

Libya: White House moves towards war, seeking regime change or partition

By [Brian Becker](#)

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U.S., British and French imperialists want to regain control of Africa's largest oil producer.

The Libyan government's unilateral cease-fire and call for negotiations with those in the armed rebellion who, in the words of the Foreign Minister, believe in Libya's "territorial unity," have created an unanticipated hitch in the fast-track plans of British, French and U.S. imperialism to start bombing the country.

The imperialist powers are scrambling to find a way around Gaddafi's peace offer and initiate the military attack to topple the Libyan government, or, as an alternative, create a de facto partition of the country. Today, Obama threatened to attack unless the Libyan government pulled its troops back from nearly half of the country. Claiming that "parts of the country declared their independence," the White House appears to be preparing for a second option: the country's virtual partition, which would allow the Western-supported National Transitional Council to become the de facto government of Libya's oil-rich eastern territory.

Libya is Africa's largest oil producer.

Partition and dismemberment of countries with independent governments has been a strategy that the U.S., British and French governments employed in the Kurdish region of Iraq after the 1991 war, in Yugoslavia in the mid-1990's, and recently in Sudan, which until January was Africa's largest country. Of course, the biggest prize for imperialist expansion through the act of dismemberment was the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991. For decades during the so-called Cold War the U.S. government, and especially the Central Intelligence Agency, crusaded on behalf of the "captive nations" of the Soviet Union. Its break-up was immediately followed by the eastward expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the incorporation of the western and southern republics of the former Soviet Union into the U.S. sphere of influence.

The breakup or de facto partition of Libya would be a great historical tragedy for the people, but would become a boon for all of the western oil giants.

At the very moment that the UN Security Council condemned the Gaddafi government for the use of violence against the armed rebels in Libya, a U.S.-backed violent suppression of peaceful protestors was underway in Bahrain and Yemen. Today, in response to the killing of more than 40 unarmed protestors in Yemen, the White House statement urged "peaceful, orderly" dialogue, and "an open and transparent process." The difference is that the

Bahraini and Saudi monarchies, and the Yemeni government, exist as client dictatorships of the United States.

On March 17, the same day that the U.S. government and UN Security Council authorized a military attack against Libya on the pretext that Gaddafi government was employing violence in its own civil war, CIA drone aircrafts blitzed a village in northwest Pakistan. Multiple missiles scored a direct hit on a meeting of local people who were trying to resolve a property dispute. The meeting was allegedly mediated by Taliban officials, which made the people fair game for robotic destruction. Twenty six of the 32 people present at the Jirga (the negotiation council) were killed.

Just a week ago, nine Afghan boys were systematically murdered by a U.S. helicopter attack while they were collecting firewood to heat their family homes.

For the last decade, the Libyan government embraced neoliberal reforms and collaborated with Italian, British and U.S. imperialism. When the armed revolt began against Gaddafi, the United States and other powers saw a new opportunity to regain control over this oil-rich country. Now, even if the imperialists were to reverse course and accept a ceasefire in Libya, their basic strategy of regime change, and/or partition, would remain. An unnamed White House official told CNN today, "If you have a cease-fire in place that is verifiable, then you can continue turning the noose without taking necessarily further action."

The U.S., British and French governments don't care about freedom, democracy or the use of violence. They have employed limitless violence for centuries against the people of the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Latin America who suffered the scourge of colonialism and foreign occupation. The interests of the imperialists are exclusively predatory.

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