The War against Libya, Part 2: Humanitarian Imperialism

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Sources
Interventionist Mythology

Demonizing Gaddafi

- President Richard Nixon: Gaddafi was “more than just a desert rat” but also “an international outlaw”
- President Gerald Ford: Gaddafi was a “bully” and a “cancer”
- President Jimmy Carter: Gaddafi as “subhuman”
- Secretary of State, Gen. Alexander Haig: Gaddafi as “a cancer that has to be removed”
- Vice President George H. W. Bush: Gaddafi as an “egomaniac who would trigger World War III to make headlines”
- President Ronald Reagan: “this mad dog of the Middle East [who] has a goal of a world revolution, Moslem fundamentalist revolution”. “I find he’s not only a barbarian but he’s flaky”. “I think he’s more than a bad smell”. Gaddafi “engaged in acts of international terror, acts that put him outside the company of civilized men”
Belief-Dependent Realism

Demonization → Misdirection, Fear

Demonizing the “Gaddafi Forces”

“Viagra-fueled mass rape”

March 2012, the UN Human Rights Council’s commission of inquiry into war crimes in Libya:

“The Commission found that sexual violence occurred in Libya and played a significant role in provoking fear in various communities. The Commission established that sexual torture was used as a means to extract information from and to humiliate detainees. The Commission did not find evidence to substantiate claims of a widespread or a systematic attack, or any overall policy of sexual violence against a civilian population.”

African mercenary myth; Amnesty International: “some Libyan rebels seem to regard the war against Gadhafi as tantamount to a battle against black people.”
Protecting Civilians

- Which civilians? How did US/NATO define civilian?
- prolonging a civil war
- targeted civilian infrastructure
- 15 September 2011, Sirte: civilian rescuers targeted, “double-tapping”
- Under Obama, “civilian” has been officially redefined to exclude all adult, able-bodied men of combat age who are in or near a battle zone
- 16 September 2011, Sirte
- 8 August 2011, Majer
- Georg Charpentier, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Libya: “Public infrastructure, housing, education and health facilities need to be rehabilitated, reconstructed, and reactivated, intense and focused reconciliation efforts also need to be encouraged.”
The Moral Rhetoric of Humanitarian Intervention

Moral dualism

“If we do not act, we should be held responsible for the actions of others. When we do act, we should never be held responsible for our own actions.”

some lives are better and more important than others
Liberal Imperialist Language

- Standing idly by
- Conscience of the world
- International community
- The right side of history
- Saving lives
- Protecting civilians
- Surgical strikes
- “Civilian”
Material Interests

Canada “launched an all-out commercial offensive a full month before the 2011 war in Libya had ended to ensure ‘a return on our engagement and investment,’ newly released documents show.”

U.S. Ambassador Gene Cretz “participated in a State Department conference call with about 150 American companies hoping to do business in Libya’,’ seeking $150 billion on construction contracts
→ Bechtel
→ Caterpillar
General Electric alone “expects to generate as much as $10bn in revenue from Libya, as the North African country aims to rebuild its economy, infrastructure, and institutions in the post-Gaddafi era”

“in 2011, UK Department of Trade and Investment estimated the value of contracts to rebuild Libya, in areas ranging from electricity and water supplies to healthcare and education, to be upwards of $300 billion over the next 10 years.”

GE spokesman, on Libya after NATO: “‘the country needs everything, development of oil and gas, which will create the wealth to improve the life of people, clean water, reliable power, a good healthcare system, building the transportation system both rail as well as the aviation system so that you can get the economy going – all of these things are areas of focus for us in Libya, like we did in Iraq.’”
Bechtel

- U.S. Embassy, 2008: “unsuccessful year-long bid by U.S. firm Bechtel to build a commercial port in the Libyan city of Sirte,” an investment totaling more than $1 billion U.S., “the fact that an operator with Bechtel’s savvy and deep pockets was ultimately unable to secure its contract serves as a cautionary tale for the many U.S. and western companies seeking to enter Libya’s booming market”
- Bechtel: largest US private contractor; operations in over 60 countries; annual revenues of US $11 billion +
- William Casey, CIA director under Ronald Reagan: consultant for Bechtel
- Edwin A. Meese III, former White House Counsel and Attorney General in the Reagan administration
- Bechtel’s former vice president, W. Kenneth Davis, appointed Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of Energy from 1981 to 1983
- Riley Bechtel, CEO, appointed by George W. Bush to serve on the President’s Export Council
- George P. Shultz, former Secretary of State under the Reagan administration, director at Bechtel
- Caspar Weinberger, former Secretary of Defense under George H.W. Bush, vice president and general counsel at Bechtel
- Daniel Chao, a Bechtel senior vice president, advisory committee of the U.S. Export-Import Bank (Eximbank)
- Ross J. Connelly, Bechtel Group, chief operating officer for the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC)
- Administrator for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Andrew Natsios
- General Jack Sheehan, senior vice president of Bechtel for Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and Southwest Asia, member of the U.S. Defense Policy Board, Commander-in-Chief of U.S. Atlantic Command, NATO Supreme Allied Commander
- Sheehan → Henry Jackson Society → Libya Herald
Sources


Forte, M. C. (2012). References, Documents, and Articles on Libya, see: http://openanthropology.org/libya/


NATO. (2011a). NATO and Libya: Operational Media Update for 16 September. *NATO Naples Media and Information Center*,


On Cortisol, see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cortisol


