

**OMNI LIBYA NEWSLETTER #4, September 30, 2011.** Compiled by Dick Bennett for a Culture of Peace (#1 May 2, 2011; #2 July 1, 2011; #3 August 24, 2011)

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# “Syria & Libya: violence vs. non-violence debate – Uri Avnery and Michael Nagler

Posted by: "Roland James" [rolandjames\\_318@hotmail.com](mailto:rolandjames_318@hotmail.com) Tue Aug 30, 2011

Editor's note [Lerner]: This is a critical debate.... I hope you'll let me know your reactions to it. I'm a huge fan of Uri Avnery, whose articles regularly appear on our Tikkun web magazine site [www.tikkun.org](http://www.tikkun.org). So when I read his very compelling article, I asked Michael Nagler to present an alternative perspective. Michael is a dear friend whose writings on Gandhi and non-violence have been an inspiration to me and many others. I can easily understand the power of Avnery's argument, though personally I'm on the side of a principled non-violence consistent with seeing everyone, no matter how screwed up, as a manifestation and embodiment of the spirit of God. Some people misunderstood the title of my last communication where I send "overthrow the Syrian regime." Yes, but I didn't mean violently, but instead was meaning to be supporting the non-violent struggle of Syrians against the violence of Assad and his army, and encouraging us in the West to find non-violent ways to help, like boycotts, divestment and sanctions.

Please read both articles below!

Meanwhile, if you share my view that UN recognition of Palestine would contribute to the self-respect and pride that Palestinians need, and hence would make it easier for them to join in negotiations with Israel with a greater sense of power (however limited, given the wild military imbalance between the occupier and the occupied), please sign our petition calling on the U.S. and U.N. to recognize Palestine. You can sign it by clicking here or by going to : [http://salsa.democracyinaction.org/o/525/p/dia/action/public/?action\\_KEY=7064](http://salsa.democracyinaction.org/o/525/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=7064). ...

Warm regards and blessings,

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Uri Avnery

August 27, 2011

To The Shores of Tripoli

THOUGH THE Bible tells us “Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth” (Proverbs 24:17), I could not help myself. I was happy.

Muammar al-Gaddafi was the enemy of every decent person in the world. He was one of the worst tyrants in recent memory.

This fact was hidden behind a façade of clownishness. He liked to present himself as a philosopher (the “Green Book”), a visionary statesman (Israelis and Palestinians must unite in the “State of Isratine”), even as an immature teenager (his innumerable uniforms and costumes). But basically he was a ruthless dictator, surrounded by corrupt relatives and cronies, squandering the great wealth of Libya.

This was obvious to anyone who wanted to see. Unfortunately, there were quite a few who chose to close their eyes.

WHEN I expressed my support for the international intervention, I was expecting to be attacked by some well-meaning people. I was not disappointed.

How could I? How could I support the American imperialists and the abominable NATO? Didn't I realize that it was all about the oil?

I was not surprised. I have been through this before. When NATO started to bomb Serbian territory in order to put an end to Slobodan Milosevic's crimes in Kosovo, many of my political friends turned against me.

Didn't I realize that it was all an imperialist plot? That the devious Americans wanted to tear Yugoslavia (or Serbia) apart? That NATO was an evil organization? That Milosevic, though he may have some faults, was representing progressive humanity?

This was said when the evidence of the gruesome mass-murder in Bosnia was there for everyone to see, when Milosevic was already exposed as the cold-blooded monster he was. Ariel Sharon admired him.

So how could decent, well-meaning leftists, people of an unblemished humanist record, embrace such a person? My only explanation was that their hatred of the USA and of NATO was so strong, so fervent, that anyone attacked by them must surely be a benefactor of humanity, and all accusations against them pure fabrications. The same happened with Pol Pot.

Now it has happened again. I was bombarded with messages from well-meaning people who lauded Gaddafi for all his good deeds. One might get the impression that he was a second Nelson Mandela, if not a second Mahatma Gandhi.

While the rebels were already fighting their way into his huge personal compound, the socialist leader of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez, was praising him as a true model of upright humanity, a man who dared to stand up to the American aggressors.

Well, sorry, count me out. I have this irrational abhorrence of bloody dictators, of genocidal mass-murderers, of leaders who wage war on their own people. And at my advanced age, it is difficult for me to change.

I am ready to support even the devil, if that is necessary to put an end to this kind of atrocities. I won't even ask about his precise motives. Whatever one may think about the USA and/or NATO - if they disarm a Milosevic or a Gaddafi, they have my blessing.

HOW LARGE a role did NATO play in the defeat of the Libyan dictator?

The rebels would not have reached Tripoli, and certainly not by now, if they had not enjoyed NATO's sustained air support. Libya is one big desert. The offensive had to rely on one long road. Without mastery of the skies, the rebels would have been massacred. Anyone who was alive during World War II and followed the campaigns of Rommel and Montgomery knows this.

I assume that the rebels also received arms and advice to facilitate their advance.

But I object to the patronizing assertion that it was all a NATO victory. It is the old colonialist attitude in a new guise. Of course, these poor, primitive Arabs could not do anything without the White Man shouldering his burden and rushing to the rescue.

But wars are not won by weapons, they are won by people. “Boots on the ground”, as the Americans call it. Even with all the help they got, the Libyan rebels, disorganized and poorly armed as they were, have won a remarkable victory. This would not have happened without real revolutionary fervor, without bravery and determination. It is a Libyan victory, not a British or a French one.

This has been underplayed by the international media. I have not seen any genuine combat coverage (and I know what that looks like). Journalists did not acquit themselves with glory. They displayed exemplary cowardice, staying at a safe distance from the front, even during the fall of Tripoli. On TV they looked ridiculous with their conspicuous helmets when they were surrounded by bareheaded fighters.

What came over was endless jubilations over victories that had seemingly fallen from heaven. But these were feats achieved by people – yes, by Arab people.

This is especially galling to our Israeli “military correspondents” and “Arab affairs experts”. Used to despising or hating “the Arabs”, they are ascribing the victory to NATO. It seems that the people of Libya played a minor role, if any.

Now they blabber endlessly about the “tribes”, which will make democracy and orderly governance in Libya impossible. Libya is not really a country, it was never a unified state before becoming an Italian colony, there is no such thing as a Libyan people. (Remember the French saying this about Algeria, and Golda Meir about Palestine?)

Well, for a people that does not exist, the Libyans fought very well. And as for the “tribes” – why do tribes exist only in Africa and Asia, never among Europeans? Why not a Welsh tribe or a Bavarian tribe?

(When I visited Jordan in 1986, well before the peace treaty, I was entertained by a very civilized, high-ranking Jordanian official. After an interesting conversation over dinner, he surprised me by mentioning that he belongs to a certain tribe. Next day, while I was riding on a horse to Petra, the rider next to me asked in a low voice whether I belonged “to the tribe”. It took me some time to understand that he was asking me if I was a Jew. It seems that American Jews refer to themselves in this way.)

The “tribes” of Libya would be called in Europe “ethnic groups” and in Israel “communities”. The term “tribe” has a patronizing connotation. Let’s drop it.

ALL THOSE who decry NATO’s intervention must answer a simple question: who else would have done the job?

21st century humanity cannot tolerate acts of genocide and mass-murder, wherever they occur. It cannot look on while dictators butcher their own peoples. The doctrine of “non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states” belongs to the past. We Jews, who have accused mankind of standing idly by while millions of Jews, including German citizens, were exterminated by the legitimate German government, certainly owe the world an answer.

I have mentioned in the past that I advocate some form of effective world governance and expect it to be in place by the end of this century. This would include a democratically elected world executive that would have military forces at its disposal and that could intervene, if a world parliament so decides.

For this to happen, the United Nations must be revamped entirely. The veto power must be abolished. It is intolerable that the US can veto the acceptance of Palestine as a member state, or that Russia and China can veto intervention in Syria.

Certainly, great powers like the US and China should have a louder voice than, say, Luxemburg and the Fiji Islands, but a two thirds majority in the General Assembly should have the power to override Washington, Moscow or Beijing.

That may be the music of the future, or, some may say, a pipe dream. As for now, we live in a very imperfect world and must make do with the instruments we have. NATO, alas, is one of them. The European Union is another, though in this case poor, eternally conscience-stricken Germany, has paralyzed it. If Russia or China were to join, that would be fine.

This is not some remote problem. Gaddafi is finished, but Bashar al-Assad is not. He is butchering his people even while you read this, and the world is looking on helplessly.

Any volunteers for intervention?--Uri Avnery

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A response by Michael Nagler:

Nonviolence: the hard cases by Michael Nagler, founder of Peace and Conflict Studies at U.C. Berkeley and author of several books on peace and non-violence.

It has long been the despair of nonviolence activists and scholars that the word 'nonviolence' starts with a 'non.' Not to get into the linguistic peculiarities of the word itself, which entered the English language just under a hundred years ago as a misleading translation of ahimsa, it has left us looking in exactly the wrong direction, unable to appreciate the salvific power of this principle.

Not that the word itself is really the problem: we live in a "Manichaeian" culture that takes death and alienation for the ultimate reality. Walk past any video store and read the movie posters: REAL AIN'T PRETTY, UNLEASH TRUTH (i.e. a raging killer). We are living in the precise opposite of, for example, Gandhi's vision:

The world rests upon the bedrock of satya or truth. Asatya meaning untruth also means non-existent, and satya or truth also means that which is. If untruth does not so much as exist, its victory is out of the question. And truth being that which is, can never be destroyed. This is the doctrine of Satyagraha in a nutshell.

For this reason, while I sympathize with Uri Avneri's position on the need for violent means in Libya and Syria, either by the people themselves or by outside intervention, I do not agree with his pessimism on this issue, fortunately, though on all others he is for me one of the most respected voices in Israel:

I am ready to support even the devil, if that is necessary to put an end to this kind of atrocities...  
Whatever one may think about the USA and/or NATO - if they disarm a Milosevic or a Gaddafi, they have my blessing.

“If that is necessary.” Exactly the point: it is not. Nonviolence, as Gandhi said, has arrived among men (and women), it is the harbinger of peace on this earth. So you do not have to “support the devil.” You just have to support G\_d, cost what it may.

Naturally, when you wait until a conflict has flared up to extreme intensity before responding that cost will be higher — just as it is if you choose military options. Unlike the Egyptians, the Syrians found themselves swept up in what we call an “effervescence” of resistance without preparation or outside help, e.g. from veterans of successful nonviolent insurrections (like the Serbian organizers of the overthrow of Milosevic who helped in Egypt, as before then many nonviolence scholars and activists helped materially in the Philippines, Russia, and elsewhere). But in large-scale conflicts (even Gandhi did not rule out using force when ‘a madman with a sword’ is ranging the village) it is never the case that nonviolence can do nothing.

The fact is, the Syrian people already are doing what could be critical components of an unstoppable nonviolent resistance, if they knew how to build on them. According to Akram Antaki, the Damascene founder of Ma’aber (‘Crossroads’), “one of the main characteristics of the Syrian revolution is that we are all working openly. The wall of fear has disappeared.” Moreover, according to activist and lawyer Razan Zeitouneh, “Many people may not believe that, in the midst of this barbarism meted out to the Syrian people by their ruling regime, the survival of a space for other feelings than anger and pain is possible. In fact, there are still people that face the gun with flowers. . . they hope that the revolution shall change much more than the regime.”

6 Facing the gun with flowers' can actually be a misleading image for nonviolence, but let's pass that over for the present. The point is this: let us assume a 'leader' who is professionally (because of his position) and psychologically unable to respond to a popular uprising with anything but brutality. What could such a person do without obedient followers — army, police, mercenaries, fifth columnists? Yes, you can get an army to slaughter men, women, and children, but if the latter could, within reason, face the opponent's wrath without hatred such an army, as Gandhi pointed out, "would not be able to repeat the experiment." There are limits to the heartlessness of people — science has been peering recently into this neglected aspect of our nature — and we can learn to work with this potentiality; history has shown it to work every time if you know what you're doing and have the courage to do it.

For example, Syrian resisters, if they're organized enough to pull it off, could drop the personalistic, threatening rhetoric of their protests, i.e. 'Assad, now it's your turn.' That would cost very little, except emotionally, and very much improve the tenor of the movement. They could start building what Gandhi called a "constructive programme" that would likewise appear non-threatening, but in fact build up democratic institutions and infrastructure making them less dependent on the government as did the Palestinians in the First Intifada. They can reach out to soldiers, e.g. through their relatives as proved effective in the Philippines and Czechoslovakia during its "Prague Spring" of 1968-69. Would this protect them from death right away? No; but neither would violence, as we're seeing in Libya. In the end, when things are this extreme, people will die, but it makes a crucial difference how. Even Adin Ballou, probably the first nonviolence advocate (he called it "Christian non-resistance" ca. 1815-1820) pointed out that in the end, if all we can do is suffer and perhaps die without bitterness, we have done something no one can ever take away from us. And Martin Luther King added, something that has an effect on others: "unearned suffering is redemptive," and telling on the opponent.

Likewise for the international community, there are nonviolent mechanisms with which we have barely begun to experiment. I am thinking not so much of the International Criminal Court, which is still a form of retributive, not restorative justice, but on the one hand the international consensus that outsiders have a "right to protect" threatened people who are not being protected (or worse!) by their own government, and on the other hand something like the new and still far from developed practice called Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping (UCP) which has sent trained people across borders to offer good offices and if necessary interpose themselves between conflicting parties. Strange to say (unless you're familiar with nonviolent logic) they have shown that they can save lives in Sri Lanka, Mindanao, El Salvador and many other places, and sometimes, as in Guatemala, "made a space for peace" (the motto of Peace Brigades International) so that human rights workers could begin to rebuild civil society even in a climate of severe repression.

Time does not allow me to go into all these potentials here, so I would refer you to a classic in our field, “Nonviolence and the Case of the Extremely Ruthless Opponent” by Ralph Summy which, along with similar resources, will be soon available on our website [www.mettacenter.org](http://www.mettacenter.org). But I cannot emphasize enough the last words I’ve quoted from Razan Zeitouneh: “they hope that the revolution shall change much more than the regime.” The Syrian people hope that if they hold fast to nonviolence they will be able to change the culture that is so powerful and so debilitating to the human image that it can cause even as brilliant and compassionate a thinker as Uri Avnery to think that only brute force can blunt a tyrant’s violence.

If you appreciate getting these communications, please JOIN the Network of Spiritual Progressives at [www.spiritualprogressives.org](http://www.spiritualprogressives.org)

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## **End of Avnery-Nagler Debate**

### ARGUMENT FOR INTERVENTION

“When It’s In Our Interest To Intervene”

Richard Cohen, Op-Ed: “Libya under Moammar Gaddafi was not Germany under Adolf Hitler. But lives were at stake, mass murder was threatened and the man doing the threatening was capable of unspeakable acts of terrorism. Did any of this have anything to do with our vital national interests? Not really. But we had the wherewithal to avert the killing. That gave us the moral obligation to do so. U.S. policymakers now grappling with the question of America’s role in the world ought to look to the past as well as the future. We were once an uncaring nation, not selfish by any means, but tone-deaf to the cries of victims elsewhere. We defined our national interests narrowly and dismissed morality as the preoccupation of amateurs or special-interest pleaders.” READ | DISCUSS | SHARE

<http://www.nationofchange.org/when-its-our-interest-intervene-1314803458>

### AGAINST INTERVENTION

## **Libya No Model**

By Matthew Rothschild, *The Progressive*, August 29, 2011

With Qaddafi on the run, we're now hearing about Libya being a model for future U.S. interventions. The [New York Times](#) today reports that Administration officials say the Libyan intervention "may, in some important ways, become a model for how the United States wields force in other countries where its interests are threatened."

I should hope not.

Because what the United States and its European allies did was "international gangsterism," as Dennis Kucinich so colorfully put it the other day.

Obama violated the Constitution and the War Powers Act by bombing Libya without Congressional approval when Libya didn't pose a threat to the United States. And there's a big difference between threatening the United States and threatening U.S. "interests": Any country that opposes free trade and corporate domination may be said to threaten U.S. interests, at least the way the power elite defines them. So now future Presidents can cite the Libya intervention as precedent for bombing, say, Venezuela.

For their part, the allies violated the U.N. Security Council resolutions on Libya by providing huge amounts of weapons to the rebels when those resolutions had imposed an arms embargo on all parties.

What's more, the CIA trained the rebel forces and guided their assaults.

And the rationale that Obama used, late in the game, for not abiding by the War Powers Act was a classic: The Administration said that because Libya's air defenses were wiped out, U.S. pilots were no longer in harm's way, so Congress need not worry about it.

You can call this the Obama Doctrine if you want, but it amounts to this: The President can go bomb any country it wants so long as that country doesn't have air defenses, or the President can destroy a country's air defenses and continue to wage war against that country—all without bothering to get approval from Congress.

This is but a recipe for more international gangsterism in the years ahead.

## **The Anti-Empire Report**

September 1st, 2011, by William Blum, [www.killinghope.org](http://www.killinghope.org)

### ***Libya and the world we live in* by William Blum, *Anti-Empire Report*. September 1, 2011**

<http://killinghope.org/bblum6/aer97.html>

"Why are you attacking us? Why are you killing our children? Why are you destroying our infrastructure?"  
– *Television address by Libyan Leader Muammar Gaddafi, April 30, 2011*

A few hours later NATO hit a target in Tripoli, killing Gaddafi's 29-year-old son Saif al-Arab, three of Gaddafi's grandchildren, all under twelve years of age, and several friends and neighbors.

In his TV address, Gaddafi had appealed to the NATO nations for a cease-fire and negotiations after six weeks of bombings and cruise missile attacks against his country.

Well, let's see if we can derive some understanding of the complex Libyan turmoil.

The Holy Triumvirate — The United States, NATO and the European Union — recognizes no higher power and believes, literally, that it can do whatever it wants in the world, to whomever it wants, for as long as it wants, and call it whatever it wants, like "humanitarian".

If The Holy Triumvirate decides that it doesn't want to overthrow the government in Syria or in Egypt or Tunisia or Bahrain or Saudi Arabia or Yemen or Jordan, no matter how cruel, oppressive, or religiously intolerant those governments are with their people, no matter how much they impoverish and torture their people, no matter how many protesters they shoot dead in their Freedom Square, the Triumvirate will simply not overthrow them.

If the Triumvirate decides that it wants to overthrow the government of Libya, though that government is secular and has used its oil wealth for the benefit of the people of Libya and Africa perhaps more than any government in all of Africa and the Middle East, but keeps insisting over the years on challenging the Triumvirate's imperial ambitions in Africa and raising its demands on the Triumvirate's oil companies, then the Triumvirate will simply overthrow the government of Libya.

If the Triumvirate wants to punish Gaddafi and his sons it will arrange with the Triumvirate's friends at the International Criminal Court to issue arrest warrants for them.

If the Triumvirate doesn't want to punish the leaders of Syria, Egypt, Tunisia, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Jordan it will simply not ask the ICC to issue arrest warrants for them. Ever since the Court first formed in 1998, the United States has refused to ratify it and has done its best to denigrate it and throw barriers in its way because Washington is concerned that American officials might one day be indicted for their many war crimes and crimes against humanity. Bill Richardson, as US ambassador to the UN, said to the world in 1998 that the United States should be exempt from the court's prosecution because it has "special global responsibilities". But this doesn't stop the United States from using the Court when it suits the purposes of American foreign policy.

If the Triumvirate wants to support a rebel military force to overthrow the government of Libya then it does not matter how fanatically religious, al-Qaeda-related,<sup>1</sup> executing-beheading-torturing, monarchist, or factionally split various groups of that rebel force are at times, the Triumvirate will support it, as it did certain forces in Afghanistan and Iraq, and hope that after victory the Libyan force will not turn out as jihadist as it did in Afghanistan, or as fratricidal as in Iraq. One potential source of conflict within the rebels, and within the country if ruled by them, is that a constitutional declaration made by the rebel council states that, while guaranteeing democracy and the rights of non-Muslims, "Islam is the religion of the state and the principle source of legislation in Islamic Jurisprudence."<sup>2</sup>

Adding to the list of the rebels' charming qualities we have the Amnesty International report that the rebels have been conducting mass arrests of black people across the nation, terming all of them "foreign mercenaries" but with growing evidence that a large number were simply migrant workers. Reported *Reuters* (August 29): "On Saturday, reporters saw the putrefying bodies of 22 men of African origin on a Tripoli beach. Volunteers who had come to bury them said they were mercenaries whom rebels had shot dead." To complete this portrait of the West's newest darlings we have this report from *The Independent* of London (August 27): "The killings were pitiless. They had taken place at a makeshift hospital, in a tent marked clearly with the symbols of the Islamic crescent. Some of the dead were on stretchers, attached to intravenous drips. Some were on the back of an ambulance that had been shot at. A few were on the ground,

seemingly attempting to crawl to safety when the bullets came."

If the Triumvirate's propaganda is clever enough and deceptive enough and paints a graphic picture of Gaddafi-initiated high tragedy in Libya, many American and European progressives will insist that though they never, ever support imperialism they're making an exception this time because ...

- The Libyan people are being saved from a "massacre", both actual and potential. This massacre, however, seems to have been grossly exaggerated by the Triumvirate, *al Jazeera* TV, and that station's owner, the government of Qatar; and nothing approaching reputable evidence of a massacre has been offered, neither a mass grave or anything else; the massacre stories appear to be on a par with the Viagra-rape stories spread by *al Jazeera* (the *Fox News* of the Libyan uprising). Qatar, it should be noted, has played an active military role in the civil war on the side of NATO. It should be further noted that the main massacre in Libya has been six months of daily Triumvirate bombing, killing an unknown number of people and ruining much of the infrastructure. Michigan U. Prof. Juan Cole, the quintessential true-believer in the good intentions of American foreign policy who nevertheless manages to have a regular voice in progressive media, recently wrote that "Qaddafi was not a man to compromise ... his military machine would mow down the revolutionaries if it were allowed to." Is that clear, class? We all know of course that Sarkozy, Obama, and Cameron made compromises without end in their devastation of Libya; they didn't, for example, use any nuclear weapons.
- The United Nations gave its approval for military intervention; i.e., the leading members of the Triumvirate gave their approval, after Russia and China cowardly abstained instead of exercising their veto power; (perhaps hoping to receive the same courtesy from the US, UK and France when Russia or China is the aggressor nation).
- The people of Libya are being "liberated", whatever in the world that means, now or in the future. Gaddafi is a "dictator" they insist. That may indeed be the proper term to use for the man, but it must still be asked: Is he a relatively benevolent dictator or is he the other kind so favored by Washington? It must also be asked: Since the United States has habitually supported dictators for the entire past century, why not this one?

The Triumvirate, and its fawning media, would have the world believe that what's happened in Libya is just another example of the Arab Spring, a popular uprising by non-violent protestors against a dictator for the proverbial freedom and democracy, spreading spontaneously from Tunisia and Egypt, which sandwich Libya. But there are several reasons to question this analysis in favor of seeing the Libyan rebels' uprising as a planned and violent attempt to take power in behalf of their own political movement, however heterogeneous that movement might appear to be in its early stage. For example:

1. They soon began flying the flag of the monarchy that Gaddafi had overthrown
2. They were an armed and violent rebellion almost from the beginning; within a few days, we could read of "citizens armed with weapons seized from army bases"<sup>3</sup> and of "the policemen who had participated in the clash were caught and hanged by protesters"<sup>4</sup>
3. Their revolt took place not in the capital but in the heart of the country's oil region; they then began oil production and declared that foreign countries would be rewarded oil-wise in relation to how much each country aided their cause
4. They soon set up a Central Bank, a rather bizarre thing for a protest movement
5. International support came quickly, even beforehand, from Qatar and *al Jazeera* to the CIA and French intelligence

The notion that a leader does not have the right to put down an armed rebellion against the state is too

absurd to discuss.

Not very long ago, Iraq and Libya were the two most modern and secular states in the Mideast/North Africa world with perhaps the highest standards of living in the region. Then the United States of America came along and saw fit to make a basket case of each one. The desire to get rid of Gaddafi had been building for years; the Libyan leader had never been a reliable pawn; then the Arab Spring provided the excellent opportunity and cover. As to Why? Take your pick of the following:

- Gaddafi's plans to conduct Libya's trading in Africa in raw materials and oil in a new currency — the gold African dinar, a change that could have delivered a serious blow to the US's dominant position in the world economy. (In 2000, Saddam Hussein announced Iraqi oil would be traded in euros, not dollars; sanctions and an invasion followed.) For further discussion [see here](#).
- A host-country site for Africom, the US Africa Command, one of six regional commands the Pentagon has divided the world into. Many African countries approached to be the host have declined, at times in relatively strong terms. Africom at present is headquartered in Stuttgart, Germany. According to a State Department official: "We've got a big image problem down there. ... Public opinion is really against getting into bed with the US. They just don't trust the US."<sup>5</sup>
- An American military base to replace the one closed down by Gaddafi after he took power in 1969. There's only one such base in Africa, in Djibouti. Watch for one in Libya sometime after the dust has settled. It'll perhaps be situated close to the American oil wells. Or perhaps the people of Libya will be given a choice — an American base or a NATO base.
- Another example of NATO desperate to find a *raison d'être* for its existence since the end of the Cold War and the Warsaw Pact.
- Gaddafi's role in creating the African Union. The corporate bosses never like it when their wage slaves set up a union. The Libyan leader has also supported a United States of Africa for he knows that an Africa of 54 independent states will continue to be picked off one by one and abused and exploited by the members of the Triumvirate. Gaddafi has moreover demanded greater power for smaller countries in the United Nations.
- The claim by Gaddafi's son, Saif el Islam, that Libya had helped to fund Nicolas Sarkozy's election campaign<sup>6</sup> could have humiliated the French president and explain his obsessiveness and haste in wanting to be seen as playing the major role in implementing the "no fly zone" and other measures against Gaddafi. A contributing factor may have been the fact that France has been weakened in its former colonies and neo-colonies in Africa and the Middle East, due in part to Gaddafi's influence.
- Gaddafi has been an outstanding supporter of the Palestinian cause and critic of Israeli policies; and on occasion has taken other African and Arab countries, as well as the West, to task for their not matching his policies or rhetoric; one more reason for his lack of popularity amongst world leaders of all stripes.
- In January, 2009, Gaddafi made known that he was considering nationalizing the foreign oil companies in Libya.<sup>7</sup> He also has another bargaining chip: the prospect of utilizing Russian, Chinese and Indian oil companies. During the current period of hostilities, he invited these countries to make up for lost production. But such scenarios will now not take place. The Triumvirate will instead seek to privatize the National Oil Corporation, transferring Libya's oil wealth into foreign hands.

- The American Empire is troubled by any threat to its hegemony. In the present historical period the empire is concerned mainly with Russia and China. China has extensive energy investments and construction investments in Libya and elsewhere in Africa. The average American neither knows nor cares about this. The average American imperialist cares greatly, if for no other reason than in this time of rising demands for cuts to the military budget it's vital that powerful "enemies" be named and maintained.
- For yet more reasons, see the article "[Why Regime Change in Libya?](#)" by Ismael Hossein-zadeh, and the US diplomatic cables released by Wikileaks — Wikileaks reference [07TRIPOLI967 11-15-07](#) (includes a complaint about Libyan "resource nationalism")

## A word from the man the world's mightiest military powers have been trying to kill from William Blum

"Recollections of My Life", written by Col. Muammar Gaddafi, April 8, 2011, excerpts:

Now, I am under attack by the biggest force in military history, my little African son, Obama wants to kill me, to take away the freedom of our country, to take away our free housing, our free medicine, our free education, our free food, and replace it with American style thievery, called "capitalism," but all of us in the Third World know what that means, it means corporations run the countries, run the world, and the people suffer, so, there is no alternative for me, I must make my stand, and if Allah wishes, I shall die by following his path, the path that has made our country rich with farmland, with food and health, and even allowed us to help our African and Arab brothers and sisters to work here with us ... I do not wish to die, but if it comes to that, to save this land, my people, all the thousands who are all my children, then so be it. ... In the West, some have called me "mad", "crazy". They know the truth but continue to lie, they know that our land is independent and free, not in the colonial grip.

<http://killinghope.org/bblum6/aer97.html>

From FAIR: A Socially Liberal Dictator Has Been Overthrown by Fundamentalist Dictatorship?

### *The Libya Rebels and Al-Qaeda, Anonymously*

08/31/2011 by Peter Hart

FAIR editor Jim Naureckas tweeted [recently](#), "NATO's installation of an Al Qaeda-friendly government in Libya is one of 2011's most underreported stories." He's got a point. The **Washington Post** today [published](#) a pretty interesting look at how the Libyan government viewed the jihadist threat, thanks to some documents recovered in Tripoli:

The documents were uncovered days after the regime fell to rebel fighters led in part by a self-proclaimed former Islamist, Abdelkarim Belhadj. He has declared himself the leader of the "Tripoli Brigade" that spearheaded the defeat of Gadhafi loyalists in the capital. Belhadj is the former commander of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, an Islamist organization that fought alongside Afghan insurgents against Russian occupation in the 1980s.

So what does the U.S. government have to say about this? Plenty--but you can't quote them by name:

U.S. officials on Tuesday did not dispute Belhadj's Islamist roots but played down the connections.

"Some members of LIFG in the past had connections with Al-Qaeda in Sudan, Afghanistan or Pakistan,

and others dropped their relationship with Al-Qaeda entirely," said a senior U.S. official who closely tracks Islamic terrorist organizations. "It seems from their statements and support for establishing a democracy in Libya that this faction of LIFG does not support Al-Qaeda. We'll definitely be watching to see whether this is for real, or just for show."

**The official insisted on anonymity in discussing sensitive case files about terrorist organizations.**

That seems like a pretty flimsy rationale for granting a source anonymity.

END OF LIBYA NEWSLETTER #4