

US - NATO Threats to Libyan Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity

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The present situation in Libya is grave, with Philippine attention focused on the thousands of Filipino workers there who are fleeing the turmoil and are in need of immediate repatriation. Almost half of the 26,000 Filipino workers in Libya are in conflict areas, and many of them are technical and construction workers in the industry and infrastructure sectors. Their worksites have become fair game for armed mobs and pro-“democracy” protesters extorting money, mobile phones, computers and other electronic items, food and other things of value. Some of their barracks have been ransacked, and affected Filipino workers had to flee for dear life with nothing to bring with them.

The hundreds who were the first to arrive back in Manila were from the capital city of Tripoli and nearby areas in western Libya, and their orderly departure from Libya (via Malta) was arranged by their European and Korean employers with security escorts from forces of Muammar Gaddafi’s government. But employers in other conflict areas, in fear of being taken as hostages, have fled earlier and abandoned their Filipino and other expatriate workers. Areas seized by protesters are left with no local government forces which would be able to stop the armed mobs preying on worksites manned by expatriate workers.

Hundreds more of Filipina women workers, mostly nurses and laboratory technicians, are being prevented from leaving their hospitals, or are unable to get any assistance in traveling safely to the Egyptian or Tunisian border crossings where Philippine migrant welfare officials have set up documentation and repatriation centers. Many Filipino workers have to beg for passage in ships chartered by western governments to ferry their nationals from Benghazi to the southern Greek island of Crete.

The Turmoil and the Stand-Off

Latest news reports on Libya have it that fighting between pro- and anti-Gaddafi forces are occurring in Az-Zawiyah, Tripoli and Misurata in the west ; in Sabha in the south ; and in Benghazi, Al-Bayda and Tobruk in the east. Hundreds and even thousands are reported to have been killed on both sides. Protests have flared hardest in the eastern parts of the country, particularly in Benghazi which was the center of foreign-supported anti-government agitation in the past. Benghazi is now reported to be under the control of anti-Gaddafi forces which have torched police stations and government buildings, and which have taken over the local radio stations.

The main demand of protesters, according to western news reports, is the ouster of Gaddafi who has held unaccountable power as “leader of the revolution” for almost 42 years

already, and who is preparing a political dynasty in Libya. Libya's justice minister, and ambassadors to the United Nations, the Arab League, China, India and Bangladesh, have defected and turned against Gaddafi. The earlier defection to the pro-"democracy" protesters of some police and military units provided the anti-Gaddafi movement with arms and even tanks and artillery. The reported seizure of entire cities reflects a high degree of military sophistication, and is not just the result of "peaceful protests".

The Attempts to Again Manipulate the United Nations

Unfortunately for the Philippines, the vast majority of our people are getting only one-sided news and propaganda from the western media (including Al-Jazeera). These news agencies are trying to show that events in Libya are an extension of the democratic upsurge in neighboring Tunisia and Egypt ; and that there is now a virtual division of the country. This division is allegedly between the pro-"democracy" forces which have seized most of the eastern region (particularly the cities of Benghazi and Tobruk, in the former Cyrenaica region adjacent to Egypt), and the remaining Gaddafi loyalist forces in the western region (particularly the cities of Tripoli and Sirt, in the Tripolitania region adjacent to Tunisia).

As usual, Gaddafi is demonized as a tyrant who is bombing his own people, and western calls are made for the UN to take action to stop or prevent Gaddafi's genocide. Among the calls are for the UN enforcement of a "no-fly-zone" over north-eastern Libya, in order to prevent Gaddafi's air force from attacking "liberated" areas. This would be similar to the "no-fly-zone" over parts of Iraq in the 1990s, which was without any UN sanction and was only imposed unilaterally by the US-UK forces.

There are also calls for a blockade and ban of any delivery of weapons for Gaddafi forces ; and for the indictment of the Gaddafi family for crimes against humanity before the International Criminal Court (ICC). However, these would set precedents which could boomerang on the USA and its NATO allies. If the UN were to hold the officials of governments and corporations providing weapons to the Gaddafi regime accountable for how those weapons are being used, then that would set a precedent making US and NATO governments and corporations accountable for arming the most violent despots known for human rights violations and war crimes in many parts of the world.

Holding Gaddafi and Libyan officials directly accountable for alleged war crimes against a civilian population, by referring the issue directly to the ICC, would set a precedent that could hold US and NATO political leaders also responsible for civilian deaths in their present wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. US and NATO warplanes and remote-controlled drones have so far killed thousands of civilians in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Yemen, and US and NATO leaders could be also held liable for genocide.

The Threat to Libyan Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity

Virulent western media demands for UN and NATO actions against Gaddafi are reflections of covetous imperialist designs upon Libya. In this situation, the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Libyan people are threatened. A US-NATO invasion of Libya is even imminent.

In defense of his position, Gaddafi has spoken over Libyan state TV and radio to stress that the present turmoil in Libya is not an extension of the democratic upsurge in the region, but an imperialist conspiracy to take away from the Libyan people their control of

their own oil resources. Gaddafi claims that this is an armed counter-revolution participated in by outsiders and mercenaries, and which aims to bring about the imperialist occupation of Libya, similar to the present imperialist imposition of suffering and humiliation upon Afghanistan and Iraq.

Huge demonstrations in Tripoli in support of Gaddafi, in response to his call for the Libyan people to defend their sovereignty and oil wealth, have apparently disturbed the imperialist powers — especially since the protesters in Libya, up to now, have not produced any credible organization or leader around which people could be rallied politically. The so-called “*National Front for the Salvation of Libya (NFSL)*”, an exile group that has been interviewed constantly by western media as a leading opposition force, and which is loudly demanding a NATO attack against Gaddafi, has for decades served as a stooge of the CIA.

The other group usually seen in pro-“democracy” actions (assaults on police and military camps, and the burning of government buildings and facilities) is that which is backing the return of the monarchy which was deposed by Gaddafi in 1969. Pro-“democracy” protesters have hoisted Libya’s first national flag, that of the corrupt and US-subservient King Idris, over the areas they have seized. However, a return to a monarchy could only be considered a step backward for the Libyan people, and would stand opposed to those striving for democracy.

Finally, another group of protesters is the Muslim Brotherhood, the sect formed in Egypt in 1928, and which has cooperated with the CIA since their joint attempts to oust Gamal Abdel Nasser from the Egyptian presidency in the 1950s. Given this situation where US-backed protesters lack the force to oust Gaddafi, imperialism is now propagating the line that a peaceful transition in Libya not possible, and that Gaddafi’s ouster can only be done by external force. But unlike Marcos in the Philippines in 1986, and Ben Ali and Mubarak in Tunisia and Egypt earlier this year, Gaddafi is not someone who can simply be ordered by a US president to step down and yield power to a new US puppet.

The Role of the Western Media

All efforts are therefore being made to “justify” an imperialist intervention in Libya. Thus the reports which make it appear that Gaddafi is using aircraft and artillery against “unarmed” and “defenseless” protesters. Efforts are also being made by imperialism to make every use of the former Gaddafi officials, diplomats and military officers who have defected during the past week, in order to use them as components of an acceptable and effective client regime to replace Gaddafi.

However, imperialism has to contend with the fact that there is apparently no widespread defection among the 50,000 to 70,000 hard core Gaddafi security forces, unlike in Egypt where the army joined the protesters on the streets. It is therefore the role of western media to propagate the message that the Gaddafi regime is fast collapsing ; that its control of Libyan territory and population is dwindling rapidly ; that Gaddafi’s last resort is genocide against his own people ; and that the international community (meaning again the NATO “*coalition of the willing*”) should strike to take out Gaddafi and pre-empt his use of “*weapons of mass destruction*” and his blowing up of the Libyan oil industry.

It is difficult to see how events will unfold, given the continuing stand-off between Gaddafi and his imperialist-backed opponents. But we have seen how the imperialists and

their “embedded” mediemen fooled the world with blatant lies to attack Iraq and take out Saddam Hussein. In the Libyan case also, British foreign minister William Hague propagated the yarn that Gaddafi has fled to Venezuela. Considering imperialism’s hatred towards Gaddafi, and its desire to take over control of Libyan oil resources (now producing 1.8-million barrels per day, and which has the greatest reserve in Africa), the present turmoil in Libya is being used to plot the overthrow of Gaddafi and the control of Libya.

Developments Brought About by the Al-Fatah Revolution

The Al-Fatah (September 1st, 1969) Revolution led by Gaddafi overthrew the corrupt and imperialist-subservient monarchy of King Idris. It was inspired by the ideas of Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser, who earlier also overthrew a corrupt and imperialist-subservient monarchy in Egypt. King Idris earlier allowed the presence of the USA’s very large Wheelus Air Base in Libya, but the Al-Fatah Revolution promptly ended any US military presence in Libya. Before the revolution, the Libyan people were mostly illiterate and in dire poverty, while Libya’s oil resources fabulously enriched western oil companies and the Idris monarchy.

The revolution nationalized the Libyan oil industry, and used the oil riches to uplift the social conditions of the Libyan masses ; to eradicate widespread illiteracy ; to provide jobs and housing ; to develop free higher education ; and to ensure better nutrition through food subsidies. The monarchy used to own much of the habitable and arable land, until Gaddafi ordered the nationalization of land and the burning of all land titles in simultaneous bonfires nationwide in order to pave the way for radical changes in housing ownership and agrarian relations.

Under Gaddafi, Libya became the highest ranked among African countries in the Human Development Index — which includes such factors as living conditions, life expectancy (now at almost 75 years) and education. Gaddafi is also credited with the construction of a broad network of giant pipelines (the “*Great Man-Made River*”) bringing fresh water from an enormous lake beneath its large desert, in order to serve the needs of Libya’s 6 million population. Under Gaddafi, the Libyan government placed the country’s development within a radical and populist context, and promoted semi-socialist political and economic concepts. The Gaddafi government also provided significant aid to neighboring African states. However, Communist advocacy is suppressed, and the role of trade unions is marginalized inside Libya.

It was also under Gaddafi, and with oil money, that Libya attained the highest per capita income among African states. However, there is now a campaign in the western press to belie this, and to paint a picture of widespread unemployment, gaping social inequality and poverty among the Libyan people. Indeed, neo-liberal reforms ushered in recent years have resulted in inequality, with social programs and subsidies for the poor being cut, and the country’s oil wealth increasingly being given to foreign corporations. The CIA is now even trying to pass off alleged “studies” showing that most Libyans are surviving on less than USD\$2.00 per day. However, such “studies” have no credibility, considering that Libya remains a favorite among expatriate workers in the Middle East, given the relatively higher pay and better working terms in Libyan work sites.

Gaddafi’s Propagation of his “Third Universal Theory”

When Gaddafi started to propagate his “Green Book” (or the “*Third Universal*

Theory”) internationally, he tried to win over sections of national liberation and anti-imperialist movements with financial support, and this caused opportunist schisms within some national movements. His *“Third Universal Theory”* is a strange mix of utopian socialism and Islam — of non-class anti-capitalism and virulent anti-Communism.

Libyan oil money fed Gaddafi’s megalomania, and he tried to play god by interfering in some parts of the developing world — particularly in countries he considered economically inferior and with poor people ready to sacrifice as migrant workers with few rights just to retain jobs in Libya. He funded Islamic secessionist forces in southern Philippines and southern Thailand, claiming support for struggles against Christian or Buddhist domination of Moslem minorities.

In the largely Moslem country of Indonesia, Gaddafi dabbled in tribal conflicts by funding the secessionist forces of the Acehnese, in a show of support for the supposedly more fundamentalist Sumatrans as against the dominant Javanese. Gaddafi’s interference in the internal affairs of the Philippines in the 1970s cost the lives of thousands of Filipinos, mostly in Mindanao. His interference in the internal affairs of other Asian countries cost the lives of thousands more.

Gaddafi also tried to interfere in some parts of Southern Africa, casting aspersion upon the role of Communists, whites and women in the anti-apartheid struggle. For a time, he also dabbled in inter-Christian conflicts, and on this basis even supported the armed struggle of the Irish Republican Army in Northern Ireland. He gave the impression of leading a great international anti-imperialist movement (the Mathaba or “center”), which in reality was mainly composed of anti-Communist ultra-left and fundamentalist Islamic groupings. While vociferous in his anti-imperialist rhetoric and antics — which drew sanctions from imperialist countries — he was objectively sowing divisions within anti-imperialist movements, as well as within the anti-zionist national liberation movement of the Palestinian people.

In 1986, Reagan and Thatcher cooperated in an attempt to assassinate Gaddafi by bombing his residences in Tripoli and Benghazi. Gaddafi survived, but his adopted infant daughter and many more were killed, with hundreds also maimed and wounded. Despite Gaddafi’s extremist and reactionary policies, the Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP-1930), through its mass organizations, condemned the US-UK terrorist attack on Libya. Thereafter, imperialist sanctions were ratcheted up against Libya, and more assassination plots were prepared against Gaddafi, finally intimidating Gaddafi.

In 2000, a weary Gaddafi again played god in the Philippine south, this time for the purpose of mending fences with the imperialists. The Abu Sayyaf, a bandit break-away group from the Islamic secessionist movement in Mindanao had taken 21 hostages (including 10 European and other western tourists) from the Sipadan dive resort in Malaysia, and kept them captive in the southern Philippine island of Sulu. Gaddafi offered ransom of USD\$1-Million for each hostage. The release of the European and other western hostages from the clutches of his former subalterns became his first offering to appease imperialism, never mind if the hefty ransom he gave only further emboldened these bandits to undertake more terrorist activities in our country.

Further cozying up to imperialism after the Bush-Blair invasion of Iraq, Gaddafi dismantled Libya’s nuclear program in 2003, which step however gave relief to the whole world. This was followed by the payment of compensation to the victims of the bombing of

the Pan-Am flight over Lockerbie (Scotland), and the granting of privileges to US and UK companies in the Libyan oil and other business sectors. Reports then have it that Libya disclosed to US intelligence agencies information on all the sundry armed groups that it had previously supported. Gaddafi's many concessions to imperialism over the past decade have further diminished his credibility among progressive and anti-imperialist forces, and understandably, not a few of these forces have declared their solidarity with the Libyan revolt.

Prospects

Some have characterized foreign interference in the Libyan conflict as poetic justice, considering Gaddafi's earlier interference in the internal affairs of other countries. But what is at stake in Libya today is not just the future of Gaddafi and his family. What is at stake are Libya's national sovereignty and territorial integrity. It is a different matter to support steps toward democratic changes in Libya, and to support imperialist interference under the guise of assisting pro-"democracy" protesters.

The popular masses of the Libyan people are demanding civil rights and democratic freedoms (including workers' rights), an open system of laws not merely based on Sharia (Islamic law), a political system that would enhance the role of trade unions and other organizations of the working masses, and immediate measures for the amelioration of declining living standards.

The PKP-1930 supports these demands of the Libyan masses who truly stand for democratic changes. The taking of immediate steps for the realization of these demands could help Gaddafi maintain his dwindled grip on power ; however, the Gaddafi regime has no long-term prospects, and could not be expected to take these steps while busy fighting for survival.

It would also be an illusion to expect that the stooges of imperialism among the protesters — the NFSL, the monarchists, the Muslim Brotherhood, or other pliant groups that imperialism could find among the latest defectors from the Gaddafi camp — would support real democratic changes in Libya. The realization of democratic changes can only come with the quick organizing and mobilization of truly democratic Libyan mass forces in the midst of the present turmoil.

While supporting the democratic demands of the Libyan working masses, the PKP-1930 at the same time opposes imperialist interference in Libya. In particular, the PKP-1930 strongly condemns imperialist plots to push a civil war in Libya in order to pave the way for imperialist military intervention and the eventual control of Libya.

No to imperialist intervention in Libya ! Let the Libyan people make their own decisions and determine their own future, while preserving the sovereignty and territorial integrity of their country !

No to imperialist interference in Libya and the other countries of the Middle East and North Africa !

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