

OMNI LIBYA NEWSLETTER #3, August 24, 2011. Compiled by Dick Bennett for a Culture of Peace (#1 May 2, 2011; #2 July 1, 2011)

Here is the link to all OMNI newsletters:

<http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/>

Contents of #1

Why Gaddafi and Not the Other Tyrants

Mayer

Rubenstein

Blum

Carson: Deal with Saudis

Noueihed: Bombing a School for Children

Killing Gaddafi's Son and Grandchildren

Contents for #2

QUESTIONING NATO'S ATTACKS ON LIBYA

Dennis Kucinich and War Powers; House Blocks Kucinich Bill

William Blum

Cindy Sheehan

Mike Ferner, VFP

Eric Bronner

Jonathan Schell

Keith Olbermann and Michael Moore

Adam Schreck and Hadeel Al-Shalchi
Ralph Nader: Unconstitutional War

MEDIA SUPPORT FOR NATO INVASION

NYT for Escalation

PBS NewsHour

CNN

Contents for #3

Present Role and Future Interventions of NATO and US

Kucinich: End the War

NATO Failed to Learn

Marshall: NATO Bombing

Dreyfuss: Russia and S. Africa Seek Truce

Nichols: War Illegal

Schreck: Rebels in the West; ICC Issues Arrest Warrant for Gadhafi; African Union Supports Gadhafi

4 Articles in *Z Magazine*

What Really Happened in Libya

By Rep. Dennis Kucinich, Reader Supported News

24 August 11

Libya and beyond: How did we get there and what happens next?

Libyan rebels have entered Tripoli. As gun battles break out across the city, it is timely to enter into a discussion as to how the rebels arrived there. It is time to review the curious role of NATO and the future of US interventionism.

A negotiated settlement in Libya was deliberately avoided for months while NATO, in violation of UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions 1970 and 1973, illegally pursued regime change. NATO chose sides, intervened in a civil war and morphed into the air force for the rebels, who could not have succeeded but for NATO's attacks.

NATO acted with impunity. The NATO command recklessly bombed civilians in the name of saving civilians. Usurping the United Nation's traditional role, NATO looked the other way as the arms embargo was openly violated by U.N. member nations.

NATO's top commanders may have acted under color of international law but they are not exempt from international law. If members of the Gaddafi Regime are to be held accountable, NATO's top

commanders must also be held accountable through the International Criminal Court for all civilian deaths resulting from bombing. Otherwise we will have witnessed the triumph of a new international gangsterism.

The reasons for the US/NATO intervention in Libya keep changing. First it was about the potential for a massacre in Benghazi. When the massacre did not materialize and once the war against Libya was underway, the reasons for intervention changed.

We were reminded Libya had spent 'forty years under a tyrant.' We were urged to remember the destruction of Pan Am Flight 103 over Scotland, which occurred 23 years ago this December 21st. Yet almost 20 years later, on November 18, 2008 the Associated Press reported that President George Bush called Colonel Gaddafi personally "to voice his satisfaction that Libya has settled a long-standing dispute over terrorist attacks, including the bombing of a Pan Am jet over Scotland."

On December 19, 2003 Libya voluntarily gave up its nuclear weapon-making capability and on January 6, 2004 ratified the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Its relationship with the US on the mend, Libya then opened up to international investment and began the wholesale privatization of its industries, leading to massive unemployment and dissatisfaction with the state of things, particularly among younger Libyans.

I mention this not to sympathize with Colonel Gaddafi's brutality or to minimize the great tragedy of Flight 103. But if the US had come to terms with Gaddafi's past violence, why does the Obama Administration invoke it as justification for an attack on Libya? One conclusion could be that the reasons for the March 2011 attack were bogus.

Once into the war, the Administration promptly passed off nominal responsibility for the war to NATO, after beginning the war without congressional authorization. NATO became the beneficiary of US funds, US war planes, US drones, US bombs, and US intelligence assets.

NATO violated UNSC resolutions. The Obama Administration violated the US Constitution by bypassing Congress on the war. These are not mere academic matters. They have moved the world community from the rule of law to the rule of force and have set a precedent for NATO to become the new global-cop. Far from bringing a new level of security to the world scene, NATO has brought a new level of insecurity and unaccountability.

The question of the reason for United States' involvement in Libya remains.

Was the United States' Central Intelligence Agency involved in planning for regime change prior to events in February and March in Benghazi? Did the CIA and its assets have a role in fomenting a civil war?

Was the United States, through participation in the overthrow of the regime, furthering the aims of international oil corporations in pursuit of control over one of the world's largest oil resources?

Did the United States at the inception of the war against Libya align itself with elements of al Qaeda, while elsewhere continuing to use the threat of al Qaeda as a reason for US military intervention, presence and occupation?

The foreign policy objectives of the Obama Administration are cloudy. Pledges to end the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are in doubt. The Iraq War is supposed to be over at the end of this year, yet that promise appears to be fading. The US presence in Afghanistan appears to be open-ended. The latest reports describe a US commitment in Afghanistan through 2024. This raises the question as to whether the Administration has full control over the military and intelligence apparatus.

In the case of Libya, now that NATO, with the help of the US, has brought the rebels into the streets of Tripoli to fight, what follows? What's the plan? Who governs and for whose sake? Will Libya become NATO's protectorate?

It is not only the Gaddafi compound in Tripoli that will be left in ruins by NATO's actions; it will also be the Obama Administration's relationship with the African Union (AU). The AU and its member nations have been repeatedly rebuffed by the US in its efforts to bring about a peaceful, negotiated settlement for the regime's transition out of power. While the US, through NATO, has been bombing Libya, China has spent time building commercial opportunities across the African continent.

As the Administration indulges itself with wars in Libya, Iraq and Afghanistan - spending hundreds of billions of dollars on military adventurism - the United States has massive economic problems at home. Resources which should be spent creating jobs in America are going to perpetuate war abroad. Resources which should be used to build bridges in America continue to be used to bomb bridges elsewhere.

Millions of Americans are begging for a chance to earn their daily bread while the government spends its money on daily bombing. While the government has yet to produce a viable jobs program to put millions of unemployed back to work, the waste of resources on war is guaranteed to continue: The Iraq and Afghanistan wars are NOT to subject to spending caps in the budget. The American people get myths, rhetoric and unemployment while war profiteers get the gold. Can you imagine what the people of Libya will get?

“End the Illegal War in Libya Now” by Rep. Dennis Kucinich, Reader Supported News

Dennis Kucinich writes: "The US Congress must act to cut off funds for the war because there is no military solution in Libya. Serious negotiations for a political solution must begin to end the violence and create an environment for peace negotiations to fulfil the legitimate, democratic aspirations of the people. A political solution will become viable when the opposition understands that regime change is the privilege of the Libyan people, not of NATO."

READ MORE <http://www.readersupportednews.org/opinion2/267-33/6519-end-the-illegal-war-in-libya-now>

"NATO in Libya Has Failed to Learn Costly Lessons of Afghanistan" By Patrick Cockburn, *The Independent*, posted July 23, 2011
<http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/patrick-cockburn-nato-in-libya-has->

failed-to-learn-costly-lessons-of-afghanistan-2319539.html

[“NATO Bombing in Libya Leads to Drawn-Out War, More Civilian Deaths”](#) *Washington Report Archives* (2011-2015) - 2011 July

By Rachelle Marshall

The U.S. is now actively at war in four countries, counting the covert operations in Yemen and Pakistan, and maintains a sizable army in Iraq. All of these wars, like those of the past, were begun for purportedly noble purposes such as combatting terrorists, spreading democracy or protecting civilians. After 10 years of continuous warfare, however, only one of these aims has been accomplished—the killing of master terrorist Osama bin Laden—and meanwhile the U.S. has gained an expanded military presence in the region that is likely to become permanent.

NATO's expanded interpretation of a U.N. mandate to intervene in Libya to protect civilians has increased, not lessened, the number of civilian deaths. An intensive bombing campaign directed at Col. Muammar Qaddafi's army enabled his opponents to maintain a foothold in the city of Misurata, which Qaddafi's forces then subjected to constant shelling, with hundreds more deaths as a result. Qaddafi has repeatedly offered a cease-fire only to be turned down.

President Barack Obama's prediction of a bloodbath if NATO did not intervene was disputed by Prof. Alan J. Kuperman of the University of Texas, who wrote in the April 14 *Boston Globe* that until Misurata came under siege, Libyan soldiers were targeting only rebel fighters. His statement was backed up by Human Rights Watch, which found that no bloodbaths or arbitrary killings took place in the cities recaptured by Qaddafi's troops.

In any case, bombing populated areas is hardly a way to prevent civilian casualties. NATO's repeated bombing of Qaddafi's family compound in Tripoli in late April killed Qaddafi's son and three grandchildren, all under 4, and angered even Qaddafi's enemies. Administration officials said the intent was not to kill the Libyan leader but to "change his calculus" and force him to surrender.

Whatever their intent, the allies agreed that Qaddafi had to go. "It's a non-negotiable demand," said State Department spokesman Mark Toner in rejecting a proposal by the African Union for a cease-fire and the promise of reforms to Qaddafi's regime. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stressed that nothing could be resolved without "the departure of Qaddafi from power and from Libya."

The administration has yet to suggest a possible successor to Qaddafi. A State Department official praised his opponents as "a group of disparate individuals that has formed in the face of Colonel Qaddafi's onslaught and oppression and has done a good job at coalescing, at forming a leadership, at creating certain values, and communicating those values and ideals."

But in the same week, *New York Times* reporters in Benghazi described the rebels as "a ragtag, undisciplined force," prone to firing high-explosive munitions repeatedly and indiscriminately, causing numbers of unnecessary casualties. The rebels could not even agree on which of two squabbling generals was their top officer. One of the rival generals, Abdul Fattah Younes, only recently defected from the Qaddafi regime. The other, Khalifa Hifter, returned from exile in suburban Virginia, where he was in frequent communication with the CIA. Both claimed to be in charge. [READ More](#)

<http://www.wrmea.com/component/content/article/370-2011-july/10550-nato-bombing-in-libya-leads-to-drawn-out-war-more-civilian-deaths-.html>

Medvedev, Zuma Seek Libya Accord

Robert Dreyfuss July 5, 2011

Muammar Qaddafi may not hold on much longer, but the US and NATO-led war has taken a lot of steam out of the Arab spring. When the war in Libya started more than three months ago—has it really been that long?—it was touted as a quick action designed to protect Libyan civilians, but it's morphed into an all-out effort to topple Muammar Qaddafi by force and propel the questionable Libyan opposition into power. For months, it's been a stalemate, with the pro-Qaddafi forces entrenched in the capital and in various strongholds and the armed opposition unable to expand their area of control, except in a string of mountain towns south and west of Tripoli.

President's Libya War is Undeclared, Unconstitutional, Unnecessary

John Nichols June 22, 2011

It was only a matter of time before the bombing campaign that NATO nations—including the United States—have waged against Libya would go horribly awry. And so it has. NATO commanders are [now acknowledging that their forces bombed residential neighborhoods in Tripoli](#), killing and injuring civilians over the weekend—just as they previously admitted that misdirected air strikes killed rebels they were supposed

War is a messy business that is frequently defined by "collateral damage." Civilians get killed. "Friendly fire" takes down

allies. That's reality. And in a necessary war, Americans of many partisanships and ideologies can accept that reality and the

need to continue the conflict.

But the Libya fight is not necessary; at least not for the United States. And Americans know that, The [latest CBS News poll](#) finds that “**six in 10 Americans do not think that the United States should be involved in the conflict** within that country. Just 30% of Americans think the United States is doing the right thing by taking part in the current military conflict in Libya now. A majority of Republicans, Democrats, and independents alike think the U.S. should not be involved in Libya.”

President Obama, who steered the United States into the Libya conflict without proper authorization from Congress, has stubbornly refused to reconsider his wrongheaded approach to the conflict. Now we learn, from a *New York Times* report, that Pentagon’s general counsel, Jeh C. Johnson, and Caroline D. Krass, the acting director of the Justice Department’s Office of Legal Counsel, both [advised President Obama that our nation’s involvement in the war in Libya constitutes “hostilities” as defined by the War Powers Act.](#)

Translation: Even the Pentagon and the Justice Department say this was is in conflict with the laws and the Constitution of the United States.

President Obama is wrong.

And it is the job of Congress to address that wrong.

The opportunity could come this week.

House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, plans to offer the House a pair of choices: vote to authorize the US combat mission or vote to bring it to an end.

The first resolution—parallel to a proposal advanced by Senators John Kerry, D-Massachusetts, and John McCain, R-Arizona, that authorizes a limited US military mission of one year in duration. This resolution prohibits the use of ground troops except to defend endangered Americans.

The [second resolution](#) demands that, in keeping with the War Powers Act, US forces be removed from Libya “except for forces engaged in non-hostile actions such as search & rescue, aerial re-fueling, operational planning, intelligence/surveillance/reconnaissance, and non-combat missions.”

Even that is too much.

No war should be launched without a Congressional declaration, of the sort sought and obtained by President Franklin Roosevelt before the launch of World War II, and President Woodrow Wilson before World War I.

Boehner covered for Obama on the issue two weeks ago by [averting a move](#)—led by Ohio Democrat Dennis Kucinich but supported by many leading Republicans—to demand the rapid withdrawal of US forces from the NATO mission. But, now, the pressure is on both Obama and Boehner.

Ten members of the House—Kucinich, Walter Jones (R-NC), Howard Coble (R-NC), John Duncan (R-TN), Roscoe Bartlett (R-MD), John Conyers (D-MI) Ron Paul (R-TX), Michael Capuano (D-MA), Tim Johnson (R-IL) and Dan Burton (R-IN)—[have filed a suit in federal court](#) against President Barack Obama to challenge the commitment of the United States to war in Libya absent the required constitutional legal authority.

Kucinich is not just fighting in the courts. He is again offering an amendment to cut off funds for the continuation of the war.

“This Administration brought our nation to war without Congressional approval or the support of the American people. When Congress demanded an explanation, the administration tried to argue that bombing operations and support of other countries’ military operations in Libya, which cost almost \$9.5 million per day, do not constitute war. In a direct challenge to Congress, the Administration is continuing the war despite its inability to provide a constitutional or legal justification for bypassing Congress. Congress must use its constitutional authority of the power of the purse to end this war.

“My amendment will provide the first test whether this Congress will defend its own authority under Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution,” says Kucinich. “The war in Libya lacks Constitutional authority and it lacks the support of the American people.

... I am proposing this amendment to bring our engagement to a swift end.”

Kucinich and his allies on the left and right are the real leaders in the fight to hold the president to account. [Boehner, the president's golf partner, is feeling the heat](#)—and his proposed resolutions could be vehicles for ending not just an war but an assault on the constitution.

But don't waste too much time trying to keep track of Boehner's machinations, which may or may not prove to be consequential.

Watch what Kucinich and his allies do. The Ohioan and the Democrats and Republicans who have sided with him as unflinching defenders of the Constitution and the strict application of the War Powers Act are the steadiest fighters on this issue. Where they take their stand—particularly on Boehner's second resolution—will be the right and proper checks-and-balances stance. They are the true defenders of the system of checks and balances.

[Dmitri Medvedev](#) [Jacob Zuma](#) [North Atlantic Treaty Organization](#)

It's possible, finally, that the war might draw to a conclusion in a [negotiated deal](#) between Qaddafi and the opposition Transitional National Council, brokered by Russia's Dmitri Medvedev and South Africa's Jacob Zuma. The head of NATO is in Moscow, talking to Medvedev, exploring a deal, and the TNC has suggested that Qaddafi might remain in Libya, presumably indefinitely and free of prosecution, if he steps down and agrees to a transfer of power. Newspapers in Russia [say](#) that Qaddafi is looking for [a way out](#).

Sadly, Obama has turned to the “two Johns,” Senators John Kerry and John McCain, who've formed an alliance to back the war in Libya, together facing down both the growing Republican opposition to the war and the left-liberal Democratic critics.

Over the July 4 weekend, Mustafa Abdel Jalil of the TNC said:

“As a peaceful solution, we offered that he [Qaddafi] can resign...and then he can decide either to stay in Libya or abroad. If he desires to stay in Libya, we will determine the place, and it will be under international supervision.”

That's a significant concession by the TNC, since its stand all along has been that Qaddafi has to depart Libya, and they've backed international criminal proceedings against him. A counterproductive warrant for Qaddafi's arrest, issued by the International Criminal Court, has been denounced and ignored by the African Union, and rightly so: the ICC action, trumpeted by the Obama administration, has made it harder to get an accord that results in Qaddafi's stepping down. Even so, the talks between Medvedev, NATO, and Zuma have made some progress. "The meeting was rather productive," said Medvedev.

Last week, the *New York Times* noted in an editorial that Italy has called for a ceasefire and that the Arab League is "second-guessing" its support for the war, and no wonder. Rather than a limited military action, the US and NATO effort has become a grinding war in support of regime change. The ragtag Libya opposition, a far cry from the stirring democratic protests that ousted leaders in Tunisia and Egypt, has settled into something closer to trench warfare.

Other NATO members, too, are questioning the war, [reports the Los Angeles Times](#), in a piece that notes that the anti-Qaddafi coalition in NATO could fall apart:

Several signs of discontent have become public. In the Netherlands, Defense Minister Hans Hillen complained last week of "mission creep" and suggested that the campaign's advocates were deluded in believing they could crush Qaddafi. "People who thought that merely by throwing some bombs it would not only help the people, but also convince Qaddafi that he could step down or alter his policy were a little bit naive," Hillen told reporters in Brussels.

Schreck: Rebels in the West; ICC Issues Arrest Warrant for Gadhafi; African Union Supports Gadhafi

Adam Schreck, "NATO: Libya's West Pressed; African Union Backs Gadhafi," *ADG* (7-3-2011). NATO increasing its attacks on Gadhafi's forces in the West. The International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for Gadhafi's arrest, but the African Union condemned the warrant unanimously.

Empire or Republic?

The Editors

June 28, 2011 | This article appeared in the July 18-25, 2011 edition of *The Nation*.

Among all the foreign policy decisions President Obama has made, the most surprising may be the one to go to war in Libya without either requesting a declaration of war from Congress, as required by the Constitution, or obtaining legislative authorization, as required by the War Powers Resolution of 1973. Some have suggested that authorization could have been easily obtained at the time the war was launched, when public sentiment against the murderous Qaddafi regime was running high. In that case, the decision not to ask for it seems an especially gratuitous insult to Congress. But if the opposite was true, and Congress at the time had turned down authorization, then the situation is worse. In that case, the war should never have happened at all, for it was started in defiance of the only body of government empowered by the Constitution to initiate war

James Madison [President War executive](#)

Congress's recent actions have done nothing to clarify the situation. The House rejected Dennis Kucinich's resolution to force a withdrawal, but it also defeated one to authorize the war. Then the House turned down a bill that would have cut off some, but not all, funding for the Libya operation.

The still-unresolved debate over the wisdom of engaging in this conflict, which *The Nation* opposes, raises once again the general question of how, in our time, the United States shall decide whether or not to go to war. Perhaps surprisingly, the tightest restrictions on executive war-making are those in the 233-year-old Constitution. Article 1, Section 8, states, "Congress shall have power to declare war," leaving to the executive only the waging of the war thus initiated. This division of responsibilities was an application of the principle of the separation of powers, which many believe is the specific genius of the American Constitution. As Bennett Ramberg of *Politico* reminded us recently, James Madison articulated the principle in the clearest terms when he said, "Those who are to conduct a war cannot in the nature of things

be proper or safe judges, whether a war ought to be commenced, continued or concluded.” Madison’s use of the word “judges” is telling. Just as a judge only applies the law and does not make it, he seems to be saying, so a president only fights a war and must not initiate it. If those who fight the wars could send themselves to war, dangerous abuses of power would result.

Curiously, the War Powers Resolution, though an attempt to recoup Congressional power, also waters down the clear constitutional provision. It tries through legislation to recover some of the war-“declaring power enshrined in the Constitution. (In cases of attack on the United States or its territories or armed forces, the resolution permits the executive to conduct hostilities for sixty days, after which it must obtain Congressional“ authorization.)

One might have thought that the Constitution—the fundamental law of the land—would be a stronger bulwark of powers than a mere Congressional resolution. But one would be wrong, in this case. The Constitution is not self-regulating. Ordinarily, constitutional law is decisive because the courts uphold it. But in the case of war powers, the courts have regularly abdicated, calling war a “political question” unsuited for adjudication. Thus, one breakdown in the separation of powers—the separation of executive from judicial that gives the courts the power to judge the constitutionality of executive actions—has led to another: Congress’s neglect of its own war power.

Congress has been thrown back on its own devices. What should it do? Some suggest that the nature of war has changed so much in the two centuries since the Constitution was established that the whole idea of declaring war is obsolete. Charles Krauthammer writes that declarations of war are “a relic of a more aristocratic era.”

We disagree. The constitutional provision—not the War Powers Resolution—if insisted on by

a resolute Congress, would be the strongest and best medicine available for the specific evils afflicting US policy. These can be summed up as the transmogrification of the republic into an empire. If, like Krauthammer, you think that with the end of the cold war “something new was born, something utterly new—a unipolar world dominated by a single superpower unchecked by any rival and with decisive reach in every corner of the globe”; and if, like Krauthammer and the entire neoconservative tribe, you revel in that notion, then you are right to wish to jettison Congress’s war-declaring power. The rules of a republic are as poisonous to an empire as the rules of empire are to a republic.

On the other hand, what better check could there be to the imperial panoply of interminable nation-building campaigns, secret armies, covert operations, regime-change quagmires, offshore torture centers, out-of-control armed corporations, runaway military spending, wars by fleets of robots, wars by assassination—and all the other features of the imperial presidency—than a requirement to bring these machinations to light and render them accountable to democratic deliberation? It is not in spite of the changes in warfare but precisely because of them that we should recover the wisdom of Madison, who knew a thing or two about fighting empires. A choice is being made between the empire and the republic. Let us choose the republic—and the Constitution on which it rests.

No Checks, No Balances: House Refuses to Authorize Obama's Libya War, but Funds It

John Nichols June 24, 2011

House Speaker John Boehner, whose incoherent approach to the constitutional mandate that Congress check and balance presidential war-making has so served the interests of the

Obama administration's Libya project, steered the House into conflict with itself Friday.

Boehner advanced two proposals (under the sponsorship of the speaker's close allies) relating to [the president's decision to involve US forces in an ongoing—if largely dysfunctional —NATO-led assault on Libya.](#)

One proposal would have authorized the president's war of whim.

The other would have cut funding for Obama's latest war, thus bringing the initiative to a swift conclusion.

On the first measure, [the House voted 295-123 against authorizing even the limited use of US forces.](#)

On the second measure, [the House rejected the funding cut by a 238-180 vote.](#)

So the House has refused to authorize the president's war with Libya.

At the same time, however, the House has agreed to continue funding it.

If the pairing of policies makes no apparent sense, well, welcome to John Boehner's Congress.

The speaker, who has repeatedly steered the House away from moves that would actually hold the president to account, has again shredded the Constitution in order to help the Obama White House maintain an undeclared, unnecessary and unwise war.

Let's be clear about what the different players in this charade wanted with regard to these House votes.

The Obama administration would have preferred House votes to authorize the mission and to maintain the funding. They lost on the authorization, which is embarrassing, but kept the

money for the project, which is definitive. So, while the president did not get exactly what he wanted, he survived an accountability moment without really being held to account.

Antiwar forces on Capitol Hill, led by Congressman Dennis Kucinich, D-Ohio, Congressman Ron Paul, R-Texas, and the rapidly growing bipartisan coalition of congressional supporters of the Constitution and the War Powers Resolution, wanted the House to refuse to authorize the Libyan mission and to refuse to fund it. They easily won the lesser goal, in that the authorization resolution was defeated. But things got far more complex when it came to the funding resolution.

Some antiwar members, such as Kucinich, voted for the resolution because the wording seemed to limit funding for the mission. Others, such as Paul, voted against it because they feared the resolution could be read as authorizing some aspects of the current mission.

Only Boehner and the most politically self-serving of his allies favored both the refusal to authorize the war and the continued funding of it. Why? Because the refusal of authorization took a poke at the president, while the maintenance of funding served the agenda of the generous campaign donors associated with the nation's largest military contractors, a crowd that remains enthusiastic about maintaining even the most foolish of fool's missions abroad.

Friday's voting was a cynical exercise organized by Boehner and approved, grudgingly, by the White House. But there was plenty of cynicism to go around. Many Democrats who voted against authorizing the president's war then voted in favor of funding it—a have-it-both-ways combination. And more than a few Republicans with steady records of supporting military misadventures abroad took the anti-war position Friday in hopes of undermining Obama.

That does not mean, however, that everyone involved was a cynic.

A number of members did their best to cast consistent votes against authorizing the president's Libya project and against continuing to fund it. And they backed those votes up with strong statements about the need to end wars of whim and presidential prerogative.

Most of the appropriate antiwar votes came from the core group of members that has stood with Kucinich as he has battled to end this undeclared war of Barack Obama—just as he battled to end the undeclared wars of George Bush.

On the question of whether to authorize the Libyan mission, [Kucinich and sixty-nine other Democrats voted “no.”](#) They were joined by 225 Republicans.

On the question of limiting the use of US funds to maintain the Libya mission, thirty-six Democrats (including Kucinich and prominent progressives such as Michigan's John Conyers and Massachusetts' Barney Frank) voted “yes,” as did 144 Republicans. But it is important to note that a number of antiwar members, including Paul and California Democrat Mike Honda, voted “no” because of their fears that the resolution's language about limiting (rather than eliminating) funding for the Libya mission could be read as a backdoor authorization of the mission.

Paul was particularly blunt in urging his colleagues—especially the Republicans—to oppose any authorization (be it formal or through language allowing some funding) of a continued mission in Libya.

New York Congressman [Jerry Nadler, the ranking Democrat on the Constitution Subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee](#) warned: “We have been sliding for seventy years to a situation where Congress has nothing to do with the decision about whether to go to war or not, and the president is becoming an absolute monarch. And we must put a stop to that right now, if we don't want to become an empire instead of a republic.”

Nadler was right, as he so frequently is on issues of presidential powers.

Unfortunately, the debate that might have been on this most central of constitutional questions was thwarted by Boehner, who rushed the proposals to votes on a Friday afternoon when Congress is preoccupied with a trumped-up debt-ceiling debate and the mad rush to finish business before the traditional July 4 break.

New York Congresswoman [Louise Slaughter, the ranking Democrat on House Rules Committee](#), decried the “shameful” way in which Boehner and House Republicans forced quick votes with limited debate on the two Libya measures rushed through both bills. “[The] way in which today’s measures are being debated shames the dignity, history and tradition of this body,” said Slaughter. “I really regret the shameful way this important debate has been rushed through Congress and I apologize to future generations who will look back on the work that we are doing today to try to understand the time.”

4 ARTICLES IN *Z MAGAZINE*

Marjorie Cohn, “Stop Bombing Libya”;

Phyllis Bennis, “Libyan Intervention Threatens the Arab Spring”;

Noam Chomsky, “On Libya and the Unfolding Crisis” (interview);

Stephen R. Shalom and Michael Albert, on no-fly zones, intervention, etc.

END OF LIBYA NEWSLETTER #3