

# The War on Libya and US Foreign Policy: Ronald Reagan, 1986 versus Barack Obama, 2011

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Global Research, March 30, 2011

[Stop NATO](#) 30 March 2011

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

*From Reagan to Obama: This careful compilation by Rick Rozoff reveals the hypocrisy of US foreign policy as well as the continuity of America's imperial design...*



Ronald Reagan (RR) April 14, 1986  
Barack Obama (BO) March 28, 2011

RR:

At 7 o'clock this evening eastern time air and naval forces of the United States launched a series of strikes against the headquarters, terrorist facilities, and military assets that support Mu`ammar Qadhafi's subversive activities.

BO:

Confronted by...brutal repression and a looming humanitarian crisis, I ordered warships into the Mediterranean...It was not in our national interest to let that happen. I refused to let that happen. And so nine days ago...I authorized military action....

RR:

Several weeks ago in New Orleans, I warned Colonel Qadhafi we would hold his regime accountable....

BO:

Ten days ago, having tried to end the violence without using force, the international

community offered Gaddafi a final chance to stop his campaign of killing, or face the consequences.

RR:

Colonel Qadhafi is not only an enemy of the United States. His record of subversion and aggression against the neighboring States in Africa is well documented and well known. He has ordered the murder of fellow Libyans in countless countries.

BO:

For more than four decades, the Libyan people have been ruled by a tyrant – Moammar Gaddafi. He has denied his people freedom, exploited their wealth, murdered opponents at home and abroad, and terrorized innocent people around the world – including Americans who were killed by Libyan agents.

RR:

Today we have done what we had to do. If necessary, we shall do it again.

BO:

So for those who doubted our capacity to carry out this operation, I want to be clear: the United States of America has done what we said we would do.

RR:

To our friends and allies in Europe who cooperated in today's mission, I would only say you have the permanent gratitude of the American people.

BO:

In this effort, the United States has not acted alone....Our most effective alliance, NATO, has taken command of the enforcement of the arms embargo and No Fly Zone.

RR:

Self-defense is not only our right, it is our duty. It is the purpose behind the mission undertaken tonight.

BO:

[W]hen our interests and values are at stake, we have a responsibility to act. That is what happened in Libya over the course of these last six weeks....I have made it clear that I will never hesitate to use our military swiftly, decisively, and unilaterally when necessary to defend our people, our homeland, our allies, and our core interests.

RR:

I have no illusion that tonight's action will ring down the curtain on Qadhafi's reign of terror. But this mission, violent though it was, can bring closer a safer and more secure world for decent men and women. We will persevere.

BO:

That is not to say that our work is complete....Gaddafi has not yet stepped down from power, and until he does, Libya will remain dangerous.

RR:

Tonight I salute the skill and professionalism of the men and women of our Armed Forces

who carried out this mission. It's an honor to be your Commander in Chief.

BO:

I want to begin by paying tribute to our men and women in uniform who, once again, have acted with courage, professionalism and patriotism. They have moved with incredible speed and strength.

RR:

We Americans are slow to anger. We always seek peaceful avenues before resorting to the use of force – and we did. We tried quiet diplomacy, public condemnation, economic sanctions, and demonstrations of military force. None succeeded. Despite our repeated warnings, Qadhafi continued his reckless policy of intimidation....

BO:

For generations, the United States of America has played a unique role as an anchor of global security and advocate for human freedom. Mindful of the risks and costs of military action, we are naturally reluctant to use force to solve the world's many challenges. But when our interests and values are at stake, we have a responsibility to act.

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