

## No-fly zone: Putting a leash on Kadafi

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David Scheffer  
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*David Scheffer, the U.S. ambassador at large for war-crimes issues from 1997 to 2001, is a law professor at Northwestern University and author of the forthcoming book, "All the Missing Souls: A Personal History of the War Crimes Tribunals."*

On Thursday evening the United Nations Security Council hit the right target when it authorized a no-fly zone over Libya, as well as "all necessary measures" against loyalist forces of Moammar Kadafi

. With the tide recently turning against the rebellion, the no-fly zone and airstrikes against advancing armor and troops are needed more than ever to protect millions of Libyan civilians and help deter the atrocities certain to follow any victory or further brutal attacks by Kadafi's soldiers and mercenaries.

The debate over whether to deny Kadafi the use of his warplanes and helicopters, which delayed action for weeks, centered on how to ensure that such an initiative ultimately would help defeat Kadafi. Cynics have argued that a ground intervention would be required to finish the task. That would mean full-scale warfare, which raises alarm bells in the wake of Iraq and Afghanistan. In any event, it was not authorized by the Security Council. Optimists believe a no-fly zone may help turn the tide against Kadafi and empower the opposition to prevail, or at least hold onto some territory.(...)

(...)Crimes against humanity, such as extermination, torture, mass rape, enforced disappearances, persecution and other inhumane treatment, probably await the rebels and their families who fall under Kadafi's power. We may even witness a genocidal assault against a "differentiated" national group, namely the thousands of Libyan nationals who joined the opposition, as well as their families. War crimes, such as the shelling of non-military targets, including civilians, may also be revealed in the weeks ahead.(...)

(...)So the objective of the no-fly zone must not be framed in military terms alone. It must be seen as a potent weapon, joined with the Security Council's other measures, to avert mass atrocities. A no-fly zone also can be used as leverage on Kadafi. Even if he does not care about world opinion, at least he would have to ponder whether he wants the permanent grounding of all of his air assets.

There are additional options, some of greater risk, which may need to be considered to protect lives.

The Security Council could authorize creation of havens in western and eastern Libya, guarded by peacekeeping forces and a no-fly zone, to shelter significant numbers of the opposition. The technological and telecommunications eyes of the world should be focused around the clock on every move Kadafi's forces take, with data flowing to the International Criminal Court for evidence at future trials. The Security Council could request well-crafted covert arrest operations by key governments to capture any Libyan indicted for atrocities.

A global pledge was forged in 2005 at the United Nations that there is a **responsibility to protect** civilian populations at risk of atrocities. A no-fly zone will help thwart the worst possible outcome in Libya.

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