

Libyan ex-premier appeals to the West against Qaddafi's terrorism

by Abdul Hamid el-Bakoush

The following excerpts are from the policy paper submitted to the Third International Schiller Institute Conference by former Libyan Prime Minister Abdul Hamid el-Bakoush, and read in his absence on Nov. 24 to the 1,500 participants (see p. 18). Only days earlier, on Nov. 17, President Mubarak of Egypt had announced that Bakoush, who heads the anti-Qaddafi Organization for the Liberation of Libya in exile in Cairo, had escaped an attempted assassination by Qaddafi-mandated hit squads. In foiling the plot with the help of friendly intelligence services, Egyptian police uncovered plans to kill the leaders of seven nations in Europe, the Middle East, and the Indian Subcontinent.

I fully admit that it is not my right to dictate to any government its foreign policy, therefore what I wish to convey to the governments of the free world is in fact a view emanating from me personally, as a former prime minister, of a country belonging to the Third World—Libya—who was in power for some of the time, and who lived near the events of the region and the world most of the time.

My speech will center on the attitude of the successive American administrations, also, the Western European governments toward dictatorships governing the Third World, and particularly the one governing my country now, Libya.

I wish to make it clear here that I am not accusing the American administration, or any European government, of responsibility for the military coup d'état in Libya or in other countries, for this is a different topic altogether. However, there is no doubt in my mind that they are all responsible by varying degrees for the phenomenon of military coup d'états, dictatorships and their continuation. . . .

The Third World today, including the Arab countries, is living through a period of anxiety, turmoil, and instability, where most of it is controlled by harsh, mostly military regimes. And, despite the fact that our news media, in the Third World, are the most vociferous on freedom, democracy, and economic prosperity, we, of all countries of the world, are the most to suffer oppression, poverty, and slavery in a way that exceeds what most Marxist countries go through.

Most countries of the Third World, after the Second World War, were demanding liberation, and viewed the departure

of the European colonialists as a freedom from slavery, and an opening of the gates of democracy, freedom, and economic development. As a result of the struggle of our peoples, and the conditions of human consciousness, most of these countries gained their national independence, and gave birth to national governments that lacked experience and wisdom. It was not long before measures to seize power started, by force, in the form of an attack by the military or armed civilians, undertaken by a few individuals claiming, honestly or deceitfully, that they came to exterminate the residue of colonialism, liberate their people, and build their countries' economy. The trial had proven that our peoples had been deceived, for the national dictatorial regime became more ruthless and destructive to our countries than any foreign ruler we ever knew.

Third World aspirations

For when the Third World countries called for independence, they meant to attain the following:

First: A national, civilized, and organized regime in the form of institutions governed by laws carried out by an authority chosen by the majority of the people.

Second: An economic development that would invest its natural and human resources.

Third: Freedom for all, and respect of human rights.

Fourth: An equitable distribution of incomes among the various segments of the society.

So, what happened after the Second World War?

All colonialist countries departed, and were replaced by national regimes, and the peoples commenced their own trial, but soon found themselves without freedom. For the national or foreign rule was replaced by new rulers representing military, or quasi-military dictatorships. Governing in the form of military cliques, or a one-party system, and rushing to seek ways and means that would eliminate freedom and abolish democracy—practicing killings and terrorism, ruining the national economy, education, and corrupting social life. The practice became one dictator exchanging place with another, by means of a violent action in a coup carried out at night while the people are asleep.

The important question is: Why were the national aspi-

rations of freedom, independence, and development aborted, and to what extent are the successive American administrations and European governments responsible?

. . . It could have been possible for the peoples of the Third World to march in the road of democracy, freedom, and development, and go through the evolutionary phases reaching prosperity and freedom, or a revolution by themselves on their circumstances and rulers, had it not been for the abortive actions against these peoples by military coups and external conspiracies.

Yes, Marxist countries participated in the encouragement of these coups and alterations, and rushed to corrupt the new rulers/dictators, in order to gain influence in Third World countries at the expense of the free countries. But ever since the United States became the main force in Western policies after the Second World War, and the shrinking of the European empires, we found out that it had concurred on the time, place, and manner chosen by the Soviet Union in their conflict over the spheres of influence. When Europe was divided into free democracies and Marxist dictatorships, the situation stabilized. Only the Third World countries remained as an open area of conflict between the two superpowers. Marxism immediately and actively encouraged the overthrow of pro-Western regimes, and the successive American administrations fought the cold war with the same tools used by the Soviets, and competed with them in the encouragement of military and quasi-military coups.

The American administration, however, did not distinguish between one coup leader and another and used only one criterion: his foreign policy. He who antagonized the Soviets was made welcome, and he who made friendship with them was considered an antagonist. Thus, limiting its view to the immediate results, it neglected the more permanent future. The U.S. encouragement and embrace of the new non-Marxist dictatorships, who are more vicious than any Marxist regime, paved the way for terrorism, injustice endangering liberties, breaking laws, enslaving people, waging local wars, abusing wealth, and spreading poverty and backwardness.

The American administrations, and the governments of Western Europe following their footsteps, disregarded the values of human civilization, and tacitly encouraged injustice among the peoples of the Third World, in exchange for friendship with ruthless dictatorships, justifying this policy as one of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. . . .

What was the West's contribution?

We ask ourselves, what was the West's contribution to the spread of liberal democracy among countries of the Third World, and when did it stand up to the brutal and destructive regimes? Very seldom, which in the end led to the alignment of Third World dictatorships with the totalitarian regimes of the world, because they are natural allies, against freedom

and democracy. The American administrations had to perceive this conclusion a long time ago.

The U. S. administration is not the only one acting in the manner described. Most Western European governments' conduct served Third World dictatorships' policies and interests of its rulers. For example, I remember what France did, when it intervened in Chad against the Qaddafi invasion last year, in support of the legitimate government, then withdrew at the first opportune moment, without solving any problem.

I do not demand that the United States, or any other country, declare war on dictatorial governments. However, it is requested not to embrace and encourage them, for the sole reason that their policies differ from those of the Soviet Union.

I wonder where did all the values implanted by the founders of the United States, the declaration of the American Human Rights, and all the admirable ideals go? They have been fogged by short-term interests, and when the American administration performs a serious deed, it rushes to disguise it in shame.

The Western European governments became accustomed to appeasing terrorism and oppression practiced by many Third World dictatorships, and European parties compete to please every dictator who exports oil or any other raw material, and buys arms and food, ignoring all his atrocities, in order to alleviate price increases and mass unemployment. The government of Great Britain was lax with the death squads dispatched by Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi, to liquidate Libyans and non-Libyans abroad. It also accepted individuals appointed by Qaddafi in his London embassy, with no credentials or qualifications, as diplomats, free to commit murders and acts of terrorism, until they shot dead, from the embassy in London, an English policewoman.

Once again, I do not demand the countries of the Free World declare war on the Qaddafi regime in Libya, or the likes of it. But why display leniency, to the extent that each dictator competes with the other in imposing his will on the Western countries, knowing in advance that they will quiet down in exchange for concluding commercial deals. . . .

Qaddafi and U.S. attitudes

Allow me to remind you of the American administration's attitudes towards the conduct of Qaddafi on the Libyan and Arab levels, and within the sphere of the Third World. In 1969, the American administration welcomed the government's overthrow by Muammar el-Qaddafi, thinking that what had happened in Libya was a revolution by the youth and the new generation. The United States had a considerable presence in Libya at that time, which presupposes that they knew that Qaddafi's first objective was to eliminate the Libyan youth, and block its chances of reaching power.

The successive American administrations contributed to drawing Qaddafi's image as a mythical leader in the region, and conceded to withdraw from its military bases stationed

in Libya in a theatrical performance, that depicted Qaddafi as a colossal patriotic hero. They condoned all his crimes, even those against the U.S. embassy, which was burnt more than once. The United States decided to perform sea maneuvers in the Bay of Sert, facing Libyan shores, against Qaddafi's will, who claims that his territorial waters extend to a distance of 200 miles. Qaddafi objected and delivered a speech denouncing the maneuvers, and the Americans then canceled them. The whole incident would appear as if Qaddafi had forced them to do so. His influence seemed to have permeated to the White House, when he became a friend to the former American President Carter's brother, and made him believe that he could depend on Qaddafi to free the American hostages from Khomeini's grip in Teheran.

As you can see, Ladies and Gentlemen, the policy of the American administration toward the regime in Libya, which is an example of Third World dictatorships, if not the worst example, does not express any experiences acquired through its relations with the governments of the Third World. The military coup in Libya took place after several coups in the region, and proved, despite its pretenses of democracy, that it is an instrument to oppress the people. And, despite close relations with countries of the Free World, it soon aligned with the Marxists, and fought the interests of the Free World. Despite all these experiences, the U.S. administration went through a new experience by welcoming the Qaddafi coup and honoring his desires, at a time it had direct and substantial military presence in Libya.

True, Libya gained independence through a U.N. resolution, and was ruled since 1952 by a monarchist system that was unable in 1969 to fulfill the ambitions of the new generations, who were born and educated after Libya had its revenue from oil. They did not live through the lean years of poverty and hunger during the first years of independence. But the alternative to the monarchist system is the natural development towards more democracy, not by a military coup d'état, which is considered a setback, harmful to the interests of the Libyan people, who had not known a single execution since 1962, but knew hundreds after the coup in 1969. Its rulers today spend the oil revenue on military adventures everywhere, and have halted the economic and social development of the Libyan people. They have schemed plots all over the Arab world, and in Africa, aligned with every terrorist and threatened the West's interests in the region. Yet, despite all that, Qaddafi is portrayed in the Western media as a devout puritan, at a time when he kills his fellow countrymen in parties broadcast live on television, and boastfully admits of liquidating his opponents outside Libya.

In conclusion, I wish to propose some recommendations directed to the U.S. administration, and to the governments of the free world. They are:

1) The discouragement of military coup d'états, and to withhold recognition until assurances are evident of respect

for human rights, and the establishment of a responsible authority elected by the majority of the people in a civilized manner.

2) To confront the current dictatorships in Third World countries politically, economically, and with the media, and to condemn their repressive practices.

3) To end the competition between the U.S. and the countries of the Free World, to achieve economic gains resulting in dealings with Third World dictatorships.

4) To invite the United Nations, using all methods of argument and persuasion, to adopt and implement the following:

a) Define criteria that must be possessed by any government admitted to the U.N., foremost among which is to enjoy in a definite way the support of the majority of the people, who, in turn, must demonstrate their ability to express their views freely and in successive periods and that the government respects human rights, and is based on a free legislative authority, and enjoys an independent judicial system.

b) To form an apparatus to assess the adequacy of these criteria in member states now.

5. To counter international terrorism and to form an international court to prosecute the responsible rulers for the crimes of murder, terrorism, and violation of human rights, in their countries or abroad.

6) To request from all governments of the Free World to grant entry and protection to refugees from the Third World, and to enable these citizens who have escaped from dictatorial regimes to express their views freely.

7) To demand from the government of the United States and countries of the Free World to declare their denunciation of all Third World dictatorial regimes, and to limit political and economic dealings to the narrowest scope. It would not be hard, if we were sincere, to distinguish between dictators and their obverse.

Ladies and Gentlemen, maybe what I have proposed appears to be a kind of reverie. Allow me to dream it.

Ladies and Gentlemen, no longer are we, in the Third World, interested in problems of economic and social development, nor do we discuss with industrialized countries the prices of raw materials and industrial goods. For we have been distracted by the murders, tortures, terrorism, arrests, and banishment. Just imagine, how I could possibly think as I watch on television in my country a group of the ruler's followers choking a citizen to death without trial.

Finally . . . I hope that my talk would not be interpreted as if I pronounced wisdom. It is only an honest conception of the attitudes of the Free World vis-à-vis the serious problems of the Third World, and the case of Libya concerns me most. It is a conception dictated by an experience bearing a lot of pain, and could expose me to extreme hazards. However, I choose the hazard over silence, and join those who contributed to the fight against injustice, oppression, and violations of human rights, in all honor and sincerity.