

# Creative Destruction: Libya in Washington's Greater Middle East Project

## Part II

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Global Research, March 26, 2011

[engdahl.oilgeopolitics.net](http://engdahl.oilgeopolitics.net) 26 March 2011

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

*For those who do not believe in coincidence, it's notable that on March 19, 2011 the Obama Administration ordered the military bombing attack on Libya, ostensibly to create a 'no fly zone' to protect innocent civilians and on March 19, 2003, the Bush administration ordered the bombing of Iraq.*

The No Fly strikes were begun under US command with suspicious haste following the UN Resolution. To date the attacks have been led by US, British and French air forces and warships. A storm of Tomahawk cruise missiles and GPS-guided bombs has rained down on undisclosed Libyan targets with reports of many civilian deaths. No end is in sight at present.

Eight years earlier to the day, the Bush Administration began its Operation Shock and Awe, the military destruction and occupation of Iraq, allegedly to prevent a threat of weapons of mass destruction which never existed as was later confirmed. The Iraqi invasion followed more than a decade of illegal No Fly Zone operations over Iraqi airspace by the same trio—USA, Britain and France.

Far more important than any possible numerology games a superstitious Pentagon might or might not be playing is the ultimate agenda behind the domino series of regime destabilizations that Washington has ignited under the banner of democracy and human rights across the Islamic world since December 2010.

With Washington's exerting of enormous pressure on other NATO member states to take formal command of the US-led bombing of Libya, no matter under what name, in order to give Washington a fig leaf that would shift attention away from the Pentagon's central role via AFRICOM in coordinating the military operation, the entire upheaval sweeping across North African and Middle East Islamic countries is looking at this writing more like the early onset of a World War III, one that some NATO members hint is expected to last decades.

As with World War II and World War I, this one as well would be launched to expand what David Rockefeller and George H.W. Bush in the past have called a "new world order."

### **Gaddafi's real 'crime'**

Unlike Tunisia or Egypt where a halfway credible argument could be made that the

population was suffering from exploding food prices and a vast wealth gap, Gaddafi's Libya, officially called Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, is very different.

There, according to Africans I have spoken to with direct knowledge, Libyans enjoyed the highest living standard on the Continent. Gaddafi did not stay on top for 42 years without ensuring that his population had little room to complain. Most health services, education and fuel was state-subsidized. Gaddafi's Libya had the lowest infant mortality rate and highest life expectancy of all Africa. When he seized power from ailing King Idris four decades ago literacy was below 10% of the population. Today it is above 90%, hardly the footprint of your typical tyrant. Less than 5% of the population is undernourished, a figure lower than in the United States. In response to the rising food prices of recent months, Gaddafi took care to abolish all taxes on food. And a lower percentage of people lived below the poverty line than in the Netherlands. Gaddafi calls his model a form of Islamic socialism. It is secular and not theocratic, despite its overwhelmingly Sunni base in the population. 1

Why is the United States so opposed to Gaddafi? Clearly because he is simply "not with the program." Gaddafi has shown repeatedly and not without grounds that he deeply distrusts Washington. He has constantly tried to forge an independent voice for an Africa that is increasingly being usurped by the Pentagon's AFRICOM. In 1999 he initiated creation of the African Union, based in Addis Abbaba, to strengthen the international voice of Africa's former colonial states. At a pan-African summit in 2009 he appealed for creation of a United States of Africa to combine the economic strengths of what is perhaps the world's richest continent in terms of unexploited mineral and agricultural potentials.

Granted Gaddafi doesn't have the best Western PR agencies like Saatchi & Saatchi or Hill & Knowlton to give his message the pretty touches that politicians like Barack Obama or David Cameron or Nicolas Sarkozy have. Nor is he photogenic like his Washington counterpart, making his grisly face easy to demonize in the media as a kind of new Hitler.

Gaddafi is a thorn in Washington's side for other reasons though. He says that the 9/11 hijackers were trained in the US, yet he also urged Libyans to donate blood to Americans after 9/11. Gaddafi has been working for decades to build an independent voice for African states not controlled by either the US or former European colonial powers, his United States of Africa.

When all the Western media demonizing is stripped away, Gaddafi is the last of a generation of moderate socialist pan-Arabists still in power, after Egypt's Nasser and Iraq's Saddam Hussein have been eliminated, and Syria has aligned with Iran.<sup>2</sup>

So long as he remains, Libya poses an embarrassing economic alternative to Washington's 'free market' globalization template which it is now desperate to impose on the one billion peoples of the Islamic world from Morocco across Africa and the Middle East to Afghanistan. For the powers driving this spreading war, it is a question of survival of the American Century, or what the quaint neo-conservatives called the New American Century, of the future survival of a sole American Superpower through spreading war and chaos as its own economy disintegrates more by the day.

### **Amr Mousa and dubious political games**

The launch of Operation Odyssey Dawn, the coordinated US-British-French military attack on Libya following the UN Security Council resolution, was begun with shocking speed once

Egyptian diplomat Amr Mousa, spokesman for the Arab League, conveniently arm-twisted his nervous brothers in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and other Arab states, clearly convincing them that by voting for the no-fly they might remain in the good graces of Washington and thereby avoid the fate of Egypt's Hosni Mubarak or Tunisia's Ben Ali. Washington had clearly planned its military actions long before March 19.

Following weeks of diplomatic deception and what were clearly deliberately misleading signals from US Defense Secretary Robert Gates claiming to oppose a no-fly zone for Libya, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton claiming to support one, and a US President appearing to be weak and vacillating, the Nobel Peace President Obama, the President who ordered escalation of the war in Afghanistan and defended the CIA torture prison at Guantanamo, ordered a de facto declaration of war against a sovereign nation, Libya, despite the fact that no US lives were endangered nor US territory threatened by what was essentially an internal Libyan armed tribal uprising against an established head of state and government. Moreover, Gaddafi's Libya has never threatened an invasion of a neighboring state, an essential if forgotten precondition for any UN intervention.

As experience in Bosnia and in Iraq in the 1990s clearly showed, a No Fly Zone is not a neutral minor event but a full scale act of war, a violent taking control of the airspace of a sovereign territory, including destroying the anti-aircraft and air strike capacity of the target country.

Richard Falk, a distinguished professor of international law and UN Special Rapporteur on Palestinian Human Rights, noted the utter lack of any basic criteria for a UN intervention in Libya:

*What is immediately striking about the bipartisan call in Washington for a no-fly zone and air strikes designed to help rebel forces in Libya is the absence of any concern with the relevance of international law or the authority of the United Nations. None in authority take the trouble to construct some kind of legal rationalisation. The 'realists' in command, and echoed by the mainstream media, do not feel any need to provide even a legal fig leaf before embarking on aggressive warfare.*

*It should be obvious that a no-fly zone in Libyan airspace is an act of war, as would be, of course, contemplated air strikes on fortifications of the Gaddafi forces. The core legal obligation of the UN Charter requires member states to refrain from any use of force unless it can be justified as self-defence after a cross-border armed attack or mandated by a decision of the UN Security Council.*

*Neither of these conditions authorising a legal use of force is remotely present, and yet the discussion proceeds in the media and Washington circles as if the only questions worth discussing pertain to feasibility, costs, risks, and a possible backlash in the Arab world.<sup>3</sup>*

Falk, who has spent most of the past five decades defending the now-forgotten notion that a rule of law is preferable to a rule of barbarian 'might makes right,' adds, "Cannot it not be argued that in situations of humanitarian emergency 'a state of exception' exists allowing an intervention to be carried out by a coalition of the willing provided it doesn't make the situation worse?" He answers his rhetorical question:

*With respect to Libya, we need to take account of the fact that the Gaddafi government, however distasteful on humanitarian grounds, remains the lawful diplomatic representative*

*of a sovereign state, and any international use of force even by the UN, much less a state or group of states, would constitute an unlawful intervention in the internal affairs of a sovereign state, prohibited by Article 2(7) of the UN Charter unless expressly authorised by the Security Council as essential for the sake of international peace and security.*

*Beyond this, there is no assurance that an intervention, if undertaken, would lessen the suffering of the Libyan people or bring to power a regime more respectful of human rights and dedicated to democratic participation.*

*What I am mainly decrying here in the Libyan debate are three kinds of policy failure: The exclusion of international law and the United Nations from relevance to national debates about international uses of force; The absence of respect for the dynamics of self-determination in societies of the South; The refusal to heed the ethics and politics appropriate for a post-colonial world order that is being de-Westernised and is becoming increasingly multi-polar. 4*

Notable in the latest Washington rush to war was the lack of any independent verification of what had become the universal image of a Gaddafi ordering his air force to shoot on what western media claimed were innocent unarmed civilians. CNN staged camera shots don't qualify as neutral in this instance, nor BBC. Ibrahim Sahad, Libyan opposition figure and National Front for the Salvation of Libya spokesman, made the charge against Gaddafi literally while standing in front of the US White House. No one bothered to independently confirm if it was accurate.

More notable, once the Arab League agreed to back a Libyan No Fly option, opposition within the UN Security Council collapsed, giving Washington its desired cover of plausible international support for its desired military action.

The Security Council vote was 10-0 with five major countries abstaining including Russia and China, which have veto power, along with India, Germany and Brazil. The United States, France and Britain pushed for speedy approval. Conveniently ignored in the ever so select mainstream western media was the relevant fact that the direct neighbors of Libya, Algeria and Tunisia and the entire African Union voted against the No Fly Zone: "If you ain't singing from our sheet of music, you don't exist, Bubba..."

Nominally, the resolution for a no-fly zone was requested by the Libyan rebels' Transitional National Council and the Arab League. In reality, as former Indian diplomat M. K. Bhadrakumar noted, "The plain truth is that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union commanded Arab League to speak since they need a fig leaf to approach the United Nations Security Council. . .The Western powers had earlier mentioned the Arab League and African Union in the same breath as representing 'regional opinion.' Now it seems the African Union isn't so important—it has become an embarrassment. African leaders are proving to be tough nuts to crack compared to Arab playboy-rulers." 5

Bhadrakumar, a former ambassador to Kuwait and Turkey, added, "The Arab League resolution was rammed through by Amr Mousa, Secretary-General of the Arab League, who hopes to succeed Hosni Mubarak as Egypt's next president. Arab leaders, who depend upon the US for their continued existence, were not hard to persuade." 6 Mousa, a savvy survivor, knows he stands no chance to be President if he doesn't have Washington's backing, covert or overt.

## **‘Coalition of the unwilling’**

The entire Washington manipulation left its backers, a de facto ‘coalition of the unwilling,’ realizing they had been double-crossed by Washington. As soon as the relentless bombing of civilian as well as military targets in Tripoli and across Libya became clear, Amr Mousa conveniently claimed that killing civilians had not been part of the UN deal, as if he hadn’t thought of that possibility before.

Russia’s Putin called the US action a new “crusade” against Libya and the Islamic world, not without reason. China denounced the US intervention. Unfortunately, both countries had been silent when it could have counted during the UN Security Council voting when they abstained, perhaps out of fear of alienating the powerful oil producer countries of the Arab League.

Realizing that they had been tricked big-time by Washington, London and Paris, all of whom had apparently planned the military action against Libya long-before any UN or Arab League vote, European NATO members and others including NATO-member Turkey immediately began vehement protest.

Germany withdrew its military support equipment from the region over disagreement over the campaign’s lack of goals or direction as unity within NATO crumbled. Italy accused France of backing the No Fly in order to grab Libya’s oil riches out from under Italy’s state-controlled ENI/AGIP. Italy also threatened to revoke US, UK, and French rights to use its bases unless NATO were formally put in charge. As of this writing Washington had even less true international backing for its military adventure than even in the 2003 Iraq invasion.

For its part British government ministers were calling for assassination of Gaddafi, stating that the Middle East and North African war could go on some “30 years.” 7

Others made the comparison to the Twentieth Century upheavals and dismantling of European empires that made way ultimately for an American Century. Those upheavals, which lasted from 1914 through 1945 were remembered in history books as World War I and World War III—in reality one long thirty years’ war for global hegemony.

As the eventual “winner” of that mammoth contest, United States elites grouped then around the immensely powerful Rockefeller family and proclaimed what *Time-Life* publisher Henry Luce in a 1941 editorial named an “American Century.” That American Century is now in dangerous decline, a protracted death agony of decay and self-destruction that began manifestly in 1971, symbolized by President Richard Nixon’s unilateral decision to tear up the Bretton Woods monetary treaty and break the tie between the US dollar and gold, a fateful turn.

## **Another war for oil?**

Yes, Libya’s oil is indeed a factor behind the British, French and US war fervor. According to what one highly-informed Middle East oil services expert familiar with the oil resources of the entire region told me privately in a recent discussion, Libya has vast untapped oil wealth, by far Africa’s largest, and “it is almost sulfur-free, the highest quality crude you find anywhere.” Until now, despite repeated CIA coup and assassination attempts to topple Gaddafi in the past, the Libyan leader was careful to not surrender total control over his oil resources to the Anglo-American oil cartel interests but to retain control to build the country,



something definitely not to Washington's liking.

Notably, the center of Libyan oil infrastructure is in the Benghazi region in the east where the Western-backed rebellion started. Benghazi is north of Libya's richest oil fields, close to most of its oil and gas pipelines, refineries and Libya's LNG port. The National Transitional Council of the Libyan Republic led by Mustafa Abdul Jalil is based there.

But it would be a mistake to reduce what is in fact Washington's Greater Middle East Project, as George W. Bush called it at the time of the 2003 Iraq invasion, to merely a grab for the oil.

Rather, regime change from Gaddafi to a US-dependent puppet regime amounts to a critical piece in a well-planned long-term US strategy to dismantle national institutions and a culture going back well over one thousand years, in an attempt to force the entire Islamic world into what George H.W. Bush in 1991 and David Rockefeller in his autobiography more recently triumphantly called a "New World Order." 8 Others call it an American-centered global imperium: "Big Mac's, KFC chicken wings and Coke Zero for everyone! Poverty, chaos, killings and Orwellian uniformity—Welcome to our new world where We give the orders and you snap your heels..."

### **'Responsibility to protect...'**

As in the cases of the US-instigated "spontaneous" and "democratic" revolts in Egypt and in Tunisia earlier,<sup>9</sup> Washington is carefully orchestrating the Gaddafi succession from behind the scenes. As numerous critics of the Washington policy pointed out, the US intervention in Libya is not a neutral act to protect innocent civilians but rather a calculated attempt to force regime change by militarily shifting the balance to the well-armed opposition forces in Benghazi in the east of Libya.

By stopping Gaddafi government forces from restoring control over their territory from an armed uprising that has fostered a civil war, principles of international sovereignty have gingerly been thrown out the window and replaced by a vague and unsubstantiated notion of "responsibility to protect," a precedent for use of force that many governments from Berlin to Rome to Beijing and Moscow now realize could have horrendous future consequences for them as well.

Once world opinion accepts the fuzzy notion that something being called "responsibility to protect," however vaguely defined, trumps national sovereignty, what is to stop Washington from imposing a No Fly zone over China or Russia or anywhere for that matter, to prevent "human rights abuses"?

Who defines that nebulous "responsibility to protect"? Washington, of course. Were there truth in labelling in international politics today, it would be named "responsibility to protect Washington's self-defined interests."

Barack Obama openly declared Washington backing for the Libyan opposition within hours of the UN Resolution, leaving no doubt that the US role was never intended to be one of a neutral peace mediator. In a CNN Spanish language interview in San Salvador on March 23, Obama declared his "hope" that Libya's opposition movement, given new protection by the US-led military assaults, can organize itself to oust Gaddafi from power. 10 Regime change is the name of Washinton's game.

Not surprisingly, it's also the name of France's game. On March 25 French President Sarkozy urged Qaddafi's followers to abandon his "murderous ways" and join the opposition. "We must hasten the decomposition of the system and the entourage of Qaddafi by telling them there's a way to get out," Sarkozy said. "Those who abandon Qaddafi in his crazy and murderous ways can join in the reconstruction of a new, democratic Libya."

The UN No Fly Resolution is far more sweeping than most media report. It is a de facto declaration of military, economic and financial warfare against a sovereign state and an established, functioning government. In addition to authorizing the No Fly Zone, the UN Resolution establishes a "ban on all flights in the airspace of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in order to help protect civilians," other than "humanitarian" flights and flights sanctioned by the UN and the Arab League.

It orders member states of the UN to stop any Libyan owned, operated or registered aircraft from taking off, landing or overflying their territory without prior approval from a UN committee monitoring sanctions. It allows member states "to inspect in their territory, including airports and seaports, and on the high seas, vessels and aircraft bound to or from Libya," if a country has "reasonable grounds" to believe they contain military items or armed mercenaries.

To put the nail in the Libyan coffin, it freezes assets of five financial institutions: Libya's central bank, the Libyan Investment Authority, the Libyan Foreign Bank, Libyan Africa Investment Portfolio, and the Libyan National Oil Corporation.<sup>11</sup>

### **The curious Libya 'opposition'**

The so-called Libyan opposition itself is a hodge-podge mix of political opportunists, ex-CIA-trained Mujahideen guerillas such as Abdel Hakim al-Hasidi of the so-called Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, who openly admits to close ties to al-Qaeda going back to Afghanistan.<sup>12</sup> That certainly raises the level of incredibility of Washington's most bizarre military crusade of recent times.

As well, the opposition includes former senior Gaddafi regime members who saw greener grass on the US, British and French-backed opposition side, and outright cutthroats who, encouraged by Washington, London or Paris smelled the chance to grab control of one of the richest lands on Earth.

Their "opposition," unlike in Tunisia or elsewhere, was never "non-violent." It was an armed revolt from the git-go, a war of tribe against tribe, not of surging aspirations for democracy. NATO member countries are being told by Washington to back one band of tyrants to oust another whose agenda does not comply with what the Pentagon calls Full Spectrum Dominance.

The Libyan "opposition" for most of the world is still a vague CNN or BBC image of stone-throwing youth crying out to the well-positioned cameras for "freedom, democracy." In reality it is far different. As George Friedman of Stratfor pointed out, the "Libyan uprising consisted of a cluster of tribes and personalities, some within the Libyan government, some within the army and many others longtime opponents of the regime." He adds, "it would be an enormous mistake to see what has happened in Libya as a mass, liberal democratic uprising. The narrative has to be strained to work in most countries, but in Libya, it breaks down completely."<sup>13</sup>

It emerges that the main opposition to Gaddafi comes from two very curious organizations—the National Front for the Salvation of Libya and a bizarre group calling itself the Islamic Emirate of Barqa, the former name of the North-Western part of Libya. Its leadership claims the group is made up of former al-Qaeda fighters previously released from jail. Their record of bloodshed is impressive to date.

The main opposition group in Libya now is the National Front for the Salvation of Libya which is reported to be funded by Saudi Arabia, the CIA and French Intelligence. They joined with other opposition groups to become the National Conference for the Libyan Opposition. It was that organization that called for the “Day of Rage” that plunged Libya into chaos on February 17.<sup>14</sup>

The key figure in the National Front for the Salvation of Libya is one Ibrahim Sahad who conveniently enough lives in Washington. According to the Library of Congress archives, Sahad is the same man the CIA used in their failed attempt at a Libyan coup of 1984. The Library of Congress confirms that the CIA trained and supported the NFSL both before and after the failed coup.

On March 11 the French government became the first nation to recognize the National Front for the Salvation (sic) of Libya, which is now operating under the amorphous cover of an umbrella group calling itself the Libyan National Transitional Council, which is little more than the old NFSL, a group financed for years by the Saudis, the French and the CIA. <sup>15</sup>

The new Transitional Council umbrella group is little more reportedly than the old NFSL — an unelected group of aged monarchist business exiles and now defectors from Gaddafi who smell opportunity to grab a giant piece of the oil pie, and have Saudi, French and CIA backing to drive their dreams of glory. These are the ones on whose behalf now NATO is fighting.

The National Transitional Council of the Libyan Republic, led by Mustafa Abdul Jalil, is based in Benghazi and controls most of the eastern half of the country. France and Portugal have so far officially recognized the Council as the sole “legitimate representative” of Libya.

The National Transitional Council also includes such former Gaddafi regime insiders as ex-Libyan Justice Minister Mustafa Abdel-Jalil and former Interior Minister General Abdel Fattah Younis, who defected earlier from the Gaddafi regime. They lobbied Washington and other Western governments for support soon after their formation. They want to mount an armed offensive against the government-controlled areas in the west to overthrow Gaddafi. That is hardly an innocent spontaneous Twitter democracy revolt, though the revolts in Tunisia and Egypt and elsewhere have been far from spontaneous either.<sup>16</sup>

In early March the Transitional Council sent their de facto foreign minister Ali al-Essawi and Abdel-Jalil crony Mahmoud Jebri to Paris where the French government, clearly smelling an opportunity to take the inside track of a future regime in Tripoli, gave the first recognition of the transitional council as the “legitimate representative” of the Libyan people.<sup>17</sup> Immediately after, France became the leading advocate for a French-led (of course) military intervention on behalf of their new-found rebel friends in Bengazi.

While the French seem to have an inside track with the diplomatic wing of the rag-tag Bengazi rebels, the British seem to have focused their attention on the military wing, where former Gaddafi Interior Minister General Abdel Fattah Younis seems to be their man. Younis



is now in command of a National Transitional Council “army.” 18

Hillary Clinton also moved to firm US ties to the insurgents. On March 13 she reportedly met in Cairo—now a place firmly in command of a Pentagon-dependent Egyptian military council after the Twitter youth had served their purpose of deposing Mubarak—with leaders of the opposition rebels. Announcing her meeting, she stated, “We are reaching out to the opposition inside and outside of Libya. I will be meeting with some of those figures both here in the United States and when I travel next week to discuss what more the United States and others can do,” she said. 19

In the western part of Libya, the contending opposition is led by the second group France has recognized, something calling itself ambitiously, the Islamic Emirate of Barqa, a former name for the northwestern part of the country. That group has been described as a group of “aged exiles and defectors from the former Gaddafi regime...waving the old King Idris monarchist flag.” 20 Not exactly a revolutionary youth Twitter movement of surging, demographically-driven aspirations.

## **Conclusion**

As of this writing, what is clear is that far more is at stake for Washington and its “coalition of the unwilling” in the launching of a new war over Libya than anyone is admitting. If this marks the first shots in a new world war, or if various governments within and outside NATO have the strength to resist the persuasive power of the Pentagon war apparatus is unclear. What is clear is that the recent events that started in Tunisia at the end of 2010 are but part of a colossally large and increasingly desperate strategy of US-orchestrated “creative destruction.” To date it has been anything but creative for those living in the affected region.

Notes:

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6 Ibid.

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10 CNN Wire Staff, *Obama hopes resurgent Libyan opposition can topple Gadhafi*, CNN, March 23, 2011, accessed in <http://edition.cnn.com/2011/POLITICS/03/22/obama.cnn.interview/index.html>.

11 UN security council resolution 1973 (2011) on Libya, reprinted in *The Guardian*, March 17, 2011, accessed in <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/mar/17/un-security-council-resolution>.

12 Praveen Swami, et al, *Libyan rebel commander admits his fighters have al-Qaeda links*, *The Telegraph*, London, March 26, 2011.

13 George Friedman, *Libya, the West and the Narrative of Democracy*, *Stratfor*, March 21, 2011, accessed in [http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/friedman\\_on\\_geopolitics](http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/friedman_on_geopolitics).

14 David Rothscum, op cit.

15 Ibid.

16 Anthony Shadid and Kareem Fahim, *Opposition in Libya Struggles to Form a United Front*, *The New York Times*, March 8, 2011.

17 *Stratfor*, *Libya's Opposition Leadership Comes into Focus*, March 20, 2011, accessed in <http://www.stratfor.com/analysis/20110307-libyas-opposition-leadership-comes-focus>.

18 Ibid.

19 Robert Dreyfus, *Will the World Recognize the Libyan Opposition?*, *The Nation*, March 10, 2011, accessed in <http://www.thenation.com/blog/159138/will-world-recognize-libyan-opposition>.

20 Matt Checker, *Reasons against "intervention" in Libya*, accessed in <http://www.spiral-m.de/blog.html>

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