

Another Reason Why Imperialism Wanted Libya Overthrown

Former French President Nicolas Sarkozy detained for questioning over Gaddafi loan

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Featured image: Libya leader Col. Muammar Gaddafi along with former French President Nicolas Sarkozy (Source: the author)

Seven years ago this month, beginning on March 19, 2011, the United States Pentagon and NATO began a massive bombing campaign against the North African state of Libya.

For seven months the warplanes flew tens of thousands of sorties over Libya, at the time the most prosperous state in Africa. Nearly ten thousand bombs were reportedly dropped inside the country resulting in an estimated 50,000-100,000 dead, many more injuries and the dislocation of several million people.

On October 20, longtime Libyan leader, Col. Muammar Gaddafi, was driving in a convoy leaving his home area of Sirte when the vehicles were struck. Gaddafi was later captured and brutally executed by counter-revolutionary forces which were led, armed and financed by the U.S., NATO and its allies.

France played an instrumental role in the destruction of Libya as a nation-state. The then President Nicolas Sarkozy praised the overthrow of the Jamahiriya political system and the execution of Gaddafi.

All of the imperialist states and their cohorts told the international community that the counter-revolution in Libya would lead to an era of democracy and prosperity. These proclamations could not have been further from the truth.

Sarkozy wanted the Libyan state eviscerated and Gaddafi assassinated because he had borrowed millions of dollars from the African leader in 2007 to finance his presidential campaign. Rumors and later documented proof surfaced to substantiate these claims.

On March 20, people around the globe awoke to news reports that Sarkozy was in custody and being questioned over financial irregularities involving the Libyan state under Gaddafi. During the period in question, Libya was a leading country within the African Union (AU) where the basis for the revitalized Organization of African Unity (OAU) founded in May 1963, realized its birth. The Sirte Declarations of 1999 led to the creation of the AU in 2002, shifting the focus of the continental body mandating deliberations on the development of viable institutions encompassing more meaningful objectives such as economic integration and regional security.

The spotlight turned on Sarkozy raises again the question of the genocidal war against Libya during 2011 and the subsequent underdevelopment, instability and impoverishment of the country and its implications for North and West Africa along with the continent as a whole. Today Libya is a source of terrorism, enslavement and internecine conflict where there are at least three sources of purported authority.

Despite the efforts of the United Nations Security Council to form a Government of National Accord (GNA), the unity of the country has remained elusive. The UNSC bears responsibility for the Libyan crisis due to the fact that Resolutions 1970 and 1973 provided a pseudo-legal rationale for the blanket bombing and ground operations in the 2011 imperialist war and its brutal aftermath.

According to an article published by France24:

“Agents of France’s office for anticorruption and fiscal and financial infractions are questioning Sarkozy in the Paris suburb of Nanterre, where he has been detained since Tuesday (March 20) morning. It is the first time authorities have questioned Sarkozy in connection with this dossier. They can keep the 63-year-old conservative former head of state in custody for up to 48 hours, after which he could be released without charge, placed under formal investigation or asked to reappear at a later date.”

The Imperialist Camp and Neo-Colonial Rule in Africa

Whether Sarkozy is placed under formal investigation, indicted or imprisoned for his financial crimes, broader issues remain over the outcomes of the war against Libya. The overthrow of a legitimate African government and the targeted assassination of its leader constitute crimes against humanity stemming from the desire to maintain the neo-colonial domination by imperialism over the continent.

The Jamahiriya state prior to the Pentagon-NATO led war represented the aspirations of not only people in Libya notwithstanding the AU member-states as well. Libya was politically stable, owed no money to global financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank and provided assistance to other African nations in the areas of social, technological, monetary and religious affairs.

While serving as chairperson of the AU in 2009, Gaddafi traveled to the UN General Assembly where he presented his vision of continental imperatives and international relations. During this period a campaign of slander and defamation was launched with the assistance of the corporate media in the U.S.

Even though Libya under the Jamahiriya had modified its stance on a number of issues related to its dealing with the U.S. and other imperialist states, the West wanted to overthrow the government to seize its oil fields and foreign reserves amounting to well over \$160 billion. A pretext of impending genocide against western-funded rebels whom had sought to remove the Gaddafi government was utilized to justify a war of regime-change.

The rebels could have never overthrown the Libyan government on their own. Therefore, they called in their paymasters in Washington, London, Paris and Brussels to ensure a victory for neo-colonialism. However, this scheme has failed to bring into existence the compliant regime sought in the post-war period.

This crisis extends beyond the legal issues facing Sarkozy. Moreover, it is a problem of modern-day imperialism which is seeking new avenues of conquest for purposes of exploitation and profit-making.

France is a leading capitalist state yet it is in perpetual economic stagnation. Joblessness remains high while a burgeoning population of African, Middle Eastern and Asian immigrants is fueling racial hatred. Notions of egalitarianism and bourgeois democracy must be selectively implemented so that the white ruling class maintains its power at the expense of a darker and growing minority seeking civil and human rights.

Abroad France still maintains its interests throughout Africa and other parts of the world. Paris is in fierce competition with London and Washington for its status within the imperialist matrix related to the control of oil, strategic minerals and essential trade routes.

The Meaning of African Unity

Therefore on the seventh anniversary of the imperialist war against Libya, the need for unity among AU member-states is more important in this period than ever before. African economic growth, development and integration cannot however be looked at separately from the indispensable need for independent security structures to safeguard resources and the sovereignty of the people.

The war against Libya represented the first full-blown campaign of the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) which was established under the administration of President George W. Bush in 2008. AFRICOM was strengthened and enhanced under Bush's successor President Barack Obama.

Three African states, Gabon, Nigeria and South Africa, voting in favor of the UNSC Resolution 1973 was the worse error of the post-independence period. Although the AU sought to bring about a ceasefire after the bombs began to fall, it was to no avail. This proves conclusively that imperialism should never be trusted and peace and security in Africa can only be won with its destruction.

Many Africans both on the continent and in the Diaspora felt that since Obama was a partial descendant of its people that he would develop a more favorable policy towards the continent and Black people inside the U.S. This was a gross miscalculation because the social and economic conditions worsened for Africans all over the world under his leadership on behalf of the imperialist world.

Consequently, it is not the individual which shapes domestic and foreign policy. Imperialism is an exploitative system which arose from the exigencies of slavery and colonialism. In the modern period neo-colonialism is the last stage of imperialism which Dr. Kwame Nkrumah documented as early as 1965, a prediction which cost him his presidency in the First Republic of Ghana at the aegis of Washington, serving as a major setback for the African Revolution as a whole.

Nevertheless, African people must learn from these historical events in order to move forward with a sober mood of determination and fortitude. Self-reliance and an independent national and global policy is the only solution to the crises facing the continent and its people in contemporary times.

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