

Former Libyan PM exposes US-NATO machinations

Oliver Campbell
24 November 2011

Revealing comments by the former prime minister of Libya's National Transitional Council (NTC) government, Mahmoud Jibril, have further exposed the predatory character of the US-NATO campaign in Libya. Far from being a humanitarian mission to "save the Libyan people," the war to oust Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi was aimed at seizing control of the country's oil wealth.

While attending a conference at Harvard University earlier this month, Jibril told an interviewer that he had a "hunch" that Gaddafi was "killed based on a request by a certain foreign power." As quoted by Bloomberg, Jibril declared: "Too many secrets could have been discovered... He [Gaddafi] was the black box of the whole country. He had too many wheelings and dealings with too many leaders in the world. With him, unfortunately, a lot of information is gone."

Jibril refused to name the foreign power, but there are a number of candidates. The US, France, Britain and Italy all had sordid dealings with Gaddafi but these have been conveniently buried with him. Documents recovered from Gaddafi's former intelligence chief have already shed light on the Libyan regime's collaboration in Washington's bogus "war on terror." The documents demonstrated that the CIA "rendered" terrorist suspects captured in other countries to Libya, and participated in their interrogation and torture.

From the outset of its intervention, NATO warplanes repeatedly tried to kill the Libyan leader in bombing raids that resulted in the death of his family members. Just days before Gaddafi was murdered, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton arrived in Tripoli, and called for him to be "captured or killed." NATO war planes

bombed Gaddafi's convoy, allowing NTC militias to move in and barbarically murder the Libyan leader.

In the interview, Jibril candidly referred to the scramble for Libya's resources, saying "every foreign power you can think of is trying to look after its own interests in Libya. No one is excluded. This is the name of the game. This is politics. Countries have interests in Libya and everybody is looking out for their own."

Whatever his personal motivations, Jibril's political history lends a certain weight to his comments. As head of Libya's National Economic Development Board, he was intimately involved in the relations between the Gaddafi regime and the major powers. After the civil war erupted this year, Jibril defected to the NTC and became its roving international representative. He has intimate knowledge of all the sordid deals that were struck to get imperialist backing for the NTC.

Jibril's remarks confirm what is widely recognised. As reported in the *Guardian*, Nuri Berruien, the head of Libya's National Oil Company, said the new Libyan government would favour its friends in allocating highly lucrative oil contracts. Oil production is expected to return to pre-war levels by the end of 2012.

The *Guardian* noted: "Heritage Oil, the FTSE 250 oil exploration firm run by [British] Tory donor and former mercenary Tony Buckingham, became the first new entrant into the Libyan oil market since the fall of Gaddafi when it bought a 51 percent stake in Sahara Oil Services Holdings for \$19m (£11.9m) last month."

Jibril referred to the machinations of the Gulf state of Qatar as "an obvious example" of foreign intervention

in Libya. During the civil war, Qatar trained, armed and provided funds to the NATO-backed opposition, and helped enforce the UN imposed “no-fly zone” with its own fighter jets. Closely aligned to the US, Qatar, like Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Kuwait, is an autocratic resource-rich regime to whose gross abuses of democratic rights Washington turns a blind eye.

Jibril’s focus on Qatar is linked to sharp divisions between rival factions of Libya’s new regime. In the interview, Jibril confirmed that these divisions contributed to his decision to stand down as prime minister. He had come under criticism from Islamists and tribal leaders, calling for his resignation. He singled out Abdul Hakim Belhadj, commander of the Tripoli military council, and a member of a prominent Islamist group, as someone who is “being supported by Qatar.”

Jibril commented: “We are having two types of legitimacy: an official legitimacy, as represented by the National Transitional Council and its government, and the real legitimacy on the ground, as represented by those people who have arms in their hands.” He described the political situation as “very dangerous” and called for elections to be brought forward to fill the “political vacuum.” The various militias are tied to conflicting tribal and regional interests, but also reflect, in a highly distorted form, the suspicion of ordinary people toward Libya’s new rulers.

Jibril’s remarks were underlined last week when a militia leader, Abdullah Naker, from the Nafusa mountains, threatened to resort to arms if the incoming government of Abdurrahim El-Keib, a US-trained engineering professor with close ties to Washington, was not to his liking. Amongst Naker’s demands is that his rival Belhadj be excluded from any role in the incoming interim cabinet.

Aside from anything else, Jibril’s comments, and their political context, expose the opportunistic and corrupt character of the Libyan “rebels,” who have been presented by Western governments, and the media alike, as “freedom fighters.” Jibril unblushingly refers to violations of international law [the murder of Gaddafi], and the neo-colonial designs of powers that

just last month he was presenting as Libya’s saviours.

Not surprisingly, Jibril’s revealing comments have largely gone unmentioned by those who aligned themselves with the US-NATO attack, falsely claiming that it was a humanitarian mission to protect the Libyan people. A significant layer of liberals, former pacifists and ex-lefts openly sided with the attack on Libya, strenuously denying that imperialist interests were at play. Now that the predatory character of the war is increasingly exposed, they maintain a deafening silence.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact