

# World War and the Russia-China Veto: Towards a Break Point at the UN Security Council?

By [Carla Stea](#)

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In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

Admonition to the Security Council: “First Do No Harm.” (The Russian Ambassador)

“They were careless people – they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made.” F. Scott Fitzgerald

“We came, we saw, he died.” Secretary of State Clinton, on the extrajudicial murder of Omar Khaddafy

“What need we fear who knows it when none can call our power to account? Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him.” William Shakespeare, Macbeth

It is troubling, indeed, that although Mrs. Navi Pillay, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had never set foot in Syria during the period about which she professed expertise, she was, nevertheless, invited to address the United Nations Security Council on December 9, 2011, and much of the Western media quoted her as the authoritative source on human rights abuses by the Syrian government, citing her poorly substantiated remarks on numerous occasions.

It is especially troubling because, at the January 31, 2012 Security Council meeting on Syria, addressed by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, UK Foreign Secretary William Hague, the French Foreign Minister, the Qatar Prime Minister and other diplomatic luminaries, Mr. Muhammad Ahmad Mustafa Al-Dabi, the Head of the League of Arab States Observer Mission to Syria, who had traveled throughout Syria from December 24, 2011 through January 18, 2012, who had interviewed a broad spectrum of Syrians, from members of the Syrian opposition, to Syrian government officials, and Syrian civilians, was not invited to that meeting to present facts about the reality on the ground in the Syrian Arab Republic. However, Mr. Al-Dabi’s Report, dated January 27, 2012 presents too many “inconvenient truths” which undermine and discredit the campaign to demonize the Syrian government.

So transparency and accountability were sacrificed for the sake of propaganda.

For the record, Mr. Al-Dabi's report states:

"26. In Homs and Dera'a the Mission observed armed groups committing acts of violence against Government forces, resulting in death and injury among their ranks. In certain situations, Government forces responded to attacks against their personnel with force. The observers noted that some of the armed groups were using flares and armour-piercing projectiles. In Homs, Idlib and Hama, the Observer Mission witnessed acts of violence being committed against Government forces and civilians that resulted in several deaths and injuries. Examples of those acts include the bombing of a civilian bus carrying eight persons and injuring others, including women and children, and the bombing of a train carrying diesel oil. In another incident in Homs, a police bus was blown up, killing two police officers. A fuel pipeline and some small bridges were also bombed.

44. In Homs, a French journalist who worked for France 2 channel was killed and a Belgian journalist injured...It should be noted that Mission reports from Homs indicate that the French journalist was killed by opposition mortar shells.

73. The Mission noted that the Government strived to help it succeed in its task and remove any barriers that might stand in its way. No restrictions were placed on the movement of the Mission and its ability to interview Syrian citizens, both those who opposed the Government and those loyal to it.

75. Recently there have been incidents that could widen the gap and increase bitterness between the parties. These incidents can have grave consequences and lead to the loss of life and property. Such incidents include the bombing of buildings, trains carrying fuel, vehicles carrying diesel oil and explosions targeting the police, members of the media and fuel pipelines. Some of those attacks have been carried out by the Free Syrian Army and some by other armed opposition groups.

68. Since it began its work, the Mission has been the target of vicious media campaigns. Some media outlets have published unfounded statements which they attributed to the Head of Mission. They have also grossly exaggerated events, thereby distorting the truth. Such contrived reports have helped to increase tension among the Syrian people and undermined the observers' work. Some media organizations were exploited in order to defame the mission and its Head and cause the Mission to fail."

Rarely mentioned is a report that a Saudi TV station recently broadcast a Salafist religious leader giving his blessing for spilling the blood of observers. This was stated by the Russian

Ambassador at the Security Council meeting on January 31.

The Report of the League of Arab States Observer Mission to Syria discredited the US/NATO effort to justify a Security Council resolution paving the way for economic sanctions and, ultimately, military invasion of Syria, using arguments and blueprints almost identical to the ones used to induce the entire Security Council to support resolution 1973 against the Libyan government.

(The prelude to Security Council resolution 1973 included members of the Libyan opposition – speaking before the Security Council in violation of the Security Council Rules of Procedure- lamenting the plight of peaceful Libyan demonstrators, and pleading for the equivalent of color revolutions, orange, rose, tulip, velvet, jasmine and other bubble gum flavored programs engineering the destabilization and collapse of governments too independent to be tolerated by NATO powers. These Libyan defectors begged for foreign intervention in Libya , and their tears were the culmination of opportunism – many of them had earlier comfortably represented the Gadaffi government.)

Mrs. Navi Pillay provided the fig leaf required for adoption of a Security Council resolution against Syria (though she had never entered Syria throughout the entire period in question), so she was given a red carpet welcome by the UK , Germany , the US , France , etc. Mr. Al-Dabi was not part of the orchestra, and did not provide necessary cover for economic and military aggression against the Syrian government, so he was effectively excluded from participation in the Security Council meeting about which he exclusively possessed reliable direct information from inside Syria .

It is troubling that, although the Al-Dabi report was readily obtainable by media outlets, at no point does the New York Times refer to the Observer Mission Report in its January 28th page 8 article, or in its February 1 page 8 article, or in its February 2nd page 10 article, or in its supercilious editorial on February 2nd, entitled: “It’s time for Russia to stop blocking the United Nations from acting against the Assad regime.” The editorial states: “The Russians, Chinese and Indians – invoking Libya – insist that they will not abide foreign military intervention in Syria or let a resolution be exploited to permit the use of force. That complaint loses credibility when Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton stipulates publicly, as she did Tuesday that ‘there is no intention to seek any authority or to pursue any kind of military intervention.’ It should be relatively easy to write a resolution to rule out military action, assuming Russia is not playing games.”

The Times editorial board suffers not only from short term but also from long term memory loss. Perhaps The New York Times forgets NATO’s games, and not only in Libya , eleven months ago, where NATO grossly violated the mandate given by resolution 1973. The Russians remember all too well how much credibility to accord Secretaries of State, such as Secretary of State James Baker’s assurance to Gorbachev that following the unification of Germany , “NATO will not expand one inch east of Berlin .” Today NATO encircles Russia . Former US Ambassador to Moscow Jack Matlock stated: “I was a witness to that, and we deceived Russia . Why then should they believe us now?”

At the January 31 high level meeting, British Foreign Secretary Hague may have been among the most honest speakers, when he stated:

“This resolution does not propose imposing change on Syria from outside, it calls for the Syrian people to be allowed to make their choices. It does not call for military action and could not be used to authorize it. It does not contain coercive measures. Indeed, it is not a Chapter VII resolution. However, it should put the leaders of Syria on notice that measures will be considered by this council if there is not an immediate end to the violence and if the Arab League plan continues to be ignored. This threat is essential.”

The resolution in blue on February 2nd stated:

“PP10: noting that nothing in this resolution authorizes measures under Article 42 of the Charter,” and then goes on to conclude: “Decides to review implementation of this resolution within 21 days, and, in the event of non-compliance, to consider further measures.”

It is an insult to the intelligence of the Russians and the Chinese to expect them to be reassured by this devious wording which, once accepted, requires them, within three weeks, to agree to consider those Chapter VII “further measures” they today so wisely reject. Any child could decipher the implicit trap, and threat in the wording of the final draft resolution submitted to the capitals. Further, in view of the picture given by the Observer Mission Report, it would be categorically impossible for the Syrian authorities to comply, since much of the violence within Syria is caused by the opposition. (Media statements that “only” Russia, China and India oppose the Syria draft resolution are bizarre, since, together Russia and China constitute 40% of the Permanent Membership of the Security Council, and the combined populations of Russia, China and India are over three billion people, almost half the population of the world. The use of the word “only,” deliberately suggesting that Russia and China are a recalcitrant minority, recalls a BBC report which stated: “Storm over the English Channel . Continent isolated.”)

It is important to understand the Russian-Chinese concern, because the consequences of Security Council Resolution 1973 against Libya are horrific, and in extreme violation of the so-called democracy and human rights of Libyan civilians, which was used as the rationalization for the more than 7,000 NATO bombing missions against Libya .

Let us examine Libya today, as a result of Security Council Resolution 1973.

Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and Doctors Without Borders (Medecins Sans Frontieres) can, by no stretch of the imagination, be accused of being left-wing, commie stooges. Therefore, their descriptions of rampant, systematic torture inflicted “by officially recognized military and security entities in Libya,” as well as “by a multitude of armed

militias” in the cities of Tripoli, Misusrata and Gheryan,” (The New York Times, January 27, page A4) should alarm the US/NATO powers who sought the more than 7,000 NATO bombing missions against Libya, ostensibly to protect the human rights of the Libyan people. What is the Security Council doing at this moment to protect the Libyan people from the tortures inflicted by the “peaceful Libyan opposition” that NATO armed, trained supported and brought to power in Libya? Where is the “Responsibility to Protect” the Libyan people now? Why are certain members of the Security Council seeking to replicate their support for dubious opposition groups in Libya with support of armed extremists./ in Syria ? On February 4, 13 members of the Security Council expressed alarm about the thousands of deaths in Syria, which the vetoed resolution S/2012/77 unfoundedly blamed almost entirely on the Syrian government, despite the Report of the League of Arab States Observer Mission, the only party with objective information about the realities on the ground in Syria.

The New York Times, page 4, January 27 reports: “Doctors Without Borders said Thursday that it would suspend its operations in detention centers in Misurata, saying some of the 115 detainees it has treated for torture-related injuries since August have been returned repeatedly with more wounds. ‘Patients were brought to us in the middle of interrogation for medical care, in order to make them fit for further interrogation,’ said Christopher Stokes, the group’s general director, in a statement. ‘This is unacceptable. Our role is to provide medical care to war casualties and sick detainees, not to repeatedly treat the same patients between torture session.’” “Human Rights Watch documented ‘ongoing torture’ in Libyan detention centers in the past six months, said Sidney Kviran, an investigator for the group. ‘Torture is used to force confessions or for punishment.’” “Fighters from Misurata have continued to attack, detain, torture and in some cases kill people from the town, even after they fled to other parts of the country, refugees and activists said. Gheit Abubakr, 46, a Tawerghan at the Tripoli camp, carried his brother’s neatly folded death certificate in the pocket of his overcoat, along with a dozen photographs of his mutilated corpse....‘They beat him to death, but he didn’t do anything, he was not in the military and did not have a gun. He was a civilian.’”

Reuters: “In Assabia...residents not involved in the fighting were kidnapped and tortured, one to death, by Gharyan fighters....Ibrahim Mohammed, 23 stated... ‘During my interrogations my ankles were crushed in metal workshop clamps, and fingers and toes smashed with metal bars. I saw our main military commander lying on the floor in a pool of blood. He was barely breathing and they had tied a metal pole to his arms and legs and were giving him electric shocks.’ Ibrahim said. ‘Ezzedine-al-Ghool was tortured to death. His wife had given birth to a son the day before.’”

February 2, 2012, Reuters: “A Libyan diplomat who served as Ambassador to France for Moamar Ghaddafi died from torture within a day of being detained by a militia from Zintan, Human Rights Watch said in a statement Friday... photos of Brebesh’s body show welts, cuts, and the apparent removal of toenails. Brebesh, 62 served in the Libyan Embassy to France from 2004-2008, first as cultural attaché, then as acting ambassador...‘These abusive militias will keep torturing people until they are held to account’...said Sarah Leah

Whitson, Middle East and North Africa director at Human Rights Watch.”

On August 21, 2011, The New York Times reported: “Coordination between NATO and the rebels, and among the loosely organized rebel groups had become more sophisticated in lethal in recent weeks, even though NATO’s mandate had been merely to protect civilians, not to take sides in the conflict....At the same time, Britain, France and other nations deployed special forces on the ground inside Libya to help train and arm the rebels” in violation of the Security Council Resolution 1973, which prohibited NATO troops on the ground.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The US/NATO powers are confronting an economic crisis brought on inevitably by the crisis of capitalism, a crisis which can no longer be resolved by war. The Russian-Chinese veto has in fact also helped protect the United States from the policies relentlessly urged by certain reckless and irresponsible members of the establishment in Washington, who would turn the United States into a military juggernaut leading to an all out World War. Lacking UN Security Council support, these reckless members of the establishment cannot claim that they represent the “International Community.”

***Carla Stea** is a journalist holding press accreditation at the U.S. Department of State and the United Nations. Her articles have been published in the US, the UK, Latin America, Russia, and have appeared in Latin American Perspectives, Covert Action Quarterly, War and Peace Digest, Rock Creek Free Press, Komsomolskaya Pravda, Rabochaya Tribuna, Sovetskaya Rossia, Novosti Press, Baltexpert, and Tapol, Report on Human Rights in Indonesia.*

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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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