** Creating stable economic opportunities for North African youth is the only structural way to curb migrant departures and deprive armed militias and organized crime of manpower.

Conclusions: The Time for Choices

The government of Abdul Hamid Dbeibah, the protests in Mellitah, and the shutdown of the El Feel and Wafa fields are the tangible proof that North Africa is an unstable but essential powder keg.

Italy must stop being a passive observer and return to being the **main actor and mediator in the area**. Shifting the focus of resources, political attention, and strategic diplomacy towards North Africa is not one option among many: it is a **condition of geopolitical and economic survival** for our country.