

2011 Libyan uprising / United States should impose a no-fly zone

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Position: United States should impose a no-fly zone

This position addresses the topic 2011 Libyan uprising.

For this position

“ The secretary of defense, Robert Gates, has said that a no-fly zone would be “a big operation in a big country” and would begin with an attack on Libyan air defense systems. But General McPeak said that the no-fly zone would be imposed over those parts of the country that Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi doesn’t control. That may remove the need to take out air defense systems pre-emptively, he said. And, in any case, he noted that the United States operated a no-fly zone over Iraq for more than a decade without systematically eradicating all Iraqi air defense systems in that time. ”

From The Case for a No-Fly Zone, by Nicholas D. Kristof (*The New York Times*, March 9, 2011) (view)

“ Gadhafi's days are over. It is just a matter of time until he is forced from power. The question is whether we will stand on the sidelines and continue to watch thousands be killed in protracted fighting or whether we will ensure that his departure is hastened and casualties minimized. ”

From A moral obligation to intervene, by Jamie Fly (*USA Today*, March 4, 2011) (view)

“ Maybe we’ll get bogged down and have to stay for years. Maybe the rebels are the really bad guys. On the other hand, lives were clearly at stake and something had to be done. The world could not simply shove its hands in its pockets and stand by as some madman had his way with people in his grip — in spirit, a reprise of the Evian conference. ”

From Military action is costly, but not as much as apathy, by Richard Cohen (*The Washington Post*, March 28, 2011) (view)

“ In fact, the no-fly zone was up and running in hours, and Gadhafi's forces have been seriously damaged. Now the rebels have a chance to eventually overthrow the dictator, and mass murder has been avoided at least for the time being. ”

From The Triumph of Evil, by Bill O'Reilly (*Human Events*, March 26, 2011) (view)

“ Is it hypocritical of the United States to act against Qaddafi and not against Al Khalifa? It is. But there are worse things in this suffering world than hypocrisy. Are we inconsistent? We are. But should we abandon people to slaughter, should we consign freedom fighters to their doom, for the satisfaction of consistency? ”

From *We Intervene*, by Leon Wieseltier (*The New Republic*, March 21, 2011) (view)

“ Should Mr. Gaddafi manage to survive and regain control, the consequences would be equally terrible. In addition to unthinkable bloodshed and suffering for Libyans, the dictator would demonstrate that U.S. and European demands for his downfall were meaningless - and offer an example to other Arab autocrats facing popular uprisings. ”

From *A no-fly zone over Libya deserves more consideration*, by The Washington Post editorial board (*The Washington Post*, March 2, 2011) (view)

“ Already the Saudis have sent an armored column to quell protests in Bahrain. Expect more of the same if Gadhafi clings to power. The Arab Spring could easily turn into a very dark winter that will arrest and reverse the momentum of recent pro-democracy demonstrations. That means consigning the entire region to a dysfunctional status quo ante in which the long-term winners will be al Qaeda and their ilk. ”

From *It's Not Too Late to Save Libya*, by Max Boot (*The Wall Street Journal*, March 16, 2011) (view)

“ We initially opposed a no-fly zone, but circumstances have changed. We should establish both a no-fly zone and a no-drive zone in the approach to the de facto rebel capital of Benghazi to prevent Qaddafi's armored vehicles from entering the city. The no-fly zone is unlikely to tip the military balance in itself, but Qaddafi's air force has been a factor in his fight against the rebels. Coupling a no-fly zone with an effort to stop his advance on the ground should save Benghazi and allow the rebels time to recoup. ”

From *Save Benghazi*, by National Review editorial board (*National Review*, March 16, 2011) (view)

“ A sacking of Benghazi will be accompanied and followed by a horrific bloodbath. A revitalized dictator is likely to be distinctly unfriendly to Western interests. And other despots will conclude that Mr. Gaddafi's brand of merciless revenge brings better results than the Tunisian and Egyptian models of accommodating people's yearning for freedom — and that American threats to the contrary can be discounted. ”

From *The United States watches as Moammar Gaddafi gains*, by The Washington Post editorial board (*The Washington Post*, March 15, 2011) (view)

“ Benghazi is not a minor desert town. It is Libya's second largest city, a major industrial and commercial hub, and a significant port. Through it, a revolt can be supplied. If Benghazi falls to Qaddafi, it will fall hard and bloodily, and the thud will be heard throughout the world. ”

From *Obama's Moment of Truth*, by Larry Diamond (*The New Republic*, March 15, 2011) (view)

“ Such a move would not necessarily amount to a slippery slope. No U.S. troops went to Bosnia until a truce was negotiated. It remains urgent to get Gaddafi’s attention and let him know that the United States will not permit him to slaughter his opponents as Hussein did the Shiites and Kurds — to the everlasting shame of the inert George H.W. Bush. ”

From Gaddafi has a long history as a killer — and must be stopped, by Richard Cohen (*The Washington Post*, March 14, 2011) (view)

“ We should not expect a rosy, Jeffersonian Libya. But the choice is between uncertainty and the certainty that if Colonel Qaddafi wins, regimes across the region will conclude that force is the way to answer protests. And when Colonel Qaddafi massacres the opposition, young protesters across the Middle East will conclude that when we were asked to support their cause with more than words, we blinked. ”

From Fiddling While Libya Burns, by Anne-Marie Slaughter (*The New York Times*, March 13, 2011) (view)

“ Many of the assertions that dog this conflict are unproven and unconvincing. It's said, for instance, that if the west tries to intervene then al-Qaida will dance a jig across the Middle East. But the leaders who speak for Benghazi couldn't be clearer: they plead for help now, help in the skies that bring them death. ”

From The west can't let Gaddafi destroy his people, by The Observer editorial board (*The Observer*, March 13, 2011) (view)

“ A no-fly zone may not achieve the end of the pathological Gadhafi regime, but it can prevent the reconquest of eastern Libya, and it could lead to a ceasefire. Above all, it holds the promise of saving many thousands of Libyan lives. ”

From A no-fly zone could prevent a Libyan bloodbath, by The Globe and Mail editorial board (*The Globe and Mail*, March 12, 2011) (view)

“ The argument for intervention in Libya is not purely or even primarily humanitarian, however. Even if one sets aside its importance as an oil-producing nation, Libya remains central to Britain's strategic and commercial interests in the region. It is noticeable that as the West (apart from Britain and France) has wavered, Gaddafi has grown in confidence. What signal will it send if the mad colonel is now left to crush the rebels, embark upon bloody reprisals, and embrace pariah status once more? ”

From David Cameron knows what to do about Libya, but does Barack Obama?, by Matthew d'Ancona (*The Daily Telegraph*, March 12, 2011) (view)

“ Opponents of a no-fly zone argue that it would require the destruction of Libyan air defenses and frequent dogfights with Libyan warplanes. But Libyan sources insist that once a no-fly zone is announced, the psycho-political balance of power would shift so dramatically that it would discourage Khadafy and his entourage from continuing a losing battle. ”

From Free Libya's cry, by Amir Taheri (*New York Post*, March 11, 2011) (view)

“ So far, Gaddafi's forces have relied on airpower selectively. But Gaddafi is shrewd. My fear is that he is either choosing to bleed the opposition to death, rather than invite global action with a broad massacre, or waiting for the world to prove itself unwilling to act. Then he may well begin killing civilians in large numbers. ”

From A no-fly zone for Libya, by John Kerry (*The Washington Post*, March 11, 2011) (view)

“ While the various secretaries were articulating their abdications, Qaddafi was committing a slaughter in Zawiyah and employing his monopoly of the skies to drive the rebels out of Ras Lanuf. An eastern offensive is clearly imminent. (This is not a civil war. This is a war by a dictator upon his people. There is no other half of the Libyan population fighting for Qaddafi.) ”

From Darkness Falls, by Leon Wieseltier (*The New Republic*, March 11, 2011) (view)

“ True, the acquiescence of China and Russia would be needed for the council to act, and they have historically been sensitive to anything that infringes national sovereignty. But it would be hard for those countries to justify blocking a resolution, given Col Gaddafi's increasingly unhinged threats. In the wake of the Rwandan massacres, the council has moreover come to accept that there is a general "responsibility to protect" populations from atrocities perpetrated by their rulers. ”

From Time to muzzle Libya's mad dog, by Financial Times editorial board (*Financial Times*, February 24, 2011) (view)

“ After North Korea and Turkmenistan, Libya is the most totalitarian state on earth. Libyans deserve better. If Obama intercedes to protect them, he might find benefit in their gratitude. Perhaps moral clarity should be Obama's new realism. ”

From Enforce a no-fly zone on Libya, by Michael Rubin (*USA Today*, February 24, 2011) (view)

Against this position

“ But unless we redefine words, ‘Gaddafi’ is not committing genocide and his brutality is hardly exceptional. If the rebels win it should be their victory, emerging from a new balance of power inside Libya. If they fail, they must fight another day. There is no good reason for us to intervene. ”

From 'No-fly zone' is a euphemism for war. We'd be mad to try it, by Simon Jenkins (*The Guardian*, March 9, 2011) (view)

“ What lesson should be learned from the fact that Europe's worst atrocity since the Second World War – the massacre by Serbs of Bosnian Muslims at Srebrenica – occurred beneath a no-fly zone? ”

From On Libya, too many questions, by George F. Will (*The Orange County Register*, March 8, 2011) (view)

“ A great strength of the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt is that they were home-grown. They would have been compromised by use of American arms or will. Obama’s low-key response may have frustrated those who wish to mold the world to American contours; but it brought about a demonstrably better result: The promise of legitimate, native-born democracies. Likewise, Libyans rebelling against Khadafy’s regime will have a far greater claim to legitimacy if they can overthrow the dictator without bombing runs by American fighter jets taking off from US aircraft carriers. ”

From For now, US must resist call for no-fly zone over Libya, by The Boston Globe editorial board (*The Boston Globe*, March 8, 2011) (view)

“ It is one thing to acknowledge Moammar Gadhafi as a ruthless despot, which he has demonstrated himself to be. But doing so does not establish the democratic bona fides of those who oppose him. And even if some of those opposing him are genuine democrats, there is no reason to assume that helping to remove the regime would result in the ascendancy of such people. ”

From The U.S. Should Keep Out of Libya, by Richard Haass (*The Wall Street Journal*, March 8, 2011) (view)

“ Yes, U.S and allied airpower can ground Moammar Gadhafi's planes. But what if it failed to end Gadhafi's rule, as a decade-long no-fly operation in Iraq failed to end Saddam Hussein's? Having effectively picked a side in a civil war, the United States would then feel obligated to finish the job — a familiar formula for incremental escalation with unforeseen consequences. ”

From No-fly zone in Libya holds more risks than rewards, by USA Today editorial board (*USA Today*, March 4, 2011) (view)

“ Central Command head Gen. James Mattis noted that a no-fly zone would first require bombing Libya's radar and missile defenses. Down that road is the type of military entanglement this country should be loath to enter into, given its current troop commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan. ”

From Careful with Gadhafi, by The Philadelphia Inquirer editorial board (*The Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 4, 2011) (view)

“ I'm no Tea Partier, but that sure sounds like a substitution of foreign for congressional authority. It's worse than outsourcing. Outsourcing is when you hire somebody abroad to do what you want. In Libya, we're doing the opposite. We're hiring ourselves out to do what somebody abroad wants ”

From The Libyan Job, by William Saletan (*Slate*, March 28, 2011) (view)

“ When you have Islamic jihadists going toe-to-toe with a mass-murdering thug and his followers, humanitarianism is in dangerously short supply. So, apparently, is sanity. If Colonel Cuckoo wins, we have the makings of a terrorist-led pariah state that hates the West in general, and the United States in particular. If the rebels win, we have the makings of a terrorist-led pariah state which hates the West in general, and the United States in particular. ”

From U.S.'s Lose-Lose War Objective in Libya: A Tie, by Arnold Ahlert (*Human Events*, March 26, 2011) (view)

“ Now suddenly he's got to go – in favor of "freedom-loving" "democrats" from Benghazi. That would be in eastern Libya – which, according to West Point's Counter Terrorism Center, has sent per capita the highest number of foreign jihadists to Iraq. Perhaps now that so many Libyan jihadists are in Iraq, the Libyans left in Libya are all Swedes in waiting. But perhaps not. If we lack, as we do in Afghanistan, the cultural confidence to wean those we liberate from their less-attractive pathologies, we might at least think twice before actively facilitating them. ”

From Do-gooders in a land with no good guys, by Mark Steyn (*The Orange County Register*, March 25, 2011) (view)

“ The likelihood of US or coalition forces killing civilians will only increase if Qaddafi's troops solidify their hold on Tripoli and other cities; urban warfare is notoriously messy. The UN resolution forbids foreign occupation, so what will we do if Qaddafi hangs on and the conflict settles into a grinding civil war, with all its attendant chaos and bloodshed? Mission creep seems to be an inevitable feature of this kind of intervention. ”

From The Libya Intervention, by The Nation editorial board (*The Nation*, March 24, 2011) (view)

“ Democrats were so intensely focused on the lack of international support in Iraq, perhaps Obama confuses global approval with our interests. What's worse than letting your "allies" or the United Nations decide whether you can go to war? It's letting them tell you that you should go to war. ”

From A war we don't need, by David Harsanyi (*The Denver Post*, March 23, 2011) (view)

“ We could've done what we did for Eastern Europe, which helped bring victory in the Cold War: verbal support and financial support for dissidents and democrats. Make clear which side we're on, but without overpromising. It sounds like the opposite of "Speak softly and carry a big stick," and in a way, it is. But it worked to defeat communism, and our track record with bigger ambitions in smaller situations has not been impressive. ”

From More bombs bursting in Libya. What for?, by Michael Kinsley (*Los Angeles Times*, March 22, 2011) (view)

“ But if Khadafy can't be beaten by the rebels, are we prepared to supply their military deficiencies? If the decapitation of his regime produces what the removal of Saddam Hussein did -- bloody chaos -- what then are our responsibilities regarding the tribal vendettas we may have unleashed? How long are we prepared to police the partitioning of Libya? ”

From Blithely off to war, by George F. Will (*New York Post*, March 22, 2011) (view)

“ Foreigners can provide all sorts of help—moral, political, diplomatic, and even material. Maybe neighbors, who share ethnicity and religion with the Libyan people, could do more. But a military attack of the sort now in progress is defensible only in the most extreme cases. Rwanda and Darfur, where we didn't intervene, would have qualified. Libya doesn't. ”

From The Case Against Our Attack on Libya, by Michael Walzer (*The New Republic*, March 21, 2011) (view)

“ The president's decision to bomb Libya and help establish a no-fly zone has injected the U.S. into yet another conflict in a Muslim nation at a time when we still maintain huge commitments in two others. U.S. resources are badly strained after a decade of military operations in Afghanistan and years of difficult warfare in Iraq. Now we fear the U.S. might get mired in protracted civil war in Libya. Such an open-ended commitment demands the broadest political support — which only congressional action can provide. ”

From An act of war without consent, by The Denver Post editorial board (*The Denver Post*, March 21, 2011) (view)

“ As The Times' David Cloud pointed out, a no-fly zone would require a major effort by the United States and its allies to establish round-the-clock patrols. American jets would be vulnerable to Libya's 50 surface-to-air missiles. A no-fly zone in Libya would also involve the United States in a conflict in which it isn't a party. And it would create a precedent for future civil wars. Would the United States be prepared to control the skies of any nation that was the site of a rebellion and immerse itself in someone else's war? ”

From No to a no-fly zone in Libya, by Los Angeles Times editorial board (*Los Angeles Times*, March 2, 2011) (view)

“ We cannot foresee, even to the degree we could over Serbia in 1999, the likely results of our "experimental bombing." We don't know what we are doing. We only know that we have moral support for it on paper, from an international organization that is utterly corrupt, wherein members who do not wish us well are pleased to grant us permission to blunder. ”

From We don't know what we're doing, by David Warren (*Ottawa Citizen*, March 19, 2011) (view)

“ Obama said the fight for freedom was the Libyan people's fight. He's right. But if our mission is not to overthrow Khadafy, what is the mission? What constitutes victory? We've learned, again, in Afghanistan and Iraq how much easier it is to get into a war than it is to get out of one. ”

From A cloudy future in Libya for U.S., by The Denver Post editorial board (*The Denver Post*, March 19, 2011) (view)

“ Obama could explain, for example, why he's now a big supporter for an operation that his secretary of defense dismissed a few days ago. He could also explain his 180-degree turn at the UN. Most important, he can explain how he'll get rid of Khadafy, protect the innocents, prevent Libya from falling to the Islamists and not break an over-stretched military with more missions. ”

From What's our plan?, by James Jay Carafano (*New York Post*, March 18, 2011) (view)

“ No-fly zones are for the birds. The real question must be put up-front if the West's Bosnian shame, its smokescreen of useless agitation, is not to get a Libyan re-run: Should President Barack Obama lead a coordinated, Arab League-backed Western military intervention in Libya to stop Qaddafi? That's a tough question. ”

From Be Ruthless or Stay Out, by Roger Cohen (*The New York Times*, March 17, 2011) (view)

“ In reality, there are lessons from our years of failure in Iraq that can be applied to an air war over Libya as easily as to a full-scale invasion or counterinsurgency. Indeed, they can be applied to any intervention — however limited its aims, multilateral its means, and competent its commanders. One is that the United States shouldn’t go to war unless it has a plan not only for the initial military action, but also for the day afterward, and the day after that. Another is that the United States shouldn’t go to war without a detailed understanding of the country we’re entering, and the forces we’re likely to empower. ”

From *Iraq Then, Libya Now*, by Ross Douthat (*The New York Times*, March 13, 2011) (view)

“ Reformed interventionist David Rieff, who wrote the book “At the Point of a Gun,” which criticizes “the messianic dream of remaking the world in either the image of American democracy or of the legal utopias of international human rights law,” told me that after Iraq: “America doesn’t have the credibility to make war in the Arab world. Our touch in this is actually counterproductive.” ”

From *In Search of Monsters*, by Maureen Dowd (*The New York Times*, March 12, 2011) (view)

“ According to the International Institute for Strategic Studies, a no-fly zone would have limited effectiveness in stopping Gadhafi's advances. Most of Libya's fighter jets are nonoperational, and its air superiority stems from 35 attack helicopters, which can evade the anti-aircraft measures of a no-fly zone. ”

From *Proceed with caution on military intervention in Libya*, by The Orange County Register editorial board (*The Orange County Register*, March 10, 2011) (view)

“ A no-fly zone could take until mid-April to put in place, by which time the situation on the ground could be very different. It would have less effect against helicopters, which are more lethal weapons in this form of combat, than it would have against jets, and as Ivo Daalder, the US ambassador to Nato acknowledged, overall air activity is not the deciding factor in the firefights between the rebels and regime loyalists and mercenaries. ”

From *Libya: The illusion of force*, by The Guardian editorial board (*The Guardian*, March 10, 2011) (view)

“ Military intervention? The Iraq invasion was just the most recent example of how much easier it is to get into a war than out of one. A more limited show of force? In 1983, the United States inserted a small Marines barracks in a spectacularly foolish attempt to calm a Lebanese civil war. A terrorist bomb killed 241, prompting a swift retreat. There is time to get it right in Libya. ”

From *Counter Gadhafi with coordinated response*, by USA Today editorial board (*USA Today*, February 24, 2011) (view)

“ Obama’s inability, or reluctance, to say clearly why we are involved in Libya or under what conditions the mission might be said to have been accomplished has occasioned comparisons with Iraq. A more apposite comparison is to Jimmy Carter’s invasion of Iran — a nation twice as large as France — with eight helicopters. This became emblematic of a floundering president out of his depth. ”

From *The haze of humanitarian imperialism*, by George F. Will (*The Washington Post*, April 6, 2011) (view)

“ It is amazing how quickly the rebels have developed a sense of entitlement. One legitimate response would be to take them up on their request to suspend operations, wish them well and leave. Then their problem would not be NATO so much as simple survival. ”

From *Libyan rebels to NATO: Get lost*, by The Washington Times editorial board (*The Washington Times*, April 6, 2011) (view)

“ Who are these rebels we're simultaneously arming and bombing? Don't worry, the CIA is "gathering intelligence" on them. They should have a clear idea of who our allies are round about the time Mohammed bin Jihad is firing his Kalashnikov and shouting "Death to the Great Satan!" from the balcony of the presidential palace. ”

From *If there's no mission, when's it accomplished?*, by Mark Steyn (*The Orange County Register*, April 1, 2011) (view)

Mixed on this position

“ There is more that the United States and its allies can do right now. NATO has expanded its air surveillance over Libya from 10 hours to 24 hours a day to gather information on Libyan troop movements. It should find a way to share relevant information with the rebels. Without firing a shot, it can sow confusion among Libyan forces by jamming their communications. All of the big states need to agree on ways to enforce the United Nations-imposed arms embargo. ”

From *Washington's Options on Libya*, by The New York Times editorial board (*The New York Times*, March 8, 2011) (view)

“ The Libyan people are liberating themselves, and the appearance of US or other Western forces in the country would only give the Gaddafi regime a propaganda victory, for it would be portrayed as another stage in the history of Western colonialism in the Middle East. Imposing a flight-exclusion zone need not have that consequence and may prove to be the only means of stopping the regime from committing atrocities against its own people. ”

From *No-fly zone for Libya should not be ruled out*, by The Sydney Morning Herald editorial board (*The Sydney Morning Herald*, March 7, 2011) (view)

“ Would the mission be do-able? Highly likely. Would it be decisive in ending a struggle that has taken on all the earmarks of a prolonged civil war? Very uncertain. ”

From *President Obama has been wisely cautious about military responses to Khadafy's bloody repression*, by New York Daily News editorial board (*New York Daily News*, March 6, 2011) (view)

“ The case study we do not have is whether a no-fly zone will aid rebel leaders in deposing a tyrannical leader in a predominantly ground combat civil war where the United States has a strong preference for who should lose, but almost no idea who the winners are. This is new territory. ”

From *Forging new ground with no-fly zone*, by Juliette Kayyem (*The Boston Globe*, March 11,

2011) (view)

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