The Question of Intervention:
Obama, Qadhafi and Operation Odyssey Dawn

On March 19, 2011, President Barack Obama launched a limited air campaign against Libya to support international efforts to protect civilians suffering at the hands of Libyan Arab Republic Chairman Muammar Qadhafi. Obama, who was then in Brasilia, Brazil, announced the authorization of military action — an interruption to his tour of Latin America. “That action has now begun,” Obama said.1 The announcement came days after the United Nations passed UN Security Council Resolution 1973, which called for a coalition of countries to protect Libyans who were experiencing a brutal crackdown on civil and human rights. “This is not an outcome that the United States or any of our partners sought,” Obama said. “I am deeply aware of the risks of any military action, no matter what limits we place on it … So, we must be clear: Actions have consequences, and the writ of the international community must be enforced. That is the cause of this coalition.”2

During his remarks, Obama stressed that his administration gave Qadhafi the opportunity to pursue an immediate ceasefire, but that the continued violation of rights and outright denial of compromise gave the U.S. no choice other than to launch Operation Odyssey Dawn (for a transcription of the speech, see Exhibit 5).3 The UN Security Council vote, which took place on March 17 — just two days before Obama’s announcement — saw 10 countries in favor and no countries against the resolution. This vote was the spark that allowed for member states to take, “all necessary measures to protect civilians under attack.”4 Though the vote was unanimous, the process of gaining the support of 10 member states was tedious and a decision ultimately came

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1 “President Obama Authorizes Limited Military Action in Libya.” The Obama White House, YouTube, 21 March 2011.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
underway as a result of White House leadership and skilled coalition building. Hours after Obama’s decision, which he was initially hesitant in pursuing, several other countries, including Britain and France, enforced the same no-fly zone and the group of Western powers started to bomb Qadhafi assets on March 19.⁵

The Mad Dog of Libya

**Revolutionary beginnings** In the wake of a fractured government dominated by traditional tribal divisions and extreme income inequality, Qadhafi led a coup d’état in Libya. The 1969 coup, which was called the al-Fateh Revolution, saw thousands of Free Officers occupy government buildings, police headquarters, airports and radio stations in an effort to overthrow King Idris I.⁶ Free Officers advocated for Arab nationalism in the face of Libya’s contrasting lack of economic mobility and extremely concentrated wealth from oil reserves. On September 1, nearly 70 young army officers led the coup, and in a matter of hours, a bloodless non-violent revolution was complete. Qadhafi, one of the revolution’s main colonels, was officially declared the de-facto leader of the Libyan Arab Republic. The young leader was hailed as the people’s hero and became the face of revolution in the country. As Qadhafi took his seat as the official head of state, 12 Free Officers became the self-proclaimed Revolutionary Command Council, laying the foundation for Libya’s new government.⁷

In its early days, the RCC proposed grand economic and social reforms in the country, hoping to revitalize economic mobility and lead Libya into a “Green Revolution.” This revolution attempted to stimulate agricultural growth in an effort to rival the country’s vast oil exports. For years, the country consistently ranked in the top 20 countries with the largest oil production. However, Libya’s prosperity under Qadhafi’s decades-long dictatorship began to decline. During the first few years of Qadhafi’s reign, he dragged Libya into dirty “petroleum politics” beginning with the 1973 oil embargo, which in its attempt to hurt the U.S. and other western powers for their support of Israel in the Yom Kippur War, also ended up hurting the country.⁸

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⁷ Ibid.
While Libya faced turmoil over oil disputes, Qadhafi’s role as the country’s leader fresh out of revolution devolved into a repressive dictatorship. The foundational structure of the Libyan Arab Republic placed no checks or restraints on the executive branch, and as a result, Qadhafi was given free rein to pursue his anti-imperialist campaigns across the world. From the outset, Qadhafi held strong anti-American sentiments — he viewed Western influence and U.S. global hegemony as one of the main reasons for why countries like Libya had faced turmoil for decades. In response to a question on expelling American forces from Libya, Qadhafi told *Time* that, “Nothing would please me more, but who else would pump the oil that we need? God damn America.” Qadhafi funded terrorist organizations and militant groups that held similar views. The leader’s sharp anti-U.S. rhetoric placed him on multiple watchlists, and American foreign policy officials and Middle East scholars were made aware of the growing hostilities Qadhafi held.

Eventually, tensions between the U.S. and Libya reached an all-time high in 1986 when President Ronald Reagan ordered airstrikes in Benghazi and Tripoli, two major Libyan cities, after Libyan agents bombed a Berlin nightclub frequented by American soldiers. This incident was one of the first direct attacks Qadhafi orchestrated against American military officers on foreign soil. Four days after the attack, Reagan held a news conference where he called Qadhafi the, “mad dog of the Middle East.” Two years later, Qadhafi’s international reputation as a brutal anti-Western dictator was cemented after two Libyan suspects bombed Pan-Am flight 103 over the small Scottish town of Lockerbie. This act of terror, which caused the death of 270 people, was the deadliest terror attack in the history of the United Kingdom.

**Decades of violence** Qadhafi’s brutality seeped into his borders, as well. Following the 1969 coup, Qadhafi imprisoned political dissenters and held public hangings for dozens of counterrevolutionary officials. The number of political prisoners held in Libya is unknown to this day because public information about the brutality at the hands of Qadhafi is limited. However, in 1993, a failed coup of counterrevolutionaries in Abu Salim prison led to the confirmed deaths of more than 1,000 prisoners who were shot by security forces. Human Rights Watch verified these

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numbers after an external investigation, and it was not until 2004 that Qadhafi acknowledged what happened in Abu Salim. “Qadhafi was delusional, unpredictable, disloyal, vindictive and bent on entering history in the most significant way, even if that [came] at the expense of people around him,” said Tarik Yousef el-Magariaf, an economist and director of the Brookings Institution Doha Center.14

Additionally, international sanctions placed against Libya as a result of Qadhafi’s actions hurt civilians for decades and strikes ordered against the country because of the Berlin and Lockerbie incidents led to the death of innocent citizens. As the Libyan people continued to bear the brunt of American and British sanctions, Qadhafi also lost control over domestic politics. The once powerful dictator began to lose a grip of Islamist insurgents in the region. Qadhafi, a Sunni Muslim, was a modernist who promoted the notion of Islamic socialism.15 By nationalizing the oil industry and increasing state revenue to implement social programs such as housing, healthcare, and education, Qadhafi attempted to fulfill promises of the popular revolution through which he was put in power. However, the failed promises under Qadhafi and the anger arising within Libya led to an increase in anti-Qadhafi attitudes within the country — specifically within the Libyan Muslim population. The late 1980s and 1990s saw a growth in Islamist opposition within Libya, and groups like the Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamic Fighting Group began to violently revolt against Qadhafi. Libyan Islamist groups were imprisoned and persecuted after unsuccessfully attempting to assassinate the leader on multiple occasions.

Ultimately, the domestic struggle between radical Islamic groups, Qadhafi’s faulty promises of Islamic socialism and members of the Libyan public, who failed to seek representation in either camp, laid the backdrop for the Arab Spring demonstrations of 2010. Inspired by the winds of revolution in neighboring Middle East and North African countries such as Egypt and Tunisia, Libya’s own popular uprising began in early 2011 as an accumulation of decades worth of grievances. Popular protests resulting in thousands of civilians mobilizing against the government were met with violent armed conflict — security forces used military warplanes to bomb civilians and hundreds of people were killed.16 Broadcast footage of hundreds of men with their arms behind their backs, lying face down in the streets of big cities like Misurata, with guns pointed at them, were

aired across the world as Qadhafi pledged to crackdown on the unrest sweeping the country. In a speech aired on television on February 22, Qadhafi vowed to quash the protests, declared himself a martyr for Libya and said he would hunt down demonstrators, “inch by inch, home by home, alleyway by alleyway.” \(^{17}\)

In early February, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay warned against the human rights violations committed during the crackdown on protestors. “The callousness with which Libyan authorities and their hired guns are reportedly shooting live rounds of ammunition at peaceful protestors is unconscionable,” Pillay said. \(^{18}\) “Widespread and systematic attacks against the civilian population may amount to crimes against humanity.”

Heeding the Call

Global attention Pressure from human rights organizations began to mount. A group of UN human rights experts called on the Libyan government to immediately expel its use of lethal force and in a news release said that, “the situation in Libya is quickly spilling out of control … adopting tactics such as the use of live ammunition to crush dissent is unacceptable.” \(^{19}\) Director-General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Irina Bokova called on the UN to focus on Libya’s targeting of journalists, scholars and the free press. In a UNESCO press release, Bokovo called on Qadhafi to, “respect the right of people to access information, to be able to communicate with one another and for the media to be able to do its job.” \(^{20}\) While international non-governmental organizations and UN agencies began to speak out, the highest call to action came from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. After reports that Qadhafi’s forces fired machine-guns at protestors mourning at a funeral of anti-government leaders in early February, Ki-moon called the situation “unacceptable.” \(^{21}\) A doctor from Benghazi told Al Jazeera after the incident that he had counted 44 deaths in three days and that the hospital was ill-equipped to treat victims of massacre. \(^{22}\) “All are very serious injuries, involving the head, the chest

\(^{17}\) “Qadhafi loses more Libyan cities.” Al Jazeera, 23 February 2011.
\(^{19}\) Ibid.
\(^{20}\) “UNESCO Director-General calls on all parties to protect Libya’s unique cultural heritage.” UNESCO.
\(^{21}\) “Libya: 200 dead as Qadhafi’s forces fire on protest mourners.” The Telegraph, 20 February 2011.
\(^{22}\) “Libya forces ‘open fire’ at funeral.” Al Jazeera, 19 February 2011.
and the abdomen. They are bullet injuries from high-velocity rifles. All are civilians from 13 to 35,” he said. “Absolutely a shoot-to-kill policy.” Following this outcry, the Secretary-General spoke to Qadhafi for 40 minutes over the phone, and according to multiple reports at the time, the Libyan leader was undeterred by the threat of UN pressure.

**Listen to the League** The UN Security Council also began to focus its efforts on the Libyan crisis in February 2011. While the council had been aware of ongoing problems in Libya since the revolution led by Qadhafi decades before, calls from the Arab League sparked a notable shift in the council’s attention.

On February 22, hundreds of protestors barricaded the entrance to the Arab League headquarters in Cairo’s Tahrir Square. Demonstrators called on the League — a loose confederation of 22 Arab nations whose goal is to improve coordination and cooperation of members regarding common interests — to deliver an ultimatum to the Libyan dictator: resign or face expulsion from the union. Hakim Abdel, a 32-year-old Libyan national protesting in Cairo told The Guardian that this was the chance for the League to take a firm stance against dictatorships and rights violations. “The [25th of] January marked the beginning of the age of democracy and transparency, the age of Arabs withdrawing their consent to be humiliated and patronized, the age when we decided to create a future for ourselves,” Abdel said, referring to the date of the 18-day pro-democracy revolution in Egypt that toppled the similarly oppressive government of President Hosni Mubarak. “Either they speak out now and order Qadhafi to fall, or they make themselves an irrelevancy forever.” During the protest, League Secretary General Amr Moussa attempted to speak to the demonstrators outside, but was quickly drowned out by chants of, “Qadhafi is a butcher!”

At the roundtable inside the deliberating room of the League, all chairs were filled except one: that of Abdel-Moneim Al-Huni, Libya’s League representative. Just days before the protests in Tahrir Square, Al-Huni issued a statement declaring his resignation. Al-Huni claimed that he

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23 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
could no longer serve and represent a regime, “that has failed miserably,” and that, “it is
dishonorable to serve a regime which kills its people and annihilates them.” While this high-level
departure marked a pivot in the concern over Libya, Al-Huni was not the only Libyan official to
call for action against Qadhafi. One day before Al-Huni’s resignation, Ibrahim Dabbashi, deputy
permanent representative to the UN, appealed to the international community to stop the violence
and brutality against innocent civilians in Libya. In an unconventional press conference convened
on a UN holiday, Dabbashi said, “we find it impossible to stay silent and we have to transfer the
voice of the Libyan people to the world,” and that what was occurring in Libya was a, “genocide.”

With the resignation of key Libyan officials and the escalating protests in Tahrir Square,
the League decided to suspend Libya’s membership that same day. It was official — Libya would
no longer be able to participate in League sessions and officially lost its seat at the table in Cairo.
The decision to suspend Libya was unprecedented and came as a surprise to many. The League,
which was established in 1945 and comprises 22 member states, rarely voted to condemn and
scrutinize the actions of its own members. The vote to silence Libya sent a powerful and urgent
signal to the international community.

*Grappling with obligation* Members of the UN Security Council welcomed this move
by the League and embraced calls from within Libya to take action. Security Council President
Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, a long-time Brazilian ambassador, issued a press statement from the
council, calling on Libya to, “meet its responsibility to protect.” The Responsibility to Protect is
a global commitment to prevent genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic
cleansing by having states promise to protect all populations at risk of these atrocities. The
commitment was endorsed by all UN member states at the 2005 World Summit. In the statement,
Viotti used R2P principles to justify the UN Security Council’s increased monitoring of the
situation in Libya. Writing on behalf of the Security Council, she expressed that the importance of

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29 Taki, Jihad. “Libyan Ambassador to the UN urges international community to stop genocide.”
30 Goldberg, Mark Leon. “A ‘Responsibility to Protect’ in Libya.” UN Dispatch, United Nations, 23
February 2011.
31 “Responsibility to Protect.” United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the
Responsibility to Protect, United Nations.
accountability, civilian freedom and the pressing need for humanitarian assistance in Libya. Viotti’s statement would help lay the foundations for a resolution invoking R2P, if necessary. The Global Center for the Responsibility to Protect also chimed in on the situation, calling on the UN to uphold their commitment and, “take immediate action to protect the population of Libya from mass atrocities.”

However, Viotti’s statement on the obligation to act did not accurately reflect every member state’s attitude at the time. Though R2P was a global commitment, it fails to guarantee a country’s commitment and lacks definitive follow through as a mechanism for action. Despite agreeing with the fundamental principles laid out in the R2P pledge, the U.S., for example, did not hold Viotti’s strong sentiments. As international and regional organizations began to speak out against Qadhafi and as top Libyan officials defected from their positions in protest, all eyes were on America. Since the start of the Arab Spring in Tunisia in late December 2011, the Obama administration grappled with how the U.S. should respond. With thousands of citizens in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain, Morocco, Syria and Libya fighting against tyranny in favor of greater civil liberties and democratic institutions, questions of American support and action were up in the air. The U.S. was supposed to act as a pillar of human rights and as a model democracy, but the Iraq and Afghanistan wars were ongoing and fresh in the conscience of the American public. And though Obama called for a paradigmatic shift in ideology in the region, urging autocratic governments to lead, “through consent, not coercion,” the U.S. was hesitant in its reaction to Libya.33 "The government of Libya has a responsibility to respect the universal rights of the people, including the right to free expression and assembly," Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said in a February 21 statement. "Now is the time to stop this unacceptable bloodshed. We are working urgently with friends and partners around the world to convey this message to the Libyan government." But, U.S. response so far had only been that: a message. While the U.S. used economic sanctions and frozen assets to pressure Libyan officials, similar to the approach of other UN Security Council countries, it never pledged definitive action on the Libya issue.

At the time, statements on Libya denouncing Qadhafi, though few and far between in comparison to other western countries, came primarily from the Department of State. The

president, in contrast, was relatively quiet on the issue. Dismayed this perceived lack of outcry, two Republican senators called for Obama to publicly denounce the human rights violations in Libya. In a joint statement, Arizona Senator Jon Kyl and Illinois Senator Mark Kirk said, “we urge the president to speak out clearly in support of the Libyan people.” But Obama did not need calls from members of Congress to feel pressured to speak out; as the winds of revolution swept through the Middle East and North Africa and as Qadhafi became more defiant to calls from the international community to resign, the Libya problem became inevitable. Obama had to confront a difficult decision.

Inside the War Room

Madam Secretary The president was deeply hesitant of engaging in a military venture into Libya. While Obama was inclined to stay out of the Arab country with the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan under way, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, a key figure in the administration, had a very different idea.

Prior to her nomination and confirmation as Obama’s Secretary of State, Clinton was a highly educated veteran of the American political system. In the late 1960s, Clinton attended Wellesley College where she served as the leader of Republican student organizations and conservative clubs. However, she stepped down as president of Wellesley Young Republicans upon realizing that her opinions on social movements, civil rights, the Vietnam War and feminist issues began to change. After undergoing this political shift in ideology, Clinton attended Yale Law School, where she devoted her time to children’s rights and family policy law. In the years that followed, she co-founded the Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families and became the first female partner at Little Rock’s Rose Law firm. And after marrying Bill Clinton, who served as governor of Arkansas, she served as the state’s first lady during the late 1970s and early 1990s.

Clinton was well-educated, and her career was full of historic firsts. While serving as First Lady of the United States from 1993 to 2001 after Bill’s election as president, Clinton was able to pursue healthcare reform, family-oriented policies and children’s issues. “No president ever had a partner quite like Hillary Rodham Clinton. She attended campaign strategy meetings in Little Rock,

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Ark., and later became the first first lady with an office in the West Wing,” Peter Baker and Amy Chozick wrote in *The New York Times*. Following her time as first lady, Clinton was elected as a senator for New York and after being defeated by Obama in the Democratic presidential primaries in 2008, she was asked to be his secretary of state. On January 21, 2009, Clinton was confirmed by a full Senate vote of 94-2 — later that day she resigned from the Senate and officially became the first first lady to be a member of the U.S. Cabinet.

As secretary of state, Clinton oversaw dealings between the U.S. and foreign governments during a challenging time across multiple regions. In her first months in office, she announced ambitious departmental reforms, including the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, which would specifically outline the Department’s activities overseas. In the wake of the War in Iraq, which Clinton voted in favor of as a senator, she wanted to increase U.S. diplomatic presence in the region. Additionally, she sided with recommendations for a military surge in Afghanistan and agreed with the military’s position that 40,000 troops and no deadline for a withdrawal was the necessary strategy in the region. Clinton supported this aggressive approach in Afghanistan until she compromised with Obama’s more restrained fallback proposal of 30,000 troops.

During the second half of her tenure, the 2011 Egyptian protests and subsequent Arab Spring proved to be one of the most challenging foreign policy crises for the administration. As secretary of state, Clinton was the face of U.S. response, which at the time was criticized for being inconsistent and confusing. The U.S. had no problem with supporting select leaders in the Middle East, while condemning others. “She criticized the foreign minister of the United Arab Emirates for sending troops to quash protests in Bahrain, even as she pressed him to send planes to intervene in Libya,” wrote *the Times*’ Helene Cooper. Her aggressive approach to Afghanistan and insistence of increased presence in the Middle East, however, was not surprising. Clinton’s stances on foreign policy have always been more hawkish than those of Obama — and most other democrats. “Hillary is very much a member of the traditional American foreign-policy establishment,” said Vali Nasr, a foreign-policy strategist who advised Clinton. “She believes, like presidents going back to the Reagan or Kennedy years, in the importance of the military — in solving terrorism, in asserting American

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influence.” This baseline tension between Clinton and the president would be a defining characteristic of her time as secretary of state.

Clinton’s embrace of the military and American intervention was entrenched in her leadership style and ideology, and reflected her personal relationships and upbringing. She was the daughter of a Navy officer and her father, Hugh Rodham, influenced many of her views during her younger years. These would later translate into her hawkish views as secretary of state. Hillary’s father was a strict conservative and anti-communist, and her time spend in conservative college organizations was the result of that. In an interview with the Times, Clinton said that even though she had undergone a political conversion at Wellesley, she visited a Marine recruiting office in Arkansas in 1975 — the year she married Bill Clinton — to inquire about a position in joining the active forces or reserves. Clinton recalled that the Marine recruiting officer told her she was too old, and she could not serve effectively as a woman. “It was not a very encouraging conversation,” Clinton said in 1994. “I decided: Maybe I’ll look for another way to serve my country.” That moment changed Clinton’s outlook on civil service, and she would go on to spend the rest of her life proving her place in government.

The Paris meeting In 2011, Clinton was nearly two years into her time as secretary of state. And on March 14, just four days before Obama’s announcement of Operation Odyssey Dawn, she would have one of the most important and defining meetings of her career.

Clinton was sitting in her suite at the Westin Hotel in Paris, getting ready for a late-night meeting with Libyan Rebel Leader Mahmoud Jibril. Jibril, who holds a PhD from the University of Pittsburgh, was a political scientist who was leading the rebellion that sought to overthrow Qadhafi. By the time Jibril had cleared customs and exited the airport, Clinton had been waiting in the room for a few hours; however, this meeting was not one that could be cancelled or delayed further. In the hotel room, Clinton and Jibril discussed the rapidly changing situation in Libya. “Did the opposition really represent the interests of the whole country? Were the divisions only regional? If Qadhafi was killed or resigned did they have a plan? She was asking every question you could

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40 Ibid.
imagine,” Jibril told the Times after the closed-door meeting. After that meeting, Clinton was convinced of U.S. intervention in Libya. Philip Gordon, one of Clinton’s assistant secretaries, said Jibril said all the right things about the opposition, supporting democracy and institution building. “They gave us what we wanted to hear,” Gordon said. The meeting cleared Clinton of most initial hesitations she had about intervening in Libya. And though, the hawkish democrat listened intently to Jibril’s cries for U.S. action in the region, “Clinton was clearly also thinking about Iraq and its hard lessons for American intervention.” Her Senate vote in Iraq was a painful reminder of what military action in the Middle East would mean for the U.S. Nonetheless, she was committed to action in Libya after speaking with Jibril.

Even from the start of the Libya issue in the U.S., Clinton was determined to learn all that she could about the issue. Clinton was a, “diligent student and unrelenting inquisitor,” absorbing briefings, listening to all advisors, studying dissenting views and meeting with foreign officials. From the earliest days of the debate over action in Libya, she presented a stark contrast to Obama’s reserved and more withdrawn approach. Anne-Marie Slaughter, Clinton’s director of policy planning, characterized Clinton as a pragmatist who would rather be caught trying than failing to do nothing at all.

The advisers During the week leading up to Clinton and Jibril’s meeting, Qadhafi’s forces were advancing toward Benghazi, a major seaport in Libya and the second-most populous city in the country. The situation had become more urgent than ever. A few days before the Paris meeting, the Arab League announced that it endorsed a no-fly zone in Libya and the French government officially announced its recognition of the Libyan rebels, the National Libyan Council, as the country’s legitimate government. Western countries began a more aggressive and targeted approach toward denouncing Qadhafi — and the U.S. had the option of either outlining a plan to help the rebels or remaining withdrawn on the issue. But the stories of violence and atrocities coming out of Libya since the start of March began to accelerate the importance of the issue, and media attention on the government’s repression further shocked the global public. The violence in Libya became a

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42 Ibid.
43 Ibid.
44 Ibid.
45 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
47 “Libya: France recognizes rebels as government.” BBC, 10 March 2011.
problem of drastic displacement, and refugees fleeing their homes to the neighboring states of Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Chad and even to countries across the Mediterranean described horrific scenes of violence. One refugee recounted, “a brutal scene of bodies hanging from electricity poles and militia trucks loaded with the dead.”

As pressure once again began to build, Clinton was not the only senior Obama advisor influential in the decision to launch Operation Odyssey Dawn. National Security Advisor Samantha Power entered the Obama administration as a champion of human rights and humanitarian intervention in the face of genocide. Power served as one of Obama’s senior advisors and had previously been a war correspondent in the former Yugoslavia covering genocide. Before joining the Obama campaign in 2008, she served as the founding director of the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School. Kenneth Roth, executive director of Human Rights Watch, believed that Power was, “clearly the foremost voice for human rights within the White House … and she has Obama’s ear.” Power’s 2002 book, *A Problem from Hell*, which won the Pulitzer Prize, cemented her as an institutional memory bank for the topic of genocide and intervention. In her book, she argued that mass atrocities in Germany during World War II, Cambodia, Rwanda and Armenia did not continue to take place because of a lack of awareness of the problems, but because countries consciously chose not to intervene. During his tenure as a senator in 2005, Obama sought out Power after reading *A Problem from Hell* and the two started their work together. Once he was elected to the presidency, she became a pivotal voice in national security circles within the White House.

With fervent liberal interventionists Clinton and Power whispering into Obama’s ear and urging action in Libya, the final voice in this powerful trio was U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice. Rice offered some of the toughest stances and harshest rhetoric toward Qadhafi, and in many UN meetings, she made it clear that Qadhafi could either step down or face international response. Rice was the voice of intervention when Obama was not, and the two provided a stark contrast of one another. In response to an interview Qadhafi had with ABC’s Christiane Amanpour, during which he claimed that Libyans loved him, Rice said that Qadhafi was delusional. “When he can laugh in talking to American and international journalists while he is slaughtering his own people, it only underscores how unfit he is to lead and how disconnected he is

from reality,” Rice said.\textsuperscript{50} The ambassador’s tough stance on Libya had come from her previous experiences serving in the Clinton administration. She held various positions including director for international organizations and peacekeeping, senior director for African affairs and served on the National Security Council. During the 1994 Rwandan genocide, Rice infamously asked during an interagency teleconference: “If we used the word ‘genocide’ and are seen as doing nothing, what will be the effect on the November election.”\textsuperscript{51} Reports of her attitude during the conference shocked those within policy circles, who perceived Rice as caring more about the midterm elections than about the genocide in Rwanda. Ultimately, the inaction during the Clinton administration regarding the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, during which an estimated 800,000 people were massacred, would impact Rice, stain her career record and paradigmatically shift her understanding of U.S. foreign policy. “I swore to myself that if I ever faced such a crisis again, I would come down on the side of dramatic action, going down in flames if that was required,” Rice said. And years later under Obama, as ambassador to the UN, she vehemently and unforgivably chose action over omission.

**Overcoming opposition**

*Hesitation from the DOD* Clinton, Power and Rice were the powerful triad that ultimately convinced a once-hesitant president to take action in Libya. And while their voices were among the most powerful in the White House, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates emerged as a voice of caution. Gates warned Congress on March 2 that implementing a no-flight zone over Libya, which is what the pro-intervention advisers promoted, would require, “a big operation in a big country.”\textsuperscript{52} Gates was the most prominent Republican member of Obama’s administration and strongly believed that though the no-fly zone was touted as an initial plan by Clinton, Power and Rice, any action would need to begin with an attack on Libyan air defenses. His testimony in front of Congress came just days after delivering another speech on the issue of American presence in the Middle East, during which he warned America against repeating another land war like Iraq and Afghanistan.

Gates extended his stay at the Pentagon when Obama decided to keep his position as Defense Secretary — he had been appointed years earlier by President George W. Bush. Amid two wide-ranging wars in the Middle East, many believe that the decision to keep Gates was strategic. “It suggests an awareness of the importance of continuity at a time of war, plus a healthy respect for Gates,” said Brookings Institution defense scholar Michael O’Hanlon in Time magazine. Keeping Gates suggested that national security was a bi-partisan issue and that during a time of two military insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan, it was important to maintain a smooth transition within the Department of Defense. Gates also had experience dealing with Libya; during the Reagan administration, he served as the deputy director for intelligence. In his memoir, From the Shadows, he recalls that following the Berlin and Pan Am bombings in the 1980s, the DOD drafted initial plans for a potential U.S.-Egypt attack on Qadhafi. At the time, Gates scoffed at the idea of a military strike against Libya because he believed that action would spark backlash against perceived American imperialism and create an upsurge in radicalization among anti-American terrorists. Nearly 25 years later, Gates stood by those same fears. He came to two conclusions about American intervention in Libya. First, destroying Libyan air facilities would take more airpower than U.S. carriers could mount alone — so, European airbases and coalition support would be needed. And, second, accomplishing a no-fly zone would do very little especially because Qadhafi would still have the capability to organize a land assault against the rebels. Gates, therefore, knew that if America intervened in Libya, it would require more force and more aggression than presumed — including a potential overthrow of Qadhafi’s dictatorship.

Gates was not alone in his concern. National Security Adviser Thomas Donilon and Counterterrorism Chief John Brennan both had reservations regarding U.S. action. Brennan believed that if the U.S. were to intervene in Libya, it needed to preempt and brace for the possibility of an upsurge in Libyan-backed terrorist attacks. Brennan was critical of Clinton, Power and Rice’s notion that intervention is the answer to end the violence. “Qadhafi has the penchant to do things of a very concerning nature,” he said. “We have to anticipate and be prepared for things

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he might try to do to flout the will of the international community.”

Donilon echoed Brennan’s concerns with the belief that Libya was not vital to security interests for the U.S. and was puzzled with American preoccupation in a non-critical region. Vice President Joe Biden even joined the inner circle of Obama’s administration skeptical of the use of American force. The vice president joined Gates, Donilon and Brennan in arguing that the fall of Qadhafi and his ousting as Libya’s leader would result in chaos. This often placed Biden and Gates on the same side of the table opposite the pro-intervention hawks. With two camps emerging within the White House, increased caution among those with American security interests in mind best reflected the growing chasm between what Obama’s senior aides were calling for and what the president was willing to do.

**Obama’s decision** The president grappled between action and inaction. The ‘damned if you do and damned if you don’t’ mentality of humanitarian intervention was a well-trodden path — with Reagan in Lebanon, H.W. Bush in Iraq and Somalia, Clinton in Bosnia and Kosovo and Bush in Darfur, Iraq and Afghanistan, Obama was not the first president to stand at this crossroads. And while Obama heeded the concerns of Donilon, Brennan, Gates and his vice president, the troika of women in Obama’s cabinet was persuasive. *The Times* reported that Obama shed his hesitation of intervention in Libya only under pressure from those advisers. In an article citing multiple insiders, *the Times* wrote that, “the change became possible, though, only after Mrs. Clinton joined Samantha Power … and Susan Rice.”

But, Obama absorbed Gates’ concern and understood that a military undertaking in Libya would require strong partnerships with allies. Obama’s paramount priority in Libya was creating an international coalition to move forward with action. At every step of the way, the president kept international allies and partners in the loop, and in a February speech, before launching Operation Odyssey Dawn, Obama said messages warning Qadhafi had come from the European Union, the Arab League, the African Union and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. “The entire world is watching, and we will coordinate our assistance and accountability measures with the international community,” Obama said. The next day, the president, alongside Secretary of State Clinton, made

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the decision to send Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Bill Burns to several cities in Europe to consult with American allies. While Burns traveled throughout Europe and reported back to the president on the positions of America’s allies, the president gave the responsibility of coalition-building to Clinton. The secretary of state was asked to travel to Geneva to convene a session of the Human Rights Council to speak on behalf of the U.S. on Libya and stress the urgency of the mounting human rights crisis. Her one-day trip to Switzerland allowed her to convince foreign ministers of the U.S.’ plan for a no-fly zone. Suzanne Nossel, deputy assistant secretary of state for international organization affairs, said Clinton’s visit, “[would] help strengthen the unity of purpose in the international community … to categorically reject the behavior of the Libyan government.” The Human Rights Council, made of 47 members, had long been divided by ideological differences. But on February 25, the council adopted a resolution condemning the violence in Libya and said the atrocities may warrant an international inquiry into crimes against humanity. Clinton was convincing and relentless in Geneva, and shortly following the decision from the Human Rights Council, the UN Security Council and NATO also convened meetings on Libya.

**The coalition approach** With the decision to intervene in Libya set, one question remained unanswered: Would the U.S. go into Libya alone? Fortunately, other countries were debating similar questions. France, Lebanon and the United Kingdom, alongside the U.S., drafted UN Security Council Resolution 1973, which formed a legal basis for military intervention, in an effort to galvanize UN support for action in Libya (for the full text of the resolution, see Exhibit 4).

The United Kingdom played a key role in forming the coalition of western countries determined to intervene in Libya come March 2011 and convincing Obama of multilateral support. But, Prime Minister David Cameron was pro-intervention long before the president. Relations between the UK and Libya were marked by turbulence under Qadhafi’s rule. These poor relations were made worse after the destruction of Pan Am Flight 103 in Lockerbie and the murder of British police officer Yvonne Fletcher after an unknown gunman fired from the Libyan embassy in London in 1984. As information about the human rights violations occurring under Qadhafi became more transparent to the international community, Cameron took the lead in condemning the dictator. During a tour of the Middle East in February 2011, Cameron met with the various leaders of Libya’s neighboring countries and continued to strongly criticize the situation in Libya, calling it “appalling

During this time, the British Foreign Office issued a travel advisory in Libya and encouraged citizens to leave the country — there were nearly 3,500 British nationals in Tripoli. Cameron also faced domestic pressure from Libyans living in the UK after hundreds of demonstrators protested outside the Libyan Embassy in central London. BBC reported that nine members of the embassy staff left the building to join the protestors in denouncing Qadhafi’s 42-year rule. Safwan Jammoun, a Libyan embassy cultural affairs administrator, said Qadhafi was, “killing our brothers, our sisters and our families.” Protests took place across the UK; Manchester, home to the largest Libyan community in the UK, saw hundreds of expats take to the streets. The UK was also in a difficult situation because Qadhafi’s son, Saif al-Islam Qadhafi lived in London. In early March, a group of demonstrators from Topple the Tyrants occupied Saif’s mansion, demanding UK action. After weeks of protest and pressure, Cameron decided to use economic sanctions and frozen assets to pressure Qadhafi to resign. And after a lobbying campaign within the House of Commons, Cameron officially decided to oversee the UK’s proposal of UN Security Council resolution 1974. “The world has watched as [Qadhafi] has brutally crushed his own people,” Cameron said.

Cameron partnered with French President Nicolas Sarkozy, who held similar concerns of unrest, violence and spillover, and Lebanese Ambassador Nawaf Salam. "It's a grave decision we've had to take,” Sarkozy said. “Along with our Arab, European and North American partners, France has decided to play its part before history.” While France had similar reasons for proposing a resolution as the UK, Lebanon was placed in a unique position. At the time, Lebanon was the only Arab country on the UN Security Council. After the Arab League called on the UN to implement a no-fly zone in Libya, the task of making this change fell onto Lebanon (for a map of the no-fly zone, see Exhibit 1). The country took the lead, alongside the UK and France, in proposing UN Security Council resolution 1973, and historical divisions and tensions between Libya and Lebanon motivated this leadership. In 1978, Shia cleric Imam Musa al-Sadr, an influential and well-known Lebanese religious figure, disappeared in Libya. In April 2011, a military official in Qadhafi’s army said Libyan agents murdered Sadr during a visit and buried his body in the south. The story was complicated when a Libyan rebel and oppositionist group claimed that Sadr was still alive and being

62 Ibid.
63 “Libya: David Cameron statement on UN resolution.” BBC, 18 March 2011.
64 “Sarkozy: ‘It’s a grave decision we’ve had to take.” NBC News, 2011.
held captive by Qadhafi’s forces.\textsuperscript{65} The search for answers about Sadr’s disappearance deeply tainted Libyan-Lebanese relations for decades and in 2010, Lebanese President Michel Suleiman boycotted the Arab Summit over the issue. For decades after Sadr’s disappearance, there were no direct flights between the two countries, and in 2003, Libya closed its embassy in Beirut. Lebanon saw the Security Council resolution as an opportunity to challenge Qadhafi’s brutal leadership and bring international attention to the dispute.

Lebanon, France, the US and the UK officially proposed their resolution on March 17 and UN Security Council resolution 1973 was adopted the same day. The resolution demanded an immediate ceasefire and an end to violence against civilians, the imposition of a no-fly zone, a strengthened arms embargo, a ban on all Libyan-designated flights, asset freezes, a travel ban and economic sanctions. The resolution also gave the authorization to use all means necessary to protect civilians. Ten countries, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, France, Gabon, Lebanon, Nigeria, Portugal, South Africa, the UK and the U.S. approved the resolution. However, five major countries abstained.\textsuperscript{66} Chancellor Angela Merkel said Germany would not take part in the military action, despite sharing in the goals of the resolution. “Our abstention should not be confused for neutrality,” Merkel said.\textsuperscript{67} Germany’s abstention represented real hesitations with the intervention in Libya and the country’s foreign minister, Guido Westerwelle, said western intervention would have unpredictable consequences in the Arab world.\textsuperscript{68} India abstained because the resolution’s outline of military action was considered too vague, Brazil abstained because it viewed the use of force to end violence as contradictory and hypocritical, and permanent members Russia and China had reservations about the no-fly zone.

Regardless of these major abstentions, the resolution passed. After consulting Congress, the president authorized military action to stop Qadhafi and enforce the resolution. The U.S. officially had the greenlight for Operation Odyssey Dawn.

\textsuperscript{67} Peel, Quentin. “Merkel explains British abstention.” Financial Times, 18 March 2011.
A Shifting Strategy

_The transition to NATO_ After the resolution was adopted, Qadhafi’s government said it would comply and implement a ceasefire. However, it soon became clear that this promise was hollow. After several reports of continued violence against the masses, a coalition of American and European forces began to bomb Libyan targets. French warplanes were the first to fire shots at government tanks and armored vehicles. Next, British and U.S. warships and submarines launched over 100 Tomahawk missiles against Libyan air defense. Within a matter of days, Tripoli and Misrata became warzones. The Libyan government said in a statement that nearly 50 people were killed and over 100 were wounded, claiming that most causalities of western airstrikes were children, though this could never be independently confirmed.69 Immediately, the conflict in Libya was painted by Qadhafi’s government as an intervention of western imperialism. Less than two hours after Obama’s announcement of Operation Odyssey Dawn in Brazil, Qadhafi told the Libyan public that he would take all action necessary to protect the country from “colonial” and “crusader” aggression.70 During that announcement, Qadhafi officially declared the Mediterranean and North Africa a battleground.

While Obama was influenced by Clinton, Power and Rice — the hesitation from Gates and other officials in his administration created a lingering restraint in his approach to intervention. The president believed from the outset that action in Libya would not be unilateral and though the U.S. took command of the initial operations, the White House sought to pass command off to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. France, the UK and Lebanon knew that only the U.S. and NATO possessed the capabilities necessary for air and ground operations — a concern that Gates also had. Obama and Cameron, two of the most powerful and influential actors in NATO, were effectively able to galvanize other NATO members to join the coalition. A coalition of NATO allies had already engaged in military operations in Libya as a part of Operation Odyssey Dawn, but as more support, both ideational and material, became necessary in Libya, both leaders decided to involve the alliance. But while the NATO member frontrunners leading the charge against Qadhafi maintained the perception that an eventual NATO transition would be smooth, there was discord among members.

France, who initially helped lead the Operation Odyssey Dawn coalition and co-sponsored the resolution, expressed concerns that a NATO-led mission would lead to Arab outcry and

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69 Evans, Dominic. “Qadhafi wins little Arab sympathy as West strikes.” Reuters, 19 March 2011.  
criticism of western motives in the country. Additionally, the perception that NATO is a U.S.-dominated alliance worried countries, like France, that sought equal footing in the intervention. And with Germany’s abstention, Merkel withdrew its naval forces in the Mediterranean from NATO’s command. While there was infighting among NATO member countries, including concern from Italy and Norway over disagreement on command of military assets, the alliance ultimately came to the agreement that the transition to NATO command would be able to provide streamlined political direction to the coalition’s military operations. This eventual transition to NATO command eased Obama’s initial concerns of unilateral action and unilateral consequences. On March 23, NATO launched its first maritime mission to enforce the arms embargo placed against Libya. Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Turkey, the UK and the U.S. all pledged over 15 ships and submarines and over 50 fighter jets and surveillance planes in the alliance’s first joint operation in the region. After the coalition success of this operation, under the command of Italian Vice Admiral Rinaldo Veri, the allies finally agreed to officially participate in a joint NATO command of air operations. And on March 27, NATO announced that it would expand the scope of its mission to protect civilians using airstrikes against Qadhafi’s forces. At 6:00 p.m. GMT on March 31, the formal transfer of command occurred (for a transcription of the speech, see Exhibit 6). In a speech to the nation, Obama said,

Last night, NATO decided to take on the additional responsibility of protecting Libyan civilians. This transfer from the United States to NATO will take place on Wednesday. Going forward, the lead in enforcing the no-fly zone and protecting civilians on the ground will transition to our allies and partners, and I am fully confident that our coalition will keep the pressure on Qaddafi’s remaining forces.

In that effort, the United States will play a supporting role — including intelligence, logistical support, search and rescue assistance, and capabilities to jam regime communications. Because of this transition to a broader, NATO-based coalition, the risk and cost of this operation — to our military and to American taxpayers — will be reduced significantly (for a full cost breakdown of intervention in Libya, see Exhibit 3).

So, for those who doubted our capacity to carry out this operation, I want to be clear: The United States of America has done what we said we would do. The U.S.-coordinated Operation Odyssey Dawn had officially ended, and the NATO coalition-led Operation Unified Protector began.

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The Question of Intervention:
Obama, Qadhafi and Operation Odyssey Dawn

Epilogue

For months, the coalition forces launched an offensive against the government. In August, the rebel forces, backed by a NATO bombing campaign, were able to regain territory and eventually capture Tripoli. With reclaimed territory and a weakened government response, the rebels found victory and on September 16, the United Nations recognized National Transitional Council as the legal representative government of Libya. This move officially replaced the Qadhafi regime, and after months of evading capture, the former dictator of Libya was brutally beaten and shot by rebel fighters on October 20.

The Libyan conflict, which has since been labeled a civil war, resulted in over 50,000 registered refugees and asylum-seekers, an estimated 270,000 internally displaced people and, from the months of April to June 2011, nearly 1,200 civilian deaths at the hands of rebel, government and coalition forces. Some argue that the defeat and conclusion of the war spared the people of Libya from the potential massacre that could have continued. However, Qadhafi’s death was not the end of Libya’s turmoil; in fact, Libya has since spiraled into disaster. The North African country, which after the civil war once had a promising outlook, became a haven for ISIS, as it reeled from the effects of NATO-led airstrikes, and a country fraught with even deeper tribal divisions and extremism.

In public, Libya was labeled a “mess,” but in private, the president called Libya a “shit show.” In 2016, Obama said Libya was the worst mistake of his presidency. The president, who was then at the end of his eight years in office, said his biggest regret was, “failing to plan for the day after what I think was the right thing to do intervening in Libya.” But Obama believes that while the intervention was justified, Libya became a “shit show” because of the passivity of American allies rather than the incompetence of American foreign policy. “When I go back and I ask myself what went wrong,” Obama told The Atlantic, “there’s room for criticism, because I had more faith in

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75 Ibid.
the Europeans, given Libya’s proximity, being invested in the follow-up.” After the start of Operation Unified Protector, French President Nicolas Sarkozy lost the 2012 election to Francois Hollande — France then slowly backed out of the operation. Additionally, Obama alleges that UK Prime Minister David Cameron became, “distracted by a range of other things.” For months after the intervention, these searing critiques of Sarkozy and Cameron would be a talking point of the administration. The breakdown of the western coalition of allies, coupled with the deep tribal divisions that plagued Libya, led to an overestimation of successful end results. And ultimately, after Qadhafi’s death and the quick departure of western forces, Libya was left war-torn and without resources. The fragile government established by rebels struggled to control a region and people destroyed by war. U.S. and coalition action in Libya continue to be a defining moment in history for the debate over intervention.

The schism within the administration of whether or not Libya was an utter failure dug a permanent scar into the Obama administration. Notably, these divisions plagued Obama’s cabinet past his time in office. Hillary Clinton never stopped blaming the president for Libya. “Did I do the due diligence? Did I talk to everybody I could talk to? Did I visit every capitol and then report back to the president?” she said on the democratic debate stage in 2016. "Yes, I did. That's what a secretary of state does. But at the end of the day, those are the decisions that are made by the president to in any way use American military power, and the president made that decision.”

76 Ibid.
Exhibit 1: Initial and Expanded No-fly Zone Over Libya

As of March 19, 2011

Source: DOD, edited by CRS.
Notes: Locations are approximate.

As of March 27, 2011

Source: DOD, edited by CRS.
Notes: Locations are approximate.
Exhibit 2: Timeline of Events

January 13  Hundreds of citizens begin protesting in Bayda, Derna and Benghazi over the delay in the building of housing units. Protestors claim political corruption for stall in social projects.

The start of the anti-Qadhafi movement begins.

February 1  Libyan writer and political commentator Jamal al-Hajji is arrested for calling on the public to protest in support of greater freedoms in Libya. Al-Hajji said Libya should follow the Tunisia and Egyptian revolutions.

February 2  The Arab Spring protests begin in Libya.

February 15 Nearly 600 demonstrators protest the arrest of human rights lawyer Fathi Terbil outside of the Benghazi police headquarters. Protestors hurled rocks, blocked roads and damaged cars. Police forces responded with tear gas, water cannons and rubber bullets.

February 17 The National Conference for the Libyan Opposition asked citizens and groups to oppose the Qadhafi government in a “Day of Rage.” Protestors torched government buildings and a police station.

Libyan forces kill 14 protestors at a funeral procession for an opposition leader.

February 18  Active resistance of Libyan opposition forces begin. Demonstrations erupt, and Libyan forces kill 24 protestors using live ammunition. Two Libyan police officers are caught and hanged by protestors.

February 19  Another funeral procession is fired on. Opposition commandeer bulldozers and protestors attempt to overtake the Kaitiba military compound. 30 people are killed.

February 20  In Misrata, violent clashes break out between security forces and the opposition. A man named Mahdi Ziu blew up himself and his car, which is loaded with explosives and propane tanks at a security compound. At the end of the day, an estimated 40 people are killed.

February 22  Demonstrators protest outside of the Arab League headquarters in Cairo’s Tahrir Square. Protestors call for the resignation of Qadhafi and League support.

February 23  Former Libyan Justice Minister Mustafa Abdul Jalil alleges Qadhafi ordered the 1988 bombing of Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland.

February 24  Libyan loyalist forces fire automatic weapons on a mosque in Zawiya where protestors are holding an anti-government sit-in.

March 2  Libyan forces begin an assault on Zawiya and launch airstrikes on the city in an attempt to take back the city. Using mortar, rocket, anti-aircraft artillery and machine guns, the government pushes toward the city center. 52 people die and 300 are wounded.

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates testifies in front of Congress and urges against the implementation of a no-fly zone over Libya.
March 6  Qadhafi officially launches a Libyan counteroffensive.

March 9  Zawiya comes under Qadhafi’s control. But, opposition forces drive security forces out of the city center. Over 40 people are killed.

March 10  France becomes the first country to recognize the National Interim Council as Libya’s legitimate government.

March 14  Secretary of State Hillary Clinton meets with Mahmoud Jibril in Paris, France to discuss U.S. action in Libya.

March 15  The last opposition-held city before Benghazi, Ajdabiya, is struck by security forces. Most rebels retreat from the city after a nearly four-day air attack.

March 17  The United Nations Security Council passes Resolution 1973 to impose a no-fly zone in Libya.

March 18  Qadhafi declares an immediate ceasefire. Al Jazeera reports, however, that security forces are still fighting the opposition. Sniper attacks and fired artillery are reported in Misrata and Ajdabiya.

March 19  Libya security forces enter Benghazi with tanks. Mortars are fired onto the city. 27 people die.

An opposition Mig-23BN (fighter aircraft) is shot down over Benghazi. The Libyan government claims the opposition forces violated the no-fly zone.

President Barack Obama announces the start of Operation Odyssey Dawn from his tour in Brasilia, Brazil.

Exhibit 3: Estimated Costs of Operations in Libya

**Table 1. Estimated Costs of Libyan Operations, March 19-March 28, 2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPERATIONAL COSTS</th>
<th>Flying Hours</th>
<th>Cost per flying hour</th>
<th>Estimated Cost in millions of $</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial Suppression of Air Defenses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-2 bomber aircraft</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>31,236</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refueling support</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>9,031</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing Combat Air Patrols and Strike Operations</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>F-15Es</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>19,568</td>
<td>11.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>F-16s</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>8,926</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support Sorties</td>
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<tr>
<td>EA-18G Growler electronic warfare</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>18,334</td>
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<tr>
<td>KC-135 refueling support</td>
<td>8/12</td>
<td>11,462</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-3 AWACS and E-8 JSTARS Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR)</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>18,648</td>
<td>1.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>EC-130J Commando Solo information operations/psychological operations</td>
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<td>6,982</td>
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<tr>
<td>Search and Rescue Support</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>5,659</td>
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<tr>
<td>One-time Rescue Operation for F-15 lost</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Harriers, CH-53 helicopters, MV-22s, and KC-130J</td>
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<td>Not applicable</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUBTOTAL OPERATIONAL COSTS</td>
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<td>Not applicable</td>
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<tr>
<th>POTENTIAL MILITARY PERSONNEL COSTS</th>
<th>No. Eligible</th>
<th>Monthly Amount</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>Imminent Danger Pay&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>0.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUBTOTAL MILITARY PERSONNEL</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>0.8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POTENTIAL REPLACEMENT COSTS&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>No. Expended</th>
<th>Cost per aircraft/missile</th>
<th>Estimated Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Replacing Tomahawk missiles</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>257.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Replacing JDAM missiles</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>1.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Replacement cost of lost F-1SE</td>
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<td>75,000,000</td>
<td>75.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUBTOTAL REPLACEMENT</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>334.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL POTENTIAL COST</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>373.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Resolution 1973 (2011)
Adopted by the Security Council at its 6498th meeting, on 17 March 2011

The Security Council,
Recalling its resolution 1970 (2011) of 26 February 2011,
Deploring the failure of the Libyan authorities to comply with resolution 1970 (2011), Expressing grave concern at the deteriorating situation, the escalation of violence, and the heavy civilian casualties,
Reiterating the responsibility of the Libyan authorities to protect the Libyan population and reaffirming that parties to armed conflicts bear the primary responsibility to take all feasible steps to ensure the protection of civilians,
Condemning the gross and systematic violation of human rights, including arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, torture and summary executions,
Further condemning acts of violence and intimidation committed by the Libyan authorities against journalists, media professionals and associated personnel and urging these authorities to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law as outlined in resolution 1738 (2006),
Considering that the widespread and systematic attacks currently taking place in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya against the civilian population may amount to crimes against humanity,
Recalling paragraph 26 of resolution 1970 (2011) in which the Council expressed its readiness to consider taking additional appropriate measures, as necessary, to facilitate and support the return of humanitarian agencies and make available humanitarian and related assistance in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya,
Expressing its determination to ensure the protection of civilians and civilian populated areas and the rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian assistance and the safety of humanitarian personnel,
Recalling the condemnation by the League of Arab States, the African Union, and the Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference of the serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law that have been and are being committed in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, S/RES/1973 (2011) 2 11-26839
Taking note of the final communiqué of the Organization of the Islamic Conference of 8 March 2011, and the communiqué of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union of 10 March 2011 which established an ad hoc High-Level Committee on Libya,
Taking note also of the decision of the Council of the League of Arab States of 12 March 2011 to call for the imposition of a no-fly zone on Libyan military aviation, and to establish safe areas in places exposed to shelling as a precautionary measure that allows the protection of the Libyan people and foreign nationals residing in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya,
Taking note further of the Secretary-General’s call on 16 March 2011 for an immediate cease-fire,
Recalling its decision to refer the situation in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya since 15 February 2011 to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, and stressing that those responsible for or complicit in attacks targeting the civilian population, including aerial and naval attacks, must be held to account,

Reiterating its concern at the plight of refugees and foreign workers forced to flee the violence in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, welcoming the response of neighboring States, in particular Tunisia and Egypt, to address the needs of those refugees and foreign workers, and calling on the international community to support those efforts,

Deploring the continuing use of mercenaries by the Libyan authorities, Considering that the establishment of a ban on all flights in the airspace of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya constitutes an important element for the protection of civilians as well as the safety of the delivery of humanitarian assistance and a decisive step for the cessation of hostilities in Libya,

Expressing concern also for the safety of foreign nationals and their rights in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya,

Welcoming the appointment by the Secretary General of his Special Envoy to Libya, Mr. Abdel-Elah Mohamed Al-Khatib and supporting his efforts to find a sustainable and peaceful solution to the crisis in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya,

Reaffirming its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya,

Determining that the situation in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security,

Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations,

1. Demands the immediate establishment of a cease-fire and a complete end to violence and all attacks against, and abuses of, civilians;

2. Stresses the need to intensify efforts to find a solution to the crisis which responds to the legitimate demands of the Libyan people and notes the decisions of the Secretary-General to send his Special Envoy to Libya and of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union to send its ad hoc High Level Committee to Libya with the aim of facilitating dialogue to lead to the political reforms necessary to find a peaceful and sustainable solution; S/RES/1973 (2011) 11-26839 3

3. Demands that the Libyan authorities comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, human rights and refugee law and take all measures to protect civilians and meet their basic needs, and to ensure the rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian assistance; Protection of civilians

4. Authorizes Member States that have notified the Secretary-General, acting nationally or through regional organizations or arrangements, and acting in cooperation with the Secretary-General, to take all necessary measures, notwithstanding paragraph 9 of resolution 1970 (2011), to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, including Benghazi, while excluding a foreign occupation force of any form on any part of Libyan territory, and requests the Member States concerned to inform the Secretary-General immediately of the measures they take pursuant to the authorization conferred by this paragraph which shall be immediately reported to the Security Council;
5. Recognizes the important role of the League of Arab States in matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security in the region, and bearing in mind Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, requests the Member States of the League of Arab States to cooperate with other Member States in the implementation of paragraph 4;

No Fly Zone

6. Decides to establish a ban on all flights in the airspace of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in order to help protect civilians;

7. Decides further that the ban imposed by paragraph 6 shall not apply to flights whose sole purpose is humanitarian, such as delivering or facilitating the delivery of assistance, including medical supplies, food, humanitarian workers and related assistance, or evacuating foreign nationals from the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, nor shall it apply to flights authorized by paragraphs 4 or 8, nor other flights which are deemed necessary by States acting under the authorization conferred in paragraph 8 to be for the benefit of the Libyan people, and that these flights shall be coordinated with any mechanism established under paragraph 8;

8. Authorizes Member States that have notified the Secretary-General and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, acting nationally or through regional organizations or arrangements, to take all necessary measures to enforce compliance with the ban on flights imposed by paragraph 6 above, as necessary, and requests the States concerned in cooperation with the League of Arab States to coordinate closely with the Secretary General on the measures they are taking to implement this ban, including by establishing an appropriate mechanism for implementing the provisions of paragraphs 6 and 7 above,

9. Calls upon all Member States, acting nationally or through regional organizations or arrangements, to provide assistance, including any necessary overflight approvals, for the purposes of implementing paragraphs 4, 6, 7 and 8 above;

10. Requests the Member States concerned to coordinate closely with each other and the Secretary-General on the measures they are taking to implement S/RES/1973 (2011) 411-26839 paragraphs 4, 6, 7 and 8 above, including practical measures for the monitoring and approval of authorized humanitarian or evacuation flights;

11. Decides that the Member States concerned shall inform the Secretary-general and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States immediately of measures taken in exercise of the authority conferred by paragraph 8 above, including to supply a concept of operations;

12. Requests the Secretary-General to inform the Council immediately of any actions taken by the Member States concerned in exercise of the authority conferred by paragraph 8 above and to report to the Council within 7 days and every month thereafter on the implementation of this resolution, including information on any violations of the flight ban imposed by paragraph 6 above; Enforcement of the arms embargo

13. Decides that paragraph 11 of resolution 1970 (2011) shall be replaced by the following paragraph: “Calls upon all Member States, in particular States of the region, acting nationally or through regional organisations or arrangements, in order to ensure strict implementation of the arms embargo established by paragraphs 9 and 10 of resolution 1970 (2011), to inspect in their territory, including seaports and airports, and
on the high seas, vessels and aircraft bound to or from the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, if the State concerned has information that provides reasonable grounds to believe that the cargo contains items the supply, sale, transfer or export of which is prohibited by paragraphs 9 or 10 of resolution 1970 (2011) as modified by this resolution, including the provision of armed mercenary personnel, calls upon all flag States of such vessels and aircraft to cooperate with such inspections and authorizes Member States to use all measures commensurate to the specific circumstances to carry out such inspections”;

14. Requests Member States which are taking action under paragraph 13 above on the high seas to coordinate closely with each other and the Secretary-General and further requests the States concerned to inform the Secretary-General and the Committee established pursuant to paragraph 24 of resolution 1970 (2011) (“the Committee”) immediately of measures taken in the exercise of the authority conferred by paragraph 13 above;

15. Requires any Member State whether acting nationally or through regional organisations or arrangements, when it undertakes an inspection pursuant to paragraph 13 above, to submit promptly an initial written report to the Committee containing, in particular, explanation of the grounds for the inspection, the results of such inspection, and whether or not cooperation was provided, and, if prohibited items for transfer are found, further requires such Member States to submit to the Committee, at a later stage, a subsequent written report containing relevant details on the inspection, seizure, and disposal, and relevant details of the transfer, including a description of the items, their origin and intended destination, if this information is not in the initial report;

16. Deplores the continuing flows of mercenaries into the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and calls upon all Member States to comply strictly with their obligations under paragraph 9 of resolution 1970 (2011) to prevent the provision of armed mercenary personnel to the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya; S/RES/1973 (2011) 11-26839 5

Ban on flights

17. Decides that all States shall deny permission to any aircraft registered in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya or owned or operated by Libyan nationals or companies to take off from, land in or overfly their territory unless the particular flight has been approved in advance by the Committee, or in the case of an emergency landing;

18. Decides that all States shall deny permission to any aircraft to take off from, land in or overfly their territory, if they have information that provides reasonable grounds to believe that the aircraft contains items the supply, sale, transfer, or export of which is prohibited by paragraphs 9 and 10 of resolution 1970 (2011) as modified by this resolution, including the provision of armed mercenary personnel, except in the case of an emergency landing;

Asset freeze

19. Decides that the asset freeze imposed by paragraph 17, 19, 20 and 21 of resolution 1970 (2011) shall apply to all funds, other financial assets and economic resources which are on their territories, which are owned or controlled, directly or indirectly, by the Libyan authorities, as designated by the Committee, or by individuals or entities acting on their behalf or at their direction, or by entities owned or controlled by them, as designated by the Committee, and decides further that all States shall ensure that any funds,
financial assets or economic resources are prevented from being made available by their nationals or by any individuals or entities within their territories, to or for the benefit of the Libyan authorities, as designated by the Committee, or individuals or entities acting on their behalf or at their direction, or entities owned or controlled by them, as designated by the Committee, and directs the Committee to designate such Libyan authorities, individuals or entities within 30 days of the date of the adoption of this resolution and as appropriate thereafter;

20. Affirms its determination to ensure that assets frozen pursuant to paragraph 17 of resolution 1970 (2011) shall, at a later stage, as soon as possible be made available to and for the benefit of the people of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya;

21. Decides that all States shall require their nationals, persons subject to their jurisdiction and firms incorporated in their territory or subject to their jurisdiction to exercise vigilance when doing business with entities incorporated in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya or subject to its jurisdiction, and any individuals or entities acting on their behalf or at their direction, and entities owned or controlled by them, if the States have information that provides reasonable grounds to believe that such business could contribute to violence and use of force against civilians;

Designations

22. Decides that the individuals listed in Annex I shall be subject to the travel restrictions imposed in paragraphs 15 and 16 of resolution 1970 (2011), and decides further that the individuals and entities listed in Annex II shall be subject to the asset freeze imposed in paragraphs 17, 19, 20 and 21 of resolution 1970 (2011);

23. Decides that the measures specified in paragraphs 15, 16, 17, 19, 20 and 21 of resolution 1970 (2011) shall apply also to individuals and entities determined by the Council or the Committee to have violated the provisions of resolution 1970 S/RES/1973 (2011) particularly paragraphs 9 and 10 thereof, or to have assisted others in doing so;

Panel of Experts

24. Requests the Secretary-General to create for an initial period of one year, in consultation with the Committee, a group of up to eight experts (“Panel of Experts”), under the direction of the Committee to carry out the following tasks: (a) Assist the Committee in carrying out its mandate as specified in paragraph 24 of resolution 1970 (2011) and this resolution; (b) Gather, examine and analyze information from States, relevant United Nations bodies, regional organisations and other interested parties regarding the implementation of the measures decided in resolution 1970 (2011) and this resolution, in particular incidents of non-compliance; (c) Make recommendations on actions the Council, or the Committee or State, may consider to improve implementation of the relevant measures; (d) Provide to the Council an interim report on its work no later than 90 days after the Panel’s appointment, and a final report to the Council no later than 30 days prior to the termination of its mandate with its findings and recommendations;

25. Urges all States, relevant United Nations bodies and other interested parties, to cooperate fully with the Committee and the Panel of Experts, in particular by supplying any information at their disposal on the implementation of the measures decided in resolution 1970 (2011) and this resolution, in particular incidents of non-compliance;
26. Decides that the mandate of the Committee as set out in paragraph 24 of resolution 1970 (2011) shall also apply to the measures decided in this resolution;

27. Decides that all States, including the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, shall take the necessary measures to ensure that no claim shall lie at the instance of the Libyan authorities, or of any person or body in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, or of any person claiming through or for the benefit of any such person or body, in connection with any contract or other transaction where its performance was affected by reason of the measures taken by the Security Council in resolution 1970 (2011), this resolution and related resolutions;

28. Reaffirms its intention to keep the actions of the Libyan authorities under continuous review and underlines its readiness to review at any time the measures imposed by this resolution and resolution 1970 (2011), including by strengthening, suspending or lifting those measures, as appropriate, based on compliance by the Libyan authorities with this resolution and resolution 1970 (2011).

29. Decides to remain actively seized of the matter.
Exhibit 5: President Barack Obama's Speech Announcing Operation Odyssey Dawn
Brasilia, Brazil
March 19, 2011

Good afternoon, everybody. Today I authorized the Armed Forces of the United States to begin a limited military action in Libya in support of an international effort to protect Libyan civilians. That action has now begun.

In this effort, the United States is acting with a broad coalition that is committed to enforcing United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973, which calls for the protection of the Libyan people. That coalition met in Paris today to send a unified message, and it brings together many of our European and Arab partners.

This is not an outcome that the United States or any of our partners sought. Even yesterday, the international community offered Muammar Qaddafi the opportunity to pursue an immediate cease-fire, one that stopped the violence against civilians and the advances of Qaddafi's forces. But despite the hollow words of his government, he has ignored that opportunity. His attacks on his own people have continued. His forces have been on the move. And the danger faced by the people of Libya has grown.

I am deeply aware of the risks of any military action, no matter what limits we place on it. I want the American people to know that the use of force is not our first choice and it’s not a choice that I make lightly. But we cannot stand idly by when a tyrant tells his people that there will be no mercy, and his forces step up their assaults on cities like Benghazi and Misurata, where innocent men and women face brutality and death at the hands of their own government.

So we must be clear: Actions have consequences, and the writ of the international community must be enforced. That is the cause of this coalition.

As a part of this effort, the United States will contribute our unique capabilities at the front end of the mission to protect Libyan civilians and enable the enforcement of a no-fly zone that will be led by our international partners. And as I said yesterday, we will not -- I repeat -- we will not deploy any U.S. troops on the ground.

As Commander-in-Chief, I have great confidence in the men and women of our military who will carry out this mission. They carry with them the respect of a grateful nation. I'm also proud that we are acting as part of a coalition that includes close allies and partners who are prepared to meet their responsibility to protect the people of Libya and uphold the mandate of the international community.

I've acted after consulting with my national security team, and Republican and Democratic leaders of Congress. And in the coming hours and days, my administration will keep the American people fully informed. But make no mistake: Today we are part of a broad coalition. We are answering the calls of a threatened people. And we are acting in the interests of the United States and the world.

Thank you very much.
Exhibit 6: President Barack Obama’s Speech Announcing Transition of Operational Command to NATO

Washington D.C.
March 28, 2011

Tonight, I’d like to update the American people on the international effort that we have led in Libya — what we’ve done, what we plan to do, and why this matters to us. I want to begin by paying tribute to our men and women in uniform who, once again, have acted with courage, professionalism and patriotism. They have moved with incredible speed and strength. Because of them and our dedicated diplomats, a coalition has been forged and countless lives have been saved.

Meanwhile, as we speak, our troops are supporting our ally Japan, leaving Iraq to its people, stopping the Taliban’s momentum in Afghanistan, and going after al Qaeda all across the globe. As Commander-in-Chief, I’m grateful to our soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen, and to their families. And I know all Americans share in that sentiment.

For generations, the United States of America has played a unique role as an anchor of global security and as an advocate for human freedom. Mindful of the risks and costs of military action, we are naturally reluctant to use force to solve the world’s many challenges. But when our interests and values are at stake, we have a responsibility to act. That’s what happened in Libya over the course of these last six weeks.

Libya sits directly between Tunisia and Egypt — two nations that inspired the world when their people rose up to take control of their own destiny. For more than four decades, the Libyan people have been ruled by a tyrant – Muammar Qaddafi. He has denied his people freedom, exploited their wealth, murdered opponents at home and abroad, and terrorized innocent people around the world — including Americans who were killed by Libyan agents.

Last month, Qaddafi’s grip of fear appeared to give way to the promise of freedom. In cities and towns across the country, Libyans took to the streets to claim their basic human rights. As one Libyan said, “For the first time we finally have hope that our nightmare of 40 years will soon be over.”

Faced with this opposition, Qaddafi began attacking his people. As President, my immediate concern was the safety of our citizens, so we evacuated our embassy and all Americans who sought our assistance. Then we took a series of swift steps in a matter of days to answer Qaddafi’s aggression. We froze more than $33 billion of Qaddafi’s regime’s assets. Joining with other nations at the United Nations Security Council, we broadened our sanctions, imposed an arms embargo, and enabled Qaddafi and those around him to be held accountable for their crimes. I made it clear that Qaddafi had lost the confidence of his people and the legitimacy to lead, and I said that he needed to step down from power.

In the face of the world’s condemnation, Qaddafi chose to escalate his attacks, launching a military campaign against the Libyan people. Innocent people were targeted for killing. Hospitals and ambulances were attacked. Journalists were arrested, sexually assaulted, and killed. Supplies of food and fuel were choked off. Water for hundreds of thousands of people in Misurata was shut off. Cities and towns were shelled, mosques were destroyed, and apartment buildings reduced to rubble.
Military jets and helicopter gunships were unleashed upon people who had no means to defend themselves against assaults from the air.

Confronted by this brutal repression and a looming humanitarian crisis, I ordered warships into the Mediterranean. European allies declared their willingness to commit resources to stop the killing. The Libyan opposition and the Arab League appealed to the world to save lives in Libya. And so at my direction, America led an effort with our allies at the United Nations Security Council to pass a historic resolution that authorized a no-fly zone to stop the regime's attacks from the air, and further authorized all necessary measures to protect the Libyan people.

Ten days ago, having tried to end the violence without using force, the international community offered Qaddafi a final chance to stop his campaign of killing, or face the consequences. Rather than stand down, his forces continued their advance, bearing down on the city of Benghazi, home to nearly 700,000 men, women and children who sought their freedom from fear.

At this point, the United States and the world faced a choice. Qaddafi declared he would show “no mercy” to his own people. He compared them to rats, and threatened to go door to door to inflict punishment. In the past, we have seen him hang civilians in the streets, and kill over a thousand people in a single day. Now we saw regime forces on the outskirts of the city. We knew that if we wanted — if we waited one more day, Benghazi, a city nearly the size of Charlotte, could suffer a massacre that would have reverberated across the region and stained the conscience of the world.

It was not in our national interest to let that happen. I refused to let that happen. And so nine days ago, after consulting the bipartisan leadership of Congress, I authorized military action to stop the killing and enforce U.N. Security Council Resolution 1973.

We struck regime forces approaching Benghazi to save that city and the people within it. We hit Qaddafi’s troops in neighboring Ajdabiya, allowing the opposition to drive them out. We hit Qaddafi’s air defenses, which paved the way for a no-fly zone. We targeted tanks and military assets that had been choking off towns and cities, and we cut off much of their source of supply. And tonight, I can report that we have stopped Qaddafi’s deadly advance.

In this effort, the United States has not acted alone. Instead, we have been joined by a strong and growing coalition. This includes our closest allies — nations like the United Kingdom, France, Canada, Denmark, Norway, Italy, Spain, Greece, and Turkey — all of whom have fought by our sides for decades. And it includes Arab partners like Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, who have chosen to meet their responsibilities to defend the Libyan people.

To summarize, then: In just one month, the United States has worked with our international partners to mobilize a broad coalition, secure an international mandate to protect civilians, stop an advancing army, prevent a massacre, and establish a no-fly zone with our allies and partners. To lend some perspective on how rapidly this military and diplomatic response came together, when people were being brutalized in Bosnia in the 1990s, it took the international community more than a year to intervene with air power to protect civilians. It took us 31 days.

Moreover, we’ve accomplished these objectives consistent with the pledge that I made to the American people at the outset of our military operations. I said that America’s role would be limited; that we would not put ground troops into Libya; that we would focus our unique capabilities on the front end of the operation and that we would transfer responsibility to our allies and partners. Tonight, we are fulfilling that pledge.

Our most effective alliance, NATO, has taken command of the enforcement of the arms embargo and the no-fly zone. Last night, NATO decided to take on the additional responsibility of protecting
Libyan civilians. This transfer from the United States to NATO will take place on Wednesday. Going forward, the lead in enforcing the no-fly zone and protecting civilians on the ground will transition to our allies and partners, and I am fully confident that our coalition will keep the pressure on Qaddafi’s remaining forces.

In that effort, the United States will play a supporting role — including intelligence, logistical support, search and rescue assistance, and capabilities to jam regime communications. Because of this transition to a broader, NATO-based coalition, the risk and cost of this operation — to our military and to American taxpayers — will be reduced significantly.

So for those who doubted our capacity to carry out this operation, I want to be clear: The United States of America has done what we said we would do.

That’s not to say that our work is complete. In addition to our NATO responsibilities, we will work with the international community to provide assistance to the people of Libya, who need food for the hungry and medical care for the wounded. We will safeguard the more than $33 billion that was frozen from the Qaddafi regime so that it’s available to rebuild Libya. After all, the money doesn’t belong to Qaddafi or to us — it belongs to the Libyan people. And we’ll make sure they receive it.

Tomorrow, Secretary Clinton will go to London, where she will meet with the Libyan opposition and consult with more than 30 nations. These discussions will focus on what kind of political effort is necessary to pressure Qaddafi, while also supporting a transition to the future that the Libyan people deserve — because while our military mission is narrowly focused on saving lives, we continue to pursue the broader goal of a Libya that belongs not to a dictator, but to its people.

Now, despite the success of our efforts over the past week, I know that some Americans continue to have questions about our efforts in Libya. Qaddafi has not yet stepped down from power, and until he does, Libya will remain dangerous. Moreover, even after Qaddafi does leave power, 40 years of tyranny has left Libya fractured and without strong civil institutions. The transition to a legitimate government that is responsive to the Libyan people will be a difficult task. And while the United States will do our part to help, it will be a task for the international community and — more importantly — a task for the Libyan people themselves.

In fact, much of the debate in Washington has put forward a false choice when it comes to Libya. On the one hand, some question why America should intervene at all — even in limited ways — in this distant land. They argue that there are many places in the world where innocent civilians face brutal violence at the hands of their government, and America should not be expected to police the world, particularly when we have so many pressing needs here at home.

It’s true that America cannot use our military wherever repression occurs. And given the costs and risks of intervention, we must always measure our interests against the need for action. But that cannot be an argument for never acting on behalf of what’s right. In this particular country — Libya — at this particular moment, we were faced with the prospect of violence on a horrific scale. We had a unique ability to stop that violence: an international mandate for action, a broad coalition prepared to join us, the support of Arab countries, and a plea for help from the Libyan people themselves. We also had the ability to stop Qaddafi’s forces in their tracks without putting American troops on the ground.

To brush aside America’s responsibility as a leader and — more profoundly — our responsibilities to our fellow human beings under such circumstances would have been a betrayal of who we are. Some nations may be able to turn a blind eye to atrocities in other countries. The United States of America
is different. And as President, I refused to wait for the images of slaughter and mass graves before taking action.

Moreover, America has an important strategic interest in preventing Qaddafi from overrunning those who oppose him. A massacre would have driven thousands of additional refugees across Libya’s borders, putting enormous strains on the peaceful — yet fragile — transitions in Egypt and Tunisia. The democratic impulses that are dawning across the region would be eclipsed by the darkest form of dictatorship, as repressive leaders concluded that violence is the best strategy to cling to power. The writ of the United Nations Security Council would have been shown to be little more than empty words, crippling that institution’s future credibility to uphold global peace and security. So while I will never minimize the costs involved in military action, I am convinced that a failure to act in Libya would have carried a far greater price for America.

Now, just as there are those who have argued against intervention in Libya, there are others who have suggested that we broaden our military mission beyond the task of protecting the Libyan people, and do whatever it takes to bring down Qaddafi and usher in a new government.

Of course, there is no question that Libya — and the world — would be better off with Qaddafi out of power. I, along with many other world leaders, have embraced that goal, and will actively pursue it through non-military means. But broadening our military mission to include regime change would be a mistake.

The task that I assigned our forces — to protect the Libyan people from immediate danger, and to establish a no-fly zone — carries with it a U.N. mandate and international support. It’s also what the Libyan opposition asked us to do. If we tried to overthrow Qaddafi by force, our coalition would splinter. We would likely have to put U.S. troops on the ground to accomplish that mission, or risk killing many civilians from the air. The dangers faced by our men and women in uniform would be far greater. So would the costs and our share of the responsibility for what comes next.

To be blunt, we went down that road in Iraq. Thanks to the extraordinary sacrifices of our troops and the determination of our diplomats, we are hopeful about Iraq’s future. But regime change there took eight years, thousands of American and Iraqi lives, and nearly a trillion dollars. That is not something we can afford to repeat in Libya.

As the bulk of our military effort ratchets down, what we can do — and will do — is support the aspirations of the Libyan people. We have intervened to stop a massacre, and we will work with our allies and partners to maintain the safety of civilians. We will deny the regime arms, cut off its supplies of cash, assist the opposition, and work with other nations to hasten the day when Qaddafi leaves power. It may not happen overnight, as a badly weakened Qaddafi tries desperately to hang on to power. But it should be clear to those around Qaddafi, and to every Libyan, that history is not on Qaddafi’s side. With the time and space that we have provided for the Libyan people, they will be able to determine their own destiny, and that is how it should be.

Let me close by addressing what this action says about the use of America’s military power, and America’s broader leadership in the world, under my presidency.

As Commander-in-Chief, I have no greater responsibility than keeping this country safe. And no decision weighs on me more than when to deploy our men and women in uniform. I’ve made it clear that I will never hesitate to use our military swiftly, decisively, and unilaterally when necessary to defend our people, our homeland, our allies and our core interests. That’s why we’re going after al Qaeda wherever they seek a foothold. That is why we continue to fight in Afghanistan, even as we have ended our combat mission in Iraq and removed more than 100,000 troops from that country.
There will be times, though, when our safety is not directly threatened, but our interests and our values are. Sometimes, the course of history poses challenges that threaten our common humanity and our common security — responding to natural disasters, for example; or preventing genocide and keeping the peace; ensuring regional security, and maintaining the flow of commerce. These may not be America’s problems alone, but they are important to us. They’re problems worth solving. And in these circumstances, we know that the United States, as the world’s most powerful nation, will often be called upon to help.

In such cases, we should not be afraid to act — but the burden of action should not be America’s alone. As we have in Libya, our task is instead to mobilize the international community for collective action. Because contrary to the claims of some, American leadership is not simply a matter of going it alone and bearing all of the burden ourselves. Real leadership creates the conditions and coalitions for others to step up as well; to work with allies and partners so that they bear their share of the burden and pay their share of the costs; and to see that the principles of justice and human dignity are upheld by all.

That’s the kind of leadership we’ve shown in Libya. Of course, even when we act as part of a coalition, the risks of any military action will be high. Those risks were realized when one of our planes malfunctioned over Libya. Yet when one of our airmen parachuted to the ground, in a country whose leader has so often demonized the United States — in a region that has such a difficult history with our country — this American did not find enemies. Instead, he was met by people who embraced him. One young Libyan who came to his aid said, “We are your friends. We are so grateful to those men who are protecting the skies.”

This voice is just one of many in a region where a new generation is refusing to be denied their rights and opportunities any longer.

Yes, this change will make the world more complicated for a time. Progress will be uneven, and change will come differently to different countries. There are places, like Egypt, where this change will inspire us and raise our hopes. And then there will be places, like Iran, where change is fiercely suppressed. The dark forces of civil conflict and sectarian war will have to be averted, and difficult political and economic concerns will have to be addressed.

The United States will not be able to dictate the pace and scope of this change. Only the people of the region can do that. But we can make a difference.

I believe that this movement of change cannot be turned back, and that we must stand alongside those who believe in the same core principles that have guided us through many storms: our opposition to violence directed at one’s own people; our support for a set of universal rights, including the freedom for people to express themselves and choose their leaders; our support for governments that are ultimately responsive to the aspirations of the people.

Born, as we are, out of a revolution by those who longed to be free, we welcome the fact that history is on the move in the Middle East and North Africa, and that young people are leading the way. Because wherever people long to be free, they will find a friend in the United States. Ultimately, it is that faith — those ideals — that are the true measure of American leadership.

My fellow Americans, I know that at a time of upheaval overseas — when the news is filled with conflict and change — it can be tempting to turn away from the world. And as I’ve said before, our strength abroad is anchored in our strength here at home. That must always be our North Star — the ability of our people to reach their potential, to make wise choices with our resources, to enlarge the prosperity that serves as a wellspring for our power, and to live the values that we hold so dear.
But let us also remember that for generations, we have done the hard work of protecting our own people, as well as millions around the globe. We have done so because we know that our own future is safer, our own future is brighter, if more of mankind can live with the bright light of freedom and dignity.

Tonight, let us give thanks for the Americans who are serving through these trying times, and the coalition that is carrying our effort forward. And let us look to the future with confidence and hope not only for our own country, but for all those yearning for freedom around the world.

Thank you. God bless you, and may God bless the United States of America. (Applause.) Thank you.