



Saturday July 16 2011

# No country for an old tyrant

## Gaddafi should not be offered internal exile in Libya

On March 17, the UN authorised an international coalition to take all steps necessary to protect Libyans from the brutality of the year-old tyrant ruler, Muammar Gaddafi. Yet while the western-led intervention has to some extent curbed the colonel's aggression, it has not forced his regime to crumble. As the conflict drags on, and Ramadan and the French presidential election season loom, coalition officials are searching for ways to break the deadlock.

One proposal is that Col Gaddafi could be offered internal exile in Libya if he promised to abdicate all military and political power. This is a bad idea. It is not obvious that such a solution would offer Col Gaddafi any security, as his Egyptian counterpart, Hosni Mubarak, found, internal exile leads via house arrest to the courts. Given this arrest, and Col Gaddafi's record, there is no reason to believe he would keep his word. Leaving him in Libya as the next regime, which will initially be weak, struggles to build a state from scratch, would be an unacceptable risk.

That is not to say that the coalition should shun non-military ways of pressuring Gaddafi from power. His exit is the key precondition for a resolution of the Libyan conflict. And given the regime's military superiority over the rebels, and the fact that the coalition has neither the mandate nor the appetite to use ground forces



### Lean times afoot

## Your interview with Bachelet focused on trivia

From Ms Mary Robinson.

Sir, Women represent just 19 per cent of parliamentarians in the world and occupy less than one in six seats on corporate boards of Fortune 500 companies. More than 60m women live in countries without domestic violence laws.

Plenty to discuss with UN Women's new executive director, Michelle Bachelet, then? Instead we are asked to care about the quality of her suit, the size of

her waistline and her arrangements for cleaning her apartment ("Pink and Perry", *Lunch with the FT*, Life & Arts, July 9).

It might be understandable if Ms Bachelet was some second-rate nobody with nothing to say. In fact, she was only the fifth woman to be elected president in Latin America and enjoyed some of the highest approval ratings anywhere in the world. She now represents the interests of half the

world's population at the United Nations.

Until women are assessed on the basis of the quality of their ideas, rather than the colour of their eyes shadow, on the strength of their leadership, not the style of their hair, UN Women will continue to be urgently needed.

Mary Robinson  
Former President of Ireland  
Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

## Nato will carry equal blame

From Gen Sir Michael Rose.

Sir, Simon Kuper ("The tups of Srebrenica", *Life & Arts*, July 2) focuses far too narrowly on the failings of the Dutch and the United Nations in Srebrenica during the terrible events that took place there in July 1995. He neither sets in context nor attempts to explain how the worst massacre since the end of the second world war could have happened in Europe, when both the UN and Nato were present. Indeed, when the history of the Balkan wars is better understood, it is likely that Nato will carry as much blame for Srebrenica as the UN.

For had Nato troops deployed in 1992, when President Alija Izetbegovic invited them into Bosnia to prevent the war spreading there from Croatia, neither the war nor the massacre could have happened. Worse still, following the deployment of the UN to Bosnia in a principally humanitarian role, Nato, led by the US systematically undermined the peacekeeping efforts of the UN by breaking the arms embargo for Yugoslavia and by arming and training the Muslims and Croatsians.

This gave false hope to the Muslims that they could recover their lost territories by force of arms, a hope that was to be cruelly betrayed at Dayton. But, having destroyed the credibility of the UN mission in the eyes of the warring parties which made it impossible for the UN peacekeeping efforts to succeed, Nato and the US then found themselves unable to influence events on the ground from the air. It was the virtual collapse of the UN mission in 1995 that subsequently encouraged General Ratko Mladic to attack Srebrenica.

The UN mission in Bosnia was never to "defend or protect" and the UN Security Council resolutions relating to the six safe areas were deliberately avoided these terms. Nor were the peacekeepers mandated, equipped or trained to conduct war fighting operations by the 16 contributing nations. That role belonged to Nato, which sadly limited its response to bombing. If proper lessons are not learnt, from Bosnia and Srebrenica, the slogan "Never Again" will, I fear, turn out once again simply to be empty rhetoric.

Michael Rose,  
UN Commander, Bosnia, 1994

## COMMENT ON FT.COM

**The squeezed middle**  
Chris Giles, economics editor, discusses inequality and failing middle-income jobs  
[www.ft.com/squeezed-middle](http://www.ft.com/squeezed-middle)

For corrections e-mail: [corrections@ft.com](mailto:corrections@ft.com)

## Evangelicals want the US governed as a theocracy

From Mr John K Lambert.

Sir, Ultra-religious conservatives - more to the point, religious bigots - continue to try to block the Republican party ("Lord, is this what you want?", *Life & Arts*, July 2). Christian operatives such as Barb Heik expertly undue influence in the selection of presidential candidates in the Iowa caucuses by applying a "most righteous" test to Grand Old Party hopefuls.

The current crop of Republican candidates is apparently sucking up to Ms Heik in the hope that they pass muster according to her job of measuring their righteousness. It is absurd that candidates bow to her parochial attitude.

Ms Heik views everything in terms of the dogma espoused by evangelical Christians. To that end, she and other hardline evangelicals want the US governed as a theocracy. Their opposites, progressive Democrats, are no less zealous in their goal to convert the US to a European-style form of socialist governance.

As for the selection of the GOP presidential nominee, if this is dictated by the undue influence of a small band (compared with the overall size of the GOP electorate) of Heik-like theocratic jowlers, I shall write in a candidate on the ballot paper at election time.

John K Lambert,  
Silver Spring, MD, US

## Wrong medicine prescribed for euro

From Prof Witold Orlowski.

Sir, The way European Union countries try to deal with the eurozone crisis seems to be marked by futile measures, inadequate to the current and future challenges. The lessons drawn from the crisis are inadequate as well.

The eurozone does not need a common finance minister, as Jean-Claude Trichet suggests, with unclear competences and a doubtful mandate. It needs a common Fiscal Policy Council, a professional, apolitical and supranational body that would set the maximum ceilings for the bond issues of every government.

Things should be set according to a clear model, taking into account the current level of indebtedness and economic situation both on the national and EU level. Any issue of bonds in excess of these ceilings should be exposed to prohibitive market interest rates and partially taxed by the EU. The countries of the EU that do not use the euro should be allowed to join this

## Attack of the Big Mac

From Mr Michael Clarke.

Sir, As the European Central Bank and the European Commission fight to save the euro, on a rare visit to McDonald's in Nîmes, France, this week I thought for a moment that the fight was lost.

When I paid with a €50 note for a Big Mac, the lady at the till promptly started to tear the note in two. In response to my worried inquiry as to what was amiss, I received the reassuring answer that tearing €50 notes was now company policy, at least in this region, to ensure that they were genuine. The metal security strip resists the action.

While my mind was set at rest as regards the immediate survival of the euro, it does suggest that our currency is not perhaps held in the metal security strip resists the action.



Saved by its metal security strip

same regard as the US dollar, which I believe is legally protected from such systematic attack.  
Michael Clarke,  
Herzlee, Belgium

# Mao-ma Mia

## Expect reindeer-takes-it-all rush for China's music market

Mamma mia, here we go again. Following the shift of manufacturer-ers from west to east, it is the entertainment industry's turn to make the long march to China, on Monday, the musical based on Abba's hit songs premiered in Shanghai - the first West End show to be performed in Mandarin. That western companies are falling over each other to gain a foothold in Asia is not surprising. How can they resist it? Money money money is surely on the mind of the Chinese hosts as well: the show is produced by the state-owned China Arts and Entertainment Group. Swedish jumpstarts and cheery

great and inapplicable success in the west. But can the musical count on a similar reception in China? There is no denying the Chinese enthusiasm for western theatre. Shakespeare's works have long

## Letters



Gillian Tett

## Getting unwanted birthday guests on my account

A couple of days ago I noticed that my little-used Facebook account was suddenly full of "Happy Birthday" messages. No surprise there: it was my birthday (44, if you need to ask).

But what was noteworthy - and unmentioning - was that these greetings came from people who had never previously known my date of birth or, in some cases, conversed with me for years. The reason? Those cyber-gnomes at Facebook - or, more accurately, an algorithm created by them - had delved into my account, noted my birth date and dispatched messages to my "friends". FB has

defiance," he wrote "by e-mail rather than on Facebook's wall".

Just a nice form of group cyber-cuddle? Or is something more creepy at work? I am divided. Part of me loves the idea of getting "Happy Birthdays" greetings. But the idea of an algorithm trying to "direct" my celebrations makes me wince, not least because algorithms are trying to "direct" so much of our lives today. For evidence of this, just look at Bill Pariser's excellent book *The Filter Bubble*, which describes how entities such as Google now routinely use algorithms to scan our internet usage in a way that risks creating social silos.

Quite apart from that, the antics of algorithms raise issues of social "behaviour". As anthropologists observe, one way to define a "society" is as a grouping of people who share a common mental map and rules about interaction. Or, as a Merriam-Webster dictionary notes, etiquette is "the conduct or procedure required by good breeding or prescribed by authority to be observed in social or official life". Thus distinctions are created - and a group defined.

to create unspeakable rules of engagement. Some of my Facebook friends, for example, might have wished to say "Happy Birthday" even without being directed, others felt it was an overly familiar intrusion. And then there are people such as Amir, who have the idea of Facebook "directing" them at all.

One solution would be for everyone to sort their cybercontacts into "Friends" - and everyone else. This month, Google has created a service, Google+, which allows you to do this. But I am not sure that I want to sort my private mental map of my friendship links into a precise category. To me, that seems "rude".

The good news is that some entrepreneurs are stepping into this void, offering advice on etiquette rules. Check out, for example, the book *connected* by the Rediff

good rule of thumb is to promote others three times as much (or more) than you promote yourself" when using links on Facebook or Twitter: avoid all slanderous statements; let someone know if you forward a link; wait for 24 hours before responding to a negative Facebook post; never make more than one request to be a Facebook friend; and accept with grace if the answer is "no" and never - ever - post on a Facebook wall when drunk or jet-lagged.

Meanwhile, Ross Bennett, a London-based law firm, recently issued a formal "five-step guide to good social media etiquette" warning people "not to vent your frustrations on Facebook or Twitter on family disputes". None of these manuals covers the delicate question of how to rank your friends with Google+, or how to respond to a "directed" "Happy Birthday" message from people you barely know. Nor do they cover the more important question about what cyberconnections are doing to our real-world relations. Perhaps that will emerge. But in the meantime, I am contemplating my Facebook privacy