

# After Democrats' celebration of militarism, US warplanes bomb Libya

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Last week at the Democratic National Convention, both Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama delivered lengthy speeches filled with platitudes and bromides, but they did not bother to mention one extremely important piece of information. They did not tell the American people that, even as he spoke, Obama had just ordered the US military to carry out a major new act of war.

With the air strikes launched against the Libyan coastal city of Sirte on Monday, US imperialism has embarked on a major new escalation of its protracted military intervention in a region that has seen the killing and maiming of millions in unending US invasions, bombings, targeted assassinations and regime-change operations over the course of a quarter century.

The Obama administration ordered the strikes without congressional authorization or bothering even to make a pretense of explaining the rationale for this latest act of war to the American people.

A Pentagon spokesman, asked about the legality of the bombings, cited the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force, which sanctioned military action against those who planned and executed the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and those who supported them. Fifteen years later, the argument that this applies to anyone killed by US bombs in Libya is absurd on its face.

Ostensibly, the bombing raids are aimed at aiding a group of militias aligned with the Western-backed "Government of National Accord" to prevail against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), which has controlled Sirte since February of last year.

In reality, the desperate conditions in Sirte and throughout Libya are the direct product of the 2011 US-NATO war for regime-change that ended with the

toppling of the Libyan government and the lynch mob murder of its leader, Muammar Gaddafi.

Washington and its allies relied upon Islamist Al Qaeda-linked militias that were subsequently funneled, along with massive stockpiles of Libyan arms, into Syria to carry out an even bloodier, and ongoing, regime-change operation in that country. Those who took over Sirte, the hometown of Gaddafi and the city most devastated by the war, consisted of these former US proxy forces who returned from the Syrian killing fields.

The dropping of more American bombs on Libya, whose economy and society have been destroyed by the US-NATO intervention, will hardly resolve the country's crisis. That is not their purpose.

Rather, this fresh eruption of American militarism is meant to serve as another assertion of US hegemony in the region. It is also a pointed threat to Washington's adversaries under conditions where the debacles produced by the CIA-orchestrated war for regime-change in Syria and the failed US-backed coup in Turkey have raised tensions between the US and Russia to the boiling point.

The *World Socialist Web Site* has warned for some time that the current US election will be followed in short order, no matter which capitalist party prevails, by a new eruption of American militarism. Traditionally, the US ruling establishment has held off on major new military interventions until after elections, so as to prevent the question of war from becoming an issue before the voters.

The bombing of Libya, however, makes clear that they cannot wait, so sharp is the crisis confronting US imperialism.

One thing is certain, the attack on Libya was not planned yesterday. High-ranking officials who spoke

before the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia last week, including, besides Obama and Clinton, Vice President Joe Biden, were well aware that a new military intervention was imminent.

The bombs dropped on Libya make clear the significance of the convention's non-stop glorification of the military and the fascistic chants of "USA, USA" used to drown out even the muted and scattered expressions of opposition to war.

New and far more dangerous wars are being prepared and will not be postponed.

On the final day of the convention, Jeremy Bash, a top Clinton foreign policy advisor and former chief of staff at both the Pentagon and the CIA, told the British daily *Telegraph* that "a Syria policy review will be one of the first items of business for the national security team." He described the Syrian government of President Bashar al-Assad as a "murderous regime" and vowed that the new administration would get him "out of there." According to the report, he described "a foreign policy more hawkish than that of the current administration."

The current administration is already carrying out daily bombing raids in Syria that over recent days have killed hundreds of civilians. It has deployed hundreds of special operations troops on the ground in support of US proxy forces. It has proven incapable, however, of propping up the so-called "rebels," consisting of the Al Qaeda-linked al-Nusra Front and other Islamist militias, against a Russian-backed offensive by Syrian government forces.

Under these conditions, a "more hawkish" policy can mean only one thing: a direct military intervention against the Assad regime and a confrontation with the Russian and Iranian forces that are supporting it.

Once again, the meaning of the convention rhetoric is revealed. The McCarthyite rhetoric against Russia in connection with unsubstantiated claims that Putin was behind the WikiLeaks release of Democratic National Committee emails exposing DNC machinations to rig the primary process in Clinton's favor was aimed at preparing public opinion for a military confrontation between the world's two largest nuclear powers.

It is far from clear that such a confrontation can be held off until a new administration takes office, or even until the November election. The imminent collapse of the "rebel" stronghold in the Syrian city of Aleppo and

the move toward rapprochement between Turkey and Russia are driving Washington toward new military actions. It may not be able to wait to carry out the military escalation for which the Democratic convention set the stage.

The world situation is on a hair trigger. Outside of the intervention of the working class, a third world war is not only a threat, but an inevitability.

As the International Committee of the Fourth International's February 18, 2016 statement "Socialism and the Fight Against War" makes clear, the decisive question is the building of a new mass antiwar movement of the working class, armed with a socialist and internationalist program. It states: "The permanent war of the bourgeoisie must be answered with the perspective of permanent revolution by the working class, the strategic goal of which is the abolition of the nation-state system and the establishment of a world socialist federation."



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