

# Britain's Failed Intel Operation in Libya: Her Majesty's Bungling "Secret Intelligence Service"

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"Do not hold the delusion that your advancement is accomplished by crushing others.": (Marcus Tullius Cicero, 106-43 B.C. Roman Statesman, Philosopher.)

## British Style "Liberation": Beware the Ides of March. Part Two

Even by the standards of a near bankrupt island off Europe, run currently, largely, by a bunch of seemingly gung-ho, out of touch millionaires, the gun boat diplomacy of Messrs Cameron, Fox and Hague (Prime Minister, Defense Minister and Foreign Minister respectively) was a monumental farce of historic proportions.

The story unravelled as fast as Britain's Foreign Minister William Hague's statement on 21st February that Gaddafi had fled to Venezuela - which prompted London's Venezuelan Embassy to release an emphatic denial clarifying : " ... the mistaken aspect of such a statement."

A small British diplomatic team ..." according to William Hague, had entered Libya (illegally) to make contact with the rebel National Council in Benghazi. Liam Fox, singing from the same hymn sheet (6th March) told ITN that: "a small diplomatic team" was talking with the rebels. Not quite. A team of "special forces" officers had been captured by a group of guards protecting the Al-Khadra Farm company, eighteen miles from Benghazi, alerted by the deafening thudding of helicopter rotor blades.

They were apprehended, tied up and delivered to the Benghazi revolutionary council. A senior member of the council told the Guardian: "They were carrying espionage equipment, reconnaissance equipment, multiple passports and weapons. This is no way to conduct yourself during an uprising ... Gaddafi is bringing in thousands of mercenaries to kill us, most are using foreign passports ... how do we know who these people are? They say they're British nationals and some of the passports they have are British. But the Israelis used British passports to kill that man in Dubai last year." Indeed.

Rebel sources initially also expressed puzzlement about the mission. "If this is an official delegation, why come with helicopters? Why not say 'we are coming, permission to land at the airport?' There are rules for these things," one said.

Seemingly, the hapless bunch were taken by helicopter from HMS Cumberland, docked off the Libyan coast, to liaise with British man called "Tom", who had been working at the Al-

Khadra farm as an “administrator” for a few months. He had, however, driven off at 3 a.m., the same night, saying he was going in to Benghazi (as you do, in the middle of the night, in the middle of a revolution) according to one of the guards. A Foreign Office official, asked whether it would not have made more sense to simply dock by boat in Benghazi harbour and take a taxi to meet the rebel leadership, a mere couple of miles away, conceded that, yes, that probably would have been wiser.

Former British ambassador to Libya, Oliver Miles, commented dryly that the antics seemed “a strange way of introducing yourself to a new regime”.

The bungling bunch, are thought to have been assembled by the “Secret Intelligence Service”, a bit of an oxymoron, in the circumstances, clearly deficit in both intelligence and secrecy. The: “SIS collects secret intelligence and mounts covert operations overseas in support of British Government objectives”, states their website. The “objective” in this case is undoubtedly the largest oil deposits in Africa and the ninth largest in the world. Amongst the “values” which the SIS “upholds” is : “Integrity – we act within our legal framework and with the highest ethical and professional standards.” (1) Creeping illegally, in to a sovereign state, in the dead of night, armed to the teeth, with a bunch of dodgy passports, and surveillance equipment, seems to fall a little short on the “integrity” front, but we can all make mistakes. They certainly endorsed Colonel Gaddafi’s assertion that the uprisings were the result of “foreign interference”, though.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office hit another high score on the error front, unable to evacuate an estimated three thousand British oil workers from the initial chaos, whilst other countries, including some tiny, some very poor, were having no trouble sending in flights to bring their nationals home. All descended in to further absurdity, when it was announced that the war ship HMS Cumberland (from which the above insurgents deployed) was going to the rescue: “but would not dock until it was safe.”

A plane that was finally chartered, was stuck at Gatwick airport for ten hours, with a technical hitch, the Foreign Minister and his staff apparently unable to find any others for charter any where on the planet. David Cameron said he was: “terribly sorry” for the plight of the stranded – and Deputy Prime Minister Clegg said he had “forgotten” he was in charge of the country.

There were no such problems in chartering a ‘plane for the staff of the British Embassy, who closed the building and scuttled out, with the Ambassador, Richard Northern, on 26th February.

The Prime Minister was touring the Middle East, condemning violence, with a bunch of arms salesmen in tow. At the same time, in the United Arab Emirates, fifty British companies had displays at the arms export show, attended by Libyan Generals, as Cameron declared the force used in that country as: “completely appalling and unacceptable.”

The “appalling and unacceptable”, was, in fact being carried out using U.K., equipment, licensed for sale to Libya as late as 2010, including: wall and door breaching projectile launchers, crowd control ammunition, small arms ammunition, tear gas and irritant ammunition. Sniper rifles were also approved. Further, both Bahraini(2) and Libyan authorities were invited to attend two recent UK arms fairs: Farnborough in 2010 and Defence and Security Equipment International (DSEI) in 2009. (3)

As British nationals were abandoned and Cameron flogged arms and wandered, smirking, in Cairo's Tahrir Square (4) boasting being "the first Western leader" to visit after the uprising (British politicians have a delusional obsession at being "first" or "leading the world", having a pitiful modern record on both, except in illegal invasions and mass murder.) Nick Clegg went skiing.

Since Barack Obama, last week told Colonel Qaddafi he should step down (and was pressured in to suspending a contract to Libya for troop carriers and military exports, which would also have benefited Britain's BAE Systems) Cameron has followed his Leader and, this week with France's President Sarkozy, signed a letter to Herman von Rompuy, President of the European Union Council, urging: " ... ending of the suffering of the Libyan people", thus "Muammar Qaddafi and his clique must leave." Hardly statesmanlike language and hardly legal. Incredibly they call for plans to "prepare to to help" the insurgency and preparations for a no-fly zone over Libya.

Patrick Cockburn, in the (London) Independent (11th March) encapsulated the posturing: "There is something frivolous and absurd about France's sudden recognition of the Libyan rebel leadership in Benghazi as a sort of quasi-government. Presumably intended to give the impression Nicolas Sarkozy has a grip on events, it is evidence he does not know what to do any more than other European leaders.

"The recognition of unelected and self-appointed leaders in countries in which civil war is raging is a reminder, rather, of 19th century imperialism, when the British, for instance, would choose a leader in a country like Afghanistan who was most likely to be co-operative. There is usually a price to be paid for this. Leaders backed by outside powers may obtain arms and money, but their local credibility is unlikely to be enhanced. In Libya, Gaddafi can more easily deride his opponents as foreign dupes. If recognition of the Benghazi junta is aimed at providing political cover for later military intervention, it is again unlikely to convince anybody that Libyans are taking the decisions."

As Iraq, sell \$millions in arms to a seemingly favored customer, then impose sanctions, freeze all assets (accounting for seized assets apparently not necessary) invade and grab the oil fields. They also demanded all countries now embargo arms: "including supplies to mercenaries." Since mercenaries from U.S., and U.K., firms such as Control Risks, Blackwater (now XE) Kellog, Brown and Root, Triple Canopy, CACI, Titan (the latter two who brought the high standard of duty of care in Abu Ghraib to the world) of course, outnumber troops in Afghanistan and Iraq in order of magnitude, the latter ranks a special category of chutzpah.

As the Arab League too, grapples with the problem, and moots following the U.S., European Union route of a "no fly zone", the sticky matter of legality emerges again. As Richard Falk, Professor Emeritus of International Law at Princeton, points out: "It should be obvious that a no-fly zone in Libyan airspace is an act of war, as would be, of course, contemplated air strikes on fortifications of the Gaddafi forces. The core legal obligation of the U.N., Charter requires member states to refrain from any use of force unless it can be justified as self-defence after a cross-border armed attack or mandated by a decision of the U.N., Security Council."

His colleague, Professor Francis Boyle of the University of Illinois told Al Jazeera (10th March) that the proposed no fly zone was illegal, and: " ... recognising the Libyan rebels as a legitimate government", simply signalled intention of interfering in Libya's affairs, and that

all the U.S., was interested in was re-stealing Libya's oil.

Presenting as altruism, another kleptomaniac foray for resources (and subsequent, inevitable disastrous, quagmire) is important. The buzz word currently for carpet bombing and invasion is: "humanitarian intervention." The indisputable tragedy of thirty deaths was "a massacre." Implication: "intervention" is a moral duty. Yet strangely, when US/NATO in Afghanistan killed sixty four villagers on 20th February (locals said twenty were women, twenty nine were children and young adults, aged seven to twenty, and fifteen, men) it was declared by spokesmen, not a "massacre" but a "mistake."

On 1st., March when nine children, aged seven to fifteen were killed whilst collecting firewood, near a village in Kunar province, Defence Secretary, Robert Gates described their annihilation as a " ... a setback." The Washington Post (3rd March) described the childrens' deaths as: "the latest irritant" between US/NATO., forces and the Afghan government. Killings of protesters in Iraq, by forces of America's puppet government, are met with silence. There was no call for a "no fly zone" as Israel decimated Gaza and mercilessly destroyed fourteen hundred lives, trapped in a tiny land, with no where to hide.

Whatever the undisputed failings of the Libyan regime, the "humanitarian intervention" aspect does not sit too well in a country, where, according to the Human Development Index (HDI) (which measures life expectancy, health, literacy and well being) an "extensive" social services programme, included a comprehensive pension system, compensation for sickness and work injury, maternity benefit, free medical care and education, with a "dramatic" improvement in literacy over two decades and the lowest infant mortality rate and highest life expectancy in Africa.

The HDI is the highest in Africa and rates 53rd over all (in context, Brazil 73rd.) Whilst Colonel Gaddafi's treatment of opponents leaves plenty to be desired, Abu Ghraib, Bagram, Guantanamo, and secret torture renditions across the planet, the potential treatment of Julian Assange and the actual treatment of Bradley Manning, are hardly platforms from which to preach human rights.

Should anyone harbour doubts as to how casual invasion has become, the banter between General Petraeus and Robert Gates, on his recent arrival in Afghanistan, should allay them. 'Apparently unaware of an open microphone, Gen Petraeus greeted Mr Gates at Kabul airport joking: "Welcome back, sir, flying a little bigger plane than normal ... you gonna launch some attacks on Libya or something?"

The US Defence Secretary responded to the comment by laughing and replied, "yeah, exactly." ' (Daily Telegraph, 8th March.)

Since the imposition of sanctions on Iraq in 1990, the subsequent bombings, George W, Bush's declaration of a "Crusade" before Iraq's invasion, the carpet bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999, the bombing, invasion and occupation of Afghanistan in 2001, the U.S., and U.K., have led twenty one, shameful, homicidal, infanticidal, blood soaked years against Muslim lands.

Enough.

\* <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=23486>

1. <http://www.sis.gov.uk>

2. Bahrain SIS and UK torture equipment:  
<http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=23619>
3. <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/14172>
4. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1359316/Prime-Minister-David-Cameron-takes-arms-dealers-Egypt-promote-democracy.html#ixzz1G7KYnGUx>

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