

Gaddafi Death: A Bullet to the Head is the Culmination of NATO's Criminal War

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Global Research, October 22, 2011

22 October 2011

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

Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#), [US](#)

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The shocking images of Muammar Gaddafi being hauled while dazed, confused and blood-soaked on to the back of a pick-up truck by gun-toting opposition fighters cannot disguise the awful reality – the Libyan leader was lynched on the street, executed in a squalid form of summary “justice”.

His murder by NATO-backed militants is in many ways a fitting end to a seven-month campaign of criminal war and atrocities by the US, Britain, France, Canada and other western powers.

After several weeks of military siege of Gaddafi's hometown of Sirte, during which civilians were bombarded by NATO warplanes, the Libyan leader was dragged from a drainage pipe before being fatally shot. The involvement of NATO in this climactic act of savagery cannot be denied.

Apparently, a convoy carrying Gaddafi attempting to flee from Sirte was attacked by NATO jets – various reports say British and French jets – rendering him to the hands of the NATO-backed fighters on the ground.

Mobile phone images showed 69-year-old Gaddafi being manhandled, barely able to stay on his feet. His vest was a bloody mess. It is not clear whether his injuries were incurred during the earlier NATO air attack on his convoy or at the hands of his captors. But moments later, similar images show his lifeless body with a gunshot to the left side of the head. His captors also claimed that he had been shot in the upper body with a 9mm handgun. Just before his killing, one of Gaddafi's captors was seen brandishing a handgun at his head.

The NATO-backed Transitional National Council is now contradicting the version of events told by its fighters, claiming – somewhat incredibly – that the former Libyan leader was shot in crossfire between soldiers loyal to Gaddafi and the TNC's fighters.

Washington has subsequently called for an “open and transparent” inquiry into how Gaddafi was killed. Such a call can be seen as a cynical attempt to obfuscate the appalling fact that NATO is an accessory to a war crime – the cold-blooded murder of a defenceless prisoner.

Certainly, the initial reaction of Western leaders and media could not contain their glee at the news of Gaddafi's brutal slaying.

The Financial Times declared that his “timely death” opened up a new beginning for the

North African country; the Daily Telegraph crowed how Gaddafi was hauled from “a sewer” and given “a bullet to the head”. The New York Times intoned that Gaddafi’s killing “vindicated” Obama’s war strategy in Libya, while the Christian Science Monitor asserted that “Gaddafi death gives NATO its ‘mission accomplished’ moment in Libya” and went on to ponder if it provided “a model for future US interventions”. Obama, Cameron, Sarkozy and Merkel were quick to glorify the execution.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said: “The path is now finally clear for a fresh political start, in peace. Germany is relieved and very happy about this,” she added.

US President Barack Obama called the death a “momentous day in the history of Libya”.

Britain’s David Cameron also could not restrain his satisfaction, declaring that he was “proud of the role played by Britain in Libya’s liberation”. Cameron appeared to excuse the roadside execution: “I think today is a day to remember all of Colonel Gaddafi’s victims... We should also remember the many, many Libyans who died at the hands of this brutal dictator and his regime.”

Few people would deny that Muammar Gaddafi’s 42-year rule was without allegations of human rights violations. Indeed, that did not stop Western leaders cosying up to Gaddafi at times when it suited them. Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair flew to Tripoli to have several secret meetings with Gaddafi and on one occasion lobbied on behalf of investment bank JP Morgan.

Whatever crimes Gaddafi is alleged to have committed does not mitigate the fact that he was summarily executed by NATO-backed forces and that this appalling extrajudicial killing was greeted by Western leaders with approval and applause.

His murder marks the lawlessness and barbarity with which Western governments are now overtly operating in pursuit of their foreign policy objectives.

The squalid demise of Gaddafi is reminiscent of Iraq’s Saddam Hussein. He too was at one time feted by Western leaders when, like Gaddafi, it suited their self-serving interests. But when their mercurial interests dictated, he too was crushed and discarded. Like Gaddafi, Saddam Hussein was captured and dragged from a hole in the ground. But at least in the case of Saddam, the Western powers felt obliged to go through a sham court prosecution before he was lynched. No longer, it seems, are Western governments restrained by sham niceties in their method of discarding opponents. A bullet to the head on the side of the road will do.

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