

Libya

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Professor Galtung established peace research as an academic discipline long before the advent of 'security' studies. His writings and activism during half a century continue to inspire new generations.

A physician who heals only friends, not foes, is no physician but party to a war. An organization that protects only our side's civilians, not the other side's, is not humanitarian but belligerent. We are far from the Hippocratic Oath in world affairs. Thus, there is nothing historical about the March 17 Security Council Resolution 1973.

Historical would have been a resolution protecting possible foes, and restraining friends of the Anglo-American-French trio dominating the UN Security Council from putting their NATO at UN disposal as a world cop. The NATO that made headlines on exactly the same day for killing civilians, a daily routine it seems, in Afghanistan. Historical would have been R2P [responsibility to protect], a no-fly zone over Gaza, over Bahrain, over Pakistan, Afghanistan; against themselves. What happens now is intervention supporting one side against the other. It is normally called war.

True, President Obama became more multilateral than Bush. But that is a formalistic perspective. The problem is not who and how many decide but what they decide. Also true, the resolution excluded Fidel Castro's prediction of 21 February that NATO will occupy Libya: 'a foreign occupation force of any form on any part of Libyan territory'. But it included the US rider: 'by all necessary measures'. There may be more UN Security Council resolutions.

Then a closer look, starting with the vote. The majority 10/5 and no veto is clear. But the Western trio represents less than half a billion people, whereas the five

abstainers, BRIC [Brazil, Russia, India, China] plus Germany, are close to half of humanity. To abstain, regardless of political motivation, may be something beyond voting against: a 'no' accepts the discourse but is against; abstain rejects the whole approach.

The German abstention withdrew the biggest European NATO member, digging a hole as the Organisation is supposed to be based on consensus.

More important among the abstainers are the two pillars of SCO, the Shanghai Co-operation Organization, one observer, India, and the biggest country in Latin America. By and large, it is the West against the Rest, and articulation of NATO versus the SCO opposition. And they all talk about a vague alternative, ceasefire, mediation. Hopefully they will translate that rhetoric into action, and soon.

The third power is Islam; but, whereas NATO-SCO use state terrorism, some elements in Islam specialized in terrorism. Who gets Islam on their side will rule the world, and NATO is now at war with four, and has a Secretary General with solid anti-Islamic credentials.

That the United States wants to recede into the background is easily explained. They have all the reasons not to front the empire, leaving that job to the allies. The US is bankrupt, and wants to share economic, military and, above all, political risks. There are noises in Congress about the Constitution; moreover, we cannot afford it, this could become a deeper quagmire than Afghanistan. The NATO action has confirmed all the predictions about the colonizers of Africa; the UK-France-Italy. He can now try a second revolution. He may not win, but may not lose either; for that, NATO ground troops could be needed, and 20 years of war and occupation.

Of course, nobody should just watch a regime brutalizing its own people, as would happen if/when Gaddafi turns rhetoric into reality. All other measures should have been used, including hitting his planes by sea-born missiles. But, as someone on National Public Radio quipped, 'President Obama has fired more cruise missiles than all other Nobel Peace Prize winners combined', and they have hit all kinds of targets, flying, driving, walking, being. *What is next?*

Well, what does this remind us of? The NATO action against Serbia, of course, as Michel Collon points out (www.salon.com). They did not have a UN Security Council mandate; but used 'all necessary measures'.

As for Libya, for Serbia-Kosovo the West made its usual propaganda. There is that reduction of the enemy to one person, to be hated, using faithfully the Orwell recipe in *1984*. Milosevic, Hussein, Osama bin Laden, now Gaddafi. That groundwork has been done for

Castro-Chávez, but with no UNSC 1973 follow-up, so far. Strange that the West, which produced the idea of a social contract that the people could revise, Rousseau against Hobbes, is focused on only one person and so little on the people, and only on the bad, nothing good that could explain why so many are on his side. And the West is so ignorant of history, in spite of its high education.

But the goals in Serbia were clear: bombing state enterprises, not the privatized ones; opening for transnational companies to get hold of natural resources; getting that huge military base, Camp Bondsteel; supporting a liberation army (KLA) with a track record of horrors. The weapons used included cluster bombs, graphite bombs to hit electricity, and depleted uranium, with well-known consequences.

We do not know that this will apply to the Libyan exercise, with the threat to flatten Tripoli. Who the rebels are is not clear; no doubt many, most, all, are strongly and rightly against Gaddafi's dictatorship. But what are they for, their goals? Educated guess: they will accommodate direct foreign investment, in oil, and a base or two, out of gratitude and to solidify the victory. And the US then has what it has sought for a long time: a NATO base in Africa (and the more so, the less peace). Withdraw the foreign presence in Bosnia and Kosovo, and the order imposed by the West may unravel, even quickly. From a US to a Western empire?

In Libya there may be millions who dislike the man, but like much of what he stood for. The West may become an easy victim of its own one-country-one-person doctrine. And we are in for one more long-lasting, tragic, crime against humanity. With no exit.

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