

Mbeki Blasts Libya Regime Change

Former South African President Thabo Mbeki, in a lengthy address Feb. 16 in South Africa, entitled “Reflections on Peacemaking, State Sovereignty and Democratic Governance in Africa,” systematically exposed the manner in which the U.S.A., U.K., and France, with the full collaboration of the UN, intended to implement regime change in Libya from the beginning, and willfully ignored African efforts to resolve the crisis. We paraphrase his argument here:

Mbeki stated that the cases of the French-UN-run regime change in the Ivory Coast early last year, and the regime-change operation in Libya, have established a precedent that can be repeated in Africa, whenever deemed necessary by the former colonial powers, and their hangers-on. Mbeki was speaking at the annual commemoration of the life of Dullah Omar, a revolutionary intellectual, attorney, stalwart of the African National Congress, and advocate of a government role in the elimination of poverty, who died in 2004.

Mbeki asserted that the crisis in Libya could have been resolved without regime change, but the NATO powers were determined to push it through. He stated that on March 10, 2011, the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council adopted a Roadmap for the peaceful resolution of the Libyan conflict, which provided for an end to the violent conflict, and the institution of a process of negotiations to determine the future of the country.

He added that the AU had secured the agreement of Gaddafi to this Roadmap, since Libya was one of its members.

The AU forwarded its March 10 decision to the UN

and the Arab League, among other organizations. But, Mbeki charged, the UNSC willfully ignored the AU decisions, treating the AU and the peoples of Africa “with absolute contempt.” (On March 20, 2011, NATO denied entry to Libya of the AU panel of Presidents which was to begin mediation for a political settlement.)

Instead, on March 17, seven days after the AU made its Roadmap decision, the UNSC adopted Resolution 1973, which provided the space for NATO political alliance, “to intervene in Libya to impose a violent resolution of this conflict, centered on regime change, which objective was completely at variance with Resolution 1973.” In so doing, Mbeki stated, NATO intervened, not to protect civilians as the UNSC resolution called for, “but to lead and empower the opposition National Transitional Council in a military campaign to overthrow the Qaddafi regime.”

He cited a public statement by the P3 (Obama, Cameron, and Sarkozy) a month after Res. 1973 was adopted, which stated that the overthrow of Gaddafi was the intention: “There is a pathway to peace that promises new hope for the people of Libya: a future without Gaddafi. . . . So long as Gaddafi is in power, NATO and

its coalition partners must maintain their operations . . . Colonel Gaddafi must go, and go for good. . . .”

Mbeki charged that UN institutions gave free reign to the P3 states to determine the future of Libya with their illegal regime-change objective; he delineated several examples, including:

- The Secretary General allowed the NATO-sponsored rebels to act as the legitimate representatives of Libya, “contrary to all UN protocols”;
- The UN Secretary General refused to accredit the representatives of the Libyan government;
- The UN insisted that Libya should be defined as other than an African country, insisting that the legitimacy of the regime-change policy derived from the Arab League, of which Libya had become only a nominal member.

Mbeki left responsibility for the U.S. support of the regime-change policy on Obama’s shoulders. Mbeki noted that a fortnight before the vote on Res. 1973, then-U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Adm. Mike Mullen, then head of the U.S. armed forces, both stated that they had seen no confirmation that the Qaddafi regime was massacring civilians.

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