

# US hands off Libya!

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# Libya and imperialism

*Editorial, February 23, 2011*

Of all the struggles going on in North Africa and the Middle East right now, the most difficult to unravel is the one in Libya.

What is the character of the opposition to the Gadhafi regime, which reportedly now controls the eastern city of Benghazi?

Is it just coincidence that the rebellion started in Benghazi, which is north of Libya's richest oil fields as well as close to most of its oil and gas pipelines, refineries and its LNG port? Is there a plan to partition the country?

What is the risk of imperialist military intervention, which poses the gravest danger for the people of the entire region?

Libya is not like Egypt. Its leader, Moammar al-Gadhafi, has not been an imperialist puppet like Hosni Mubarak. For many years, Gadhafi was allied to countries and movements fighting imperialism. On taking power in 1969 through a military coup, he nationalized Libya's oil and used much of that money to develop the Libyan economy. Conditions of life improved dramatically for the people.

For that, the imperialists were determined to grind Libya down. The U.S. actually launched air strikes on Tripoli and Benghazi in 1986 that killed 60 people, including Gadhafi's infant daughter — which is rarely mentioned by the corporate media. Devastating sanctions were imposed by both the U.S. and the U.N. to wreck the Libyan economy.

After the U.S. invaded Iraq in 2003 and leveled much of Baghdad with a bombing campaign that the Pentagon exultantly called “shock and awe,” Gadhafi tried to ward off further threatened aggression on Libya by making big political and economic concessions to the imperialists. He opened the economy to foreign banks and corporations; he agreed to IMF demands for “structural adjustment,” privatizing many state-owned enterprises and cutting state subsidies on necessities like food and fuel.

The Libyan people are suffering from the same high prices and unemployment that underlie the rebellions elsewhere and that flow from the worldwide capitalist economic crisis.

There can be no doubt that the struggle sweeping the Arab world for political freedom and economic justice has also struck a chord in Libya. There can be no doubt that discontent with the Gadhafi regime is motivating a significant section of the population.

However, it is important for progressives to know that many of the people being promoted in the West as leaders of the opposition are long-time agents of imperialism. The BBC on Feb. 22 showed footage of crowds in Benghazi pulling down the green flag of the republic and replacing it with the flag of the overthrown monarch King Idris — who had been a puppet of U.S. and British imperialism.

The Western media are basing a great deal of their reporting on supposed facts provided by the exile group National Front for the Salvation of Libya, which was trained and financed by the U.S. CIA. Google the front's name plus CIA and you will find hundreds of references.

The Wall Street Journal in a Feb. 23 editorial wrote that “The U.S. and Europe should help Libyans overthrow the Gadhafi regime.” There is no talk in the board rooms or the corridors of Washington about intervening to help the people of Kuwait or Saudi Arabia or Bahrain overthrow their dictatorial rulers. Even with all the lip service being paid to the mass struggles rocking the region right now, that would be unthinkable. As for Egypt and Tunisia, the imperialists are pulling every string they can to get the masses off the streets.

There was no talk of U.S. intervention to help the Palestinian people of Gaza when thousands died from being blockaded, bombed and invaded by Israel. Just the opposite. The U.S. intervened to prevent condemnation of the Zionist settler state.

Imperialism's interest in Libya is not hard to find. Bloomberg.com wrote on Feb. 22 that while Libya is Africa's third-largest producer of oil, it has the continent's largest proven reserves — 44.3 billion barrels. It is a country with a relatively small population but the potential to produce huge profits for the giant oil companies. That's how the super-rich look at it, and that's what underlies their professed concern for the people's democratic rights in Libya.

Getting concessions out of Gadhafi is not enough for the imperialist oil barons. They want a government that they can own outright, lock, stock and barrel. They have never forgiven Gadhafi for overthrowing the monarchy and nationalizing the oil. Fidel Castro of Cuba in his column “Reflections” takes note of imperialism's hunger for oil and warns that the U.S. is laying the basis for military intervention in Libya.

In the U.S., some forces are trying to mobilize a street-level campaign promoting such U.S. intervention. We should oppose this outright and remind any well-intentioned people of the millions killed and displaced by U.S. intervention in Iraq.

Progressive people are in sympathy with what they see as a popular movement in Libya. We can help such a movement most by supporting its just demands while rejecting imperialist intervention, in whatever form it may take. It is the people of Libya who must decide their future. □

# No U.S. attack on Libya!

*By Sara Flounders, March 2, 2011*

The worst thing that could happen to the people of Libya is U.S. intervention.

The worst thing that could happen to the revolutionary upsurge shaking the Arab world is U.S. intervention in Libya.

The White House is meeting with its allies among the European imperialist NATO countries to discuss imposing a no-fly zone over Libya, jamming all communications of President Moammar Gadhafi inside Libya, and carving military corridors into Libya from Egypt and Tunisia, supposedly to “assist refugees.” (New York Times, Feb. 27)

This means positioning U.S./NATO troops in Egypt and Tunisia close to Libya’s two richest oil fields, in both the east and west. It means the Pentagon coordinating maneuvers with the Egyptian and Tunisian militaries. What could be more dangerous to the Egyptian and Tunisian revolutions?

Italy, once the colonizer of Libya, has suspended a 2008 treaty with Libya that includes a nonaggression clause, a move that could allow it to take part in future “peacekeeping” operations there and enable the use of its military bases in any possible intervention. Several U.S. and NATO bases in Italy, including the U.S. Sixth Fleet base near Naples, could be staging areas for action against Libya.

President Barack Obama has announced that “the full range of options” is under consideration. This is Washington-speak for military operations.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton met in Geneva on Feb. 28 with foreign ministers at the U.N. Human Rights Council to discuss possible multilateral actions.

Meanwhile, adding to the drumbeat for military intervention is the release of a public letter from the Foreign Policy Initiative, a right-wing think tank seen as the successor to the Project for the New American Century, calling for the U.S. and NATO to “immediately” prepare military action to help bring down the Gadhafi regime.

The public appeal’s signers include William Kristol, Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, Elliott Abrams, Douglas Feith and more than a dozen former senior officials from the Bush administration, plus several prominent liberal Democrats, such as Neil Hicks of Human Rights First and Bill Clinton’s “human rights” chief, John Shattuck.

The letter called for economic sanctions and military action: deploying NATO warplanes and a naval armada to enforce no-fly zones and have the capability to disable Libyan naval vessels.

Senators John McCain and Joseph Lieberman while in Tel Aviv on Feb. 25 called for Washington to supply Libyan rebels with arms and establish a no-fly zone over the country.

Not to be overlooked are calls for U.N. contingents of medical and humanitarian workers, human rights monitors and investigators from the International Criminal Court to be sent to Libya with an “armed escort.”

Providing humanitarian aid doesn’t have to include the military. Turkey has evacuated 7,000 of its nationals on ferries and chartered flights. Some 29,000 Chinese workers have left via ferries, chartered flights and ground transportation.

However, the way in which the European powers are evacuating their nationals from Libya during the crisis includes a military threat and is part of the imperialist jockeying for position regarding Libya’s future.

Germany sent three warships, carrying 600 troops, and two military planes to bring 200 German employees of the oil exploration company Wintershall out of a desert camp 600 miles southeast of Tripoli. The British sent the HMS Cumberland warship to evacuate 200 British nationals and announced that the destroyer York was on its way from Gibraltar.

The U.S. announced on Feb. 28 that it was sending the huge aircraft carrier USS Enterprise and the amphibious assault ship USS Kearsarge from the Red Sea to the waters off Libya, where it will join the USS Mount Whitney and other battleships from the Sixth Fleet. U.S. officials called this a “pre-positioning of military assets.”

### **U.N. vote on sanctions**

The U.N. Security Council — under U.S. pressure — on Feb. 26 voted to impose sanctions on Libya. According to studies by the U.N.’s own agencies, more than 1 million Iraqi children died as a result of U.S./U.N.-imposed sanctions on that country that paved the way for an actual U.S. invasion. Sanctions are criminal and confirm that this intervention is not due to humanitarian concern.

The sheer hypocrisy of the resolution on Libya expressing concern for “human rights” is hard to match. Just four days before the vote, the U.S. used its veto to block a mildly worded resolution criticizing Israeli settlements on Palestinian land in the West Bank.

The U.S. government blocked the Security Council from taking any action during the 2008 Israeli massacre in Gaza, which resulted in the deaths of more than 1,500 Palestinians. These international bodies, as well as the International Criminal Court, have been silent on Israeli massacres, on U.S. drone attacks on defenseless civilians in Pakistan, and on the criminal invasions and occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan.

The fact that China went along with the sanctions vote is an unfortunate example of the government in Beijing letting its interest in trade and continued oil shipments take precedence over its past opposition to sanctions that clearly impact civilian populations.

### **Who leads the opposition?**

It is important to look at the opposition movement, especially those being so widely quoted in all the international media. We must assume that people with genuine grievances and wrongs have been caught up in it. But who is actually leading the movement?

A front-page New York Times article of Feb. 25 described just how different Libya is from other struggles breaking out across the Arab world. “Unlike the Facebook enabled youth rebellions, the insurrection here has been led by people who are more mature and who have been actively opposing the regime for some time.” The article describes how arms had been smuggled across the border with Egypt for weeks, allowing the rebellion to “escalate quickly and violently in little more than a week.”

The opposition group most widely quoted is the National Front for the Salvation of Libya. The NFSL, founded in 1981, is known to be a CIA-funded organization, with offices in Washington, D.C. It has maintained a military force, called the Libyan National Army, in Egypt near the Libyan border. A Google search of National Front for the Salvation of Libya and CIA will quickly confirm hundreds of references.

Also widely quoted is the National Conference for the Libyan Opposition. This is a coalition formed by the NFSL that also includes the Libyan Constitutional Union, led by Muhammad as-Senussi, a pretender to the Libyan throne. The web site of the LCU calls upon the Libyan people to reiterate a pledge of allegiance to King Idris El-Senusi as historical leader of the Libyan people. The flag used by the coalition is the flag of the former Kingdom of Libya.

Clearly these CIA-financed forces and old monarchists are politically and socially different from the disenfranchised youth and workers who have marched by the millions against U.S.-backed dictators in Egypt and Tunisia and are today demonstrating in Bahrain, Yemen and Oman.

According to the Times article, the military wing of the NFSL, using smuggled arms, quickly seized police and military posts in the Mediterranean port city of Benghazi and nearby areas that are north of Libya’s richest oil fields and are where most of its oil and gas pipelines, refineries and its liquefied natural gas port are located. The Times and other Western media claim that this area, now under “opposition control,” includes 80 percent of Libya’s oil facilities.



The Libyan opposition, unlike the movements elsewhere in the Arab world, from the beginning appealed for international assistance. And the imperialists quickly responded.

For example, Mohammed Ali Abdallah, deputy secretary general of the NFSL, sent out a desperate appeal: “We are expecting a massacre.” “We are sending an SOS to the international community to step in.” Without international efforts to restrain Gadhafi, “there will be a bloodbath in Libya in the next 48 hours.”

The Wall Street Journal, the voice of big business, in a Feb. 23 editorial wrote that “The U.S. and Europe should help the Libyans overthrow the Gadhafi regime.”

### **U.S. interests – oil**

Why are Washington and the European powers willing and anxious to act on Libya?

When a new development arises it is important to review what we know of the past and to always ask, what are the interests of U.S. corporations in the region?

Libya is an oil-rich country — one of the world’s 10 richest. Libya has the largest proven oil reserves in Africa, at least 44 billion barrels. It has been producing 1.8 million barrels of oil a day — light crude that is considered top quality and needs less refining than most other oil. Libya also has large deposits of natural gas that is easy to pipe directly to European markets. It is a large country in area with a small population 6.4 million people.

That is how the powerful U.S. oil and military corporations, banks and financial institutions who dominate global markets see Libya.

Oil and gas are today the most valuable commodities and the largest source of profits in the world. Gaining control of oil fields, pipelines, refineries and markets drives a great part of U.S. imperialist policy.

During two decades of U.S. sanctions on Libya, which Washington had calculated would bring down the regime, European corporate interests invested heavily in pipeline and infrastructure development there. Some 85 percent of Libya’s energy exports go to Europe.

European transnationals — in particular BP, Royal Dutch Shell, Total, Eni, BASF, Statoil and Rapsol — have dominated Libya’s oil market. The giant U.S. oil corporations were left out of these lucrative deals. China has been buying a growing amount of oil produced by Libya’s National Oil Corp. and has built a short oil pipeline in Libya.

The huge profits that could be made by controlling Libya’s oil and natural gas are what is behind the drum roll of the U.S. corporate media’s call for “humanitarian intervention to save lives.”



Manlio Dinucci, an Italian journalist writing for Italy's *Il Manifesto*, explained on Feb. 25 that "If Gadhafi is overthrown, the U.S. would be able to topple the entire framework of economic relations with Libya, opening the way to U.S.-based multinationals, so far almost entirely excluded from exploitation of energy reserves in Libya. The United States could thus control the tap for energy sources upon which Europe largely depends and which also supply China."

## **Libya background**

Libya was a colony of Italy from 1911 until Italy's defeat in World War II. The Western imperialist powers after the war set up regimes across the region that were called independent states but were headed by appointed monarchs with no democratic vote for the people. Libya became a sovereign country in name, but was firmly tied to the U.S. and Britain under a new monarch — King Idris.

In 1969 as a wave of anti-colonial struggles swept the colonized world, revolutionary-minded Pan-Arab nationalist junior military officers overthrew Idris, who was vacationing in Europe. The leader of the coup was 27-year old Moammar Gadhafi.

Libya changed its name from the Kingdom of Libya to the Libyan Arab Republic and later to the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

The young officers ordered the U.S. and British bases in Libya closed, including the Pentagon's large Wheelus Air Base. They nationalized the oil industry and many commercial interests that had been under U.S. and British imperialist control.

These military officers did not come to power in a revolutionary upheaval of the masses. It was not a socialist revolution. It was still a class society. But Libya was no longer under foreign domination.

Many progressive changes were carried out. New Libya made many economic and social gains. The conditions of life for the masses radically improved. Most basic necessities — food, housing, fuel, health care and education — were either heavily subsidized or became entirely free. Subsidies were used as the best way to redistribute the national wealth.

Conditions for women changed dramatically. Within 20 years Libya had the highest Human Development Index ranking in Africa — a U.N. measurement of life expectancy, educational attainment and adjusted real income. Through the 1970s and 1980s, Libya was internationally known for taking strong anti-imperialist positions and supporting other revolutionary struggles, from the African National Congress in South Africa to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Irish Republican Army.

The U.S. carried out numerous assassination and coup attempts against the Gadhafi regime and financed armed opposition groups, such as the NFSL. Some

U.S. attacks were blatant and open. For example, without warning 66 U.S. jets bombed the Libyan capital of Tripoli and its second-largest city, Benghazi, on April 15, 1986. Gadhafi's home was bombed and his infant daughter killed in the attack, along with hundreds of others.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s the U.S. succeeded in isolating Libya through severe economic sanctions. Every effort was made to sabotage the economy and to destabilize the government.

### **Demonization of Gadhafi**

It is up to the people of Libya, of Africa and of the Arab World to evaluate the contradictory role of Gadhafi, the chair of Libya's Revolutionary Command Council. People here, in the center of an empire built on global exploitation, should not join in the racist characterizations, ridicule and demonization of Gadhafi that saturate the corporate media.

Even if Gadhafi were as quiet and austere as a monk and as careful as a diplomat, as president of an oil-rich, previously underdeveloped African country he still would have been hated, ridiculed and demonized by U.S. imperialism if he resisted U.S. corporate domination. That was his real crime and for that he has never been forgiven.

It is important to note that degrading and racist terms are never used against reliable U.S. pawns or dictators, regardless of how corrupt or ruthless they may be to their own people.

### **U.S. threats forces concessions**

It was after the U.S. war crime billed as "shock and awe," with its massive aerial bombardment of Iraq followed by a ground invasion and occupation, that Libya finally succumbed to U.S. demands. After decades of militant, anti-imperialist solidarity, Libya dramatically changed course. Gadhafi offered to assist the U.S. in its "war on terror."

Washington's demands were onerous and humiliating. Libya was forced to accept full responsibility for the downing of the Lockerbie aircraft and pay \$2.7 billion in indemnities. That was just the beginning. In order for U.S. sanctions to be lifted, Libya had to open its markets and "restructure" its economy. It was all part of the package.

Regardless of Gadhafi's many concessions and the subsequent grand receptions for him by European heads of state, U.S. imperialism was planning his complete humiliation and downfall. U.S. think tanks engaged in numerous studies of how to undermine and weaken Gadhafi's popular support.

IMF strategists descended on Libya with programs. The new economic advisors prescribed the same measures they impose on every developing country. But Libya did not have a foreign debt; it has a positive trade balance of \$27

billion a year. The only reason the IMF demanded an end to subsidies of basic necessities was to undercut the social basis of support for the regime.

Libya's "market liberalization" meant a cut in \$5 billion worth of subsidies annually. For decades, the state had been subsidizing 93 percent of the value of several basic commodities, notably fuel. After accepting the IMF program, the government doubled the price of electricity for consumers. There was a sudden 30 percent hike in fuel prices. This touched off price increases in many other goods and services as well.

Libya was told to privatize 360 state-owned companies and enterprises, including steel mills, cement plants, engineering firms, food factories, truck and bus assembly lines and state farms. This left thousands of workers jobless.

Libya had to sell a 60-percent stake in the state-owned oil company Tamoil Group and privatize its General National Company for Flour Mills and Fodder.

The Carnegie Endowment Fund was already charting the impact of economic reforms. A 2005 report titled "Economic Reforms Anger Libyan Citizens" by Eman Wahby said that "Another aspect of structural reform was the end of restrictions on imports. Foreign companies were granted licenses to export to Libya through local agents. As a result, products from all over the world have flooded the previously isolated Libyan market." This was a disaster for workers in Libya's factories, which are unequipped to face competition.

More than \$4 billion poured into Libya, which became Africa's top recipient of foreign investment. As the bankers and their think tanks knew so well, this did not benefit the Libyan masses, it impoverished them.

But no matter what Gadhafi did, it was never enough for U.S. corporate power. The bankers and financiers wanted more. There was no trust. Gadhafi had opposed the U.S. for decades and was still considered highly "unreliable."

The magazine *US Banker* in May 2005 ran an article titled "Emerging Markets: Is Libya the Next Frontier for U.S. Banks?" It said that "As the nation passes reforms, profits beckon. But chaos abounds." It interviewed Robert Armao, president of the New York City-based U.S.-Libya Trade and Economic Council: "All the big Western banks are now exploring opportunities there," said Armao. "The political situation with [Gadhafi] is still very suspect." The potential "looks wonderful for banks. Libya is a country untouched and a land of opportunity. It will happen, but it may take a little time."

Libya has never been a socialist country. There has always been extensive inherited wealth and old privileges. It is a class society with millions of workers, many of them immigrants.

Restructuring the economy to maximize profits for Western bankers destabilized relations, even in the ruling circles. Who gets in on the deals to privatize

key industries, which families, which tribes? Who is left out? Old rivalries and competitions surfaced.

Just how carefully the U.S. government was monitoring these imposed changes can be seen in recently released Wikileaks cables from the U.S. Embassy in Tripoli, reprinted in the Britain-based Telegraph of Jan. 31. A cable titled “Inflation on the rise in Libya” and sent on Jan. 4, 2009, described the impact of “a radical program of privatization and government restructuring.”

“Particular increases were seen,” the cable said, “in prices for food-stuffs — the price of previously subsidized goods such as sugar, rice, and flour increased by 85 percent in the two years since subsidies were lifted. Construction materials have also increased markedly: prices for cement, aggregate, and bricks have increased by 65 percent in the past year. Cement has gone from 5 Libyan dinars for a 50-kilogram bag to 17 dinars in one year; the price of steel bars has increased by a factor of ten.

“The [Libyan government’s] termination of subsidies and price controls as part of a broader program of economic reform and privatization has certainly contributed to inflationary pressures and prompted some grumbling. ...

“The combination of high inflation and diminishing subsidies and price controls is worrying for a Libyan public accustomed to greater government cushioning from market forces.”

These U.S. Embassy cables confirm that while continuing to maintain and finance Libyan opposition groups in Egypt, Washington and London were also constantly taking the temperature of the mass discontent caused by their policies.

Today millions of people in the U.S. and around the world are deeply inspired by the actions of millions of youths in the streets of Egypt, Tunisia, Bahrain, Yemen and now Oman. The impact is felt even in the sit-in in Wisconsin.

It is vital for the U.S. political and class-conscious movement to resist the enormous pressure of a U.S.-orchestrated campaign for military intervention in Libya. A new imperialist adventure must be challenged. Solidarity with the peoples’ movements! U.S. hands off! □



March 21, Times Square, New York City

# Behind the demonizing of Gadhafi

*Editorial, March 2, 2011*

Africa continues to be the most underdeveloped continent, despite having the world's most abundant mineral wealth.

The United States in 1847 created Liberia as a place to send freed African-American slaves. Eventually it became the biggest rubber plantation in the world. In the late 19th century, most of the rest of Africa was carved up by the European colonial powers, including Germany, Britain, Portugal, Spain, Italy, France and Belgium. By the time of World War I, Africa was nothing more than a gigantic plantation, with hundreds of millions of African peoples made into virtual slaves and their resources ripped off to help enrich European and U.S. capitalists.

After World War II, anti-colonial struggles spread like wildfire throughout Africa, bringing forth dynamic African leaders at the head of campaigns for independence and sovereignty from their former colonial oppressors. These heroic leaders included Patrice Lumumba, Amílcar Cabral, Samora Machel and Kwame Nkrumah.

Libya had been an Italian colony until Italy's defeat in World War II. After the war, the U.S. and Britain set up a monarchy in Libya under King Idris I. Moammar al-Gadhafi was a military officer when he led a coup in 1969 against the monarchy. This led to the nationalization of Libya's oil and social gains for the Libyan people.

In recent years, however, U.S. sanctions and military aggression against the Gadhafi regime led the government to make concessions and agree to austerity measures demanded by imperialist banks, all of which fueled unrest in the population.

On top of this growing imperialist intervention and pressure, the capitalist media are carrying out a vicious, vindictive campaign against Gadhafi, characterizing him in demonizing, racist terms like "mad dog." Such terms are never used to describe former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak or other U.S. puppets in the Arab world, from Saudi Arabia to Jordan to Bahrain.

The U.S. has imposed sanctions on President Gadhafi and his family's bank accounts; by contrast, the U.S. did not impose similar sanctions on Mubarak and his reported \$70 billion in bank accounts. While President Barack Obama has publicly called for Gadhafi to step down from office, he treated Mubarak with kid gloves before the resolve of the Egyptian masses forced Mubarak to leave office.

The racist, hostile treatment of Gadhafi is not an isolated example. Another African leader who has been demonized in a comparable manner is Robert Mugabe, president of Zimbabwe. Unlike Gadhafi, Mugabe has been the leader of a national liberation movement, ZANU-PF. Mugabe forced Britain, the colonial oppressor, to the bargaining table in 1979 to work out an agreement in which Britain would subsidize the giving back to African war veterans of millions of acres of land stolen by white farmers. But Britain didn't live up to the agreement. When Mugabe kept his promise to these freedom fighters by seizing the land, the U.S. and British governments in 2000 imposed genocidal sanctions on the Zimbabwean economy and also sought to isolate Mugabe with a prolonged character assassination. They called him a "tyrant" and "despot" and accused him of starving his people — when the real culprits were "structural adjustment" measures imposed by the IMF, along with periods of severe drought.

The Western imperialists have also made every effort to demonize President Omar al-Bashir of Sudan while funding secessionist movements in the oil-rich South and West of the country, imposing sanctions and bringing criminal charges against him in the International Criminal Court.

It is the right of any oppressed people to oppose and organize against their leaders if basic needs and rights are not being met. It is not the right of imperialist governments to manipulate, exploit and outright intervene in the internal affairs of another country while personally and politically demonizing their leaders. This is a violation of the basic right to self-determination.

There have been reports from news sources, including Al Jazeera, that low-waged migrants from Chad, Niger and other sub-Saharan African countries working in Libya have been physically attacked and accused of being "mercenaries" hired by Gadhafi. These attacks are being carried out by anti-Gadhafi forces who are receiving backing from the West.

The imperialists don't care about any suffering of the Libyan people but will do what they deem in their interests to gain control of the oil that Libya possesses. The people of Libya don't need imperialist intervention; they need and deserve reparations from imperialist banks and governments that have held back real economic development and political independence on a continent that has been severely abused for centuries, beginning with the devastating slave trade.

It is imperative that the progressive movement in the U.S. take up the clarion call of getting imperialism off the backs of the African people by intensifying the class struggle here. This is what real solidarity is all about. □



# Libya repels attack as U.S. seeks 'regime change'

*By Abayomi Azikiwe, Editor, Pan-African News Wire, March 9, 2011*

As of March 7, Libyan military forces have stepped up their counteroffensive against rebel units backed by the U.S. and European Union countries. Government soldiers have retaken the town of Bin Jawad and are mounting assaults on rebels near the oil port of Ras Lanuf as well as Az Zawiyah, Tobruk and Misurata.

Meanwhile, Western and allied media sources have escalated their disinformation campaign against Moammar Gadhafi and the Libyan government in an effort to create the conditions for the overthrow of this oil-rich, North African state.

Gadhafi and the Libyan government are portrayed as the worst form of dictatorship in the world. Leading foreign policy operatives of the U.S. government like Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Ambassador to the U.N. Susan Rice have openly called for Gadhafi's removal.

The biased news coverage of developments in Libya has created the atmosphere for widespread vilification of Gadhafi and his government.

## **ICC threatens Libya from Europe**

On March 3 the International Criminal Court, based in The Hague, Netherlands, announced that Gadhafi, his sons and other leading figures in the Libyan government are under investigation for alleged war crimes. This institution has been dubbed by many people around the world as the "African Criminal Court," since it has focused almost exclusively on leaders within the continent.

The ICC has issued warrants against Sudan's president, Omar Hassan al-Bashir, for alleged crimes committed during that government's efforts to restore order in the face of attacks by rebels operating in the western Darfur region of this central African state. The warrants against Bashir have been drawn up over the objections of both the African Union and the Arab League.

ICC prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo told the international press on March 3, "I would like to use this opportunity to put [Libya] on notice. I want to be clear: If their troops commit crimes, they could be made criminally responsible." (CNN, March 3)

Moreno-Ocampo acknowledged to questions, "This is the beginning of the investigation. I can give no details. We cannot confirm these allegations that these civilians were bombed by planes."



## **Libya's human rights standing**

The United Nations Human Rights Council based in Geneva has suspended Libya from participating in its activities and the country's representative to Geneva has defected. Prior to the new round of attacks against this North African state, however, this same council had prepared a report praising Libya's record on human rights. (Reuters, March 3)

In relationship to the status of women in Libya, the report said: "The delegation indicated that women were highly regarded in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, and their rights were guaranteed by all laws and legislation. Discriminatory laws had been revoked." (Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Human Rights Council, Jan. 4)

The report goes on to note that "Libyan women occupied prominent positions in the public sector, the judicial system, the public prosecutor's office, the police and the military. Libyan legislation also guaranteed children their rights, and provided for special care for children with special needs, the elderly and persons with disabilities."

## **Venezuelan proposal rejected by imperialists**

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has submitted a proposal to mediate the current conflict inside Libya by establishing a negotiating team to be dispatched to the country and the region. This effort was outright rejected by the imperialist states of the U.S. and France.

Venezuela and Libya, two large-scale, oil-producing states, have good diplomatic and economic relations. When Libya was chair of the African Union in 2009 and president of the United Nations General Assembly, Gadhafi led a delegation of African representatives to Venezuela to participate in a high-level meeting with Latin American states.

The Arab League said that it was interested in the Venezuelan peace proposal. However, the U.S. and France apparently felt that such an effort would lend too much credibility to both Venezuela and the Arab League.

The African Union, a 53-member organization of independent African states, has issued two statements on the situation in Libya, which have largely been ignored by the U.S., the U.N. and the international corporate-oriented media.

The AU Peace and Security Council supported "the aspirations of the people of Libya for democracy, political reform, justice and socio-economic development" but stressed "the need to preserve the territorial integrity and unity of the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya."

The biased reporting of the corporate media and the threats leveled by the International Criminal Court, the United States, NATO and the European Union indicate clearly that the Western governments are seeking to institute regime change in this North African country. □

## **On the horns of a dilemma**

*By Deirdre Griswold, March 9, 2011*

This article is based on a talk given March 4 at a meeting of the New York branch of Workers World Party.

The U.S. imperialist ruling class is on the horns of a dilemma over what to do about Libya. In modern terms, it finds itself in what could be called a lose-lose situation.

Ever since a movement of junior officers deposed Libya's monarchy in 1969, and especially since its leader, Moammar Gadhafi, nationalized Libya's oil, the imperialists in the U.S. and in Europe have wanted to get rid of him.

They tried to weaken his regime with economic sanctions, decades of CIA training and financing of opponents in exile, and in 1986 a direct air assault on Tripoli and Benghazi in which 60 people were killed by U.S. bombs — one of them Gadhafi's infant daughter.

The pressures on Libya were so great that in 2003, after the U.S. carried out its "shock and awe" assault on Iraq, Gadhafi made political and economic concessions to imperialism, opening up areas of the Libyan economy and ending state subsidies on many needed items. But while imperialist heads of state then congratulated Gadhafi and seemed to accept his regime, none of this was enough, especially for the U.S.

When the protests against the U.S.-backed dictatorships in Tunisia and Egypt began at the end of 2010, and grew into such huge mass demonstrations that even Washington was forced to call on Hosni Mubarak to step down, the idea grew in Western circles that now was the time to dislodge Gadhafi. This seems to have struck a chord with some elements in Libya, especially in the eastern city of Benghazi, which is situated near Libya's major oil fields, pipelines, refineries and ports. Protests began. However, they very soon morphed into a well-armed rebellion against the Libyan government aimed at seizing control of the country.

While the U.S. and other imperialist powers have been involved in brokering a change of faces in Egypt and Tunisia in order to retain the same basic power structures — which are unacceptable to millions of people — they have cheered on the armed opposition in Libya since the beginning.

What is their dilemma? It is this: After several weeks of fighting, Gadhafi has not been overthrown and has strong support in Tripoli, the capital city where one-third of Libya's population lives. The rebel forces appear to be in

retreat — and may not all have the same aims. The Western media cites those who have been calling for intervention.

If the imperialists openly intervene to secure the military overthrow of Gadhafi, this would undermine their carefully orchestrated efforts to appear to side with the people of the region while urging nonviolence. This problem has been openly discussed, although in more veiled language, in the U.S. capitalist media.

### **Biggest U.S. stakes are in the Gulf**

So which is more important to them, Libya — or Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Bahrain, Yemen, Kuwait, Oman — and possibly even Saudi Arabia, if the revolts spread?

We ourselves have pointed out that U.S. oil corporations are salivating over the prospect of gaining control over the 47 billion barrels of oil under the desert sands of Libya. At the present time, the U.S. imports no oil from Libya. (Nevertheless, prices are being opportunistically hiked here at the gas pumps, supposedly because of the Libyan crisis.) Even more important to the billionaire class, U.S. oil companies like ConocoPhillips, Marathon, Hess and Occidental Petroleum, while profiting from the exploration, drilling, pumping, refining and exporting of Libya's oil, have much larger interests elsewhere.

Libya's proven oil reserves, the largest in Africa, pale in comparison to those in the U.S.-aligned and -armed Gulf states — some 700 billion barrels, not counting Iran.

Mass uprisings are shaking many of these states despite heavy repression — which gets very little attention in the Western media compared to Libya. The social gulf in these countries between rich and poor, haves and have-nots, is immense compared to Libya, where oil income has been used to attain the highest human development index in Africa.

Certainly, the governments of these top-heavy oil states, like the absolute monarchy of King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz of Saudi Arabia, or the emirate of Kuwait run by the al-Sabah dynasty, are inherently unstable. They would have been overthrown long ago were it not for their powerful protector — the billionaire-dominated U.S. government, with its far-flung navy and web of bases around the world.

However, with all its powerful weapons and hundreds of thousands of invading troops, the U.S. has not even been able to crush a resistance movement in impoverished Afghanistan or set up a stable comprador regime in Iraq. And these two aggressions, along with U.S. backing for Israel's brutal occupation of Palestinian land, have turned public opinion in the region sharply against U.S. intervention.

When Barack Obama was elected president, the strategists for imperialism hoped they could reverse this erosion of U.S. influence in the Arab world. They went on a charm offensive that in style was very different from the anti-Muslim agitation of the Bush period. Perhaps the masses saw this as an opening to rise up against dictators like Mubarak without triggering an automatic U.S. intervention.

So which will it be? Will U.S. imperialism show its fangs again and, perhaps with the support of Britain, France, Germany and Italy, declare a “no-fly” zone over Libya in order to paralyze Gadhafi’s air force while rebels try to advance and take the capital? It’s a possibility, but one fraught with dangers for imperialism. First of all, the rebels may not be able to do it. Then the question of sending imperialist ground troops would be on the table, which could embroil the U.S. and its allies in another quagmire.

On March 2, U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, a former head of the CIA, testified to Congress. He rather sharply answered the “loose talk” of those clamoring for a no-fly zone, saying that would require massive air strikes against Libya’s air-defense system as well as against its air force.

Gates, Obama and others are hoping that U.S. and U.N. sanctions, clandestine operations, a simmering civil war, gunboat diplomacy and a hostile imperialist media will put enough pressure on the Libyan people that the imperialists can achieve their objectives. However, they will not rule out military intervention.

Britain was just caught sending a team of MI6 intelligence officers and Special Forces soldiers into eastern Libya, reportedly for a meeting with rebels. But farmers in the area caught the British agents after their helicopter landed in the middle of the night and handed them over to the rebels, who then released them. (Guardian [Britain], March 7) It was an embarrassment for the British government — and undoubtedly also for those rebels who had been in secret negotiations with them.

The imperialists have tried to use the mass popular rebellions in the region as a cover for carrying out their own operation against Libya — but it is fear of pushing these rebellions even further in an anti-imperialist direction that has so far restrained them from open intervention. □

# Libyan military routs Western-backed rebels

*By Abayomi Azikiwe, Editor, Pan-African News Wire, March 16, 2011*

March 13 — Libyan government forces have taken several towns both east and west of Tripoli, the capital, driving out rebel groups that have been calling for military intervention by the imperialist states. Morale among the opposition is reportedly declining in Benghazi, which has been the de facto headquarters of the rebels.

The United States and the European powers in NATO have been supporting and trying to coordinate the actions of these groups, but their weakness prompted NATO to hold a strategy meeting on March 10.

Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi has maintained that the rebels are backed by the Western imperialist countries and that they are attempting to divide the country along regional and tribal lines. Since the beginning of the unrest, the corporate media outlets in the U.S. and around the world have given unconditional support to the rebel groups.

All the major imperialist states are lined up against the Libyan government in their demand that Gadhafi and his supporters be overthrown. Nonetheless, these Western countries are divided over the best way to remove the current government and gain control over the oil and natural gas resources inside this North African state.

## **U.S. forces bogged down**

U.S. military forces have already suffered tremendous defeats and setbacks in Iraq and Afghanistan. Inside Afghanistan the Pentagon has ordered more than a thousand bombing missions per month and deployed more than 100,000 U.S. and NATO troops. Nevertheless, the resistance forces are growing significantly.

The U.S. has no strategy for the decisive defeat of the resistance in Afghanistan or Pakistan, where the war has spread even wider under the Obama administration. Obama dispatched an additional 30,000 troops to Afghanistan in late 2009, but these new units have failed to bring the country under the control of the U.S. military forces. In Pakistan, U.S. and NATO policy has only succeeded in creating more adversaries.

Despite the official U.S. position on Iraq that the “surge” worked and that the combat mission is over, Pentagon forces are still being killed in the country. Invaded in 2003 and occupied by U.S. forces ever since, Iraq today is by no means stable or self-sufficient.

Just recently, hundreds of thousands of Iraqis protested against the horrendous conditions prevalent inside the country, which include poor drinking water, lack of utility services, high unemployment, and soaring food and fuel prices. Dozens of demonstrators were killed by the U.S.-trained security forces in February and March. These demonstrations, and the brutality with which they were treated, garnered virtually no press coverage inside the U.S.

The U.S. and other Western imperialist states claim their concerns in Libya are only related to the burgeoning humanitarian crisis caused by the fighting launched by the rebels. The U.S. has dispatched warships to the region under the guise of evacuating foreigners from the North African state.

The U.S. Africa Command (Africom) has been engaged in “its first operational assignment, helping to evacuate foreigners from Libya and delivering humanitarian supplies to refugees in Tunisia,” said Voice of America on March 9. It added, “The command has also had a key role in preparing what officials call a ‘full range of options’ in case President Barack Obama orders military intervention in Libya.”

However, U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates warned Congress and the Obama administration of the dangers associated with possible aerial bombardments of Libya and the deployment of troops in this North African state. He indicated that the imposition of a so-called “no-fly zone” over Libya would require air strikes against the government’s defensive positions and moving a large-scale naval expedition into the region.

### **Egypt’s military secretly helps rebels**

Egypt receives an estimated \$1.5 billion annually from the U.S. to subsidize its military forces. A United Press International dispatch published on March 9 reported: “Egypt, still grappling with a revolution that toppled President Hosni Mubarak in February, is reported to be quietly aiding rebel forces seeking to oust Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi. ... While the United States and the international community debate whether to intervene in the civil war raging in Libya to support the ragtag rebel forces holding the east of the country, Egypt apparently has sent around 100 Special Forces troops to help the insurgents.”

Unnamed sources referred to in the UPI report indicate that the “Egyptian commandoes are most likely from Unit 777 of the Egyptian army’s Special Operations Command set up in the late 1970s. Unit 777’s 250-300 personnel trains with Germany’s elite GSC-9 counter-terrorism force, the U.S. Army’s Delta Force and France’s GIGN, special operations arm of the National Gendarmerie.” The conservative government of Nicolas Sarkozy of France was the first of the imperialist states to formally recognize the rebel forces.

NATO’s meeting on March 10 brought together defense ministers, foreign ministers, prime ministers or presidents for a two-day meeting about what to do with regard to Libya. Just prior to the March 10 gathering, NATO said it

was engaging in the 24-hour-a-day surveillance of Libyan air space. NATO also admitted that an airborne warning-and-control aircraft has already gone on patrol with a Boeing E3 Sentry maintaining a position over the Mediterranean.

However, although Britain and France pushed for setting up a no-fly zone over Libya, there was no agreement among the imperialists, who referred the matter to the U.N. Security Council.

Turkey, also a member of NATO, opposed intervention. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said, “Military intervention by NATO in Libya or any other country would be totally counter-productive.” (AFP, March 14)

## **African Union opposes intervention**

The African Union Peace and Security Council, headed by Zimbabwe, after a two-day meeting issued a communiqué on March 11 opposing any foreign military intervention in Libya. The AU meeting, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, went on record as recognizing Libya’s unity and territorial sovereignty. The AU represents 53 member states.

The continental organization concluded: “The current situation in Libya calls for an urgent African action for the immediate cessation of all hostilities, the cooperation of the competent Libyan authorities to facilitate the timely delivery of humanitarian assistance to the needy populations, the protection of foreign nationals, including the African migrants living in Libya, and the adoption and implementation of the political reforms necessary for the elimination of the causes of the current crisis.”

Libyan state television on March 13 reported, “The Libyan authorities will take all steps to welcome [AU] members and offer all facilities for the accomplishment of the mission.”

On the same day, Gadhafi met with ambassadors from China, Russia and India and encouraged these states to increase their economic cooperation with Libya. (Jana, March 14)

## **U.S. hands off Africa!**

The U.S. is already heavily involved militarily on the African continent with the growing presence of Africom, as well as joint operations with various states throughout the region. The U.S. military base in Djibouti serves as its forward operational center in the Horn of Africa.

These foreign policy and military maneuvers can lead to a protracted ground conflict involving U.S. and NATO forces in North Africa.

Other states in Africa — namely Sudan, Zimbabwe and Somalia — are now under even more of a threat of direct military intervention from the U.S. and other imperialist countries. In Somalia, the U.S. is already engaged in a proxy



war to prevent the seizure of power by an Islamic resistance movement that is hostile to Washington's objectives in the Horn of Africa.

The people of Libya and North Africa are not the enemies of the working people and the oppressed in the United States. The people in the United States must vigorously oppose the intervention by the Pentagon and NATO in the plot to topple the Libyan government. The resources utilized for war and occupation throughout the world should be rechanneled to provide jobs, housing, health-care, quality education and public services to the majority of working people and the poor. □



Left: Rally in Madison, Wisconsin; Below: Rally in Times Square, New York



# Hands off Libya! Jobs, not war!

*Editorial, March 17, 2011*

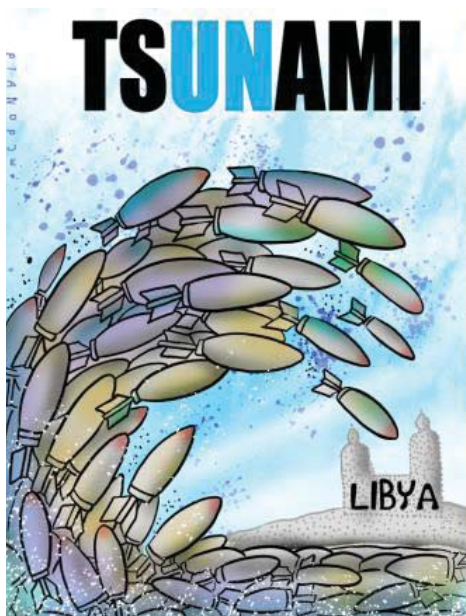
The imperialist states with the greatest economic stakes in North Africa and the Middle East — the U.S., Britain and France — have once again used the United Nations Security Council as a political cover to endorse their naked aggression against a developing country struggling to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

On March 17, these three pushed through a resolution giving them the supposed authority to openly wage war against Libya by bombing it, all under the guise of humanitarian concern for civilians.

Libya has been resisting an armed force, supported by these same imperialists, that has used conventional weapons of war, not prayers or pleas, to take over cities in this North African country's most sensitive economic areas — where its oil is refined and shipped out. But this week the tide turned in this war, and in recent days the Libyan government has shown that it has the popular support and the strength to roll back this attempt to either partition the country or overthrow the government altogether and push Libya back to the days of neo-colonialism.

That is why the imperialists rushed to ram through a resolution that is as phony as the ones that “authorized” sanctions on Iraq and Yugoslavia, with devastating consequences for the people who were supposedly being rescued.

Make no mistake about it — this is not a struggle between an entrenched dictatorship that has served the interests of the imperialists and unarmed demonstrators — like the mass demonstrations in Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain, Yemen and now even Saudi Arabia. But the imperialist media in particular has framed the Libyan issue as a struggle for democracy. The U.N. resolution itself is worded deceitfully, as a move intended to help civilians, without mentioning that this intervention is intended to resuscitate an armed rebellion that has been receiving outside assistance.



Troops from the reactionary kingdom of Saudi Arabia this week invaded Bahrain to shoot down demonstrators there. The Yemeni rulers are also firing on unarmed demonstrators. But the imperialists are not clamoring to intervene there on the side of the demonstrators; they aren't even publicly rebuking these reactionary rulers.

The Security Council vote authorizing the imperialists to bomb Libya was 10 for, with five abstentions. Those who voted for — notably the U.S., Britain and France — represent the huge transnational banks and oil companies that have monopolized control of the Middle East and most of the world's oil. The countries that abstained — China, Russia, India, Brazil and Germany — have almost four times as many people as those voting for the resolution.

This crime is against the working class at home, too. Who will pay for another aggression at a time when the political stooges of big business are crying poverty and cutting every needed social program? Not the super-rich, who barely pay taxes, but the working class and oppressed, who already are suffering high unemployment, plunging wages and cuts to all vital social services.

We must demand: No intervention in Libya! Libya belongs to the Libyan people, not to the imperialist plunderers. End all U.S. interventions and occupations and bring the troops home! Money for jobs, housing, education and health care, not imperialist war! □



UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon facing angry protesters in Cairo, Egypt after the UN Security Council vote.

## **Why imperialists hate Libya, love Bahrain**

*By Deirdre Griswold, March 17, 2011*

Events continue to unfold rapidly in North Africa and the Gulf states.

On March 14 Saudi Arabia sent tanks and 2,000 troops into the kingdom of Bahrain to protect the Al Khalifa royal family there from mass protests demanding an end to the monopoly of political power in the hands of the king.

The next day police shot dead two protesters in a crowd of at least 10,000 who had marched to the Saudi Embassy in Bahrain with signs reading “Stop Saudi invasion.”

The tiny island territory of Bahrain was once a British colony and a base in the Persian Gulf for the Royal Navy, but today it is used by the U.S. Fifth Fleet. It has become a major financial center for the oil-rich Gulf states. The majority of people are Shiite but the royal family is Sunni and close to the Saudi rulers. The Shiites are discriminated against and not allowed by law to belong to Bahrain’s army.

### **Rebels pushed back in Libya**

At the same time, in North Africa, the Libyan military has been able to push back armed rebel forces that in recent weeks had gained control of several cities both east and west of the capital, Tripoli. Now the only city of any size remaining in rebel hands is Benghazi, strategically located astride the roads and pipelines leading to 80 percent of Libya’s oil.

The leaders of the Libyan rebels had counted on support from the U.S. and European imperialists and have been calling for their military intervention. However, the imperialists have responded only with covert military aid to the rebels so far and have not been able to agree on setting up a “no-fly zone” over Libya — which Britain and France have campaigned for in both the U.N. and NATO.

All the imperialists would prefer a loyal Western puppet over Moammar Gadhafi, who came to power in 1969 through a progressive nationalist military coup. He nationalized the country’s oil, which provided the funds for a dramatic improvement of the people’s standard of living. Decades later, however, in the period after the U.S. “shock and awe” invasion of Iraq, Gadhafi agreed to open Libya up again to foreign investment.

## **WikiLeaks cable makes things clear**

However, a cable from U.S. Ambassador Gene Kretz to the State Department on June 4, 2009, made public by WikiLeaks, shows that more recently Libya was able to force foreign oil firms, especially France's Total, to agree to take a much smaller percentage of the oil and gas yielded from their wells, under threat of renationalization.

Kretz wrote, referring to Libya's National Oil Corporation: "The renegotiation of Total's contract is of a piece with the NOC's effort to renegotiate existing contracts to increase Libya's share of crude oil production. ... Each consortium will take 27 percent of oil production, down from the 50 percent take they had under the previous agreement. For gas, the consortium will take a 40 percent share (down from 50 percent), which will be reduced in the future to 30 percent. For the Mabrak field, which is located in the Sirte basin and produces some 20,000 barrels of oil per day, the new production share is 73 percent for the NOC, 20.25 percent for Total and 6.75 percent for StatoilHydro." ("06.04.2009: French Total-led consortiums accept lower production shares in Libya" — WikiLeaks document published in *Aftenposten*)

As the U.S. ambassador well understood, this effort by the Libyan government to get more control over its most valuable resource would antagonize the imperialist oil companies and their rich capitalist owners. No wonder that France was the first country to recognize the rebel regime in Benghazi!

Thus two very different struggles are taking place simultaneously in the region.

In Bahrain, the masses are coming out in mass protests against a regime solidly supported by the imperialists and reactionary Arab forces like the Saudis.

In Libya, it is the armed rebel groups that have imperialist support. The heads of state in the U.S., Britain and France have all called for the downfall of the Libyan government, headed by Col. Moammar Gadhafi. And they continue to threaten to intervene unless Gadhafi is overthrown — which appears increasingly unlikely.

## **End of an era**

Ruling groups like those in Tunisia, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain that have stayed in power for decades because they tied their fortunes to the interests of U.S. and European imperialist powers can no longer count on stability.

Some have ruled through state structures that are outright political dictatorships headed by kings, emirs or military strongmen. Others have allowed parliaments, prime ministers and presidents to exist as long as the interests of the ruling class and its imperial patrons were served.

It all seemed stable. The imperialists took out enormous wealth — in natural resources and in products created by the super-exploitation of the workers. They



allowed the kings, presidents and their political and business cohorts to live the good life while the masses of people sank from poverty to squalor.

The imperialists grew super-super-rich on profits from oil and other investments. In order to keep these regimes in power, they taxed the workers at home in order to send their puppets abroad the latest weapons and train their officers in how to repress the unhappy people. If that wasn't enough, they sent in their warships and planes in a show of brute strength.

Just a few months ago, it all still seemed to work. The stock exchanges were functioning well, funneling the wealth to those who already had too much, while unemployment, malnutrition and the million daily burdens that come with poverty kept the people down.

But then came a turning point: the mass movements that began demanding better conditions for the people as well as the exit of the foreign-appointed "leaders" who had oppressed them. They swelled from thousands to millions, and they wouldn't go home at the end of the day. Suddenly the vulnerabilities of these regimes were laid bare. Suddenly it was clear that they relied on imperialism to stay in power.

### **Imperialism's dilemma deepens**

What do the imperialists do now? That is what is being discussed every day behind closed doors in Washington and on Wall Street, in London, Paris, Rome, Berlin and the other imperialist capitals.

This doesn't come at a good time for them. They have growing problems at home, too. The costs of empire — and the deepening divide between rich and poor — are arousing the masses at home as well. How can the imperialist states divert even more money into ever bigger military adventures without further enraging the workers at home — who more and more are protesting the painful cuts being made to their wages, their services, public education, health care and everything else people need to have a decent life?

The thin veneer of capitalist democracy meant to cover up dictatorship by the big banks and corporations is wearing thin. With an intractable crisis of mass unemployment, an anti-union offensive and the balancing of government budgets on the backs of the workers, even as profits are again inflating the bank accounts of the very rich, it is hard for capitalist politicians of any stripe to stir up public support for yet another military adventure to protect the oil companies' buddies in the Middle East.

Whether it's to protect the rebels in Libya or the regime in Bahrain, imperialist intervention will only deepen the crisis of a system that is becoming more hated with each passing day. □

## **Stop U.S. bombing of Libya!**

*By Abayomi Azikiwe, Editor, Pan-African News Wire, March 24, 2011*

The bombing of Libya, which began on March 19, has aroused world opposition to this new aggression by the U.S. and European imperialist powers.

The bombing began on the eighth anniversary of the U.S. and British invasion and occupation of Iraq. Pentagon warplanes were bolstered by ships and planes from France, Britain, Italy and Canada. Using U.N. Security Council Resolution 1973 as a cover, these imperialist states have initiated an all-out war aimed at overthrowing the Libyan government and occupying that North African country.

The assault, dubbed “Operation Odyssey Dawn,” has included strikes by fighter aircraft and missiles launched from warships off the coast of Libya in the Mediterranean Sea. Areas inside Libya that have been bombed include Benghazi, Tripoli, Misurata and Ajdabiya.

On March 19, three Air Force B-2s from Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri dropped 45 bombs weighing a ton each on Misurata. Also, 15 Air Force and Marine fighter jets accompanied by aircraft from France and Britain bombed Benghazi. One U.S. F-15 jet fighter was reported downed on March 21.

The next day bombs dropped on the capital city of Tripoli destroyed a compound used by Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi.

The Libyan government said a three-story building in Tripoli had been destroyed by war planes of the U.S. and European states. Although U.S. and European military officials have stated that the Libyan leader is not a target in these operations, it is clear that these Western governments are out to assassinate Libya’s head of state. Nearly 25 years ago the U.S. military under Ronald Reagan bombed the Libyan cities of Tripoli and Benghazi in an earlier attempt on the life of Gadhafi; his young daughter was killed in the attacks.

In regard to the March 20 attacks on the compound where Gadhafi is often present, Libyan spokesperson Mussa Ibrahim told journalists, “This was a barbaric bombing which could have hit hundreds of civilians gathered at the residence of Moammar Gadhafi about 400 meters away from the building which was hit.” (Herald Sun (Australia), March 21)

Ibrahim went on to point out the contradictory and deceptive language being utilized by the Western countries now bombing Libya. He noted that “Western countries say they want to protect civilians while they bomb the residence knowing there are civilians inside.” In the aftermath of the bombing in Tripoli,



British Defense Secretary Liam Fox said on March 20 that Gadhafi was a “legitimate target.” (The Australian, March 21)

Nevertheless, U.S. Navy Vice Adm. William E. Gortney of the Joint Chiefs of Staff claimed that no civilians had been harmed in the bombings, which have included the use of stealth B-2 bombers, jet fighters, and more than 120 “Tomahawk” cruise missiles as well as other deadly U.S. weapons.

### **NATO, the Arab League, African Union and U.N. Security Council**

Since the bombing began on March 19, the United States has claimed to have limited objectives related to protecting civilians and imposing a “no-fly zone” over the North African state. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, contradicting his British counterpart, said Gadhafi was not a target. Gortney also claimed that “The no-fly zone is now effectively in place. We are not going after Gadhafi. At this particular point, I can guarantee he is not on the target list.”

Yet since late February, the Obama administration has called for the removal of the Libyan leader. These calls have been repeated not only by the president but by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice.

Moreover, the so-called rebellion in Libya that began in Benghazi on Feb. 17 has been supported by the U.S. and other Western imperialist states. Several of the groups trying to overthrow the Libyan government have long been financed, armed, trained and coordinated by the CIA.

France, prior to the bombing operations, gave recognition to the rebels as the legitimate government of Libya. At least two major peace proposals, put forward by Latin American states as well as the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, were rejected outright by the imperialist states now bombing the country as well as by the rebels.

Evidence of the real objectives in the bombing of Libya is the cover being provided by the imperialist states for the rebels. After the rebels’ defeat in the western and eastern section of Libya, the U.S. and European powers began bombing to support attacks by the rebels on key cities under government control.

Another important political aspect of the bombing of Libya has been the assertion that the Arab League supported the attacks. Amr Moussa, secretary-general of the Arab League, said several weeks prior to the bombings that he would support a no-fly zone over the country. However, the Arab League vote on support for U.N. Resolution 1973 was in a closed-door session with only half the member states present. Of those, Syria and Algeria reportedly objected to it.

Moussa has now expressed reservations about the military operations by the imperialist states against Libya. The Arab League leader said, “What happened differs from the no-fly zone objectives. What we want is the protection of civilians. Protection, not shelling more civilians.” (abc.net.au, March 21)

The African Union, a 53-member state organization for the continent, issued a communiqué on March 11 expressing solidarity with Libya and opposing foreign military intervention. The AU Peace and Security Council, which issued the communiqué, called for a negotiated resolution to the war in Libya and appointed a fact-finding mission to visit Libya to work on ending the fighting.

Nonetheless, the AU communiqué was totally ignored by the U.S., Canada, France, Italy and Britain. A delegation from South Africa that was scheduled to travel to Libya on March 21 was cancelled due to the imposition of the no-fly zone by the Western states.

### **Egyptian protesters attack U.N. chief**

Outrage has been expressed throughout the world over the launching of a new war by Western imperialist governments. Inside Libya itself, thousands of citizens have resisted the rebel forces backed by the U.S. and other former colonial powers such as France, Britain and Italy, which had colonized Libya for many decades.

Thousands of Libyans have flocked to government buildings to act as human shields against the bombs being dropped by the Western military forces. Gadhafi on March 21 called for a civilian march on the city of Benghazi, where the rebels remain under the protection of bombs being dropped by the U.S., France and Britain.

Perhaps the most dramatic protest against the attacks on Libya took place in Cairo, Egypt, on March 21, when U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon arrived in the country to hold talks with Moussa of the Arab League. Several hundred anti-war demonstrators attacked his vehicle.

Ban had tried to visit Tahrir Square, the center of protest for the pro-democracy movement in Egypt, but was prevented from doing so by the demonstrators. His vehicle was pelted with rocks as he was driven away.

Demonstrations were held in Manila, Philippines, where U.S. flags were burned amid denunciations of the bombing. Criticism has also come from China, Russia, India and Brazil, all of which had abstained on the U.N. resolution.

In the Republic of South Africa, the African National Congress Youth League condemned the ruling party's vote in the U.N. in support of the resolution. The ANCYL said that "It is evident that certain powers, particularly the U.S., U.K. and France, want to impose a puppet government in Libya so that they can have access to its oil reserves." ([timeslive.co.za](http://timeslive.co.za), March 21)

The ANCYL stressed that it was a mistake for the South African government to vote in favor of the U.N. resolution, noting that its allies had abstained "because they noticed the inconsistencies being applied to Libya."

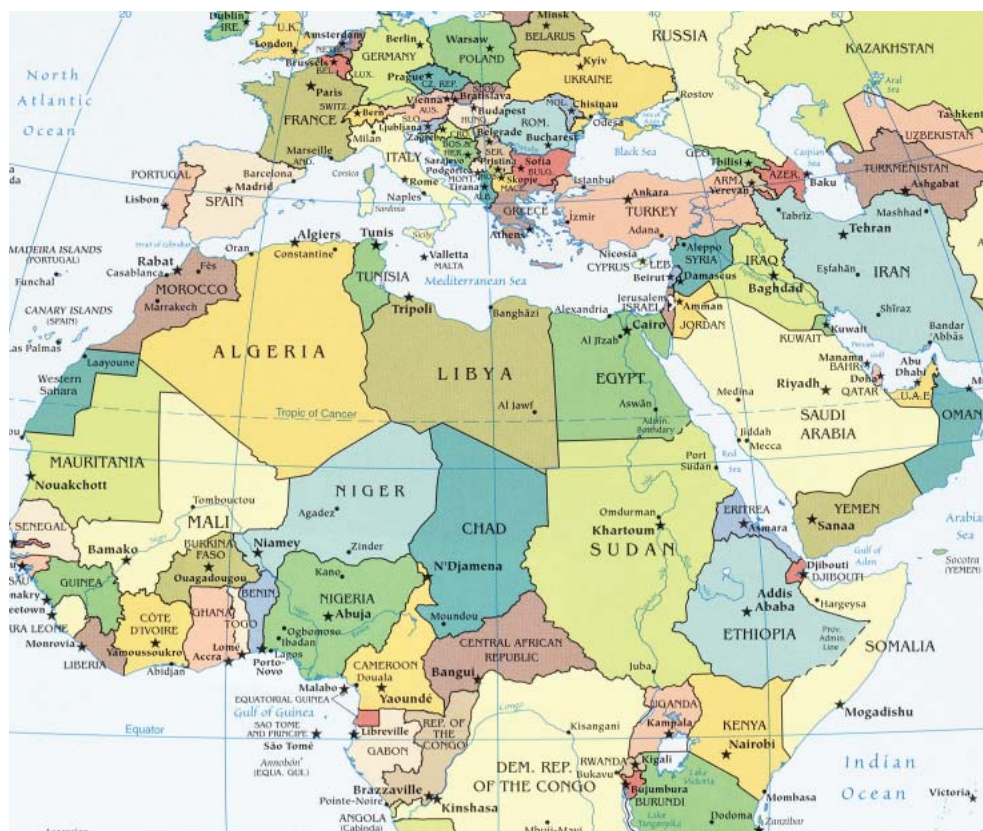
This response by the ANCYL and the impact of the bombing missions over Libya prompted South African President Jacob Zuma to express concern over

how the no-fly zone was being implemented. “We call for an immediate cease-fire in Libya and an end to attacks on civilians,” Zuma said. (timeslive.co.za)

Organizations throughout the world that have denounced the U.S./European bombing campaign against Libya include: Workers World Party, Free Arab Voice, the South African Communist Party, World Federation of Trade Unions, the Nation of Islam, Communist Party of Greece, Communist Party of Canada, All-African People’s Revolutionary Party (GC), Philippine Communist Party and Communist Party of Australia, among others.

Numerous African states including Zimbabwe, South Africa and Uganda have denounced the bombing and efforts on the part of the imperialists to effect a regime change in Libya.

On April 9 there will be national anti-war demonstrations in New York and San Francisco whose demands include a halt to U.S. and European aggression towards Libya. □



# Libya and the era of imperialist reconquest

*By Fred Goldstein, March 24, 2011*

However the rebellion in Libya began, it was both inevitable and entirely predictable that it would quickly become an opening for imperialist intervention and counterrevolution in the oil-rich North African country.

The fact that the “rebellion” received sympathetic, screaming headlines, ferociously hostile to the government of Moammar Gadhafi from the very beginning, should have been sufficient to put the entire anti-imperialist movement on guard. The boiler-plate propaganda about “massacres,” without the slightest evidence, was repeated as if it were the gospel truth. That should have been further evidence of the plans for “great power” intervention (“great” in their oppression, as Vladimir Lenin pointed out long ago).

The condemnations were particularly hypocritical coming from the mouths of the same imperialist powers that have been massacring oppressed people on every continent since the dawn of colonialism — from the slave trade in Africa to the cruelty of conquistadors in South America, the genocide of Indigenous peoples in the U.S., the colonization of India, up to the present-day campaigns against the Palestinians in Gaza, Predator drone massacres of civilians in Afghanistan and Pakistan, to say nothing of the wholesale destruction of Iraqi society and the attendant mass killing of civilians.

There have been numerous rebellions and many documented massacres of unarmed civilians in recent months that have not spurred military action by the imperialist powers. Is it even conceivable that Washington would lobby or arm-twist the Arab League to provide a figleaf for U.S. intervention in support of protesters in Yemen, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia or Jordan? No, because these have been genuine rebellions against autocratic regimes backed by the White House and the Pentagon.

There have been no campaigns to get U.N. Security Council resolutions authorizing military action in any of these countries. No aircraft carriers, nuclear submarines, missile ships, AWACS planes, spy satellites, etc., moved into position to support these genuine popular uprisings against moth-eaten reactionary monarchies that guard the interests of the U.S. and Western oil companies, as well as the strategic position of the Pentagon in the Persian Gulf region.

## **Bush, Obama & ‘regime change’**

The fact is that the Obama administration, the British and the French have de facto put Libya on the “axis of evil” list started by George W. Bush in his infamous 2002 State of the Union speech, where he singled out Iraq, Iran and

the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as targets for "regime change." That is what "Gadhafi must go" means.

What these three countries have in common is that they all threw imperialism out of their countries during the rise of the socialist camp and the national liberation movements after World War II. They were part of a global movement that fought to establish economic and political independence from transnational banks, corporations and the Pentagon.

Libya falls directly into that category, having overthrown puppet King Idris and ousted imperialism in 1969 under the leadership of Col. Moammar Gadhafi. The Libyan revolution, like the revolutions in Iraq in 1958 and Iran in 1979, also nationalized Western-owned oil companies and shut down imperialist military bases. The fact that Gadhafi shifted toward the West later, opening up to oil companies and imposing International Monetary Fund-dictated austerity programs, is not enough to satisfy the voracious appetite of the corporations for profit. They want to take the whole country — lock, stock and barrel.

### **Libya & the era of reconquest**

The invasion of Libya is part of a long-term trend on the part of the imperialist countries that began with the collapse of the USSR and Eastern Europe from 1989 to 1991. That trend is to reconquer territories and riches lost during the 20th-century rise of the socialist camp and the national liberation movements.

That is what the intervention in Libya is about. That is what the two wars in Iraq were about. And that is what the permanent threats to Iran and North Korea are about, not to mention the permanent blockade of Cuba, the military encirclement of China and the attempt to destroy the government of Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe.

In other words, the right to national sovereignty, self-determination and self-defense of formerly oppressed countries is obsolete, according to the doctrine of the New World Order.

The mad adventure in Libya, led by Washington and supported by Britain and France, shows once again that war and militarism are an integral feature of imperialism and of the monopoly-capitalist system upon which it rests.

During the first half of the 20th century, imperialist war was driven by inter-imperialist rivalry and struggles over which country would be able to loot the colonial peoples. During the latter part of the 20th century, war and the threat of war were driven by the struggle of imperialism against the socialist camp and the national liberation movements — the Cold War.

Now the permanent tendency of imperialism toward war and militarism is driven by the drive for reconquest of the territories lost in that period.



## **Imperialism & permanent war**

U.S. imperialism now has two wars and a major post-war occupation going on simultaneously — in Afghanistan, Libya and Iraq. It has made northeastern Pakistan a free-fire zone for predator drones. Since the collapse of the USSR and Eastern Europe in 1989-1991, it has launched five wars of conquest — in Iraq twice, in Yugoslavia in 1999, in Afghanistan in 2001, and now in Libya.

It has threatened two other wars — one against Iran and the other against People's Korea. U.S. troops have been at war continuously for the last decade.

Washington has five aircraft carriers, each accompanied by a flotilla of 10 destroyers, frigates and other warships in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea surrounding Libya. The French and the Italian imperialists each have a carrier in the area as well.

The entire imperialist world, with a combined gross domestic product of more than \$20 trillion, a combined population of close to a billion people, and a combined military machine worth at least \$2 trillion is bearing down on Libya — an underdeveloped, formerly colonized country of 6 million people with an economy of some \$40 billion that is without the capability to defend itself militarily against the juggernaut facing it.

The French and the British capitalist governments were clamoring for a no-fly zone as a pretext for intervention and to guard their oil interests. But it was not until Washington got behind the effort, forcing the Arab League and the U.N. Security Council to go along and moving its military flotilla and air force into position, that the attack could begin.

## **Working class enters anti-war movement**

These wars have cost trillions of dollars. They are eroding the economic foundation of U.S. capitalist society and imposing a huge cost upon the workers, the poor and the oppressed who pay for the wars, both with their tax money and with the loss of vital social services.

This plunge into a new war comes in the midst of a profound economic crisis, a jobless recovery, growing mass unemployment and a budding rebellion of the working class, which has shown itself in the Wisconsin struggle against union busting and austerity budgets.

On March 19 a mass anti-war march took place in Madison, Wis., that was attended by thousands of unionists and their supporters in a joint effort with the anti-war movement. This is a step forward in the U.S. in the direction of giving the anti-war movement a working-class character.

As the wars multiply and the attacks on the workers grow more severe, a genuine working-class rebellion against imperialist war will come onto the agenda. The working class is the only class that can put an end to imperialist war. □



# Attack on Libya draws protests in U.S.

*By Betsey Piette, March 24, 2011*

Even before the first U.S. bombs rained down on Libya, protesters across the U.S. stood up to voice their opposition to yet another U.S. war for oil. These protests continue.

The most significant was in **Madison**, Wis., where an anti-war march and rally were co-sponsored by the Iraq Veterans Against the War, the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO and other labor organizations. IVAW members led the march, with thousands of students and workers following behind.

Firefighters Local 311 from Madison joined the ranks for a march around the Capitol. Current Wisconsin AFL-CIO president, Phil Neuenfeldt, and former president, David Newby, spoke, as did the president of the Machinists Union, Mahlon Mitchell of the Wisconsin Firefighters Association, the Madison mayor, SEIU nurses and others.

Vietnam veteran Will Williams, a member of Veterans for Peace and the Madison Area Peace Coalition, spoke out against the U.S. wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya from the main stage at the Capitol. Afterwards, he told a reporter, “We’re involved in a war, a war against economic slavery. Taking from people what they have struggled and died for years to get, and it’s all at risk. We need something like the Bonus Army of 1932, where vets will get out in the forefront, and people will follow and go camp out in Washington, D.C., until they change the way they do business with our tax dollars.”

In **Detroit** on March 11, the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice had held a demonstration at the Federal Building calling for an end to the war buildup. Another demonstration was held March 21 in downtown Detroit on the eighth anniversary of the Iraq war that denounced the beginning of the bombing of Libya.

In **Atlanta** on March 18 nearly 200 people marched through Piedmont Park, led by the Atlanta Sedition Orchestra. Students and youth carried a giant octopus labeled “U.S. war machine,” its tentacles gripping funds for education, health care, housing and jobs. Initiated by the Georgia Peace and Justice Coalition/Atlanta, several dozen local peace and justice, community and student groups endorsed.

A banner from the International Action Center read, “Not another war for OIL! U.S. hands off Libya.” Other banners supported Pvt. Bradley Manning and called to “Foreclose the war, not people’s homes.”

Around 1,500 people rallied at Lafayette Park in **Washington**, across from the White House, on March 19 to demand an end to U.S. wars on Iraq,

Afghanistan and Libya. The eighth anniversary of the Iraq War ended with civil disobedience at the White House.

Led by Veterans for Peace, the angry protesters chanted, “From Wisconsin to Iraq, Stand up, fight back!” and “Free Bradley Manning!” Daniel Ellsberg, who exposed the Pentagon Papers, was one of 113 people arrested for chaining themselves to the fence of the White House.

Ana Maria Reichenbach, an activist with Chapel Hill Students for a Democratic Society, said, “When veterans stand up and put their bodies on the line to stop the war, it is really inspiring. It’s time for young people to follow their example and rebuild the anti-war movement.”

March Forward!; Answer Coalition; Iraq Veterans Against the War; Code Pink; Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST); Black is Back Coalition; and many more organizations took part in the demonstration.

Protests on March 19 in **San Francisco** not only marked the eighth anniversary of the U.S. war against Iraq but also the first day of the new U.S./NATO air attack on the sovereign nation of Libya. Mike Casey, president of UNITE HERE Local 2, the hotel workers’ union currently on strike against major San Francisco hotels, called for labor-community support against the wars and the current attacks against working people.

Demonstrators later marched from Union Square to the West St. Francis Hotel to show support for the striking hotel workers. The demonstration was organized by the March 19th Coalition and endorsed by a broad array of organizations, including the Answer Coalition, the San Francisco Labor Council, the National Council of Arab Americans and the West County Toxics Coalition.

On March 20, thousands demonstrated in **Los Angeles** to say no to war and occupation in Iraq and Afghanistan. The demonstration was called by the Answer Coalition. Libya was clearly on the minds of everyone there and news of the criminal attack electrified the demonstration. The announcement of yet another imperialist war was booed and jeered as the words crawled across an electronic sign on CNN’s L.A. office.

The International Action Center distributed a statement denouncing the attack on Libya. The next day the IAC held an emergency demonstration at the Westwood Federal Building to demand an end to U.S., French and British bombing of Libya. Members of BAYAN-USA, the All African Peoples Revolutionary Party – GC, Unión del Barrio and Anti-Racist Action also participated. The action was covered by ABC, Fox, Telemundo and Univisión.

In **Philadelphia** on March 21 protesters gathered outside City Hall to denounce the U.S./NATO air attacks on Libya and to demand money for jobs, not wars. Signs that read, “Not another U.S. war for oil” and “Stop U.S. attacks on Arab and African people,” caused many passersby to stop, talk and ask for fliers. Organized by the Philadelphia Against War coalition, the protest was

endorsed by the Brandywine Peace Community and the International Action Center.

In **St. Paul**, Minn., hundreds marched and rallied on March 19 chanting, “Bring the troops home! Out of Iraq and Afghanistan!” and “Do not expand wars against Libya!” Signs read, “Opposing war is not a crime,” referring to FBI raids on homes of anti-war and solidarity activists in the fall of 2010.

In nearby **Minneapolis**, demonstrators gathered on March 21 for an emergency protest to say no to U.S. war in Libya. The event was endorsed by Women Against Military Madness, the Anti-War Committee and others.

Even before the U.S. fired a single rocket at Libya, people gathered in downtown **Phoenix** on March 19 to say that the U.S. and the world do not need another war.

In **New York City** the International Action Center held a picket line March 21 in the Times Square area to protest the U.S.-French-British bombing of Libya. An earlier protest was held March 18 right after a U.N. Security Council resolution pushed by the U.S., France and Britain authorized military action against Libya. Near New York’s Federal Plaza, it was called by the United Antiwar Coalition.

*Contributing writers: John Catalinotto, Judy Greenspan, Dianne Mathiowetz, John Parker, Bryan G. Pfeifer, Scott Scheffer and Scott Williams. □*



Antiwar rally in Detroit

# **U.S. steps up drive to conquer Libya**

## **Oil profiteers call the shots**

*By Fred Goldstein, March 30, 2011*

President Barack Obama's speech of March 28 was largely devoted to justifying U.S. military intervention in Libya on humanitarian grounds, as being necessary to prevent a "massacre." It was meant to obscure the fundamental fact that Washington is leading an effort, joined by the British and French imperialists, to destroy a sovereign government and recolonize Libya.

This war is about oil, money and a drive to unleash the Pentagon's arsenal on Libya in order to bring it back under the total domination of imperialism. The rest is all lies and staged propaganda.

The speech concealed the real role that the U.S. military is playing and will continue to play in this naval and air campaign, which is costing \$100 million a day to U.S. taxpayers alone. The weekend before Obama spoke about pulling back and leaving the job to NATO, six tank-killing A-10 Warthogs that fire laser-guided missiles and 30-millimeter cannons arrived on the scene. The U.S. also deployed two B-1B bombers as well as AC-130 gunships, which orbit over targets at 15,000 feet and use 40-millimeter and 105-millimeter cannons. These gunships are precise and are meant for cities. (New York Times, March 29)

The military role of the U.S. is utterly predominant. Of 200 devastatingly accurate Tomahawk cruise missiles fired so far, 193 have been fired by U.S. forces. The Pentagon has dropped 455 precision-guided munitions, compared to 147 by the other imperialist powers.

Most importantly, the U.S. orchestrates the entire air war. Its eavesdropping aircraft locate positions. These locations are passed on to Global Hawk drones, then relayed to AWACS planes that send target information to F-16 and Harrier jets. This is a Pentagon-run war.

## **A war for spoils**

Obama's speech also concealed the struggle over spoils that is at the bottom of this war. The "rebels" rose up in the oil-rich east of the country. They already have their own oil company, set up in Benghazi early in the struggle. Claiming to represent 40 percent of the country's 1.6 million barrels of oil a day output, it operates a refinery and terminal out of Tobruk. The company is being sold to the Qataris. The plan is to place the money in escrow for Italian, French, Spanish and U.S. oil companies like ENI, Repsol, Total and Occidental Petroleum. (New York Times, March 29)

Libya has a \$70 billion state sovereign fund that U.S. private equity firms and hedge funds like the Blackstone Group, Colony Capital, Lightyear Capital and other Wall Street sharks have been trying to get into. With Washington's freezing of Libya's assets, these deals have been frozen. But, according to Don Steinbrugge, managing partner of Agecroft Partners, a Virginia consultant to hedge funds and investors, "Once there is a transition to a more stable government, their asset base should be a positive in helping them build business." (Business Week, March 24)

### **Wall Street's 'rebel' minister**

A key person who can help these corporate predators is the newly appointed finance minister of the National Transition Council, Ali Tarhouni. Tarhouni left Libya in 1973 for the U.S. He taught economics at the University of Washington Graduate School of Business, specializing in stock analysis. He consults widely and sits on a number of corporate advisory boards. ([tibra.org/awards/2002/judges/tarhouni.htm](http://tibra.org/awards/2002/judges/tarhouni.htm))

Tarhouni was a key participant in a 1994 conference on "post-Gadhafi Libya" hosted by the Washington Center for Strategic and International Studies. He promoted privatization and regional economic integration at the conference, which was also attended by various groups with ties to the National Endowment for Democracy — a conduit for the CIA.

Tarhouni was the political coordinator for a National Conference of the Libyan Opposition in Seattle. The NCLO was founded in London in 2005 and is centered on the National Salvation Front, with a history of CIA connections. ("Post-Qaddafi Libya on the Globalist Road," Foreign Policy Journal, Feb. 26) Tarhouni is Wall Street's point man in the pro-imperialist would-be government.

### **Washington's 'boots on the ground'**

The White House and the Pentagon say there will be no "boots on the ground" and that they are just supporting the "rebels." In fact, the rebels have become the Pentagon's de facto "boots on the ground" for the moment, inadequate though they may be, while U.S. Tomahawk missiles attempt to blast a path for them to Tripoli.

However the rebellion in the oil-rich Benghazi region may have begun, the U.S. government would never decide to spend \$100 million a day and move its naval power into the region to support a genuine national liberation movement. The U.S. ruling class, which has a long and bloody history of intervention, is unlikely to make such a colossal miscalculation.

It is also doubtful that any genuine national liberation movement would call on the biggest imperialist aggressors in history to be its protectors. This rebellion may have fed on genuine popular discontent. But the power of imperialism in the post-Soviet era and its ability to manipulate and capture movements must

be the paramount calculation in the minds of any leaders who genuinely want to liberate their countries from oppression.

During the era when the USSR and Eastern Europe existed as a material stronghold of the socialist camp, and at a time when China was pursuing an anti-imperialist policy, liberation movements around the world could acquire military, technical, political, medical and other types of support for their struggles for national liberation.

At present, only a movement with a firmly grounded, anti-imperialist orientation, which is highly organized and has prepared the groundwork to arm itself without falling prey to Washington or London, can hope to carry out a successful liberation struggle.

Whatever grievances a people may have, nothing is stronger, harsher or more reactionary than the oppression and superexploitation the imperialist powers will impose. Any groupings that open the door to an imperialist take-over of their country only serve these predatory interests.

### **Stop military adventure**

The Libyan operation is a military adventure. The Pentagon generals and admirals, especially the Navy high command, want to use their killer arsenals on Libya. However, the high command is ambivalent about this operation. The most aggressive forces want to go in and kill Col. Gadhafi. In the first days of the attacks, the military launched a bunker-buster missile on the presidential compound. Its aim was to kill or terrorize.

Obama in his speech referred to a limited engagement and declared that the goal was not to kill Gadhafi by military force. After this speech, Sen. John McCain, who speaks for a section of the military, opposed this concept of limited war and said that Gadhafi should be killed by military force. He implied that were it not for the British, the French and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the attacks might not have taken place.

In fact, the attack was launched by the U.S. on an emergency basis when the Gadhafi government was on the verge of recapturing Benghazi. Obama had been vacillating between the cautious camp, led by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, and the hawks, led by Clinton. Like McCain, Clinton represents the more adventurous forces in the military.

Just as in Afghanistan, the military forces that were for wider war prevailed in the political struggle in Washington, after periods of vacillation.

Military adventurism is and always has been a fundamental feature of U.S. imperialism. The anti-war movement must resist this aggression and the attempt to recolonize Libya with all its might. But, in the long run, the only way to end these military adventures is the destruction of U.S. imperialism. □



## **Imperialists escalate bombing operations over Libya**

*By Abayomi Azikiwe, Editor, Pan-African News Wire, March 31, 2011*

After more than a week of intensive bombing of the North African state of Libya, U.S. President Barack Obama on March 28 went on television to provide a rationale for beginning yet another war against a developing country with a majority Muslim population. He claimed the U.S. is no longer leading the campaign to overthrow the Libyan government and install a puppet-regime compliant to the West. However, the bulk of the firepower used in the war is being supplied by the Pentagon.

Obama announced that full command of the war against Libya was being rapidly transferred to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. However, the U.S. government founded NATO and still controls this imperialist military alliance.

A Canadian, Lt. Gen. Charles Bouchard, has been designated operational commander for the war against Libya. On March 21, Canadian CF-18 fighter jets flew their initial bombing missions over Libya amid claims by Defense Minister Peter MacKay that Ottawa had a “moral duty” to participate in the war in North Africa. All four opposition parties in the Canadian Parliament endorsed the ruling Conservative Party’s decision.

Reports indicate that warplanes from the U.S., Britain, France, Canada, Italy, Denmark and Belgium are involved in aerial and sea bombardments of Libya. In addition, the U.S.-backed Gulf states of Qatar and the United Arab Emirates have entered the campaign.

Since March 25, Qatari Mirage jets have flown alongside French aircraft in bombing operations over northeastern Libya. The Associated Press explained why: “The decisions by Qatar and UAE to join the coalition in Libya reflect their strong traditional ties to the United States and their desires to play a more active role internationally. The Gulf states rely on a strong regional U.S. military presence as a buffer against Iran, which is seen as a threat by the Gulf’s kings and sheiks.” (March 28)

Turkey, a recent member of NATO and a longtime base for U.S. military operations against Iraq and Afghanistan, will reportedly take control of the airport in the rebel-held city of Benghazi. Turkey’s naval forces will patrol areas between Crete and this northeastern Libyan city, where the rebellion against the Gadhafi government began on Feb. 17.

## **Bombing operations escalate**

Meanwhile, Tornado aircraft flying from a base in Britain bombed Libyan government installations in the southern area of Sabha. Libya's state news agency reported several casualties in the attacks.

Western imperialist airstrikes have provided cover for the rebel forces, which are seeking to recapture key cities they lost to government forces in mid-March. Fierce fighting between the Libyan military and the rebels has taken place in Misrata, Nawfaliya and Sirte.

The current war against Libya represents the largest U.S. and Western European military deployment in the region since the invasion of Iraq in March 2003. The imperialists want to bring this North African state under their control not only to seize its vast oil resources but also to forestall any revolutionary shift in direction by the democratic movements in neighboring Egypt and Tunisia.

Analyst Michel Chossudovsky says the war is based on "outright lies by the international media: Bombs and missiles are presented as an instrument of peace and democratization. This is not a humanitarian operation. The war on Libya opens up a new regional war theater." (Global Research, March 20)

Chossudovsky notes: "There are three distinct war theaters in the Middle East and Central Asia regions: Palestine, Afghanistan and Iraq. What is unfolding is a fourth U.S.-NATO War Theater in North Africa, with the risk of escalation."

Nonetheless, the Libyan people are maintaining their resistance to the imperialist onslaught. Libyan forces have held off the rebels in Misrata and areas leading toward Sirte, despite heavy bombardment by U.S. and European war planes and naval forces.

## **Condemnations around the world**

In Mali, a West African state, thousands of people demonstrated against the war on March 25 chanting, "Down with Obama! Down with Sarkozy!" The crowd marched through the capital of Bamako to the French and U.S. embassies. Public opinion throughout Africa has been highly critical of the Western states and their war against Libya. (Associated Press, March 25)

President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe called the Western countries attacking Libya "bloody vampires." South African President Jacob Zuma, after much internal criticism by the African National Congress Youth League and the Congress of South African Trade Unions over his government's vote for U.N. Resolution 1973, called for an immediate cease-fire.

In Greece, youth supporting the Communist Party burned flags of the European Union in protest against the war.

Demonstrations in solidarity with the Libyan government were held in Belgrade, Serbia. In Madrid thousands marched on March 26 protesting Spain's involvement as a launching pad for attacks on Libya.

A statement issued by the All-African People's Revolutionary Party (GC) called for demonstrations in countries that “participate in this affront to and crime against Africa, the African Diaspora, and World Humanity, until any and all of their regimes are changed.”

Min. Louis Farrakhan of the Nation of Islam spoke out forcefully against the U.S. war on Libya. His remarks were broadcast widely on African-American formatted radio programs.

Former U.S. Rep. Cynthia McKinney condemned the U.S. bombing, noting that Moammar Gadhafi is a target “because he has been a thorn in the side of anti-revolutionary forces since he took power in Libya, overthrowing the King and nationalizing the oil industry so that the people could benefit from their oil resources.”

On April 9-10 major anti-war demonstrations will take place in New York and San Francisco called by the United National Antiwar Committee, which has issued a statement opposing U.S. intervention in Libya.

The recent round of events in North Africa illustrates clearly that U.S. foreign policy has not changed at all under the Democratic administration of Barack Obama. □



Rallies in opposition to U.S. and European attacks on Libya, in Belgrade, Serbia (top) and Athens, Greece (bottom).

# War in Libya: it's about oil

*By Tony Murphy, March 31, 2011*

As quickly as the imperialists have launched a war against Libya, anti-war demonstrations have sprung up everywhere. Many signs and slogans mention oil: “No blood for oil” or “Not another war for oil.”

Maybe this focus on oil is just leftist dogma. How much oil does Libya contribute to the global market anyway, compared to countries like Saudi Arabia? And hasn't Libya already opened its oil fields to capitalist exploitation?

Yes, it has. But because Gadhafi's government insists on having a say in this process, the capitalists are still not satisfied. It's not about the flow of oil, but the flow of profits.

“[O]fficial estimates say Libya can produce oil for \$1 a barrel,” reported the Wall Street website *Energy and Capital* in 2008. “At \$110 on the world market, the simple math gives Libya a \$109 profit margin.”

Investors who want to make a “killing” in the energy market read *Energy and Capital*. On March 22, its article entitled “The Japan buying opportunity” included the statement: “There's a reason the phrase ‘Buy when there's blood in the streets’ is common among advanced investors.”

It's true the “advanced investors” in countries like the U.S., Britain, Canada, Spain, Italy and France — all members of the original “coalition of the willing” that spearheaded the bombing of Libya — are already profiting from Libya's “Tripoli tea.”

But in the Libyan market not yet a decade old, their governments are in intense competition with each other. None of them can afford to be outmaneuvered in a country that has vast, undeveloped oil resources.

And for this moment they have banded together in a thieves' pact to confront their common problem in Libya: the intense struggle that exists between Gadhafi's government and oil companies over how much profit they get — and whether they will be able to continue getting it at all.

Workers World has already reported, based on recently released WikiLeaks cables, that Gadhafi was recently able to force French oil company Total to share about 20 percent more of its profit from Libyan oil fields with Libya.

Other cables name Italy's ENI, Petro-Canada and two consortiums led respectively by U.S. Occidental and Spain's Repsol as losing \$5.4 billion from renegotiated production contracts.

Still other cables show that Libya exercised the right to revoke drilling rights if the oil companies' home governments engaged in the demonization of Gadhafi, which has since reached epic proportions.

Libya almost nationalized Petro-Canada's operations in 2009, when Canadian politicians attacked Libya over that country's welcome home of alleged Lockerbie bomber Abdelbaset al-Megrahi.

Gadhafi held off carrying out that threat, but issued an order forcing Petro-Canada and its operator, Libya's Hrouj company, to cut production by 50 percent.

This is Gadhafi's true crime in the eyes of the imperialists — not his treatment of "his own people." When capitalists dream of profits from highly lucrative resources like oil and natural gas, they dream of governments who simply let them have their way.

The servants of the "advanced investors" hope they can use the revolutionary rising of the Arab masses as a cover for regime change and install a compliant puppet government like they did in Iraq.

In a worsening worldwide economic crisis, that dream has become a compelling necessity for capitalists who must constantly expand. Take it from the Energy and Capital website in its Libya report: "We're in the middle of a monumental energy and commodity bull market as other assets wobble on credit concerns and raw materials seem to give us the only real and true equity left in the world." □

# Useful Resources

NATO's plan is to occupy Libya (Feb. 21), Cynicism's danse macabre (Feb. 26), NATO's inevitable war (Mar. 3-4), and other Reflections. By Fidel Castro.

[www.granma.cu/ingles/reflections-i/reflections-i.html](http://www.granma.cu/ingles/reflections-i/reflections-i.html)

Libya in the Great Game. (Feb. 25)

By Manlio Dinucci (Il Manifesto). Translated.

[www.creative-i.info/?p=31177](http://www.creative-i.info/?p=31177)

Libya, the puzzle of the no-fly zone; The Pentagon is "repositioning" its naval and air forces and preparing for Operation Libya. (Mar. 2)

By Manlio Dinucci (Il Manifesto). Translated.

[www.iacenter.org/nafricamideast/libya-nofly030411/](http://www.iacenter.org/nafricamideast/libya-nofly030411/)

[www.iacenter.org/nafricamideast/operation-libya030311/](http://www.iacenter.org/nafricamideast/operation-libya030311/)

Cuba categorically rejects any attempt whatsoever to take advantage of the tragic situation created in order to occupy Libya and control its oil.

By Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister of Foreign Affairs. (Mar. 1)

[www.granma.cu/ingles/news-i/2marzo-Cuba%20categorically.html](http://www.granma.cu/ingles/news-i/2marzo-Cuba%20categorically.html)

Chavez Proposes Talks for Libya (Mar. 1)

Al Jazeera.

[english.aljazeera.net/news/americas/2011/03/2011316273322512.html](http://english.aljazeera.net/news/americas/2011/03/2011316273322512.html)

Spotlight on Libya (March 4)

By Ibrahim Ebeid

[www.iacenter.org/nafricamideast/libya-spotlight030711/](http://www.iacenter.org/nafricamideast/libya-spotlight030711/)

ILPS condemns US and NATO preparations for military intervention against Libya. (Mar. 4) By Prof. Jose Maria Sison

[www.josemariasison.org/?p=7256](http://www.josemariasison.org/?p=7256)

A call to defend Libya's unity, sovereignty, and independence from imperialist aggression. (Mar. 5)

[www.freearabvoice.org/?p=980](http://www.freearabvoice.org/?p=980)

Libya: Is This Kosovo All Over Again? (Mar. 7)

By Diana Johnstone

[www.counterpunch.org/johnstone03072011.html](http://www.counterpunch.org/johnstone03072011.html)



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