

The US-Nato War Against Libya: America's Fake Commitment to "Democracy"

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For over three months, repressive Arab monarchies and dictatorships in the Middle East and North Africa have been experiencing a continuing series democratic uprisings by heroic unarmed multitudes. The overall outcome is still in doubt, including in the two countries that have had apparent successes so far, Tunisia and Egypt.

Any examination of the many rebellions without taking into primary consideration the decisive role of U.S. hegemony in this strategic, resource-rich region of the world would be like attempting to understand global warming without mentioning the key role of fossil fuels.

These uprisings have created an immediate geopolitical crisis and a serious political dilemma for the Obama Administration. Washington has been supporting these anti-democratic regimes, with one exception, for decades, and has no intention of allowing them to depart America's orbit. At the same time, the United States is politically compelled to maintain its dedication to the rhetoric of democracy as a cover for its worldwide hegemony and military misdeeds.

Under the circumstances, the U.S. has decided to display its democratic credentials and convey the false impression that it has joined the struggle of the Arab masses by attacking the one country in the entire region where a democratic uprising will not jeopardize Washington's imperial interests. The Obama Administration is now showing its commitment to democracy — and not just "talking the talk," but "walking the walk" with its military power in Libya.

The United States and NATO (from now on: USNATO) have virtually created a civil war to bring about regime change in Libya in the guise of what used to be called "humanitarian intervention" — until the hypocrisy of the term became visible — and is presently defined by the UN as the international community's "responsibility to protect" citizens in grave danger of massive human rights violations.

What's the real meaning of Operation Odyssey Dawn, the U.S. code name for this latest act of western military aggression against a small Muslim country? Why is Libya's leader, Col. Muammar Gaddafi, suddenly being used to deflect world attention from the uprisings to USNATO support of "democracy" in Libya and the "rescue" of its people?"

The Obama Administration and its British and French allies are frantically attempting to construct a viable puppet opposition to the Libyan government while they attack loyalist regions following the March 17 UN Security Council decision to establish a no-fly zone over

Libya.

There had been opposition to Gaddafi, of course, but of a different caliber than that of the other popular uprisings, both for its composition and the fact that it called upon U.S./European imperialism to intervene with massive military power to bring about regime change.

President Barak Obama's nationwide television address March 28 is a good point of departure for understanding Washington's dilemma, but only if you read between the lines and are familiar with Washington's activities in the Middle East and North Africa (from now on: MENA) for the last 65 years. Attempting to justify bombarding yet another Muslim country (after Iraq, Afghanistan, Western Pakistan and Yemen), Obama delivered a dishonest and self-serving speech as manipulative as any broadcast by his notorious predecessor, George W. Bush.

The president resorted to an extraordinary lie by suggesting that his decision to attack Libya saved the lives of "nearly 700,000 men, women and children" in the eastern city of Benghazi, and followed up with the self-righteous admission that "I refused to let that happen." Taken at face value, the man deserved a second Nobel Peace Prize for this unique accomplishment as much as he did the first, when he accepted the award while planning to vastly expand the Afghan war.

Obama also announced that NATO, not the U.S. after the initial onslaught, will now play the "leading" role in attacking Libya. Washington, however, remains deeply involved.

The "transfer" is intended to take potential heat off Obama, not only for launching another act of aggression in the Middle East but to provide political cover should the adventure become a fiasco, as seems more than likely.

This White House maneuver was so intentionally deceptive that the usually bland Associated Press could not resist deconstructing it thusly: "In transferring command and control to NATO, the U.S. is turning the reins over to an organization dominated by the U.S., both militarily and politically. In essence, the U.S. runs the show that is taking over running the show."

In assessing the uprisings and the attacks on Libya it is important to recognize that two historic, related contradictions have been coming into play in MENA the last few months. Each has reached the acute stage of at least short term resolution in this strategic region where most of the world's known oil resources are deposited. The outcome will influence the political future of the region, and of the United States as the world's dominant hegemonic power.

One contradiction —a maturing class struggle — is between the needs of the historically oppressed and silenced working class, lower middle class, the downtrodden, and youth in general, on one side, and on the other the repressive, wealthy ruling classes and privileged bureaucracies in the various monarchies and dictatorships that exist throughout the region.

The second contradiction is corollary to the first, involving the geopolitical and geostrategic outcomes for Washington. It is between U.S. global power, which controls and depends upon the allegiance of all MENA's authoritarian governments, and the mass uprisings in country after country demanding greater democracy and economic reforms that may topple those

regimes.

There are three possible outcomes: (1) If the uprisings are crushed, U.S. control of the region is strengthened, at least pending the next uprisings. (2) If some popular forces are crushed and others are bought off with reforms that allow the repressive class to continue its domination behind a more democratic façade, U.S. power probably will remain as is or diminish slightly. (3) If some uprisings are crushed and some bought off, while some transform into social revolutions that seize and rebuild the state apparatus to serve the people, that would be a definite setback for the U.S. as world hegemon, and probably would result in a U.S. invasion of the offending territory.

Washington's principal fear is that democratic regimes that are unwilling to subordinate themselves to the U.S. will come to power, thus weakening what President Obama intends to protect by any means necessary — what he fiercely champions as American "leadership." He counsels these rightist regimes to offer reforms and a degree more democracy, if necessary, but if that cannot win the day more repression is required.

Nearly all the countries in the region are well within the U.S. sphere of influence. Many of these dictatorships and monarchies have been supported, armed with cutting edge weaponry, protected against their own people, and in some cases (such as Egypt and Jordan) financed by American governments going back decades. Of course this practice is the opposite of what Washington preaches, but a large proportion of the American people evidently base their understanding of international current events on the notoriously expurgated corporate mass media, not on alternative media.

In return for its services to the authoritarian regimes, Washington is assured plentiful supplies of oil, priority deliveries as needed and preferential treatment when petroleum production eventually peaks and prices rise as supplies decline; the U.S. military/industrial complex earns hundreds of billions of dollars in arms sales to these dependent regimes — a huge and continuous shot in the arm for the American economy; Washington's Israeli satellite is safeguarded; and the political left in the entire area has been neutered or liquidated, among other benefits.

A good part of U.S. world power is based on its command of this energy-rich region and on the retention of all the territories under its domination. This is especially important since Latin America, its first and oldest quasi-"possession," no longer kowtows to all of Uncle Sam's whims.

The only country in MENA that is totally independent of Washington is Iran, and as a consequence it is demonized and continually threatened by the U.S., Israel and (behind closed doors) Saudi Arabia, which is always encouraging Washington and Tel-Aviv to attack.

Until just before the uprisings began in January, a total of 13 MENA countries were dominated by the United States, including Yemen, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel, Palestine (Palestinian Authority), Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco. Five other countries in the region are marginally in the U.S. sphere, including Turkey (a democratic NATO country), Lebanon (also democratic), Syria, Algeria and Libya.

The 22-member Arab League has been comfortably situated in Washington's vest pocket for many years. Its approval of the March 17 UN no-fly resolution was essential before the USNATO attacks began. As Asia Times Online has reported, only 11 countries were present

at the voting. Six of them were members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), dominated by Saudi Arabia. Syria and Algeria were against it, so only 9 out of 22 Arab League members voted for the new war. The GCC has also recognized Washington's proposed puppet government for Libya, the Benghazi-based National Council, though not the Arab League so far.

Many international observers had good reason to think that Libya was no longer on Washington's hit list in recent years and that Col. Gaddafi was rehabilitated in the eyes of the western democracies, until now. Brian Becker, the leader of the U.S. ANSWER antiwar coalition put it this way in recent article:

"Washington did not succeed in toppling the Gaddafi government [in the 1980s-90s] but Libya did indeed go through 'regime change.' The regime itself shifted its domestic and international policies. It moved steadily to the right. In the last decade, it has adopted a variety of neoliberal reforms, embraced and collaborated with the Bush administration's so-called war on terror, increasingly exported Libyan resources to invest in Italian corporations and banks, while becoming politically friendly with Italy's right-wing government of Silvio Berlusconi, and opened Libyan oil business to BP.

"If there had been no recent revolt in Libya, the United States, Britain and Italy would have been content to have the Gaddafi regime — with its neoliberal orientation — remain in power. Although Gaddafi was neither a puppet nor a client, it was clear that the regime's neoliberal, collaborationist orientation made it a satisfactory partner with the imperialist governments of the west."

The Bush Administration welcomed the Gaddafi government back into the fold in 2004, ending the sanctions right wing President Reagan put into effect in 1986. The U.S. and a number of other countries removed the Gaddafi government from their terrorist lists. Over the years this government dismantled its weapons of mass destruction and handed over its 800-mile range SCUD missiles, strongly opposed al-Qaeda, and enjoyed warm relations with foreign oil companies. In May 2010 Libya won a three-year seat on the UN Human Rights Council, a recognition of its transformation, with 155 votes in the 192-nation General Assembly.

A number of leftist governments in Latin America remain on normal terms with Gaddafi, recognizing, as former Cuban leader Fidel Castro wrote March 11, that "The Libyan leader got involved in extremist theories that were opposed both to communism and capitalism," but the main point now is to stop "NATO's war-mongering plans."

It is true Libya is not a democracy, any more than the other governments in question are democracies. The ruling elite and its leading supporters are quite well provided for, starting with the Gaddafi family and loyal tribal leaders. But some important efforts have been made on behalf of Libya's six million people since a youthful and once idealistic and revolutionary Gaddafi led a rebellion against King Idris that turned Libya from a monarchy into a republic in 1969, and led to the nationalization of the country's oil resources.

The U.S. mass media have long depicted conditions in Libya as brutal and harsh for all but the ruling elite, but that is not true. Libya is extremely high on the 2010 UN Human Development Index, the best international tool for obtaining a comparative measure of life expectancy, literacy, education and standards of living for countries worldwide. It is a

universal means of measuring well-being, especially child welfare.

The well being of Libya's people measures 0.755, the highest in Africa and a bit higher than that of the much wealthier oil kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which measures 0.752. Annual per capita income is about \$15,000. Over the past 30 years, Libya has steadily increased its welfare programs and standards of living to graduate into the UN's "High Human Development" category, another first in Africa. Urban areas are fairly modern. Education and healthcare are free. Agriculture is subsidized. For lower income families the government subsidizes food, electricity, water, and transportation.

The people have legitimate grievances, and it is right to rebel. At the same time, Libya is the victim of a massive military attack by USNATO that has nothing to do with protecting the people. It has everything to do with violating a sovereign country to topple a government and replace it with one more obedient to western interests, to take undeserved credit for upholding democratic values, and to minimize the importance of legitimate struggles against authoritarianism in other MENA countries supported by Washington.

Much of what is said about the war from Washington is extremely one-sided. This is made quite evident in these few paragraphs from a March 21 article by George Friedman, who leads Stratfor, an authoritative private company that provides intelligence reports for a fee that are often quite reliable, and hardly left or pro-Gaddafi:

"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. As we have 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, all of whom saw an opportunity at this particular moment.... United perhaps only by their opposition to Gaddafi, these people hold no common ideology and certainly do not all advocate Western-style democracy. Rather, they saw an opportunity to take greater power, and they tried to seize it.

"According to the [western] narrative, Gaddafi should quickly have been overwhelmed — but he wasn't. He actually had substantial support among some tribes and within the army. All of these supporters had a great deal to lose if he was overthrown. Therefore, they proved far stronger collectively than the opposition, even if they were taken aback by the initial opposition successes. To everyone's surprise, Gaddafi not only didn't flee, he counterattacked and repulsed his enemies.

"This should not have surprised the world as much as it did. Gaddafi did not run Libya for the past 42 years because he was a fool, nor because he didn't have support. He was very careful to reward his friends and hurt and weaken his enemies, and his supporters were substantial and motivated. One of the parts of the narrative is that the tyrant is surviving only by force and that the democratic rising readily routs him. The fact is that the tyrant had a lot of support in this case, the opposition wasn't particularly democratic, much less organized or cohesive, and it was Gaddafi who routed them."

Washington spends at least \$75 billion a year on its 16 intelligence agencies, and was completely surprised by the MENA uprisings.

They began quietly and tragically Dec. 17 in the central Tunisian town of Sidi Bouzid when an educated, jobless 26-year-old man, Mohammed Bouazizi, who was trying to support his

family by selling fruits and vegetables, drenched himself in paint thinner and lit a match in front of a local municipal office. He died from severe burns but his deed was the single spark that ignited a prairie fire of protest throughout the region.

According to Al Jazeera news agency, “police had confiscated his produce cart because he lacked a permit and beat him up when he resisted. Local officials then refused to hear his complaint. Bouazizi’s act of desperation highlights the public’s boiling frustration over living standards, police violence, rampant unemployment, and a lack of human rights.”

By Jan. 14, when Tunisian President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali and his corrupt wealthy family fled to Saudi Arabia, hundreds of unarmed protestors had been killed by security forces, mainly in Tunis, the capital. Ben Ali had been in office nearly 24 years, having won several crooked elections with improbable 99% margins. The U.S. backed Ben Ali throughout these years until the day he fled, at which point President Obama praised “this brave and determined struggle for universal rights,” which Washington and France would have blocked had they been able.

Next to be singled out by Mohammed Bouazizi’s self-immolation was Egypt, the most influential Arab country. The U.S. backed Hosni Mubarak, former commander of the Egyptian air force, since he took over the presidency upon the 1981 assassination of President Anwar Sadat, a one-time army officer killed in a bungled coup led by a junior officer. Sadat had signed the historic Egypt-Israel peace treaty in 1979. Mubarak ruled for three decades, honoring the agreement and collaborating with Israel in imposing sanctions on the people of Gaza, for which his government was paid \$1.3 billion a year. Mubarak retained power by ruling under an emergency decree that guaranteed he would be elected.

Despite government repression, the protests were spreading and getting much larger, inspiring the Arab masses to launch their own uprisings throughout MENA.

Recognizing the U.S. would lose credibility if it continued to back the dictator, and after checking with the Egyptian military and security forces to make sure its own interests and those of Israel would be safeguarded, Obama told Mubarak to resign.

The U.S. had good reason to trust the army. The Pentagon had been training and cultivating Egyptian officers for decades, often in America, and it supplies all the top notch equipment the military craves. The U.S. subsidy will continue and may increase.

Obama could now tell the world, as he did March 28: “Wherever people long to be free, they will find a friend in the United States.”

In a Feb. 8 article before the big decision, left wing analyst James Petras, a Professor Emeritus of Sociology at SUNY Binghamton (N.Y.), succinctly captured the Obama Administration’s dilemma as it contemplated dumping Mubarak:

“The Washington calculus on when to reshuffle the regime is based on an estimate of the capacity of the dictator to weather the political uprising, the strength and loyalty of the armed forces and the availability of a pliable replacement. The risk of waiting too long, of sticking with the dictator, is that the uprising radicalizes: the ensuing change sweeps away both the regime and the state apparatus, turning a political uprising into a social revolution....

“Obama hesitates and like a wary crustacean, he moves sideways and backwards, believing

his own grandiloquent rhetoric is a substitute for action... hoping that sooner or later the uprising will end with Mubarakism without Mubarak: a regime able to demobilize the popular movements and willing to promote elections which result in elected officials following the general line of their predecessor." A couple of days, later Obama said "poof," and the feared dictator was gone.

The U.S. can tolerate Mubarak's overthrow because it is highly doubtful Egypt's ruling elite will refuse to remain within the American orbit; indeed, they will cling to Washington's knees. It is likewise doubtful that the military council ruling Egypt at the behest of this ruling class until a new government is selected will guide the country in a direction satisfactory to the workers and students who drove Mubarak from power.

This was the meaning of the huge "Friday of Warning" protest in Cairo's Tahrir Sq. April 8. It was focused on the head of the military council, Field Marshal Mohamed Tantawi, who worked faithfully at Mubarak's side in ruling Egypt for decades. The rebels perceive that though the dictator is gone, important aspects of the long dictatorship are likely to remain.

Washington is pleased with developments, so far. What the United States cannot tolerate is a social revolution in a country subordinate to the U.S that smashes the existing state apparatus and starts building a new revolutionary regime dedicated to ousting all traces of the former imperialist influence. When Nicaragua tried it, Uncle Sam launched the "Contras." After Cuba succeeded, the U.S. is still punishing its small neighbor for declaring independence from its Yankee overlord — 52 years later.

At issue is whether the Egyptian people will be satisfied when the new arrangements are made entirely clear in a few months. What happens then will depend in part on whether the pro-democracy forces have been able to form strong organizations and a broad united front with a leadership determined to implement radical measures.

The U.S. government's silence about the terrible repression in Yemen and Bahrain are a perfect example of its hypocrisy about democracy.

In Yemen, the U.S.-backed regime continually shoots and kills unarmed demonstrators who amazingly keep protesting day after day, and there's hardly been a peep out of the White House because the corrupt government of President Ali Abdullah Saleh has been bought and paid for by the Obama Administration.

Saleh is America's puppet ruler, a corrupt tyrant who has governed for 33 years. The protestors say with one voice, "Resign Now!" If Saleh can't crush the rebellion soon with his U.S.-trained army and the hundreds of millions of dollars he has been receiving, the White House may have to step in and make a deal with the opposition along these lines: Saleh and his family will leave (with their cash intact) and U.S. aid will help finance the new government as long as Washington, its drones, the CIA, the worldwide surveillance systems and spying network have the freedom to operate without interference in Yemen.

The oil-rich Kingdom of Bahrain (population 1,215,000) is a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council and is protected first by reactionary Saudi Arabia (which has sent thousands of troops to crush demonstrations for democracy), then by the U.S. because that's where the Navy's Fifth Fleet — covering the Persian Gulf, Red Sea, Arabian Sea, and coast off East Africa as far south as Kenya — is based. About three-quarters of the population are Shi'ites, second class citizens in a society ruled by Sunnis. A huge proportion of the Shia population

has conducted many nonviolent protests for democracy and against inequality, with demonstrations at times exceeding 100,000. The military has not hesitated to shoot the unarmed demonstrators. The U.S. has told “both sides” to avoid violence.”

The official story about the attack on Libya is that the purpose is to save civilian lives, stop “madman” Gaddafi from killing civilians, and to bring democracy to the MENA. But this is fiction — variations on well worn themes frequently employed by Washington in recent decades against the leadership of small countries the White House decides to invade or crush for geopolitical or resource reasons, such as Yugoslavia, Iraq and Afghanistan.

The USNATO decision to attack came after the National Libyan Council (or Transitional Council), mainly headquartered in Benghazi in the anti-Gaddafi eastern region, began publicly calling on Washington and its European allies earlier in March to take economic, political and military action to topple the Libyan government and install a new leadership composed mainly of itself.

We assume USNATO instructed the National Council to make the public plea, to which it would then respond under the UN’s “responsibility to protect” clause. As far as we know this is the only instance where those who sought to conduct an uprising in MENA asked the leading western countries to militarily pave the way for them.

Col. Gaddafi is the perfect target, having been demonized by the West for decades as an authoritarian, and at times displaying character traits suggesting megalomania and instability. The American people were indoctrinated to hate him many years ago, so U.S. public opinion was already prepared for regime change. It was the same with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in 2003, or Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosević in 1999, among many others. Demonize first, exaggerate second, attack third.

The UN Security Council’s March 17 approval of Resolution 1973 called for a cease fire, a no-fly zone over Libya, an arms ban, and a freeze of Libyan assets owned by government officials. It authorizes all necessary means to protect civilians and civilian-populated areas, but does not permit a “foreign occupation force.” The U.S. added a loophole that specified arms might be made available and other actions taken if they would “protect civilians.”

The resolution could have been defeated had Russia or China voted “no,” since a negative vote cast by a permanent member of the Security Council amounts to a veto. Both countries expressed qualms about the resolution but abstained, as did three non-permanent members — Brazil, India and Germany. The 10 other non-permanent votes were all “yes,” including the only Arab member of the Council, Lebanon. (See sidebar below: “China and Russia Abstain.”)

A few days later, abstainers China, Russia, India, and Brazil, which account for some 40% of the world population (2.9 billion people out of 6.8 billion) expressed dismay that the resolution was interpreted by the U.S. and NATO to mean destroying Libya’s entire air defense system and most of its air force, bombing tanks and soldiers on the ground, and military installations as well as roads and sectors of civilian infrastructure. So far (April 7) NATO reports conducting over 1,000 bombing operations that have destroyed more than 30% of Libya’s military force.

The Arab members of the Security Council later issued similar objections, as did a number of other countries, but USNATO’s predictable excesses continue, and no action will be taken.

Since there's always far more than meets the eye in these affairs, often kept secret for many years, mull over this information from Pepe Escobar, a journalist who has been writing almost on a daily basis about the uprisings for Asia Times Online. On April 2 he wrote:

"You invade Bahrain. We take out Muammar Gaddafi in Libya. This, in short, is the essence of a deal struck between the Barack Obama administration and the House of Saud [which controls Saudi Arabia]. Two diplomatic sources at the United Nations independently confirmed that Washington, via Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, gave the go-ahead for Saudi Arabia to invade Bahrain and crush the pro-democracy movement in their neighbor in exchange for a 'yes' vote by the Arab League for a no-fly zone over Libya...."

There are probably many Libyans who seek democratic change after four decades of governance by the Gaddafi family, but this government also has many supporters. At no time has it been indicated a majority of Libyans support overthrowing Col. Gaddafi, much less back a USNATO war to install a western-aligned government in Tripoli — especially one about which considerable questions are being asked.

The U.S., Britain and France quickly supported the idea of building a coalition around the National Libyan Council including pro-monarchists, disaffected tribes in this tribal society, several former leading members of the government, some high ranking military officers and émigrés, including a few who have been in touch with various intelligence services for years.

USNATO attacks have coordinated with the anti-government political and military leaders, who are working in concert with their benefactors in Washington, Paris and London. U.S. CIA agents and Special Forces soldiers, joined by their opposite numbers from several NATO states, are operating in Benghazi and other areas not occupied by loyalist troops. They are training the anti-government troops, supplying weapons and sophisticated military hardware and communications equipment.

In the latest disclosure April 7, the "unarmed civilians" Resolution 1973 was supposed to protect have about 20 tanks at their command as well as other heavy military equipment. The information surfaced when a NATO bomber pilot thought the tanks were part of the loyalist arsenal and blew up a few of them, with their crews.

The Security Council did not authorize arming the civilians. At this point, the resolution seems little more than permission for USNATO to destroy the loyalist army and arm the anti-government forces to install a new government in Tripoli.

However, USNATO's plan "for the political future of Libya was undermined by the growing military doubts over the make-up of the rebel groups," according to The Telegraph (UK) March 29. "'We are examining very closely the content, composition, the personalities, who are the leaders of these opposition forces,' Admiral [James] Stavridis, [NATO'S Supreme Allied Commander, Europe] said in testimony yesterday to the U.S. Senate."

Then on April 3, longtime analyst Michel Chossudovsky wrote on the Global Research website:

"There are various factions within the Libyan opposition: Royalists, defectors from the Gaddafi regime including the Minister of Justice and more recently the Foreign Minister, Moussa Moussa, members of the Libyan Armed Forces, the National Front for the Salvation of Libya (NFSL) and the National Conference for the Libyan Opposition (NCLC) which acts as

an umbrella organization.

“Rarely acknowledged by the Western media, the Libya Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG – Al-Jamaa al-Islamiyyah al-Muqatilah bi Libya), is an integral part of the Libyan Opposition. The LIFG, which is aligned with al-Qaeda, is in the frontline of the armed insurrection.”

Chossudovsky, an Emeritus Professor of Economics at Ottawa University, and director of Montreal’s Centre for Research on Globalization, notes that the paramilitary LIFG was founded in Afghanistan by veteran Libyan Mujahedeens of the Soviet-Afghan war.... There are contradictory reports as to whether the LIFG is part of Al Qaeda or is acting as an independent jihadist entity. One report suggests that in 2007 the LIFG became ‘a subsidiary of al Qaeda, later assuming the name of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).’”

During its lifetime, “The LIFG was supported not only by the CIA and The British Secret Intelligence Service but also by factions within Libya’s intelligence agency, led by former intelligence head and Foreign Minister Moussa Koussa, who defected to the United Kingdom in late March 2011.” The full article is at <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=24096>

There is a chance USNATO may prefer a longer, drawn out struggle than their overwhelmingly superior fire power may suggest, perhaps for as least as long as the various uprisings manage to sustain themselves. Fighting for “democracy” in Libya absolves the U.S. from the accusation that is against the uprisings in its subordinate countries. At the same time, of course, the western war against Libya grabs most of the headlines and often pushes the other struggles to the background.

USNATO did not launch a war against Libya as a humanitarian gesture. If/when it removes the Gaddafi family from leadership and installs a replacement the allied military coalition will exercise decisive influence for many years to come, especially in oil concessions, privatizations and building contracts that enhance multinational corporations, air and military bases, a solid vote in the UN and other world organizations, and more.

The historic Arab uprisings of 2011 will inspire multitudes of people around the world for many years to come, even if imperialism — in league with repressive monarchies, and violent dictatorships — may crush some of the rebellions, contain others with small concessions, and perhaps implement limited democracy in Tunisia and Egypt.

What matters is that the struggle is taking place, has the support of the masses of people, and that the people are courageous and determined. There is still a chance for more immediate triumphs.

What has been happening in recent months is the “1848” of the 21st century. Most of the great European rebellions of the time were defeated, but out of those struggles came victories. Out of the great uprisings of the Arab World of 2011, and hopefully longer, will come many victories.

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