



Funeral for the victims of the US air strike.

Libyan elements to train and infiltrate over the Tunisian border, etc. Again, Qaddafi serves as a scapegoat for internal problems. Tunisia's 7 million inhabitants suffer from extensive unemployment. The US and its allies are also disturbed by Libya's broadcasts calling on the Tunisian people to rise up and kill the Zionists living in their midst, giving the addresses of Zionist Jews suspected of having CIA contacts. Nevertheless, Tunisia's hands are tied in terms of taking effective action against Libya, due to its shaky internal situation.

Qaddafi's involvement in Chad is also a thorn in the side of the US and France. There are 7000 Libyan troops aiding Goukouni Oueddei, who controls the northern half of the country, in the struggle against the US-installed Hussein Habre. Although the US and France are both backing Habre, the Reagan Administration has made it clear on more than one occasion that France has the primary role in this part of Africa. Although the US provides financial support, it will not send troops to Chad. The US's need for a French foothold in Chad has restrained Reagan from riding France too hard about confronting Libya on other levels. Mitterrand, addressing the summit of French-speaking African nations, said: «France will not permit the balance to be upset...(in) Chad.» Qaddafi, however, has repeatedly embarrassed the French government and shown that he is not to be intimidated by threats or force. Paris has, temporarily at least, «ruled out using French troops to drive out Oueddei's forces from Chad» (*Newsweek*, March 6th).

The US had hopes of using neighboring countries to do its dirty work, but estimates of this possibility show little chance of success and even an operation involving Libya's hostile neighbors could require up to six divisions or 90,000 US soldiers.

Boy Scouts

The anti-Libyan campaign dates back to the September 1, 1969 revolution when Qaddafi closed down the US's Wheelus airforce base in Libya. From that time on, the US administration has taken many ousted Libyan bourgeois under its wing, hoping to groom an opposition able to topple Qaddafi. The US has spent millions of dollars nourishing Libyan exile groups which are supposed to have launched several unsuccessful coup attempts. Yet these groups are not of the caliber to fulfill imperialist aims. One covert plan involving exile groups was blocked by the CIA's deputy director, John N. McMahon, on the grounds that the exiles were «boy scouts» - too weak to have a chance of success. Moreover, Libya's purge of anti-regime elements left little room for enemy maneuvering.

Another venture Washington invested in was the so-called National Front for the Salvation of Libya (NFSL), led by Mohammed Youssef Magarieff, former auditor general in Libya and recommended to the CIA by the Saudis. It was no coincidence that the NFSL's birth came in the same period that a CIA search for «a surrogate organization that would overthrow Qaddafi by whatever means necessary» became known in 1981. The CIA trained NFSL leaders and recruits in western Europe, Sudan and Morocco, while Saudi Arabia supplied the funds. Mustafa bin Halim, former Libyan prime minister, now advisor to the Saudi monarchy, was the go-between with Magarieff. Members of this group attempted to assassinate Qaddafi in May 1984, but failed and were captured. In May 1985, the NFSL was dealt another blow when Sudan deprived them of air time, but then Cairo radio obliged them.

Imperialism's ruffled feathers

With the escalation of imperialist aggression against Libya, the Soviet Union, Libya's staunchest ally, has stepped up its military support, sending advanced SAM-5 anti-aircraft missiles, launchers, radars and transporters. With a 200-mile range, these missiles give Libya an effective weapon to challenge US planes flying over the Gulf of Sidra. Although many imperialist quarters have expressed disdain for this «relatively old, slow-flying, ground-to-air» missile, it has not failed to ruffle their feathers. The missile can hit targets 95,000 feet in the air and can knock down US reconnaissance aircraft as well as the sophisticated AWACS. Thus, a shadow of doubt was cast over the abilities of even high-performance US fighters. Obviously, their attack on Libya in March was a provocation, designed to glean information on Libyan air defence. This was reflected in the new stand-off tactics used by the naval aircraft. Pilots stayed away from their targets to fire guided missiles at Libyan military installations. To a large extent, they depended on electronics to pinpoint targets, while using new aviation tactics that expose them to minimal risks. With its confidence restored, the US resumed its campaign, waiting for any pretext to strike Libya again. The April bombing of Libya can only be described as crazed, immoral brutality. The F-111 fighters blasted civilian sites, hospitals and government facilities. Despite repeated claims that they did not wish to assassinate Qaddafi, his residence was bombed as well, injuring his wife and sons, and killing his 16-month old daughter. Leaks from informed sources said that a press release had been prepared by the US administration, announcing the «unfortunate, accidental» death of Qaddafi.

If anything, Libya has shown that brute force cannot intimidate her. Arab nationalists and progressive forces around the world decried Reagan's infamous aggression. A delegation from the non-aligned countries visited Qaddafi to express their support. The Soviet Union cancelled the meeting between Soviet Foreign Minister Edward Shevardnadze and US Secretary of State Schultz. However, despite worldwide condemnation of its aggression, the US has shown no signs of restraint. Rather it threatens to escalate its aggression to a dangerous new pitch, with the move of a US nuclear warship into Mediterranean waters. Reagan has openly stated that the US would repeat its attack on Libya if the «need» arises. The US policy of brute force and aggression from the Bay of Tonkin in Vietnam to Grenada has been experienced by peoples all over the world. Imperialism has yet to discover that history will take its course. It has yet to discover the potential of the masses, and their determination to fight a life and death battle against oppression, hegemony and inhumanity.