

The US and Gaddafi: The murderer calls for an investigation of the crime

Bill Van Auken
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US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton solemnly announced Sunday that Washington “strongly supports” an independent investigation into the barbaric murder of Libya’s deposed head of state Muammar Gaddafi.

What exactly is it that Ms. Clinton wants investigated that she doesn’t already know?

Gaddafi was captured Thursday while fleeing his hometown of Sirte. Over the previous month Sirte had been under continuous NATO bombardment and a brutal siege by the so-called “rebels” that destroyed the city and claimed untold numbers of civilian dead and wounded.

His convoy, detected by US spy planes, was attacked first by an American Predator drone aircraft, operated by remote control from an airbase in Nevada. An American AWAC surveillance aircraft then called in French fighter jets, which dropped two 500-pound bombs on the vehicles in which Colonel Gaddafi and his entourage were fleeing.

The air strikes left dozens dead and the Libyan leader wounded. He was then hunted down by the NATO-backed “rebels,” who were operating together with “advisors” from the SAS British special forces.

Gaddafi’s final moments have been recorded in a number of jumpy videos filmed on his attackers’ cell phones. They show a wounded Gaddafi shouting and feebly resisting a mob of frenzied militiamen who are taunting and attacking him, while screaming “Allahu Akbar”—“God is greatest.” He is dragged, kicked and beaten bloody with guns and fists before being thrown onto the hood of a vehicle. Footage shows a gun placed to his head and then his body on the pavement, blood pouring from the back of his skull.

As one member of the NATO-backed National Transitional Council (NTC) based in Benghazi has

succinctly stated, “They beat him very harshly, and then they killed him.”

Asked by ABC’s Christiane Amanpour for her “gut reaction” to the hideous cell phone videos, Clinton responded, “Well, Christine, you know, obviously, no one wants to see any human being in that condition.”

Clinton’s statements were clearly well rehearsed, aimed at assuaging the worldwide revulsion over the footage of Gaddafi’s lynching. As for her “gut reaction,” that was revealed on the day of the killing itself, when she laughingly told a reporter, “We came, we saw, he died.”

Indeed, barely 48 hours before the lynching of Gaddafi, the US secretary of state had flown into Tripoli, where she declared that the Libyan leader should be “captured or killed” as soon as possible.

This was hardly an offhand comment. The entire eight-month US-NATO war against Libya has been waged with the aim of “regime change,” ousting Gaddafi and installing a client regime that would more pliantly do the bidding of Washington and its NATO allies, along with the Western energy conglomerates.

Utilizing the popular upheavals in neighboring Tunisia and Egypt as a cover, the US and its allies deliberately fomented armed confrontation in Libya and then sought to drum up support and secure UN sanction for intervention on the phony pretext of protecting civilian lives.

Under this “humanitarian” banner they waged a relentless and criminal air war against the oil-rich North African country, while repeatedly staging missile strikes and bombings targeting Gaddafi and his family. A NATO missile strike on a Gaddafi residence in Tripoli on May 1 killed one of Gaddafi’s sons and three grandchildren. All of American and NATO technical resources were trained on Libya in an effort to

locate the Libyan leader and kill him.

Nor was this the first such effort. As early as 1969, as Henry Kissinger revealed in his memoirs, discussions were held within the US government about covert action to assassinate Gaddafi, largely because of his radical Arab nationalism, his interference with US-Saudi control over OPEC oil policies and his closing down of the Pentagon's biggest airbase on the African continent. In 1986, the Reagan administration carried out the US bombing of Gaddafi's Tripoli compound. And, in the 1990s, Britain's intelligence service, MI6, conspired with Islamist elements in a bid to kill him.

While Gaddafi had, in the wake of the Soviet Union's dissolution, sought to accommodate himself to the West, foreswearing "weapons of mass destruction" and actively collaborating in the US "global war on terror," the imperialist powers neither forgave nor forgot his earlier offenses.

For Hillary Clinton and the Obama administration to call for an investigation of the killing of Gaddafi goes well beyond cynicism. It is as if the Eisenhower administration had demanded an investigation of the assassination of Patrice Lumumba, or the Nixon White House called for an international probe of the death of Salvador Allende.

The main difference is that in those days it was the CIA that was known as "Murder, Inc." because of its clandestine operations. Now the US government as a whole openly and unabashedly embraces assassination as a principal tool of foreign policy.

On three occasions in less than six months, President Obama has paraded before the television cameras to announce unlawful killings. Last May it was the liquidation of Osama bin Laden, who was shot to death, unarmed, by US special operations troops. In September came the assassination of a US citizen, Anwar al-Awlaki, in Yemen by means of a Hellfire missile. Killed in the attack was a second US citizen, Samir Khan. Now Obama has claimed credit for the lynching of Gaddafi.

Countless others have been similarly murdered with less fanfare in Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia and elsewhere. Two weeks after the killing of Awlaki, a Hellfire missile claimed the life of his 16-year-old son, Abdulrahman, like his father an American-born US citizen. This attack, which killed eight others, most of them also minors, went virtually unreported in the

American mass media.

Instead, media pundits debate whether these "foreign policy successes" will help the president's reelection bid, with Obama presumably running on his record as "assassin-in-chief," approving "kill lists" drawn up by a secret committee that has effectively become a new extra-constitutional branch of the US government.

The savage murder of Muammar Gaddafi is emblematic of an utterly lawless and violent policy on the part of the American ruling elite, which is desperately seeking to offset the economic decline of American capitalism by means of an endless series of wars and provocations aimed at seizing control of vital resources and markets.

With good reason, Obama and Hillary Clinton believe they have nothing to fear from an investigation of Gaddafi's murder by the United Nations or the International Criminal Court. Nevertheless, the reckless attempt to reimpose colonialism in the Middle East and North Africa will not resolve, but will only deepen, the insoluble economic and social contradictions and crisis of American and world capitalism.

This crisis is bringing the working class internationally into struggle and creating the conditions for a revolutionary settling of accounts with the crimes of US imperialism.

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