

# American

## NEWS & VIEWS

*A Daily Newsletter from Public Affairs, American Embassy*

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March 21, 2011

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## President Obama Meets with Top Aides on Libya

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.  
Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama held a conference call with top national security advisers March 20 to discuss the international effort to enforce a no-fly zone over Libya to stop Libyan military forces from attacking civilians, the White House says.

Obama, who is currently traveling in Latin America, had a secure conference call with National Security Advisor Tom Donilon, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, Defense Secretary Robert Gates, White House Chief of Staff William Daley, AFRICOM Commander General Carter Ham and Deputy National Security Advisor Denis McDonough, the White House said.

Ham, who recently assumed command of the Stuttgart, Germany-based U.S. Africa Command, briefed the president.

“President Obama received a briefing from General Ham on U.S. military operations in Libya, as part of the international effort to enforce U.N. Security Council Resolution 1973,” the White House said. “The president also discussed the ongoing military and diplomatic consultations taking place on the situation in Libya.”

Clinton had just returned from a one-day trip to Paris on March 19, where she had met with European and Arab leaders on final steps to enforce the U.N. resolution authorizing a no-fly zone. Obama is traveling to Brazil, Chile and El Salvador March 19-23.

The U.N. resolution was approved by the Security Council by a vote 10-0 with five abstentions on March 17. It authorizes the use of all means necessary, including a no-fly zone, to halt the military forces of Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi from attacking the Libyan people. The resolution also demands an immediate cease-fire among other measures.

Vice President Biden spoke by telephone March 20 with Algerian Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia and Emir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as part of ongoing consultations on coalition actions in support of the U.N. security resolution, the White House said.

“The vice president discussed with both the Prime Minister and Emir their mutual support for the full implementation of the resolution and the need to protect the Libyan people,” the White House said.

Admiral Mike Mullen, the chairman of the U.S. Joint

Chiefs of Staff, said March 20 on CNN’s State of the Union news show that a no-fly zone over Libya is “effectively in place.” He said that the current strategy of the international coalition is to block logistical support to Qadhafi’s forces, which range from Tripoli in the west to the outskirts of the eastern coastal city Benghazi.

Mullen said during another interview on NBC’s Meet the Press that this was a limited military mission for the United States and there will be no U.S. military ground forces introduced into this operation. “This isn’t about occupation in any shape or form,” Mullen said on the program.

The goal is for Qadhafi to withdraw his forces back into their garrisons and stop attacking civilians who have been protesting against his 42-year reign, Mullen said. Since the no-fly zone was imposed March 19, the Libyan military has grounded its aircraft and helicopters, Mullen said.

U.S. and British Navy ships and submarines fired 112 highly precise Tomahawk cruise missiles at more than 20 air defense, communications and command facilities to clear an air corridor for international military aircraft to establish air patrols and ground Libya’s air force, Vice Admiral William Gortney, director of the Joint Staff, told reporters at a March 19 Pentagon briefing in Washington.

“We’re on the leading edge of ... coalition military operations designed to enforce United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973 in Libya,” Gortney said.

“The goals of these initial operations are essentially twofold: first, to prevent further attacks by regime forces on Libyan citizens and opposition groups, especially in and around Benghazi; and second, to degrade the regime’s capability to resist the no-fly zone we are implementing under that United Nations resolution,” he said.

The targets chosen by coalition forces were selected based on an assessment that these sites posed either a direct threat to coalition aircraft enforcing the no-fly zone or a direct threat to the people of Libya, Gortney told reporters.

In addition to the sea-launched cruise missiles that struck more than 20 integrated air defense systems and communications and command facilities, U.S., British and French military planes stopped Qadhafi’s armored forces that were attacking the opposition-held city of Benghazi. Military aircraft from other nations are expected to join in the no-fly zone operations as early as March 20, Mullen said.

“These strikes were carefully coordinated with our

coalition partners," Gortney said. "I want to stress, however, that this is just the first phase of what will likely be a multiphased military operation designed to enforce the United Nations resolution."

### **President Obama Calls for Expanded U.S.-Brazil Ties**

By MacKenzie C. Babb  
Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama commended U.S.-Brazil cooperation across areas such as trade, technology and energy, and said the two countries should continue expanding their ties "to promote peace and prosperity throughout the world."

"The United States and Brazil are partners not just because we share history, not just because we're in the same hemisphere; not just because we share ties of commerce and culture, but also because we share certain enduring values and ideals," Obama said March 20 in Rio de Janeiro.

As two of the world's largest economies, the United States and Brazil worked side by side during the global financial crisis to restore growth and confidence, Obama added. He praised cooperation between the two nations in a multitude of areas, and called for an increase in student exchanges and an expansion of joint work between U.S. and Brazilian scientists, researchers and engineers.

He also called for the two countries to expand trade and investment and to continue to work together to defend the hemisphere's security against narcotics trafficking and nuclear threats.

Obama said both nations believe in the power of democracy to promote inclusive growth and human progress. After a meeting with Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff March 19, Obama said the United States and Brazil share a commitment to support universal rights everywhere, such as free speech, freedom from discrimination and the right to have a voice in government.

And he also remarked on the struggle for these rights across the Middle East, and said it will ultimately be citizens across the region who determine their own future.

"When men and women peacefully claim their human rights, our own common humanity is enhanced," he said. "Wherever the light of freedom is lit, the world becomes a brighter place."

Obama praised Brazil's political transformation to democracy, and commended its leadership both in the

region and on the world stage.

"In the global community, you've gone from relying on the help of other nations, to now helping fight poverty and disease wherever they exist. You play an important role in the global institutions that protect our common security and promote our common prosperity," Obama said.

"And you will welcome the world to your shores when the World Cup and the Olympic Games come to Rio de Janeiro," he said.

The president said the American people are encouraged by Brazil's success, and he called for the United States and Brazil to stand as equal partners bound by common interests and mutual respect.

Brazil is the first stop on Obama's five-day, three-nation tour of Latin America, which will also include visits to Chile and El Salvador. He is set to return to Washington March 23.

### **Secretary Clinton Working with Partners on Response to Violence in Libya**

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.  
Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton met with European and Arab leaders in Paris to decide how to deal with Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi's continued attacks on the Libyan people.

At a news conference March 19, Clinton said the United States would bring to bear unique military capabilities on Libya to assist a global coalition that is forming to enforce a U.N. Security Council resolution that authorizes a no-fly zone over the North African nation and calls for an immediate cease-fire. Even while the diplomats and leaders met in Paris, Qadhafi's military forces had begun working their way into the eastern port city of Benghazi, the opposition stronghold.

Clinton met before the meeting at the Elysee Palace with French President Nicolas Sarkozy, British Prime Minister David Cameron and Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper. And she also conferred separately with the foreign ministers of the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Iraq and Jordan, according to news reports. Delegations from the United States, Canada, Germany, Norway, Italy, Denmark, Belgium, Spain, the European Union, Great Britain, Iraq, Morocco, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Iraq, Jordan and the United Nations met in Paris March 19.

Arab League Secretary-General Amr Moussa attended the

meeting along with EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton and U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. The Arab League called for the no-fly zone at a special meeting on March 12.

Clinton told reporters that Qadhafi's regime has lost all legitimacy. She said the United States will support all necessary measures to enforce the U.N. resolution adopted by the Security Council March 17 in New York.

Clinton also told reporters that the United States believes "that left unchecked, Qadhafi will commit unspeakable atrocities" against those Libyans who have risked their lives to oppose him and sought to end his 42-year reign.

President Obama, meeting with Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff in Brasilia, Brazil, March 19 during a three-nation trip to Latin America, told reporters at a joint press conference that "the international community demanded an immediate cease-fire in Libya, including an end to all attacks against civilians. Today, Secretary Clinton joined an international coalition of our European and Arab partners in Paris to discuss how we will enforce U.S. Security Council Resolution 1973."

"Our consensus was strong and our resolve is clear: The people of Libya must be protected," Obama said. "And, in the absence of an immediate end to the violence against civilians, our coalition is prepared to act, and act with urgency. And I am briefing President Rousseff on the steps that we are taking."

Earlier Clinton met with leaders in Egypt and Tunisia to assess the crisis in Libya and to enlist support for actions by the international community. Both Egypt and Tunisia have been accepted refugees who have fled the violence in Libya.

Sarkozy told reporters that French air force fighter planes had already begun enforcing a no-fly zone in Libya and were conducting aerial reconnaissance flights.

#### U.N. RESOLUTION

The Security Council resolution, passed by a vote of 10-0 with five abstentions, demands the immediate and complete end to all violence and abuse against Libyans. It authorizes "a ban on all flights in the airspace of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in order to help protect civilians."

The resolution also authorizes U.N.-member states to take "all necessary measures ... to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, including Benghazi, while excluding a foreign occupation force of any form on any part of Libyan territory."

In addition, the resolution authorizes U.N. members to act nationally or through regional organizations.

U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice said March 17 after approval of the Security Council resolution that the action was "a powerful response" to the Arab League request for a no-fly zone over Libya" and "to the urgent needs on the ground."

The Arab League had called for the Security Council to impose a no-fly zone as soon as possible in an effort to curb violence against those who have actively opposed the Qadhafi regime, according to a league statement. The league called on "the United Nations to shoulder its responsibility ... to impose a no-fly zone over the movement of Libyan military planes and to create safe zones in the places vulnerable to airstrikes."

#### International Coalition Strikes at Libyan Military

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr. and Stephen Kaufman  
Staff Writers

Washington — President Obama said March 19 that U.S. Navy and coalition ships and submarines have launched missiles against Libyan military forces to support an international coalition to stop attacks on Libyan civilians.

Obama told reporters while on a five-day, three-nation trip to Latin America that he authorized "limited military action in Libya," and said that it has begun.

The United States will contribute its "unique capabilities at the front end," he told reporters traveling with him in Brasilia, Brazil, March 19. Obama added that the use of force was not his first choice and "not a choice I make lightly."

A senior U.S. military official told reporters at a March 19 Pentagon briefing that 110 Tomahawk cruise missiles were fired from U.S. Navy ships and submarines and a British ship at Libyan air defense targets in the capital city of Tripoli and the western city of Misrata from the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Libya. The senior official also said the strikes were against long-range air defense missiles and early-warning radar sites, and main command-and-control communication centers.

In addition, the coalition was conducting aerial electronic jamming intended to protect coalition aircraft that have begun airstrikes against Libyan forces.

"In this effort, the United States is acting with a broad coalition" that is committed to enforcing the U.N. Security Council resolution that called for protecting the Libyan people, Obama said. The coalition includes forces from Great Britain, Canada, France, Italy and the United States,

a senior U.S. military official said.

Obama said he consulted with his international security team and the bipartisan leadership of Congress before acting, and he promised to “keep the American people fully informed.”

The president reiterated that the United States will not send in ground troops. “Today, I authorized the armed forces of the United States to begin a limited military action in Libya,” he began. “That action has now begun.”

“His attacks on his own people have continued,” Obama said referring to Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi. “His forces have been on the move, and the danger faced by the people of Libya has grown,” Obama said. As part of a broad coalition that includes European and Arab countries, the United States is “answering the calls of a threatened people,” he added.

The U.N. Security Council voted 10-0 with five abstentions March 17 to authorize the use of all means necessary to halt Qadhafi’s military forces from attacking the Libyan people. The resolution also includes an immediate demand for a cease-fire and a no-fly zone over Libya among other measures.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton met with European and Arab leaders in Paris March 19 to complete plans to enforce the U.N.-ordered actions. The U.N. resolution came after the Arab League voted March 12 for a no-fly zone over Libya to protect human lives.

“The international community came together to speak with one voice and to deliver a clear and consistent message: Colonel Qadhafi’s campaign of violence against his own people must stop,” Clinton said March 19 in Paris. “The strong votes in the United Nations Security Council underscored this unity.”

“And now the Qadhafi forces face unambiguous terms: a cease-fire must be implemented immediately – that means all attacks against civilians must stop; troops must stop advancing on Benghazi and pull back from Adjabiya, Misrata, and Zawiya; water, electricity, and gas supplies must be turned on to all areas; humanitarian assistance must be allowed to reach the people of Libya,” Clinton added.

Clinton said the Qadhafi government had indicated there would be a cease-fire, but the reality on the ground is continued violence.

“Colonel Qadhafi continues to defy the world. His attacks on civilians go on,” she added.

## Michelle Obama Encourages Brazilian Youth

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.  
Staff Writer

Washington – First lady Michelle Obama and daughters Sasha and Malia on March 19 watched a traditional *capoeira* performance at a Brasilia restaurant during a cultural event with young Brazilians, many from disadvantaged backgrounds who have participated in a range of U.S.-sponsored exchange and leadership development programs.

“The United States and Brazil are two of the largest economies and two of the largest democracies in the Western Hemisphere,” Obama said March 19. “But we have always believed that the future of both our nations depends on more than just relationships between presidents and prime ministers.”

“It depends on relationships between our people, and especially between our young people,” the first lady added.

President Obama and the first lady are visiting Brazil, Chile and El Salvador March 19-23. Accompanying the president and first lady are both daughters, who are off from school in Washington during the traditional spring break.

Many of the young Brazilians attending the cultural performance with the first lady and her daughters actively participate in U.S.-sponsored programs aimed at enhancing their educations and helping develop young leaders. In January 2010, the first lady met with more than 30 Brazilian young leaders who were participating in the U.S. State Department’s Youth Ambassadors Program.

Many of the young people attending the performance have participated in a variety of exchange programs between the United States and Brazil, are studying English or have been recognized by the Brazilian government for outstanding achievement in math and science, the White House said.

Mrs. Obama said that if the nations of the world are to grow together, they have to communicate – talk with one another and listen. “And that’s why I’ve always believed that it’s important for young people everywhere to build those friendships around the world, to learn different languages,” she said.

She encouraged the young Brazilians to pursue their educations because that is the one thing that will lift them out of poverty. It was the lesson she learned growing up that “the most important thing was an education,” she added.

"I knew I had to study and I had to stay focused, just like so many of you are, in order to reach my dreams," Obama told the young people.

"We need energetic, smart, young people to fix the problems in the world. And that's going to be all of you one day soon," the first lady said.

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