The War against Libya, Part 1: Overview
From “Saving Benghazi” to Regime Change

- **Chronology:**
  1. February 15/17 – March 6, 2011
  2. March 6 – March 19, 2011

- **The “Peaceful Protesters” vs. the “Brutal Dictator”**
  - “When the Libyan people sought to realize their democratic aspirations, they were met by extreme violence from their own government” (U.S. Department of State, 2011/3/24)
  - CNN, Ben Wedeman: “It appears that the policy of Moammar Gadhafi is similar to that of Attila the Hun or Genghis Khan simply slaughtering his opponents where he can….given what we’ve seen so far from Moammar Gadhafi and his willingness, for instance, to use the air force against peaceful protesters”
  - Libya Watch, Libya Al-Youm, Human Rights Solidarity
The New York Times, David Kirkpatrick: “In the neighborhoods of the capital that have staged major peaceful protests against Colonel Qaddafi, many have volunteered—speaking on the condition of anonymity—that their demonstrations were nonviolent mainly because they could not obtain weapons fast enough”

Ali Hashem: “Actually, in Libya, the beginning of the revolution and the real start of the revolution is when the rebels, or, let’s say, the activists, at that time, occupied the barracks in Benghazi, and they went inside and took all the weapons. And then it started. Then everyone had weapons and everyone was kind of, you know, fighting from that time”
An “Impending Massacre in Benghazi”

- Obama, March 28, 2011: “If we waited one more day, Benghazi, a city nearly the size of Charlotte, could suffer a massacre that would have reverberated across the region and stained the conscience of the world.”

- Obama, October 20, 2011: “And when Qaddafi and his forces started going city to city, town by town, to brutalize men, women and children, the world refused to stand idly by. “Faced with the potential of mass atrocities—and a call for help from the Libyan people—the United States and our friends and allies stopped Qaddafi’s forces in their tracks. A coalition that included the United States, NATO and Arab nations persevered through the summer to protect Libyan civilians.”
20 March - Fighting between opposition and regime forces

- Regime continues assault on Misrata
- Regime forces withdraw from Benghazi
- Regime and opposition clash vicinity Ajdabiyah
“Nor did Khadafy ever threaten civilian massacre in Benghazi, as Obama alleged. The ‘no mercy’ warning, of March 17, targeted rebels only, as reported by The New York Times, which noted that Libya’s leader promised amnesty for those ‘who throw their weapons away’. Khadafy even offered the rebels an escape route and open border to Egypt, to avoid a fight ‘to the bitter end’.” (Kuperman, 2011/4/14)
Overview of a Humanitarian Intervention

- Saving Lives, Protecting Civilians
- NATO, AFRICOM
- Regime change
- Moral Authority, Legitimacy
- Diplomacy
- Ethnic cleansing
Objectives of the Intervention

1) Increased access for U.S. corporations;
2) Controlling international access to Libyan resources;
3) Limiting the economic reach of China and Russia;
4) Ensuring a friendly regime, not influenced by ideas of “resource nationalism”;
5) Increasing the presence of AFRICOM in African affairs, diminish/subordinate/displace the AU and CEN-SAD;
6) Promoting U.S. claims to be serious about freedom, democracy, and human rights (post-Iraq image management);
7) Politically “stabilizing” the North African region;
8) Drafting other nations to undertake the work of defending and advancing U.S. political and economic interests; and,
9) Imposing neoliberalism by force.
The imposition of a no-fly zone would be a gateway for military action designed to secure regime change.