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## Hillary Clinton's Failed Libya 'Doctrine'

By Robert Parry

July 3, 2015



*Secretary of State Hillary Clinton fancied the violent 2011 “regime change” in Libya such a triumph that her aides discussed labeling it the start of a “Clinton Doctrine,” according to recently released emails that urged her to claim credit when longtime Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi was deposed. And Clinton did celebrate when Gaddafi was captured and murdered.*

*“We came; we saw; he died,” Clinton exulted in a TV interview after receiving word of Gaddafi’s death on Oct. 20, 2011, though it is not clear how much she knew about the grisly details, such as Gaddafi being sodomized with a knife before his execution.*

Since then, the cascading Libyan chaos has turned the “regime change” from a positive notch on Clinton’s belt and into a black mark on her record. That violence has included the terrorist

slaying of U.S. Ambassador Christopher Stevens and three other U.S. diplomatic personnel in Benghazi on Sept. 11, 2012, and jihadist killings across northern Africa, including the Islamic State's decapitation of a group of Coptic Christians last February.

It turns out that Gaddafi's warning about the need to crush Islamic terrorism in Libya's east was well-founded although the Obama administration cited it as the pretext to justify its "humanitarian intervention" against Gaddafi. The vacuum created by the U.S.-led destruction of Gaddafi and his army drew in even more terrorists and extremists, forcing the United States and Western nations to abandon their embassies in Tripoli a year ago.

One could argue that those who devised and implemented the disastrous Libyan "regime change" – the likes of Hillary Clinton and Samantha Power – should be almost disqualified from playing any future role in U.S. foreign policy. Instead, Clinton is the Democratic frontrunner to succeed Barack Obama as President and Power was promoted from Obama's White House staff to be U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations — where she is at the center of other dangerous U.S. initiatives in seeking "regime change" in Syria and pulling off "regime change" in Ukraine.

In fairness, however, it should be noted that it has been the pattern in Official Washington over the past few decades for hawkish "regime change" advocates to fail upwards. With only a few exceptions, the government architects and the media promoters of the catastrophic Iraq War have escaped meaningful accountability and continue to be leading voices in setting U.S. foreign policy.

### **A Dubious Validation**

In August 2011, Secretary of State Clinton saw the Libyan "regime change" as a resounding validation of her foreign policy credentials, according to the emails released this week and described at the end of a New York Times article by Michael S. Schmidt.

According to one email chain, her longtime friend and personal adviser Sidney Blumenthal praised the military success of the bombing campaign to destroy Gaddafi's army and hailed the dictator's impending ouster.

"First, brava! This is a historic moment and you will be credited for realizing it," Blumenthal wrote on Aug. 22, 2011.

"When Qaddafi himself is finally removed, you should of course make a public statement before the cameras wherever you are, even in the driveway of your vacation home. ... You must go on camera. You must establish yourself in the historical record at this moment. ... The most important phrase is: 'successful strategy.'"

Clinton forwarded Blumenthal's advice to Jake Sullivan, a close State Department aide. "Pls read below," she wrote.

“Sid makes a good case for what I should say, but it’s premised on being said after Q[addafi] goes, which will make it more dramatic. That’s my hesitancy, since I’m not sure how many chances I’ll get.”

Sullivan responded, saying

“it might make sense for you to do an op-ed to run right after he falls, making this point. ... You can reinforce the op-ed in all your appearances, but it makes sense to lay down something definitive, almost like the Clinton Doctrine.”

However, when Gaddafi abandoned Tripoli that day, President Obama seized the moment to make a triumphant announcement. Clinton’s opportunity to highlight her joy at the Libyan “regime change” had to wait until Oct. 20, 2011, when Gaddafi was captured, tortured and murdered.

In a TV interview, Clinton celebrated the news when it appeared on her cell phone and even paraphrased Julius Caesar’s famous line after Roman forces achieved a resounding victory in 46 B.C. and he declared, “veni, vidi, vici” – “I came, I saw, I conquered.” Clinton’s reprise of Caesar’s boast went: “We came; we saw; he died.” She then laughed and clapped her hands.

Presumably, the “Clinton Doctrine” would have been a policy of “liberal interventionism” to achieve “regime change” in countries where there is some crisis in which the leader seeks to put down an internal security threat and where the United States objects to the action.

Of course, the Clinton Doctrine would be selective. It would not apply to brutal security crackdowns by U.S.-favored governments, say, Israel attacking Gaza or the Kiev regime in Ukraine slaughtering ethnic Russians in the east. But it’s likely, given the continuing bloodshed in Libya, that Hillary Clinton won’t be touting the “Clinton Doctrine” in her presidential campaign.