

Libya And Obama's Defense Of The 'Rebel Uprising'

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Over the past two weeks Libya has been subjected to the most brutal imperial air, sea and land assault in its modern history. Thousands of bombs and missiles, launched from American and European submarines, warships and fighter planes, are destroying Libyan military bases, airports, roads, ports, oil depots, artillery emplacements, tanks, armored carriers, planes and troop concentrations. Dozens of CIA and SAS special forces have been training, advising and mapping targets for the so-called Libyan 'rebels' engaged in a civil war against the Gaddafi government, its armed forces, popular militias and civilian supporters (NY Times 3/30/11).

Despite this massive military support and their imperial 'allies' total control of Libya's sky and coastline, the 'rebels' have proven incapable of mobilizing village or town support and are in retreat after being confronted by the Libyan government's highly motivated troops and village militias (Al Jazeera 3/30/11).

One of the most flimsy excuse for this inglorious rebel retreat offered by the Cameron-Obama-Sarkozy 'coalition', echoed by the mass media, is that their Libyan 'clients' are "outgunned" (Financial Times, 3/29/11). Obviously Obama and company don't count the scores of jets, dozens of warships and submarines, the hundreds of daily attacks and the thousands of bombs dropped on the Libyan government since the start of Western imperial intervention. Direct military intervention of 20 major and minor foreign military powers, savaging the sovereign Libyan state, as well as scores of political accomplices in the United Nations do not contribute to any military advantage for the imperial clients - according to the daily pro-rebel propaganda.

The Los Angeles Times (March 31, 2011), however described how "...many rebels in gun-mounted trucks turned and fled...even though their heavy machine guns and anti-aircraft guns seemed a match for any similar government vehicle." Indeed, no 'rebel' force in recent history has received such sustained military support from so many imperial powers in their confrontation with an established regime. Nevertheless, the 'rebel' forces on the front lines are in full retreat, fleeing in disarray and thoroughly disgusted with their 'rebel' generals and ministers back in Benghazi. Meanwhile the 'rebel' leaders, in elegant suits and tailored uniforms, answer the 'call to battle' by attending 'summits' in London where 'liberation strategy' consists of their appeal before the mass media for imperial ground troops (The Independent (London) (3/31/11).

Morale among the frontline 'rebels' is low: According to credible reports from the battlefield at Ajdabiya, "Rebels ...complained that their erstwhile commanders were nowhere to be found. They griped about comrades who fled to the relative safety of Benghazi...(they complained that) forces in Benghazi monopolized 400 donated field radios and 400 more...satellite phones intended for the battlefield...(mostly) rebels say commanders rarely

visit the battlefield and exercise little authority because many fighters do not trust them”(Los Angeles Times, 3/31/2011). Apparently ‘Twitters’ don’t work on the battlefield.

The decisive issues in a the civil war are not weapons, training or leadership, although certainly these factors are important: The basic difference between the military capability of the pro-government Libyan forces and the Libyan ‘rebels’, backed by both Western imperialists and ‘progressives,’ lies in their motivation, values and material advances. Western imperialist intervention has heightened national consciousness among the Libyan people, who now view their confrontation with the anti-Gaddafi ‘rebels’ as a fight to defend their homeland from foreign air and sea power and puppet land troops – a powerful incentive for any people or army. The opposite is true for the ‘rebels’, whose leaders have surrendered their national identity and depend entirely on imperialist military intervention to put them in power. What rank and file ‘rebel’ fighters are going to risk their lives, fighting their own compatriots, just to place their country under an imperialist or neo-colonial rule?

Finally Western journalists’ accounts are coming to light of village and town pro-government militias repelling these ‘rebels’ and even how “a busload of (Libyan) women suddenly emerged (from one village)...and began cheering as though they supported the rebels...” drawing the Western-backed rebels into a deadly ambush set by their pro-government husbands and neighbors (Globe and Mail, 3/28/11 and McClatchy News Service, 3/29/11).

The ‘rebels’, who enter their villages, are seen as invaders, breaking doors, blowing up homes and arresting and accusing local leaders of being ‘fifth columnists’ for Gaddafi. The threat of military ‘rebel’ occupation, the arrest and abuse of local authorities and the disruption of highly valued family, clan and local community relations have motivated local Libyan militias and fighters to attack the Western-backed ‘rebels’. The ‘rebels’ are regarded as ‘outsiders’ in terms of regional and clan allegiances; by trampling on local mores, the ‘rebels’ now find themselves in ‘hostile’ territory. What ‘rebel’ fighter would be willing to die defending hostile terrain? Such ‘rebels’ have only to call on foreign air-power to ‘liberate’ the pro-government village for them.

The Western media, unable to grasp these material advances by the pro-government forces, attribute popular backing of Gaddafi to ‘coercion’ or ‘co-optation’, relying on ‘rebel’ claims that ‘everybody is secretly opposed to the regime’. There is another material reality, which is conveniently ignored: The Gaddafi regime has effectively used the country’s oil wealth to build a vast network of public schools, hospitals and clinics. Libyans have the highest per capita income in Africa at \$14,900 per annum (Financial Times, 4/2/11).

Tens of thousands of low-income Libyan students have received scholarships to study at home and overseas. The urban infrastructure has been modernized, agriculture is subsidized and small-scale producers and manufacturers receive government credit. Gaddafi has overseen these effective programs, in addition to enriching his own clan/family. On the other hand, the Libyan rebels and their imperial mentors have targeted the entire civilian economy, bombed Libyan cities, cut trade and commercial networks, blocked the delivery of subsidized food and welfare to the poor, caused the suspension of schools and forced hundreds of thousands of foreign professionals, teachers, doctors and skilled contract workers to flee.

Libyans, who might otherwise resent Gaddafi’s long autocratic tenure in office, are now faced with the choice between supporting an advanced, functioning welfare state or a

foreign-directed military conquest. Many have chosen, quite rationally, to stand with the regime.

The debacle of the imperial-backed ‘rebel’ forces, despite their immense technical-military advantage, is due to the quisling leadership, their role as ‘internal colonialists’ invading local communities and above all their wanton destruction of a social-welfare system which has benefited millions of ordinary Libyans for two generations. The failure of the ‘rebels’ to advance, despite the massive support of imperial air and sea power, means that the US-France-Britain ‘coalition’ will have to escalate its intervention beyond sending special forces, advisers and CIA assassination teams. Given Obama-Clinton’s stated objective of ‘regime change’, there will be no choice but to introduce imperialist troops, send large-scale shipments of armored carriers and tanks, and increase the use of the highly destructive depleted uranium munitions.

No doubt Obama, the most public face of ‘humanitarian armed intervention’ in Africa, will recite bigger and more grotesque lies, as Libyan villagers and townspeople fall victims to his imperial juggernaut. Washington’s ‘first black Chief Executive’ will earn history’s infamy as the US President responsible for the slaughter of hundreds of black Libyans and mass expulsion of millions of sub-Saharan African workers employed under the current regime (Globe and Mail 3/28/11).

No doubt, Anglo-American progressives and leftists will continue to debate (in ‘civilized tones’) the pros and cons of this ‘intervention’, following in the footsteps of their predecessors, the French Socialists and US New Dealers from the 1930’s, who once debated the pros and cons of supporting Republican Spain... While Hitler and Mussolini bombed the republic on behalf of the ‘rebel’ fascist forces under General Franco who upheld the Falangist banner of ‘Family, Church and Civilization’ – a fascist prototype for Obama’s ‘humanitarian intervention’ on behalf of his ‘rebels’.

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