



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on March 29, 2011

Obama's Statements on Libya are Misleading

In an address to the nation delivered from the National Defense University in Washington, on Monday, March 28, President Obama made statements regarding American military action in Libya, and declared that NATO would be taking the lead from the United States. Obama also claimed that the United States' role in Libya is simply to defend those under attack Moammar Gadhafi's forces. Unfortunately, President Obama's remarks may not have been entirely truthful.



The *Associated Press* notes the problems with President Obama's statements:

In transferring command and control to NATO, the U.S. is turning the reins over to an organization dominated by the U.S., both militarily and politically. In essence, *the U.S. runs the show that is taking over the show.* [Emphasis added.]

Since the United States finances 22 percent of NATO's budget, almost as much as the next largest contributors, Britain and France, combined, and since the commander of NATO's Allied Joint Force Command Naples is an American admiral, it's really misleading to pretend that NATO will be "replacing" the United States in Libya.

Additionally, based on the information coming out of Libya, it appears that the rebel forces are not merely using international military forces defensively, but to advance an offensive. *AP* explains:

Even as the U.S. steps back as the nominal leader, reduces some assets and fires a declining number of cruise missiles, the scope of the mission appears to be expanding and the end game remains unclear.

Despite insistences that the operation is only to protect civilians, the airstrikes now are undeniably helping the rebels to advance.

Even Navy Vice Admiral William Gortney, staff director for the Joint Chiefs, admitted on Monday, "Clearly [the rebels] are achieving a benefit from the actions that we're taking."

In fact, much of Obama's assertions during yesterday's speech proved to be a bit inaccurate, according to the *Associated Press*, which went through the trouble of breaking down President Obama's speech piece by piece, comparing his words to the facts.

During his speech, President Obama attempted to justify the necessity for U.S. intervention in Libya, claiming that the United States has "an important strategic interest in preventing Gadhafi from overrunning those who oppose him." Obama added, "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. I am convinced that a failure to act in Libya would have carried a far greater price for America."



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Of course, President Obama ignored the Constitution in making that determination without Congressional approval, even though he adamantly opposed similar actions taking by former President George W. Bush. Just four years ago, then Senator Obama told the *Boston Globe*:

The president does not have the power under the Constitution to unilaterally authorize a military attack in a situation that does not involve stopping an actual or imminent threat to the nation. History has show us time and again...that military action is most successful when authorized and supported by the legislative branch.

Even worse than the President's hypocrisy, Obama's contentions that the military action in Libya was of vital interest to the United States has been wholly refuted by Defense Secretary Robert Gates (a holdover from the Bush administration and member of the usually interventionist Council on Foreign Relations), who said on Sunday that the crisis in Libya "was not a vital national interest to the United States."

Obama also told Americans that international intervention in Libya has stopped the advance of Gadhafi's forces. According to the *Associated Press*, however, "Gadhafi's ground forces remain a potent threat to the rebels and civilians."

On Monday, Army General Carter Ham, the American officer overseeing the mission, told the *New York Times*, "The regime still overmatches opposition forces militarily. The regime possesses the capability to roll them back very quickly. Coalition air power is the major reason that has not happened."

Perhaps the most incredible claim purported by President Obama focused on the atrocities taking place in Libya:

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.

As observed by the *Associated Press*, however, "Mass violence against civilians has also been escalating elsewhere, without any U.S. military intervention anticipated."

Similarly, Texas Congressman Republican Ron Paul recently [told](#) former New York Governor Elliott Spitzer on CNN's *The Arena*:

It is said that we are going there for humanitarian reasons. But have you ever noticed around the world, there are a lot of humanitarian problems. One, in gross abuse of rights, was in Rwanda. We didn't care too much about that.

There's abuse of demonstrators all through the Middle East right now. But — it's being done by governments that we endorse. There are friendly dictators. So, I think they are being disingenuous when they say this is a mission for humanitarianism. It's probably more related to oil than anything else.

Ironically, President Obama made similar statements in his book, *The Audacity of Hope*, wherein he questioned America's alleged humanitarian motives in Iraq:

Why invade Iraq and not North Korea or Burma? Why intervene in Bosnia and not Darfur?

Fortunately, despite the misrepresentation of the events in Libya by the Obama administration, Americans are not so easily duped. A March 25 Rasmussen Report [poll](#) shows that just 28 percent of likely voters view Libya as a vital national security interest for the U.S., while 42 percent does not.



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Likewise, 45 percent believe the U.S. should not get involved in conflicts like Libya for humanitarian reasons, with just 35 percent supporting that purpose. Finally, 47 percent of Americans believe President Obama should not have embarked on military actions in Libya without Congressional approval, while 45 percent support the decision.

Photo: President Barack Obama arrives to deliver his address at the National Defense University in Washington, Monday, March 28, 2011 on

Libya: AP Images

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