

Hillary Clinton's Libyan Fingerprints

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Some Hillary Clinton backers now downplay the then-Secretary of State's role in what has become a disastrous "regime change" war in Libya, but that was not what her sycophants were saying four years ago, recalls Larry C. Johnson.

I am going to share with you four devastating emails sent and received by Hillary Clinton on the subject of Libya. You can find these posted at Wikileaks. It is clear in reading these exchanges that, in the glow of the fall of Muammar Gaddafi, Hillary embraced the call to spike the football and clearly was planning to use Libya as evidence of her leadership and skill that qualified her to become President.

The attack on our diplomats and CIA officers in Benghazi on 11 September 2012 however, destroyed that dream. The dream became a nightmare and Hillary has scrambled to pretend that she was not the mover-and-shaker that destabilized Libya and made it a safe haven for ISIS, aka radical Islamists.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton testifies before Congress on Jan. 23, 2013, about the fatal attack on the U.S. mission in Benghazi, Libya, on Sept. 11, 2012. (Photo from C-SPAN coverage)

Let me take you through these chronologically. First up is an email from James "Jamie" Rubin, the husband of CNN's Christiane Amanpour. (You might want to have an air sickness bag handy.) [Jaime wrote](#) on 18 July 2011:

Again, congratulations are in order for Friday's recognition of the Transitional National Council in Istanbul. It is a pleasure to see the State Department again leading the administration on this. Syria, too, but that is a subject for another day.

I suspect that you have been pushing very hard within the administration on Libya. From the outside, the White House doesn't seem like it cares very much. In general, the NSC seems uncomfortable with creative applications of American power and influence. And we all know the military and the Pentagon resist limited military operations, especially airpower-only engagements. So, it must be you and your colleagues at State. Well done. . . .

First and foremost, this is winnable. The killing of Bin Ladin aside, the administration really needs a solid, substantial success. . . .

Second, unlike in the Balkans or Afghanistan, Paris and London are fully committed, as are most Europeans, with the exception of Germany, which is a

disgrace but not really relevant in the end. . . .

Third, beyond the moral component of preventing a slaughter, defeating Qaddafi is one of the few concrete and unique ways the West can contribute to the Arab Spring. . . .

Fourth, even a small success like the one that is coming in Libya will turn around the steady decline in American influence in the region and around the world. I suspect that you know this, but European elites, Gulf elites, East Europeans and many others regard the Administration as weak.

What you need is a rationale for a new strategy and an internal argument for the Pentagon to change its position. If the Pentagon moves and a new rationale alters the politics on Capitol Hill, the White House will have to go along. . . . But I would suggest the following strategy:

First, without acknowledging that it was a mistake to let the British and French lead the operation to begin with, you can simply argue that circumstances have changed to the extent that leaving Qaddafi in power is now a national security risk. . . .

Second, for civilians in the Pentagon and the military, you can simply state that the U.S. and NATO's deterrent power is now at risk. . .

Third, the threat of Qaddafi organizing terrorist threats against Europe and possibly the United States is an argument that most Republicans will be forced to accept. (At a private meeting with Tim Pawlenty, he put forward the idea that framed as a threat from a former terrorist leader, most Republicans would change their view.) McCain and Lindsey Graham are already there and with this new rationale it should be possible to win political support from Republicans that would not support the moral case alone."

I am sure you picked up the themes here – Obama is weak ass, U.S. policy needs to shift to get on board with the Europeans and Hillary is the one to do it. Hillary loved this note from Jamie. She directed her staff to print it.

A little more than one month later (in fact, the day after rebels entered Tripoli), Hillary's old friend and confidant, [Sid Blumenthal, weighed in](#) (barf bag suggestion still recommended):

First, brava! This is a historic moment and you will be credited for realizing it. When Qaddafi himself is finally removed, you should of course make a public statement before the cameras wherever you are, even in the driveway of your vacation house. You must go on camera. You must establish yourself in the historical record at this moment. The most important phrase is: 'successful strategy.'

Just a few points: *The US has pursued a successful strategy in Libya. We did not know how long it would take, but we knew it would not be easy, and that it would require steadiness and persistence. This was the right course, based on our interests and principles. And it has worked.

Do not skimp on the reasons in the US interest behind the successful strategy: We prevented a humanitarian tragedy on a vast scale. Qaddafi, who had already killed 2,000 people in April, threatened to massacre the residents of Benghazi, tens if not hundreds of thousands of people. We worked closely with our NATO allies, proving that cooperation within the Western alliance can achieve our mutual goals.

The US has demonstrated its principled belief in the rule of law and acted on the basis of the United Nations resolution. We have supported the legitimate aspirations of the Libyan people for democracy and freedom. We have ousted a murderous dictator who has been a source of terrorism, civil war throughout Africa and a prop for dictators elsewhere. By acting in Libya we have helped advance the cause of democracy and freedom throughout the Arab world. We have provided an important support for neighboring Egypt. We have put Assad on notice that the sands of time have run out for him as well. Our successful strategy in Libya stands as a warning that our strategy will work again. Etc.

Be aware that some may attempt to justify the flamingly stupid 'leading from behind' phrase, junior types on the NSC imagining their cleverness. To refute this passive construction on US policy and help remove it as an albatross from the administration as it enters the election year, do not be defensive but rather simply explain that the US had a clear strategy from the start, stuck with it and has succeeded.

Then you can say whatever on future policy — but only after asserting the historic success and explaining the reasons why. *This is a very big moment historically and for you. History will tell your part in it. You are vindicated. But don't wait, help Clio now." (Blumenthal's reference to "Clio" is to the Greek muse of history.)

Yes sir. "Big moment" indeed. Hillary helped thousands die but, as Sid emphasized, the glory, at least part of it, belonged to her. This was not because of anything that the weak-ass President Obama did. Nope. It was Hillary's baby.

On 3 September 2011, Hillary directed her staff – Jake Sullivan in particular – to document the case of Hillary's "brilliance." Remember. [This is how Hillary and her staff were taking credit for what transpired in Libya:](#)

Secretary Clinton's leadership on Libya HRC has been a critical voice on Libya in administration deliberations, at NATO, and in contact group meetings as well as the public face of the U.S. effort in Libya. She was instrumental in securing the authorization, building the coalition, and tightening the noose around Qadhafi and his regime.

February 25 — HRC announces the suspension of operations of the Libyan embassy in Washington.

February 26 — HRC directs efforts to evacuate all U.S. embassy personnel from Tripoli and orders the closing of the embassy.

February 26 HRC made a series of calls to her counterparts to help secure passage of UNSC 1970, which imposes sanctions on Gaddafi and his family and refers Qadhafi and his cronies to the ICC

February 28 — HRC travels to Geneva, Switzerland for consultations with European partners on Libya. She gives a major address in which she says: 'Colonel Qadhafi and those around him must be held accountable for these acts, which violate international legal obligations and common decency. Through their actions, they have lost the legitimacy to govern. And the people of Libya have made themselves clear: It is time for Qadhafi to go — now, without further violence or delay.' She also works to secure the suspension of Libya from membership in the Human Rights Council.

Early March — HRC appoints Special Envoy Chris Stevens to be the U.S. representative to Benghazi

March 14 — HRC travels to Paris for the G8 foreign minister's meeting. She meets with TNC representative Jibril and consults with her colleagues on further UN Security Council action. She notes that a no-fly zone will not be adequate.

March 14-16 — HRC participates in a series of high-level video- and teleconferences B5 She is a leading voice for strong UNSC action and a NA TO civilian protection mission.

March 17— HRC secures Russian abstention and Portuguese and African support for UNSC 1973, ensuring that it passes. 1973 authorizes a no-fly zone over Libya and 'all necessary measures' - code for military action - to protect civilians against Gaddafi's army.

March 24 — HRC engages with allies and secures the transition of command and control of the civilian protection mission to NATO. She announces the transition in a statement.

March 18-30— HRC engages with UAE, Qatar, and Jordan to seek their participation in coalition operations. Over the course of several days, all three devote aircraft to the mission.

March 19— HRC travels to Paris to meet with European and Arab leaders to prepare for military action to protect civilians. That night, the first U.S. air strikes halt the advance of Gaddafi's forces on Benghazi and target Libya's air defenses.

March 29—HRC travels to London for a conference on Libya, where she is a driving force behind the creation of a Contact Group comprising 20-plus countries to coordinate efforts to protect civilians and plan for a post-Qadhafi Libya. She is instrumental in setting up a rotating chair system to ensure regional buy-in.

April 14—HRC travels to Berlin for NATO meetings. She is the driving force behind NATO adopting a communique that calls for Qadhafi's departure as a political objective, and lays out three clear military objectives: end of attacks and threat of attacks on civilians; the removal of Qadhafi forces from cities they forcibly entered; and the unfettered provision of humanitarian access.

May 5 — HRC travels to Rome for a Contact Group meeting. The Contact Group establishes a coordination system and a temporary financial mechanism to funnel money to the TNC.

June 8 — HRC travels to Abu Dhabi for another Contact Group meeting and holds a series of intense discussions with rebel leaders.

June 12 — HRC travels to Addis for consultations and a speech before the African Union, pressing the case for a democratic transition in Libya.

July 15 — HRC travels to Istanbul and announces that the U.S. recognizes the TNC as the legitimate government of Libya. She also secures recognition from the other members of the Contact Group. Late June — HRC meets with House Democrats and Senate Republicans to persuade them not to de-fund the Libya operation.

July 16 — HRC sends Feltman, Cretz, and Chollet to Tunis to meet with Qadhafi envoys 'to deliver a clear and firm message that the only way to move forward,

is for Qadhafi to step down’.

Early August — HRC works to construct a \$1.5 billion assets package to be approved by the Security Council and sent to the TNC. That package is working through its last hurdles.

Early August — After military chief Abdel Fattah Younes is killed, S sends a personal message to TNC head Jalil to press for a responsible investigation and a careful and inclusive approach to creating a new executive council

Early August — HRC secures written pledges from the TNC to an inclusive, pluralistic democratic transition. She continues to consult with European and Arab colleagues on the evolving situation.”

Hillary and her posse were not content to sit back and hope that others would recognize here “brilliant leadership.” Nope. They embarked on a full propaganda campaign to ensure that the media and the public got that message. Sid Blumenthal helped coordinate this effort and turned to fellow Hillary sycophant, Jamie Rubin, to help push the meme. His email to Hillary is dated 10 September 2011.

Jamie, using his position as an editor at Bloomberg News, published the following op-ed. Please note the shrewd and deceptive use of the media. Nowhere in this piece does Jamie disclose that he is a friend of Hillary’s and had provided previous encouragement to pursue this policy. I am sure that Jamie was feeling very smug about his insider role. The average reader, however, had no clue. They simply assumed that this was an objective journalist taking note of the magnificence of Hillary Rodham Clinton.

In an [email](#), Blumenthal passed on word to Clinton: ” Subject: H: Per our conversation. Jamie writes editorial... Sid

“<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/print/2011-09-08/hillary-clinton-deserves-credit-for-the-positive-u-s-role-in-libya-yiew.html>

Hillary Clinton Deserves Credit for U.S. Role in Libya:

View By the Editors –

Sep 7,2011

The unsung hero of the Libya drama in the U.S. is Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Clinton’s actions were critical for several reasons. Most important, she overcame Defense Secretary Robert Gates’s caution about using military force in Libya and his reluctance to support an operation led by France and Britain. Clinton also personally managed the unorthodox partnership with French President Nicolas Sarkozy that proved so crucial to joint action to defeat the Qaddafi regime.

Despite the unusual arrangement in which the U.S. was a supporter rather than a leader of NATO’s military operation, she defended intervention before a skeptical Congress and performed the hard slog of daily diplomacy around the world, helping Arab countries, the Europeans and the U.S. work together with a minimum of friction and a maximum of determination.

Aside from the killing of Osama bin Laden, the decision to support NATO military action in

Libya is probably the Obama administration's most important achievement in international affairs. Although Muammar Qaddafi is still at large and the country is a long way from having a stable, representative government, there is little doubt that the Qaddafi regime has been defeated as a result of an internal revolt led by the Transitional National Council.

History will surely judge that, by intervening on the side of the rebellion, the West — primarily the governments of France, the U.K. and the U.S. — made a unique and invaluable contribution to the democratic aspirations of the people of the Middle East. That said, the Obama administration's decision-making process remains opaque. The veteran journalist Bob Woodward's next book, due out in the fall 2012, may shed some light on the question of whose voices were decisive this past March, when President Barack Obama decided to support a United Nations resolution and a NATO military operation for Libya.

Based on our discussions with administration officials, as well as the public record, some preliminary conclusions about the decision are possible. First, while we argued for a more active U.S. military role in NATO's operation, it is now clear that Obama's unprecedented approach — in which Washington supported, rather than led, a NATO operation — was successful in the end.

Second, by breaking with Gates, Clinton tipped the balance within the administration in favor of action. Without her strong argument to support the Europeans' call for American help, Washington probably would not have acted. The president's national security adviser, Tom Donilon, was declaring freedom in Libya to be outside the U.S. national interest, and both military and civilian officials in the Pentagon were reluctant to endorse or even opposed U.S. intervention. But Clinton's push for the U.S. to act in support of Britain and France appears to have been decisive.

In retrospect, the fears of Gates and other military officials that action in Libya would be a slippery slope, perhaps leading to U.S. involvement on the ground in a third war in the Middle East, seem wildly overblown. Obama said the U.S. would play a limited role by offering unique military assets, such as aerial refueling and air-defense suppression capabilities. Congress not only opposed sending in ground troops but mostly opposed any U.S. involvement. Obama wisely resisted.

For better or worse, the Libya model is not likely to be repeated anytime soon. This is not, as some say, because NATO will never again intervene in a situation like Libya's. After the Kosovo war, many also said NATO would never again act against a dictator to save lives.

The Libya model is no guide for the future because such a unique set of circumstances in favor of military action is not likely to happen again. Think about the conditions: A despised dictator threatened mass murder; an open desert provided a decisive advantage for air power; a rebel army on the ground sought democratic change and espoused Western values; the UN at least loosely endorsed NATO air operations; the Arab League called for the West to intervene militarily in an Arab country; and U.S. allies prepared to do all the heavy lifting. Given those circumstances, it is still hard to explain why there were determined opponents, primarily in the Republican Party, to this mission in the first place.

Throughout most of Obama's term in office, only a few administration officials have commanded respect and political power on national security matters: Clinton, Gates and General David Petraeus, the most decorated and admired officer of recent times. With Gates now gone and Petraeus in a non-policy role as director of the Central Intelligence

Agency, Clinton's power will only increase as the president's re-election campaign heats up. We hope she recognizes her opportunity and uses it well."

Hillary told Sid the following in her email response to this op-ed: "It was very welcome and gave me reason to sit down and talk w Jamie who is such a good friend. Hope to talk soon-H"

This is how propaganda, press manipulation and lying to the public is manufactured in Washington, DC. Hillary and her crew, with the help of Jamie Rubin, pushed the meme that Hillary, not Obama, deserved the credit for the "success" in Libya.

Absolutely. Let her have it. Hang this festering turd of a policy around Hillary's neck. To do so is only just. She is a power hungry thug who helped cause the deaths of thousands just to advance her own vile political ambitions.

Larry C. Johnson is a former CIA analyst and counterterrorism official at the State Department. [This article originally appeared at Larry Johnson's blog No Quarter, <http://www.noquarterusa.net/blog/79194/hillarys-responsibility-libyan-disaster/>]

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