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Obama's Wise Caution on Libya

Michael Sean Winters | Feb. 23, 2011 Distinctly Catholic

Watching TV night, there were criticisms from across the political spectrum that President Obama failed to speak out more forcefully on behalf of the people in Libya who have taken to the streets in an effort to overthrow their tyrant.

There is no argument but that Gadhafi is one of the most evil people on the planet. There is no argument but that the people of Libya should be free from that evil regime. But, Gadhafi has helicopter gunships and the people do not. The last time I heard about helicopter gunships shooting on innocent civilians, the evil tyrant was Saddam Hussein. You will recall that in the first Gulf War, the U.S. encouraged both the Shia in the south and the Kurds in the north to rise up against the regime. They did so, believing that American encouragement would come with some degree of American protection. To their everlasting misery and to America?s eternal shame, they were deceived in that belief. When Saddam unleashed his gunships, the protesters the U.S. had encouraged were slaughtered en masse. The United States did nothing.

So those who are clamoring for a ?tougher? stance by the President must first ask themselves, and answer, the question: Will we - and should we - step in to protect those we ask to confront Gadhafi?s gunships? The thought of America deploying troops to another Arab country is, I submit, far-fetched. But, if we are not prepared to defend the protesters, President Obama?s relative lack of forceful speech is not just prudent, it is profoundly moral.

N.B. I am heading out of town tomorrow on holiday and am not sure what kind of internet access I will have while on vacation. So, posts here at Distinctly Catholic may be spotty through next Tuesday. Please consult our other NCR blogs in the meantime and I will try to get to a wifi Starbucks at some point.

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