

According to Washington, Crimes against Humanity are Solely Perpetrated by the Victims of US-Led Wars

Mainstream media outlets often ignore the more serious misdeeds of their own governments and regimes they support.

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Responding to Fidel Castro's death just over a year ago, then president-elect Donald Trump was among the first to attack the Cuban revolutionary's legacy. Amidst other accusations, Trump charged Castro with having "oppressed his own people for nearly six decades", without supplying any evidence to support such a claim.

Not mentioned by Trump was the extensive terrorist attacks perpetrated by his country against Cuba, dating to the early 1960s. Nor was any attention afforded to the crippling economic blockade America continues to impose on its near neighbor, in opposition to global opinion. The embargo was first implemented during the Cuban Missile Crisis over 50 years ago.

Trump further called Castro "a brutal dictator" – once more neglecting to provide proof – while overlooking American backing for some of the most notorious dictators in living memory. The US not only supported, but ensured, the coming to power of tyrants such as Augusto Pinochet (Chile), the Shah (Iran) and Haji Suharto (Indonesia).

General Suharto, for example, was responsible for killing up to a million people in massacres that rivaled Joseph Stalin's purges. Yet the Indonesian despot, who ruled for over 30 years, was never charged for crimes against humanity. He lived out his remaining days in luxury, while protected by soldiers and politicians.

The US had orchestrated Suharto's genocidal takeover (1965-66), as hundreds of thousands of Indonesians were killed by his death squads. The level of bloodshed would surely have impressed former SS commanders like Heinrich Himmler and Reinhard Heydrich, who were instrumental in perpetrating the Holocaust.

Meanwhile, Trump's hypocritical views are common policy across the West. When a designated foe (like North Korea or Iran) can be accused of something, it receives headline and front page news on mainstream networks and newspapers. Western leaders outline their objections, while ignoring the far more serious abuses that can be leveled at regimes they support (such as Saudi Arabia and Israel).

For decades, oil rich Saudi Arabia has been the most extreme fundamentalist regime in the world – and has remained a darling of the West throughout. The Saudis, with huge military aid provided by the US, Britain, France, and Germany, have been committing an overt

famine war against Yemen.

Indeed, successive Saudi regimes make their near neighbor, Iran, seem moderate by comparison. Iran has long been an enemy of the West, after its people overthrew the US-backed dictatorship of the Shah in 1979. This popular revolt against a notorious autocrat deprived America and Britain of access to Iran's huge oil reserves.

In early January this year, mainstream outlets pounced upon protest marches occurring in Iran. The numbers of those protesting were mischievously exaggerated and exploited for political purposes. There are serious problems in Iranian society, such as high youth unemployment and rising food prices, yet these issues are hardly unique. First world leaders were, however, quick to highlight their concerns for "the great Iranian people" (Trump).

There have been no such misgivings proclaimed for the more severe repression of the Saudi people, for instance. Trump's predecessor, Barack Obama, commended the late Saudi King Abdullah upon his death in 2015. King Abdullah's reign lasted for a decade (2005-2015). During that time, he oversaw extreme punishments for anything from minor thefts to drunkenness, rising oppression against women and homosexuals, to public executions for "witchcraft" and drug trafficking, etc.

Obama said King Abdullah had taken "bold steps in advancing the Arab Peace Initiative" and that his "vision was dedicated to the education of his people", while the two leaders had enjoyed "a genuine and warm friendship". Elsewhere, Bill and Hillary Clinton praised the late king's "humanitarian efforts around the world".

There was not a word criticism – simply, as Obama highlighted, Abdullah's "steadfast and passionate belief in the importance of the US-Saudi relationship" which was "a force for stability and security". It would be unwise to note the Saudi efforts for stability and security in their funding of terrorist groups such as ISIS and Al Qaeda.

However, the following year (2016), Obama was sharp to emphasize his "serious differences" with Cuba regarding "democracy and human rights" after visiting the Caribbean island. For years, Cuba has been attacked by establishment figures for what they deem to be repression of human rights.

Overlooked, is that easily the most severe humanitarian abuses occurring in Cuba, can be seen at the US-run Guantanamo military prison. Indeed, the human rights infringements at the "detention camp" are among the worst in the entire Western hemisphere. Prisoners have often been held without charge or access to lawyers – for years on end – an extreme violation of the most fundamental human rights.

For over a century, the US has illegally occupied Guantanamo Bay, which also constitutes Cuba's major port. Despite repeated demands for its return, the US has refused to relinquish Guantanamo to its rightful owner.

Furthermore, the fact that Cuba has been subjected to continued attacks by the world's dominant power is also forgotten. America's terrorist assaults on Cuba lasted for over 30 years, well into the 1990s. It included everything from bombings of Cuba's tourist industry, infrastructure and exports, to support for international terrorists, along with chemical and biological warfare [unleashed](#) on the island.

Elsewhere, in eastern Asia, a serious crisis has been smoldering since the end of World War II. Following the Japanese surrender in August 1945, Korea was divided into two zones – the north (Soviet-occupied) and south (American-occupied). This came about despite the desires of unification for ordinary Koreans. In the following years, rising geopolitical hostility led to the Korean War (1950-53), which today enters history as one of the deadliest conflicts since 1945.

Indeed, North Korea was leveled by the might of American military forces, losing over 20% of its population. The scale of devastation is put in perspective, when considering that less than 1% of the United Kingdom's population was killed during World War II.

In the ensuing decades, the country has remained in the shadow of another American invasion. As a deterrent against the threats, consecutive North Korean leaders have pursued the development and expansion of nuclear weapons and missiles.

The fact that the North's nuclear program was undertaken to discourage an American attack receives little attention. North Korea's nuclear policy is hardly a mindless strategy. One must consider the fate of non-nuclear states in the past – such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya – who were all demolished by the US military, along with help from other old imperial powers, Britain and France.

Instead, the public are repeatedly informed that Kim Jong-un wishes to develop missiles that are “capable of striking the US mainland”. If Kim followed through on this threat, it would mean the end of his own country – the US would inevitably retaliate by firing its far more prolific nuclear arsenal upon the North.

What Pyongyang desires is a guarantee for security, along with a termination of provocative US-South Korean military exercises. Indeed the North, with Chinese backing, have [repeatedly proposed](#) to the US that they halt their nuclear testing. There is one condition in return: America must cease its military maneuvers on their frontiers, including replicated nuclear-bombing raids with B-52 war planes.

In June 2017, the Trump administration immediately rejected the latest North Korean-Chinese proposition. Obama likewise rebuffed identical offers in 2014 and 2015. Again, little of this is ever reported to wider audiences. The North Korean-Chinese proposals are reasonable by all accounts. Rather, America's dangerous preference for military solutions outweighs their desire to pursue possibilities for negotiation and peace.

Elsewhere, Russia continues to be denounced on an almost daily basis by mainstream elites – from its annexation of Crimea (previously part of Russia from 1783-1917), to its involvement in Syria and eastern Ukraine. The current Kiev government, illegally imposed by the US in 2014, is the most corrupt in Europe. Yet its highly unpopular leader, Petro Poroshenko, is seldom criticized – unlike his counterpart, Vladimir Putin, who is routinely attacked despite having approval ratings regularly reaching almost 90%.

During last year's operation to retake Mosul from ISIS in northern Iraq, US-led forces killed about 11,000 civilians. This death toll dwarfs anything ascribed to Syrian government forces in recent days. Yet, in reclaiming Mosul, the appropriate criticism of American-backed forces came entirely from non-governmental organizations (like Human Rights Watch).

The same media outlets condemning the Syrian government, along with allies Russia and

Iran, were largely ignoring the catastrophe as Mosul was reduced to rubble. In fact, the civilian death toll reported in Mosul at the time was just 10% of the true figure.

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Shane Quinn obtained an honors journalism degree. He is interested in writing primarily on foreign affairs, having been inspired by authors like Noam Chomsky.

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