On the night of 17 March 2011, holding its 6,498th meeting, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1973 (UNSCR-1973), approving a ‘no-fly zone’ (NFZ) over Libya, authorising all necessary measures to protect civilians by a vote of 10 in favour with 5 abstentions.

Most interesting to note was the fact that the five abstentions included two permanent veto-wielding member states (China and Russia), and three non-permanent states (Brazil, Germany and India), who coincidentally are vying for permanent seats in the Security Council. Most notably, the fact that the five members of the Security Council who are also members of an economic group of large emerging markets with the acronym BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) all happened to be on the Security Council at the same time is either a coincidence or a very bizarre occurrence.

NATO took on the role of imposing the NFZ over Libya on Thursday 31 March 2011, despite internal divisions among member states of NATO, most notably Turkey and Germany, and the daily flights and bombings continued unabated since then. UNSCR-1973 has provided the political and legal rationale for NATO bombing operations over Libya, with thousands of civilians killed and many more injured as a result of the daily bombings.

The NATO war against the sovereign government of the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya proves that this is not a humanitarian war but one that is protecting the West’s interests in and around the oilfields mostly located in the eastern part of Libya, effectively partitioning the country contrary to international law and UNSCR-1973. The United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has now called for an immediate cessation of hostilities by all sides, including NATO, who are now openly backing the rebels with the sole intention of pushing out the legitimate government in Libya at any cost.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) issued a statement that the Libyan armed forces had used cluster bombs in Misrata. The Libyan government has denied these charges and challenged HRW to prove them; most interestingly no casualties from cluster bombs have been confirmed in Misrata. Disturbingly, depleted uranium weapons have been used in Libya, both by the USA and subsequently by NATO upon assuming command and control of the NFZ responsibilities. The United States Pentagon’s denial of use of depleted uranium (DU) weapons has been met with scepticism, especially considering USAF A-10 warthog tank-buster aircraft deployed over Libya and given that the United States has a long history of only admitting to deploying DU radioactive material months or years after it has been used. Based on news video footage, it is more than likely that depleted uranium has been used more widely than originally thought since the USA has launched shells, bombs and cruise missiles containing depleted uranium in the past in Afghanistan and Iraq.
The use of DU weapons when the USA destroyed the city of Fallujah in Iraq reveals that there have been horrendous health conditions resulting from the US military deployment of these materials. Fallujah represented a stronghold of resistance to the US forces’ invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003–04. High rates of infections, birth defects and cancers have been reported that are the direct result of the use of DU weapons.

In addition, regionally the conflict in Libya could have a devastating effect in Niger and Mali where the nomadic Tuareg peoples in the Sahara Desert regions of northern Niger and Mali and southern Libya have been involved in a spate of kidnappings and armed uprisings known as the ‘Tuareg rebellion’. This is especially dangerous for northern Niger; this is where the town of Arlit, an industrial town, is located in the Agadez region, where uranium is mined by French companies in two large uranium mines (Arlit and Akouta).

Arlit was the subject of the Niger uranium forgeries when President George W. Bush, in the build-up to the (illegal) Iraq war, in his 2003 State of the Union address stated, ‘[t]he British Government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa,’ when it was alleged that Saddam Hussein had attempted to purchase ‘yellowcake’ uranium powder from Niger during the Iraq disarmament crisis. These 16 words and the intelligence in this regard were later found to be baseless and rubbed by US intelligence agencies, albeit too late for innocent Iraqis who lost their lives over a lie during the war years.

Ambassador Joseph Wilson, who travelled to Niger to investigate the Iraq/yellowcake plot, concluded that it was highly doubtful that any such transaction had ever taken place, thus clearing Saddam Hussein of any re-starting of Iraq’s WMD (weapons of mass destruction) programme. Ambassador Wilson was punished for this by the outing of his wife, Valerie Plame, as a CIA agent, allegedly by an official working in the then vice-president Dick Cheney’s Office in the White House, which was also the plot of the movie ‘Fair Game’ released in 2010.

What is now very obvious is that the USA, the UK and France are calling for a full-scale and unabated invasion of Libya à la Iraq, or, boots on the ground. This has implications for the civilians in cities who support their legitimate government and Colonel Gaddafi, since it is being seen as a popular uprising when in effect it is confined to a few ‘rebellious types’, in the city of Benghazi. The SAS (Special Air Service) and French Special Forces have been operating in the eastern part of Libya since the beginning and now mercenaries are being recruited at an alarming rate, all being told of imminent deployment and action in Libya, contrary to UNSCR-1973.

The United Nations Security Council mandate has been a dinosaur, originally set up after the Second World War, with five permanent Security Council members (China, France, Russia, the UK and the USA) with veto powers. Until and unless the United Nations General Assembly takes decisive action to abolish the permanent seats structure and veto powers and expand the number of members to reflect the continents, the Security Council will continue to serve the privileged few nations while the rest are increasingly at risk of being ‘legally and legitimately’ bombed, invaded and occupied under the United Nations Security Council auspices.

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* Farouk James is an activist and observer of UN Security Council activities in terms of Peace-keeping Operations and Aid Agencies activities during periods of disasters, famine and conflict. Also monitors the activities of Mercenaries in Iraq and Afghanistan, having investigated the activities of Custer-Battles LLC, a Defence Contractor who had embezzled Millions of US Dollars in Iraq.
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Article-Summary:
In the wake of NATO’s imposition of the ‘no-fly zone’ over Libya on 31 March, there is serious scepticism around the United States Pentagon’s denial of the use of depleted uranium (DU), writes Farouk James. With the US, the UK and France now calling for a full-scale invasion, James writes, the veto powers of the UN Security Council’s permanent members should be called into question once again.

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