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Debate: Libya

# End the US-led armed intervention in Libya

- Debate - Problems of the Arab and Middle East regions -

Publication date: Wednesday 30 March 2011

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Focus on the Global South supports the democratic opposition in Libya that seeks to end the 43-year-old dictatorship of Muammar Gaddafi. Focus shares the Libyan people's desire to be free of a corrupt and repressive ruler who does not hesitate to employ massive force against his own people to hang on to power.

Focus cannot, however, support the massive armed intervention launched by the United States, France, and Britain on Sunday, March 20.

A "No Fly Zone" to protect civilians is one thing. An armed assault aimed at regime change is another thing altogether. The latter is the intent of the US/UK/French-led intervention, which, although displaying the figleaf of a United Nations Security Council resolution, goes far beyond the defensive aims of a no-fly zone to cross over into aggression against Libya.

Firing on ground troops and preemptively and indiscriminately destroying anti-aircraft installations will bring about precisely that loss of life that the intervention ostensibly seeks to prevent. Civilians are being killed by the western assault when civilians were supposedly the very people the action was supposed to protect.

The fight for democracy waged by the Libyan people must be supported, but not by western military action that is an instrument of regime change. This action may ostensibly have humanitarian objectives, but its main objective is to reassert western hegemony in a region that is caught up in the winds of democratic change.

Owing to its support for authoritarian regimes in the Middle East, the US has lost much of its credibility among the Arab peoples. Indeed, the US may be said to be one of the targets of the Arab democratic revolution. In this context, the intervention in Libya for regime change is Washington's belated attempt to appear as a pro-democratic force, shore up its tattered legitimacy, and remind the Arab nations of its strategic hegemony in the region. Yet the world will not miss the hypocrisy of a hegemon which shouts that it is supporting democracy in Libya while it stands on the side as a reactionary regime it has armed and supported, Saudi Arabia, has invaded and is crushing democratic forces in Bahrain.

The West's "armed intervention for democracy" will not advance the cause of democracy. Indeed, it will discredit it by associating democracy with a western show of force. The intervention in Libya risks stoking forces as powerful as the democratic movement: Arab nationalism and Islamic solidarity. It will end up creating conflicts among movements which should be complementary, and the only victor will be western hegemony.

We in Focus on the Global South call for an immediate end to the US/UK/French-led war on Libya.

We call on global civil society and on governments throughout the world to support the Libyan people's struggle for democracy against Gaddafi.

We ask especially the democratic movements in Tunisia and Egypt to come to the aid of the Libyan people.

We call for an end to all efforts to maintain or reassert US hegemony in the Middle East.

*March 22, 2011*