

The Veto Power Play Behind UN Security Council Resolutions

Russian-Chinese Veto of Draft Resolutions Against Syria Restores Independence and Legitimacy to the United Nations as the Representative of the Will of the International Community

By [Carla Stea](#)

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Hippocratic Oath: First Do No Harm

The US/NATO arrogant and sanctimonious pretense of concern for human rights, in their attempt to force through resolutions which would have led to punitive, and ultimately military action against Syria, is blatant hypocrisy.

Had Russia and China not vetoed these draft resolutions on Syria, they would have resulted in military action against Syria, culminating in the collapse of Assad's government, a "failed state," and no doubt, in the extrajudicial murder of President Assad, following the pattern of "Regime Change" coveted by US/NATO governments.

A review of US/NATO sponsored UN Security Council resolutions 678 against Iraq, and Resolution 1973 against Libya, (resolutions which Russia and China failed to veto) reveals the catastrophic human rights abuses resulting from the implementation of these resolutions. Later in this article, we examine the pattern of US/UK indifference to, or complicity with egregious human rights abuses in South Africa, as revealed through their own use of the veto.

The destruction of Iraq was foreordained in 1990, when the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 678 against Iraq (ostensibly to force Saddam Hussein to withdraw troops from Kuwait), unleashing a bombing campaign by US and UK "coalition forces" which resulted, in the words of former UN Official Marti Ahtisaari in " the destruction of the infrastructure necessary to sustain human life in Iraq." Ahtisaari told me, personally, at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. that his report, a devastating critique of the results of "coalition" (US/UK) bombing of Iraq, bombing condoned and encouraged by UN Security Council Resolution 678 authorizing "all necessary means," had cost him the post of UN Secretary-General. The UN does not like to be held accountable for the tragic consequences of its politically motivated resolutions.

In Iraq, "Regime Change" culminated in the murder of Saddam Hussein, and the destruction of his progressive government, after which Iraq has descended into a hell of terrorism, mass rape, internecine slaughter, suicide bombing, and now renewed U.S. bombing of an already decimated people. The territory of what was once a viable independent state in Iraq, anathema to US/NATO and the corporate/oligarchic interests they serve, has now become another "failed state," chaotic, and ripe for corporate plunder of its rich oil reserves.

The barbaric extrajudicial murder of Libyan President Omar Khaddafi, whose independent, progressive government elicited the wrath of US/NATO, was the ultimate consequence of UN Security Council Resolution 1973, and was celebrated by US Ambassador Susan Rice and U.S. Secretary of State Clinton, until, as in Iraq, Libya descended into an incubator of terrorism, and the Benghazi assault, which led to the murder of US Ambassador Christopher Simpson, cost Ambassador Rice her coveted promotion to the post of U.S. Secretary of State, and may well be an impediment to any future electoral ambitions former Secretary Hillary Clinton may be entertaining. Libya, too, is now shattered, easy prey to large multinational corporations coveting the wealth of its resources, which, legally, should belong to the Libyan people.

In 1990 a cowed and collapsing Soviet Union voted in favor of Resolution 678 against Iraq, and a surprisingly gullible Russia several years ago abstained on Resolution 1973 on Libya, evidently forgetting that when Resolution 1973 authorized “all necessary measures” those words were a euphemism authorizing license to murder. Russia claimed that they were betrayed when NATO exceeded the resolution’s mandate, and, (in the words of India’s former Ambassador Puri) proceeded to “bomb the hell out of Libya.”

Since 1991, and the implementation of Security Council Resolution 678, the United Nations had become merely a lapdog, giving support to US/NATO hegemonic military ambitions. In the words of former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, “The UN, which was created to prevent the scourge of war, had become an instrument of war.” Indeed, the UN was often mockingly referred to as “an annex of the U.S. Department of State and the Pentagon.”

And then something changed. As US/NATO was obviously attempting to repeat the pattern of UN supported “Regime Change” in Syria, Russia and China suddenly and repeatedly vetoed the draft resolutions being put forth by P5 members US, UK and France, which would have condoned, directly, or eventually, military action against the government of President Assad in Syria. These new draft resolutions always masqueraded sanctimoniously as concern for human rights, in an attempt to obscure and justify the naked and brutal power grab such draft resolutions actually sought to make possible. But this time, both Russia and China repeatedly vetoed these new draft resolutions, thereby denying UN Security Council authorization for mass murder.

U.S. Ambassador Rice stated that she was “disgusted” by the Russian-Chinese “indifference” to the “suffering of the Syrian people.” She ignored, however, the multiple civilian deaths resulting from US/NATO bombing of Libya, and regarded Russia’s concern for the suffering of those Libyan civilians as an annoyance. It was an “inconvenient truth” to her narrative that the Libyan people love US/NATO for freeing them from Khaddafi’s dictatorship, a narrative that lasted until the Benghazi murder of US Ambassador Simpson, and other Benghazi fatalities exposed the flaw in her “logic,” and cost her the post of Secretary of State.

US/NATO USE OF THEIR VETO POWER

An examination of the use of the veto by US/NATO reveals their consistent use of their veto power to help perpetuate the most horrific human rights abuses committed by the apartheid regime in South Africa. Numerous highly placed sources accredited to the United Nations have denounced this US/NATO double standard.

Following are excerpts from UN Security Council draft resolutions condemning atrocious human rights abuses in South Africa, draft resolutions which were vetoed by the United States and United Kingdom. (These draft resolutions can be accessed in their entirety by reference to their symbols, and the date of the voting)

On May 23, 1986, Congo, Ghana, Madagascar, Trinidad and Tobago and the United Arab Emirates submitted draft resolution S/18087/Rev.1 to the Security Council, which stated:

“Gravely concerned also at the threats to peace and security in southern Africa created by the acts of aggression by the racist regime of South Africa in Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe on 19 May 1986,

“Deeply shocked at the loss of life and damage to property caused through these wanton unprovoked military raids into Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe,

“Convinced that the root cause of racial violence in South Africa is the perpetuation of the obnoxious system of apartheid, which has already been termed by the international community a crime against the conscience and dignity of mankind,

“Convinced also that the system of apartheid is encouraged and maintained by the political and economic support which the racist regime of South Africa receives from certain countries,

1. Strongly condemns the racist regime of South Africa for the recent military raids into Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe;

Acting in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations:

Decides to impose the following selective economic and other sanctions against the South African regime as an effective means of combating the apartheid system and bringing peace and stability to southern Africa:
(v) Prohibition of all new contracts in the nuclear field; etc.”

In the remarks to the Security Council at that meeting, Mr. Shustov, representing the Soviet Union, stated: “The Soviet Union calls on the Security Council not only formally to condemn the South African attack on Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe but also to adopt the most determined and energetic measures to halt the criminal policy of terror and aggression being pursued by the South African authorities against neighbouring States.”

This draft resolution, S/18087/Rev.1, May 23, 1986, was vetoed by the United States and the United Kingdom.

On 19 February, 1987, Argentina, Congo, Ghana, United Arab Emirates and Zambia submitted draft resolution S/18705 to the Security Council, stating:

“Outraged at the Pretoria racist regime’s further intensification of its repressive rule through the imposition of a state of emergency, vesting limitless powers in its security forces, resulting in the arbitrary arrest, detention without trial and torture of over 30,000 people and the killing of over 2,500 men, women and children in the last 20 months, thus further aggravating the already gravely deteriorating situation,

“Determines (b) That the continued illegal occupation of Namibia as well as the repeated armed attacks perpetrated by South Africa and destabilization of neighbouring States constitute grave acts of aggression and a violation of their sovereignty and territorial integrity,

“Decides, under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations and in conformity with its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, to impose the following mandatory sanctions against South Africa, in accordance with Article 41: (g) Prohibitions on nuclear trade with South Africa; etc. etc.”

The Representative of Ghana, Mr. Gbebo, stated:

“The fact of the matter is that apartheid itself is inherently violent. Its fundamental tenets - deriving from the seventeenth century Calvinist theory of a chosen race with a divine right to dominate other races which, according to that theory, are perpetually condemned to servitude - have all the ingredients of violence. Furthermore, the continued banning of the African National Congress of South Africa, the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania and other national liberation organs is, it must be emphasized, in itself a direct invitation to violence. As to the charge of communism or Marxism, we can only comment that it is as false as it is tedious. It is no secret that most people have seen through this excuse because it has always been the global battle-cry used to rouse extremists and the uninformed. As long ago as 10 December 1965 at Hunter College here in New York, the late Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said: ‘In South Africa today all opposition to white supremacy is condemned as communism, and in its name due process is destroyed; a medieval segregation is organized with twentieth-century efficiency and drive; a sophisticated form of slavery is imposed by a minority upon a majority which is kept in grinding poverty; the dignity of the human personality is defiled; and world opinion is arrogantly defied.’ The attitude of the racist minority regime in South Africa has not changed even 20 years later.”

This draft resolution, S/18705, 19 February, 1987, was vetoed by the United States and United Kingdom.

On March 7, 1988 Algeria, Argentina, Nepal, Senegal, Yugoslavia and Zambia submitted draft resolution S/19585, which stated: “Condemns the continuing intensification of repression by the South African racist regime such as the arbitrary mass arrest and detention, torture in detention and murder of the leaders and activists of mass organizations, including children, the near total muzzling of the press, the maintenance and expansion of the state of emergency and, in particular, the restriction of seventeen mass organizations and eighteen individuals committed to peaceful forms of struggle

“Decides, under Chapter VII of the Charter and in conformity with its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, to impose the following mandatory sanctions against South Africa, in accordance with Article 41: Cessation of all forms of military, police or intelligence co-operation with the authorities of South Africa, in particular the sale of computer equipment, (a) Cessation of further investment in, and financial loans to, South Africa, (c) An end to all promotion of and support for trade with South Africa, etc.”

Mr. Pejic of Yugoslavia, President of the Council, stated:

“The policy of apartheid and racial discrimination has transformed South Africa into an anachronism propped up by State terrorism and racism. Human rights and human dignity are non-existent there. Oppression, terror and exploitation are the order of the day, bringing in their wake an unbearable plight and suffering for the black population....In yet another vain attempt to suppress people’s resistance and eliminate each and every opposition to apartheid, the regime in Pretoria has imposed new repressive measures. It banned all political activities and work of 17 democratic popular organizations, including the United Democratic Front and the Congress of South African Trade Unions. It broke up peaceful demonstrations of church leaders by force, arresting about 150 demonstrators, among them Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the Reverend Allan Boesak...By conscious effort, the regime has deliberately burned the bridges leading to peaceful change, thus leaving the deprived black population with no alternative but to take up arms. This is cause for great concern since it is leading South Africa to bloodshed and destruction.....Apartheid is a crime against humanity, we stated many times in this House, and a serious threat to international peace and security. It cannot be changed by reforms; it must be eradicated. Hence the obligation of the international community to stand united in its action to eliminate apartheid by all means at its disposal.”

The United States and the United Kingdom vetoed this resolution, S/19585, March 7, 1988.

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About the author:

Author and Geopolitical analyst Carla Stea is Global Research's Correspondent at United Nations headquarters, New York, NY.

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