

NOTE

Libya : Friends and Foes

Pratik Uppal writes :

The number of people who have died on the streets of Libya remains a mystery. No one knows how long Col Gaddafi will last or how much blood will have to be spilled before he departs. In Ras Lanuf there have been two air strikes by a Libyan government warplane, the rebels responded by firing anti-aircraft guns. In a recent interview with a foreign news channel; Col Gaddafi said that his rule was necessary to stop illegal immigration and prevent "millions of black Africans from crossing the Mediterranean and entering Europe in Italy or France."

What happened in Tunisia is known to all, the army did not open fire and Zine el Abidine Ali finally fled away. The country with roughly the same population as that of Libya had casualties barely exceeding the two hundred (200) mark. Egypt being 12 times more populated than Libya lost 350 citizens to skirmishes and bouts of aggression. Even Hosini Mubarak fled away. So paradoxically, Mubarak the United States' unconditional ally and Ben Ali, THE Tunisian Friend of France ; both had to leave due to pressure from the street and international community. According to UN estimates, over 1000 people have been killed since Libya's uprising began in mid-February.

Daniel Ortega, the Sandinista President of Nicaragua and Gaddafi's Friend from over three decades has been in touch with Gaddafi over phone and in his view, Gaddafi has logically been waging a great battle. Ortega like a true friend has offered Gaddafi, the solidarity of the Sandinistas and the Nicaraguan people. For Fidel Castro the Libyan problem is not the dead and the dying on the streets of Libya; but the issue is the supposedly American invasion. He would never condemn the repression , execution and beatings faced by the Libyans; what he condemns is 'Imperialism'. The Venezuelan leader Hugo Chavez says "Let's not get carried away by the drums of war, because United States, I am sure they are exaggerating and distorting things to justify an invasion". He added those who condemn Libya and say nothing about the bombardments of Fallujah and the massacres in Iraq and Afghanistan have no moral standing to condemn Libya.

The radical wing of Latin America is concerned about Gaddafi's survival and US interference rather than the welfare of the Libyan people and as Gaddafi massacres, the Latin American leaders defend him. United States and France prodded their friends in Egypt and Tunisia to leave and so they did, later than they should have but sooner than expected. If anyone expected Latin American autocrats to speak out against the violation of Human Rights in Libya, they are wrong. □□□