

## **The New American Folly in Libya**

Gary Null

Progressive Radio Network, April 1, 2011

*“I call them (the Libyan rebels) freedom fighters... now they are retreating... after all that, does the world community stand by and watch the freedom fighters get crushed? The president [Barak Obama] pledged that there would be no US troops on the ground.. but today we learned that CIA operatives are on the ground, so what does that all mean? Still it looks like the freedom fighters only shot for survival at this point is a real injection of military hardware that they say they desperately need... whether or not we arm rebels, freedom fighters, whatever you want to call them, is a very hard decision. But I think we have to do it... it is a moral decision at this point... we have a state, New Hampshire, (with the motto) ‘live free or die.’ What do you think that Libyan freedom fighter wants?” - Ed Schultz, MSNBC, March 30, 2011*

What happens when we extend the logic and beliefs of Ed Schultz and others, including Rachel Maddow and Lawrence O’Donnell, who accept Obama’s rationale for intervening militarily in Libya, which mirror those of the neocons and personalities like O’Reilly and Hannity on the radical right? For the reason that Gaddafi was responsible for the bombing of the Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie Scotland, killing 259 passengers, we are being told that arming, funding and training any opposition factions in Libya is perfectly justified. But then, is it not also true by that same logic that any civilians or innocent bystanders that were killed, tortured or disappeared as a direct result of America’s interventions in other nations are also justified to attack Americans and US interests globally? It is this old adage of “an eye for an eye” reactionary posturing that repeatedly leads us into multiple disasters, wars, revolutions, regime changes and a trail of failed foreign policies.

Moreover, Robert Parry has noted that the New York Times and the Washington Post “both believe that the United States should have begun bombing Libya before the United Nations Security Council approved the mission – a sign that the two preeminent American newspapers continue their slide into neo-conservatism.... This neo-con attitude – eager for

‘regime change’ in Muslim countries deemed enemies of Israel- has long dominated the Washington Post, with its editorial page under the control of neo-con Fred Hiatt and with its stable of neo-con writers who routinely adopt Likud-like positions regarding the Middle East”

Who are these so-called rebels and freedom fighters really? “The US and other key NATO countries have rushed to the aid of the Libyans,” says [HYPERLINK "http://globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=23949"](http://globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=23949) [Webster Tarbley](#), “but really shouldn’t they be exercising caution and actually try to learn some basic facts?”

Tarbley’s analysis of a 2007 West Point study conducted by Joseph Felter and Brian Fishman into the background of jihadis, guerrilla fighters, and suicide bombers entering Iraq from Syria between 2006-2007, found that Libyans (18.8 percent) were the second largest nationality following Saudi Arabia (41 percent) – an important finding since Libya has a much smaller population than other Arab nations. That means one-fifth of all armed individuals that contributed to the deaths of over 4,000 American troops and countless Iraqi civilians were Libyan. The Libyan region of Darnah has been identified as one of the “greatest concentrations of jihadi terrorists to be found anywhere in the world... suicide bomber heaven,” according to Tarpley. More suicide bombers against American soldiers were bred and raised in Libya than another other Arab country.

As the Obama White House bulldozes into the tribal morass of Libya, a critical question being ignored was noted by Martin Ottman on the University of Nottingham’s International Relations website. That is, the many Libyan rebel groups and organizations are “considerably fragmented over political objectives and strategies.” Libya is not Egypt. During the popular protest against Mubarak’s regime and its ultimate collapse, many otherwise opposing groups and ideologies, from the deeply radical fundamentalist to the extreme secular, were united in a common cause. Libya on the other hand is a quagmire of tribal politics and warring ethnicities with racist underpinnings.

Why is it so difficult for our leaders, especially Obama, and supposedly well informed journalists such Rachel Maddow and Ed Schultz, to recognize the historical déjà vu manifesting before their eyes? Between 1970 and the US’s recent invasion of Libya, there have been over 50 direct interventions by the US in other countries that have led to murders, torture, or severe anti-democratic suppression of populations. In most cases a

despot with questionable sanity and pathological tendencies usurped power with Washington's blessings – General Suharto in Indonesia, the Shah of Iran, Saddam Hussein, Augusto Pinochet, Haiti's Raoul Cedras, Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala, Ferdinand Marcos, and many others. The poisonous fruits of American's interventions continue to plague America's foreign policies and the safety of the American people: the birthing of Al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan, the present fundamentalist regime in Iran, Colombia and Haiti. And this at an astronomical cost to America's economic well-being. It was the Reagan Administration that fueled the mujahedeen that would evolve into our nemesis in the Middle East.

So by supplying Libyan opposition groups with weapons, the Obama administration is in direct violation of the 1973 resolution which called for a complete arms embargo on Libya. Critics argue that the weapons will be used against Gaddafi and so there is no violation here. As Tarpley observes, we are again entering a zone, as in previous conflicts, where we cannot be "sure that the weapons will not end up being used against those who supplied them leading to the loss of more American lives and billions of dollars wasted."

As noted by [HYPERLINK "http://www.progressiveradionetwork.com/more-political-articles/2011/3/31/peter-dale-scott-who-are-the-libyan-freedom-fighters-and-the.html"](http://www.progressiveradionetwork.com/more-political-articles/2011/3/31/peter-dale-scott-who-are-the-libyan-freedom-fighters-and-the.html) [Peter Dale Scott](#), in February 2004, then Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet testified before the Senate Intelligence Committee that "one of the most immediate threats to US security is from smaller international Sunni extremist groups that have benefited from Al Qaeda links. They include... the Libyan Islamic Fighting group [LIFG]" The LIFG just so happens to be one of the more extreme jihadi groups operating against Gaddafi in Libya. Comprised of former mujahideen veterans during the Afghan occupation by the Soviet Union, there is sufficient intelligence, according to Scott, that they have close links with Al-Qaeda. Even former CIA director, George Tenet testified to the Senate that the LIFG could pose one of the greater threats to US security.

Al-Qaeda is no friend of Gaddafi's anti-Islamist government. Therefore it is not a surprise, as reported in the Telegraph, that al-Qaeda "issued a call for supporters to back the Libyan rebellion, which is said would lead to the imposition of 'the stage of Islam' in the country."

When take a pause and reflect on the long history of American interventions, arming factions and groups and christening dictators and criminals, we need to envision clearly the

unintended consequences and then ask, what will the long term results likely be to our Libyan adventure?

Although she has rather dismal record in prophesying, [HYPERLINK "http://hillaryclinton.us/2011/02/27/hillary-clinton-u-s-stands-ready-to-aid-libya-protesters/"](http://hillaryclinton.us/2011/02/27/hillary-clinton-u-s-stands-ready-to-aid-libya-protesters/) [Hillary Clinton](#) may have gotten one prediction correct recently, "We are just at the beginning of what will follow Gaddafi." Indeed, the experts would agree. Yes, Hillary, some real experts in the field would agree. The political scientist Paul Sullivan at Georgetown University warned in the New York Times, "It could be a very big surprise when Gaddafi leaves and we find out who we are really dealing with."