

America: A Sunset Empire

The rise and decline of the American Empire

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Global Research, September 07, 2011

7 September 2011

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

Overview

The *America: An Empire In Decline* series examines the rise and decline of the American Empire. In Part 1, [Dawn Of A New Century](#), I analyzed America's original plans for the 21st century, immediately after the end of the Cold War, which imagined a world where the US would be the sole superpower and preventive diplomacy would be used to ensure no flare-ups occurred.

However, with the rise of the neoconservatives, first with the Project for the New American Century think tank and then later in the form of Donald Rumsfeld, Dick Cheney, Paul Wolfowitz, and Condoleezza Rice as Cabinet members in the Bush administration, a vision that saw the fall of the Soviet Union as an opportunity for the United States to become a full-fledged empire became deeply rooted in the American political and military psyche. They envisioned a world in which America would be the dominant economic, political, and military power and whose enemies and potential rivals would be kept in check. All they needed was an incident to make this possible and the devastating attacks on 9/11 provided an excuse for the US to God the globe.

In [Onset of Imperial Decline](#), I examined America's actions both at home and abroad. Domestically, the rights of citizens were being curbed in the name of the War on Terror due to the Patriot Act which allowed for the government to illegally spy on its citizens without a warrant. Abroad, America used 9/11 as a casus belli to launch an attack on Afghanistan, even though it was later revealed that the US had already been planning to invade Afghanistan prior to the attacks. It was also revealed that on 9/11, once notified of the attacks, Donald Rumsfeld ordered his aides to find a link between the attacks and Saddam Hussein as to create a pretext to invade Iraq. Soon after the invasion of Afghanistan, the US failed in an attempt to covertly overthrow Hugo Chavez of Venezuela, started its campaign of lies and deceit about Iran's nuclear facilities, and engineered several pseudo-democratic uprising in eastern Europe to ensure a pro-Western encirclement was kept around Russia. The US then turned its attention to the continent of Africa, establishing a continental wide command there as to combat the influence of rival nations such as China. However, at home, due to the incompetence of Washington and the greed of Wall Street bankers, the US experienced a massive recession which led to ripple effects around the world.

In this final installment of the series, an examination of America's recent foreign policy and military adventures will take place, concluding with a prediction of what may lay in the future for the Empire.

Escalation In Afghanistan, False Drawdown In Iraq

Soon after being elected into office on the idea of hope and change, President Obama truly showed how much change he wanted when he stated at West Point that it was in America's "vital national interest to send an additional 30,000 U.S. troops to Afghanistan." [1] He also announced "a strategy recognizing the fundamental connection between our war effort in Afghanistan and the extremist safe havens in Pakistan." [2] While Pakistan did allow for Afghan Taliban and Al Qaeda members safe haven near the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, by including Pakistan in the strategy to succeed in Afghanistan, Obama effectively made the mission even more difficult since now the US would have to deal with the Afghan *and* Pakistani Talibans, as well as with the corruption and general incompetence of the Pakistani government, as they would often make deals with the militants instead of crushing them as Washington wanted.

Escalating the war in Afghanistan brings out the irony of President Obama having received the Nobel Peace Prize. How is a man who controls the most powerful military force in history, increases military spending to historic levels, and escalates a then-eight (now ten) year old war, a man of peace? This can only occur when, as Michel Chossudovsky said, "war becomes peace," "a global military agenda is heralded as a humanitarian endeavor," and most importantly, "when [a] lie becomes the truth." [3]

In addition to escalating the war in Afghanistan, Obama oversaw a false drawdown in Iraq. While it was true that all combat forces had left, it was reported "that as many as 50,000 Marines and soldiers would remain until the end of 2011" and that the "pace of the drawdown [would] be left to commanders and determined by events on the ground as well as politics in Washington." [4] Officially, the remaining 50,000 troops "would remain in Iraq after Aug. 31, 2010, to train, equip and advise Iraqi forces, help protect withdrawing forces and work on counter-terrorism." [5] However, these soldiers were not entirely trainers, as in September alone US troops "waged a gun battle with a suicide squad in Baghdad, dropped bombs on armed militants in Baquba and assisted Iraqi soldiers in a raid in Falluja." [6] US troops are still fighting in Iraq, although now it is under the guise of training Iraqi forces. US forces may very well stay permanently in Iraq as it has been reported that the US government has worked out a deal with Iraq to allow US troops to stay until 2012, yet the Iraqi government denies it. [7]

Drone Strikes

The US has been doing drone strikes for quite some time, yet in recent years they have been escalated and the number of targets increased. In addition to targeting terrorists in Pakistan, the strikes were expanded to Yemen and Somalia as well as several other countries.

This year, it was reported that the CIA is preparing to initiate a secret program to kill Al Qaeda militants in Yemen. The plan "would give the U.S. greater latitude than the current military campaign [against AQ militants]" and is a shift from previous tactics as "Now, the spy agency will carry out aggressive drone strikes itself alongside the military campaign." [8] While the Americans may think that this is a good idea, it may cause even more instability in Yemen and push a new government away from the US.

Major revelations about America's campaign against drone strikes have come to light due to the UK-based Bureau of Investigative Journalism study on the drone strikes which resulted in a "fundamental reassessment of the covert US campaign [and] involved a complete re-examination of all that is known about each US drone strike." [9] The study revealed that

“many more CIA attacks on alleged militant targets than previously reported. At least 291 US drone strikes are now known to have taken place since 2004” [10] and that 1,100 people had been injured in drone strikes. This study has worried the Establishment to the point where the CIA is “attempting to link the Bureau’s ‘suspect’ work to unsubstantiated allegations that one of its many sources is a Pakistani spy” and “directly challenging the data itself.” [11]

However, these drone strikes can end up creating more enemies for America. One such example being in Somalia, where Dr. Omar Ahmed, an academic and Somali politician argues that US helicopter and drone attacks only help Al Shabab:

“There is no reason for the western countries to use airstrikes against al-Shabaab. **It will only increase the generations supporting al-Shabaab,**” he said. **“For example, when the Americans killed Aden Eyrow, the capability of al-Shabaab was very low. From that day forward, the militia increased in size day-after-day.** They recruited many youths, persuading them that infidels attacked their country and want to capture it.” [12] (emphasis added)

Even though the US strategy is not working, the Americans still continue it due to the political and military elite having fooled themselves to such a point where they think that the drone strikes are working, when in reality they increase anti-American sentiment and actually help the very people America is trying to defeat.

Assassinations

While things were already dismal on the domestic front due to the Patriot Act and the horrid economic crisis, things were to get worse as President Obama was given the power to assassinate American citizens.

Last year, the Obama Administration authorized the assassination of “the radical Muslim cleric Anwar al-Awlaki , who is believed to have shifted from encouraging attacks on the United States to directly participating in them.” [13] Awlaki was an American citizen who was born in New Mexico and had been an imam in the United States, before going to Yemen. American officials stated that he had joined Al Qaeda and became a recruiter.

While this may seem like a new precedent, in reality it isn’t as after 9/11 **“Bush gave the CIA, and later the military, authority to kill U.S. citizens abroad if strong evidence existed that an American was involved in organizing or carrying out terrorist actions against the United States or U.S. interests.”** [14] (emphasis added) Thus, the entire illegal act of assassinating US citizens had been on the board since 2001 and therefore was nothing but Obama continuing the draconian practices of the previous administration.

The entire idea of assassinating US citizens is not only wrong, but illegal under US law. Executive Order 12333, put into place by Ronald Reagan, states that “No person employed by or acting on behalf of the United States Government shall engage in, or conspire to engage in, assassination.” [15] However, it goes even further for all US intelligence agencies, stating that no one in the intelligence apparatus should participate in any activities that are forbidden under Order 12333, which includes assassinations.

The continued policy of assassinating US citizens only shows the continued moral decline of

the Empire and the continued concentration of power in the Executive Branch.

Cyber Command

While the US was waging war in Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, and other locations, the Americans turned their attention to cyberspace and with the creation of Cyber Command (CyCom), effectively turned cyberspace into a battlezone.

In 2010, the US created CyCom whose mission, among other things, was to “conduct full-spectrum military cyberspace operations in order to enable actions in all domains, ensure US/Allied freedom of action in cyberspace and deny the same to our adversaries.” [16] By stating that the US would ensure its “freedom of action in cyberspace,” the Americans clearly implied that they may attack other nations via the internet.

The US went even further with turning CyCom into a weapon of war when the Pentagon announced “that **computer sabotage coming from another country can constitute an act of war**, a finding that for the first time **opens the door for the U.S. to respond using traditional military force**,” with a US military official stating “**If you shut down our power grid, maybe we will put a missile down one of your smokestacks.**” [17] (emphasis added) Thus, without a doubt, the US was planning to use cyberspace as a way to increase its military might.

Iranian Green Movement

In June 2009, there began mass protests in Iran due to suspicions of election fraud, with reports of the government blocking communications and alleged vote rigging. While the protest movement was no doubt organic, there may very well have been US involvement as they had been launching covert operations within recent years.

In 2007, the CIA received a “secret presidential approval to mount a covert ‘black’ operation to destabilize the Iranian government.” [18] The operation itself was designed to pressure Iran to end its nuclear enrichment program. It was also reported that the US was “secretly funding militant ethnic separatist groups in Iran in an attempt to pile pressure on the Islamic regime to give up its nuclear program.” [19] CIA officials were working with known terrorists, such as the Mujahedeen-e Khalq, to overthrow the Iranian government. The Americans may have been hopeful that something might occur which would allow them to militarily intervene, seeing as how they positioned a second aircraft carrier near Iran’s coastal waters and “also moved six heavy bombers from a British base on the Pacific island of Diego Garcia to the Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar.” [20]

In 2008, things went even further when it was reported that the US government had decided “to fund a major escalation of covert operations against Iran” which were “designed to destabilize the country’s religious leadership.” [21] If Ayatollah Khamenei, the country’s highest ranking political and religious figure, was overthrown or assassinated, it would cause massive political turmoil in Iran, which would turn provide the Americans with an excuse to intervene in Iran or allow for US puppets to take control of the nation.

It is interesting to note that at this time the US ramped up its rhetoric against Iran, reviving

charges that the Iranian leadership ha[d] been involved in the killing of American soldiers in Iraq: both directly, by dispatching commando units into Iraq, and indirectly, by supplying materials used for roadside bombs and other lethal goods. [22]

This occurred around the time when “a National Intelligence Estimate, [which had been] released in December, [concluded] that Iran had halted its work on nuclear weapons in 2003.” [23]

Aiding terrorist attacks in Iran may very well have helped to create an atmosphere where ordinary Iranians felt that the current regime was not protecting them and thus had to challenge the regime, though not knowing they were being used as a way to fulfill American interests.

Not soon after the Iranian elections had died down, the US turned its attention to North Korea and China.

Cheonan Incident

In March of 2010, it was reported that South Korea’s ship, the Cheonan, had sunk in waters near the border with North Korea. The ship went down due to an unexplained explosion. Initially, South Korea “suspected the North Korean hand in the mishap but without convincing proof, it did not charge North Korea of this act.” [24] Thus a Joint Civilian-Military Investigation Group (JIG) was established to investigate the incident.

Preliminary investigations established the fact that the explosion was external and the JIG speculated that “the Cheonan was hit by a torpedo or a floating mine and that the blast impact originated from outside the vessel.” [25] After collaborating several reports from sailors aboard the Cheonan and simulations, the JIG “collected propulsion parts, including propulsion motor with propellers and a steering section from the site of the sinking to corroborate with the fact that it was a torpedo attack” [26] and found that the markings on one propulsion section were consistent with the marking of a North Korean torpedo that had been obtained prior to the Cheonan incident. This convinced the JIG that “the recovered parts were made in North Korea and therefore established Pyongyang’s complicity. **The JIP, therefore, eliminated other plausible factors such as grounding, fatigue failure, mines, collision and internal explosion.**” [27] (emphasis added)

In addition to the South Korean JIG, there was also an international investigatory committee known as the Multinational Combined Intelligence Task force, **which was made up of five states, “including the US, Australia, Canada and the UK”** [28] (emphasis added) and the findings of this group also pointed the finger at North Korea.

This is quite serious as not only did South Korea ignore other plausible factors that may have led to the sinking of the Cheonan, but they also trusted a group that was overwhelmingly under the influence of Western nations who are known to be hostile to North Korea. It is possible that South Korea was looking to blame the North, seeing as how they stopped immediately after they could even plausibly establish a link to North Korea.

In response to the attacks, the US and South Korea held joint war games in which the United States sent its supercarrier, the USS George Washington. The war games were to be held in the Yellow Sea, which is in China’s exclusive economic zone. Once news that the war games were going to be held in the Yellow Sea came out, China stated that it “opposes any military acts in its exclusive economic zone without permission.” [29] The Americans and South Koreans had to have done this on purpose, seeing as how launching war games would not ease tensions, but rather escalate them. One must also factor in the notion that the US had been considering China a potential threat to its dominance of the Asia-Pacific region

since the 1990s.

Not only were the South Korean war games a threat to China, but also no sooner after the US had concluded those war games, did “the U.S. [begin] a week-long exercise with Japan off the second nation’s islands near the South Korean coast.” [30] The entire point of these war games with both South Korea and Japan was to send a message to China, saying that the US was still in control of the Asia-Pacific region.

In the midst of this, an organization that was and continues to change the world was going to blow the lid on the Empire, showing their true foreign policy.

Wikileaks

In 2010, a then fairly unknown organization called Wikileaks released a video now known as Collateral Murder which shows an Apache helicopter firing on reporters from Reuters and blatantly murdering Iraqi civilians. This had the US government so worried that they conducted a counterintelligence investigation into Wikileaks, saying that the organization “represents a potential force protection, counterintelligence, operational security (OPSEC), and information security (INFOSEC) threat to the US Army.” [31]

In its extreme worry, the investigatory committee may have become slightly paranoid as they did not rule out the possibility that “current employees or moles within DoD or elsewhere in the US government are providing sensitive or classified information to Wikileaks.org” could not be ruled out and that “former US government employees leak[ing] sensitive and classified information is highly suspect.” [32] However, the chance that former US government employees would leak classified information is slim, seeing as how most are loyal to the government.

However, the Wikileaks situation would get extremely serious later when they released 250,000 documents detailing America’s true foreign policy. The documents revealed that America had been “running a secret intelligence campaign targeted at the leadership of the United Nations, including the secretary general, Ban Ki-moon and the permanent security council representatives from China, Russia, France and the UK.” [33] In July 2009, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton ordered US diplomats to gather “forensic technical details about the communications systems used by top UN officials, including passwords and personal encryption keys used in private and commercial networks for official communications” as well as “credit card numbers, email addresses, phone, fax and pager numbers and even frequent-flyer account numbers for UN figures and ‘biographic and biometric information on UN Security Council permanent representatives.’” [34] The entire operation seems to be involved in aiding the CIA and the National Security Agency for the purposes of building biographical profiles, data mining, and surveillance operations.

Due to the massive dump, some became so enraged that they called for Julian Assange’s head. Jeffrey T. Kuhner, a columnist in the *Washington Times*, stated that Julian Assange

poses a clear and present danger to American national security. The WikiLeaks founder is more than a reckless provocateur. **He is aiding and abetting terrorists in their war against America. The administration must take care of the problem - effectively and permanently.** [35] (emphasis added)

However, what Kuhner and other people who wanted Assange dead were truly enraged

about was that US foreign policy was exposed for what it truly is: the US government working hard to fulfill its interests by any means necessary, with complete and total disregard for the sovereignty of other nations, as can be shown by the fact that the US government intimidated Spanish Prime Minister Zapatero into ending his criticism of the Iraq war.

The US media as well as others jumped on the story when Julian Assange was accused of rape and began spreading it everywhere. Yet, they were quite incorrect as Assange was accused of violating a Swedish law against sex without a condom. It was reported that Sweden's Public Prosecutor's Office "leaked to the media that it was seeking to arrest Assange for rape, then on the same day withdrew the arrest warrant because in its own words there was 'no evidence.'" [36] Even though the media did their best to smear Assange's name, Wikileaks was going to play a role in lighting a spark that would take the Arab world by storm.

Arab Spring

In 2011, the United States had its dominance of the Middle East seriously threatened due to massive peaceful protests that were sweeping the Arab world. No longer were people going to put up with corrupt and oppressive regimes that were backed by Washington. No longer would they put up with horrid dictatorships in which the only freedom they had was to obey. In 2011 protests in Tunisia began what would become known as the Arab Spring.

Tunisia

The spark that launched the Arab Spring began on December 17th, 2010. Mohammed Bouazizi was selling fruit without a license and when the authorities confiscated his scale, he became enraged, confronted the police, and was slapped in the face. This led him to plead his case in the town's government office, but when it was rebuffed, he went outside and lit himself aflame. This small act became noticed by the populace at large and the anger "spread to other towns in the interior of the country, where unemployment among university graduates was approaching 50 percent." [37] Mass protests soon began with calls to end dictator Ben Ali's rule and democratic elections, however, Ali turned to the police and the slaughtering of protesters began in earnest.

The organization Wikileaks also played a role in starting up the protests, as files were released just days before Bouazizi lit himself aflame, which confirmed suspicions that many Tunisians already had: that Ben Ali was a corrupt dictator, that his family was extremely corrupt, and that life was incredibly difficult for the Tunisian poor and unemployed.

When this occurred, the US was deeply worried as Tunisia had significant military ties to the US. Tunisia cooperated "in NATO's Operation Active Endeavor, which provides counter-terrorism surveillance in the Mediterranean," participated in NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue, "and allow[ed] NATO ships to make port calls at Tunis." [38] Every now and then the US would criticize Tunisia for its record on political rights and freedom of expression, yet "In parallel with these expressions of concern, the United States continued to provide military and economic assistance to the Tunisian government." [39] Thus, the US began to play both sides. About two weeks after Ben Ali had fled the nation, America sent their top Middle East envoy to Tunisia and tried "to press its advantage to push for democratic reforms in the country and further afield." [40] While it may have appeared that the US was quickly trying to position itself on Tunisia's good side, they may have had a hand in Ali's

ousting as “According to some rumors in Tunis, the country’s army chief consulted with Washington before withdrawing his support from Ben Ali — a move which sealed the ousted president’s fate.” [41]

Almost as soon as the US was finished in Tunisia, they had even bigger problems on their hands with the protests in Egypt.

Egypt

Due to being inspired by the success of the Tunisian protests, the Egyptian people launched their own protest movement, calling for the overthrow of US puppet Hosni Mubarak. However, the US was busy co-opting the protest movement.

The US used the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) as a cover to help co-opt the protest movement. Ironically, the NED is not used for the spreading of democracy, rather it was established by the Reagan administration to aid in the overthrow of foreign governments, after the CIA’s covert operations were revealed. The NED was supported “As a bipartisan endowment, with participation from the two major parties, as well as the AFL-CIO and US Chamber of Commerce, the NED took over the financing of foreign overthrow movements, but overtly and under the rubric of ‘democracy promotion.’” [42] Thus, the US supported both Mubarak and the protesters, in a bid to make sure that no matter what occurred, America would still get its way.

Washington already had influence in Egyptian pro-democracy circles as in May 2009 many Egyptian activists that would eventually organize protests calling for the end of the dictator Mubarak’s reign

spent a week in Washington receiving training in advocacy and getting an inside look at the way U.S. democracy works. After their training, **the fellows were matched with civil society organizations throughout the country** where they shared experiences with U.S. counterparts. **The activists [wrapped] up their program this week by visiting U.S. government officials, members of Congress, media outlets and think tanks.** [43] (emphasis added)

Thus, due to the US aiding the activists, the Americans ensured that the protesters owed them a debt and that US interests would be secure even if Mubarak was ousted.

The Egyptian military also played a role in US plans. While they originally had protected protesters and refused to fire upon them, the Egyptian military showed just how supportive they were of a democratic Egypt when they began arresting and trying them before military courts, dissolved parliament, and suspended the constitution. In reality, the military junta that now controls Egypt is no different than the Mubarak regime when it controlled Egypt.

While the Egyptian military is currently in control until elections, no matter what occurs, America will still have its way.

Bahrain

Protests also began taking place in Bahrain. The people were tired of a government which “failed to abide by their own constitution, refused to investigate the crimes of torture and continued to expropriate more than half of the land of the country.” [44] The Bahraini

government was controlled by the Al Khalifa family, which has ruled Bahrain for over 300 years and has created an economy where there is a powerful and wealthy Sunni minority while the Shiite majority constantly faces discrimination in jobs and education, has little political representation, and are barred from many government and military positions.

The US was deeply troubled because of the protests as the Al Khalifa regime allowed for the Americans to station their Fifth Fleet in the country, which allows the US to patrol “the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, the Arabian Sea, and the east coast of Africa,” “keep an eye on – and, if necessary, rattle sabers – close to oil shipping lanes, Iran, and the increasing activity of pirates,” and “ [provide] basing and overflight clearances for US aircraft engaged in Afghanistan and [help] cut off money supplies to suspected Islamic terrorists.” [45] Thus, the Bahraini regime was of major importance to US regional interests.

The US showed that it would do anything to make sure that its puppet stayed in power when they backed the Saudi military intervention in Bahrain. The Saudis intervened on the behalf of the Bahraini government and began shooting into crowds of Bahraini protesters. [46] However, even though the protesters were being gunned down, they still were determined to fight for their rights against America’s puppets.

Libya

The Arab Spring movement also reached all the way to Libya, however, things were quite different as instead of having peaceful protests, opposition forces were picking up arms and fighting the Libyan military. Due to the then-leader of Libya, Col. Muammar Gaddafi, having never truly been a Western puppet, America launched a propaganda war to allow the US-NATO war machine to intervene in Libya on the grounds of “humanitarian intervention.”

The question that must be first asked is why the West even wanted to intervene in Libya. The answer is because Libya has Africa’s largest oil reserves and Western oil companies wanted access to them. However, there are also larger economic reasons. Months prior to the intervention, Gaddafi had called upon African and Muslims nations to adopt a single currency: the gold dinar. This would have excluded the dollar as the gold dinar would have been used to purchase goods, thus threatening the economies of Western nations. However, the creation of a gold dinar may have also

empowered the people of Africa, something black activists say the US wants to avoid at all costs.

“The US have denied self-determination to Africans inside the US, so we are not surprised by anything the US would do to hinder the self-determination of Africans on the continent,” says Cynthia Ann McKinney, a former US Congresswoman. [47]

There was also geopolitics at work as during the war, Gaddafi “vowed to expel Western energy companies from the country and replace them with oil firms from China, India, and Russia.” [48] This would have effectively excluded the West from ever getting at Libya’s oil. By ousting Gaddafi, the West would be able to have a puppet regime to counter Chinese and Russian moves in North Africa as well as access to Libyan oil.

What many of the media never asked until the conflict was nearing its end was who exactly were the rebels. In the Iraq war, most of the foreign fighters came from Libya and in that, **“almost all of them came from eastern Libya, the center of the anti-Gaddafi**

rebellion." [49] (emphasis added) A Libyan rebel commander even admitted that some of his soldiers had links to Al Qaeda:

In an interview with the Italian newspaper *Il Sole 24 Ore*, Mr al-Hasidi admitted that he had recruited "around 25" men from the Derna area in eastern Libya to fight against coalition troops in Iraq. Some of them, he said, are "today are on the front lines in Adjabiya".

Mr al-Hasidi insisted his fighters "are patriots and good Muslims, not terrorists," **but added that the "members of al-Qaeda are also good Muslims and are fighting against the invader"**. [50] (emphasis added)

Thus, the US and NATO were backing terrorists, yet they may have known seeing as how a 2007 West Point Study revealed that the Benghazi-Darnah-Tobruk area was a world leader in Al Qaeda suicide bomber recruitment. [51]

Due to the US and its NATO allies not wanting to look like the imperialists they truly were, Obama pressured the UN to pass a resolution allowing for the establishment of a no fly zone over Libya and an arms embargo on the nation. However, both were broken quite soon. The UN resolution clearly allowed all member states "acting nationally or through regional organizations or arrangements, to take all necessary measures to protect civilians under threat of attack in the country, including Benghazi, while excluding a foreign occupation force of any form on any part of Libyan territory." [52] However, the imperialists admitted that they wanted to overthrow Gaddafi in an op-ed piece, when Cameron, Sarkozy, and Obama stated: **"Our duty and our mandate under U.N. Security Council Resolution 1973 is to protect civilians**, and we are doing that. It is not to remove [G]addafi by force. **But it is impossible to imagine a future for Libya with [G]addafi in power."** [53] (emphasis added) The US and NATO clearly stated that their main goal was to overthrow Gaddafi.

The hypocrisy of the West ran deep as they found an excuse to intervene in Libya, but not in Egypt, Bahrain, Palestine, or any other location where people were being oppressed by local regimes. However, Western hypocrisy was shown near the outset of the conflict when it was reported that Egypt's military had begun to ship arms to the rebels *with Washington's knowledge*. [54] This clearly shows that supposed arms embargo on Libya was in reality, an embargo on Gaddafi's forces.

To whip up support for their "intervention," a massive media propaganda campaign was conducted against Gaddafi. The mainstream media were reporting things such as Gaddafi gave his troops Viagra to rape women, bombed civilians, and that Libyan troops gunned down civilians. Despite these claims being false, the mainstream media still reported it. However, what many people ignored was the fact that the rebel and NATO war crimes. In mid-August, "a NATO bombing campaign near the Libyan city of Zlitan earlier this month reportedly killed almost 100 civilians — more than half of them women and children." [55] However, NATO denied all claims arguing that they had struck legitimate targets. This is just one example of many NATO war crimes in Libya, ranging from killing civilians to bombing the rebels themselves. There were also reports that Libyan rebels were targeting and killing black Africans. All across eastern Libya the rebels "and their supporters [were] detaining, intimidating and frequently beating African immigrants and black Libyans, accusing them of fighting as mercenaries on behalf of [Gaddafi]," in some cases "executed suspected mercenaries captured in battle, according to Human Rights Watch and local Libyans," and "arbitrarily killed some mercenaries and in others cases failed to distinguish between them

and non-combatants.” [56] Yet, despite these and other numerous reports, the Libyan rebels excused their war crimes, saying that they didn’t have the structures in place to deal with matters such as these.

What was also somewhat ignored was the fact that the rebels were extremely fractured, only united in their goal to overthrow Gaddafi. This was clearly seen after the assassination of General Al-Younes and two top military commanders aides. Their deaths “resulted in internal fighting within the Transitional Council” with “Factional divisions [developing] within rebel forces.” [57] This factional divide may soon play itself out in the creation of a new Libyan government.

Finally, there was the fact that Western special forces were on the ground. The initial appearance of Western special forces was when British SAS troops were captured near Benghazi in March. However, US CIA agents were in Libya [58] and there may have been French and US special forces in Libya aiding the rebels. In a March interview on the O’Reilly Show, retired Colonel David Hunt of the US Army and Lt. Col. Tony Shaffer, a former Army intelligence officer were interviewed about the situation in Libya. Hunt stated the following when asked about special forces being in Libya:

Yes, absolutely. You’ve got British service been in there about three weeks ago and actually got captured and released. The French GIGN have been in there and our special forces and our U.S. intelligence operatives and their assets. We do not conduct operations like this, large scale air operations, without people on the ground. They have been very successful, very good, not a lot of contact with the rebels because you don’t know who to talk to. **But, yes, we have got intel gathering and rescue guys and special operations guys on the ground, have had them for about 12 days.** [59] (emphasis added)

Shaffer agreed, saying:

Yes, I have heard from my sources — I got a call from one of my key sources on Monday and that’s exactly what’s going on. Let’s be really clear here. **You have got to have these individuals doing what Dave just said,** especially when you are talking about trying to protect, and the stated goal here, Bill, is humanitarian support. So you don’t want to have weapons hitting the wrong targets. **So, Dave is very good on the fact that we have special operations guys sitting there with laser designators.** Bill, you saw... [60] (emphasis added)

The Americans constantly denied that they had boots on the ground, yet, as usual, they were lying.

The imperialists already had plans for a post-Gaddafi Libya, which consisted of “proposals for a 10,000-15,000 strong ‘Tripoli task force’, resourced and supported by the United Arab Emirates, to take over the Libyan capital, secure key sites and arrest high-level Gaddafi supporters.” [61] However, the plan may be problematic as it is “highly reliant on the defection of parts of the Gaddafi security apparatus to the rebels after his overthrow.” [62] There were far reaching economic consequences as it was reported that the new government would favor Western oil companies at the expense of Russian, Chinese, and Brazilian firms. [63]

Due to the imperialists succeeding in Libya, many are worried that the US-NATO war

machine may set its sights on a new target: Syria.

Syria

Protests in Syria began in earnest in May and have not let up since then. While there are calls for intervention into Syria, there is much at stake for America in terms of Syria's relationship with Iran.

The Americans are quite interested in the link between Iran and Syria, noting that there have been several joint ventures between the two nations in the financial and manufacturing sectors, as it was noted that "there have been several reports of increased Iranian investment and trade with Syria," "Iran has stated its intention to establish a joint Iranian-Syrian bank, possibly involving Bank Saderat and the Commercial Bank of Syria," and "the Iran Khodro Industrial Group has established a car assembly plant in Syria through a joint venture known as the Syrian-Iranian Motor Company." [64] There are also military links as Iran supplies weapons to Syria which, from the US perspective, pose a threat to its ally Israel. "In June 2010, Iran reportedly sent Syria an air defense radar system designed to detect Israeli aircraft or possibly increase the accuracy of Syrian and Hezbollah missile strikes against Israel in the event of a regional war." [65] Thus, the US was deeply worried about the link between two anti-American nations and the growing friendship between them.

Due to these worries, the US became involved in Syria's protest movement, using methods that are similar to the ones the Americans used in the Egyptian revolution and in the Libya conflict..

For the past five to six years, the US policy toward Syria has used what could be called a two-pronged strategy to push for regime change. **The US has supported "civil society" activists or external opposition organizations. It has also worked to delegitimize, destabilize and isolate the country through the application of sanctions and various other measures, which could be applied to exploit vulnerabilities.** [66] (emphasis added)

One "civil society" organization that is being used by the US is the Movement for Justice and Development (MJD), which is "closely affiliated with the London-based satellite channel Barada TV, which started broadcasting in April 2009 but 'ramped up operations to cover the mass protests in Syria.'" [67] The Americans may have wanted to work with MJD due to the fact that they are a moderate Islamic group which wants to end the Assad regime via democratic reform. This democratic reform may very well play right into America's hands if the US does intervene in Syria, they can back the MJD and argue that they are the same as Libya's rebels: people who want to end their oppressive regime and replace it with a democracy.

The US is using US organizations such as "Freedom House, American Bar Association, American University, Internews and work done by MEPI with the Aspen Strategic Initiative Institute, Democracy Council of California, Regents of the University of New Mexico and the International Republican Institute" [68] to aid in fomenting regime change in Syria by working with and funding Syrian "civil society" groups.

There have been many reports of the Syrian regime attacking unarmed protesters, however, one should be quite skeptical of these reports. The US media has reported that there are

violent Syrian protesters [69], which should make one question the official narrative that the protesters are peaceful. One must also include the fact that *there are absolutely no outside media sources in Syria whatsoever*. Journalists have contacts whom they can get information from, but who says that these sources are being objective, much less telling the truth? All the reports that are being shown in the mainstream media may very well be half-truths, if not outright fabrications.

The US may very well plan to attack Syria if manipulating civil societies does not work.

The Arab Spring, while an overall movement to overthrow oppressive regimes, has too many times been co-opted by foreign powers who seek only their personal gain. Due to this, the Arab people may never experience true freedom.

Debt Ceiling and Credit Downgrade

Once again, while the Empire was busy abroad attempting to impose its will on other nations, it was having major fiscal problems at home. In July the debt ceiling debate began as the Republicans decided to make what should have been a non-issue into a major problem and almost let the nation default in the process.

The debt ceiling would have been passed as usual, yet the Tea Parties in the House decided to refuse to increase the debt ceiling, citing the fact that the US was already \$14 trillion in debt and something needed to be done to solve the debt crisis before it became a major problem. Their remedy for the massive debt was to implement massive austerity measures. The Republicans specifically wanted to target Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid for massive cuts. The Democrats barely put up a fight to defend their constituents, and the debt ceiling agreement ended up being compromised solely of spending cuts, with a super Congress of 6 Democrats and six Republicans to come together and decide which group they were going to hurt the most.

While the media ate up the entire story, they didn't ask any serious questions such as how did the US end up with such a massive debt in the first place. The answer is because of the Wall Street bailouts, the quest for global military domination, tax cuts for the super-rich, and the increasing costs of healthcare, mainly due to medical insurance companies jacking up prices. However, the corporate media, which is in the hands of the ruling elite, has created a perception that the reason for this debt crisis is due to social programs even though this is completely false. [70] In the debt ceiling debacle, this perception would win out and would bring about America's credit downgrade.

Standard & Poor's downgraded the US debt rating to AA+ due to its loss of confidence in the US government and the stock market plunged as people viewed the downgrade as an indication that the US may very well be in decline. However, there were already signals prior to the S&P downgrade that America's economic situation was not well. In July, the IMF effectively pronounced the US bankrupt. [71] That same month, Dagong, a Chinese credit-rating agency, pointed out the problems with increasing the debt ceiling, stating that **"Raising the [debt] limit is just a legislative measure to allow the government to borrow more money, but it does not change the fact that the US lacks momentum for economic growth"** and that **"The fundamental problem is that the US' ability to generate wealth is far from compensating its increasing debt."** [72] (emphasis added) The month before that, German Rating Agency Fitch downgraded US bonds from AAA to AA on the grounds that "The U.S. government has fought the effects of the financial

market crisis primarily by an increase in government debt” and they “not see that there is sufficient attention being paid to other measures” [73] such as those previously mentioned above.

However, this brings up the larger picture of the role of credit rating agencies. Usually, they can be used as an indicator of the creditworthiness of a nation, but now it seems that they have undue influence in the economic and political realms of a nation. In essence, they can hold an entire country hostage by threatening to downgrade the nation’s credit rating if the agency’s demands aren’t fulfilled.

The Future of the American Empire

The American Empire has is now obviously in decline due to its waging of wars, tax cuts for the super wealthy, and massive debt. Thus this brings up the question that is on the minds of many Americans: What will happen to America in the future?

Economically, the US may not fair well as even after the bailout of Wall Street and \$700 billion meant to stimulate the economy, the “insolvency of the global financial system, and of the Western financial system in the first place, returns again to the front of the stage” [74] in the form of the US credit downgrade. US government debt may take a major hit as “US banks are starting to reduce their use of US Treasury Bonds to guarantee their transactions for fear of the increasing risks weighing on US government debt” and even US allies such as Saudi Arabia are worried about US debt. [75] The dollar is most likely going to decline to “something of a first among equals in a basket of currencies” which very well “may force the US into difficult tradeoffs between achieving ambitious foreign policy goals and the high domestic costs of supporting those objectives,” [76] such as constant military adventures every decade and massive aid to client states.

With the rise of new powers such as China, US military superiority, while safe on conventional grounds, may be unshaky in the realm of cyberspace and the US may have its rule challenged, not only in the Asia-Pacific region by China, but also in Latin America by Brazil and eastern Europe by Russia. This could potentially create situation where the Empire will have to choose between fighting against these new adversaries or work with them. If the Empire’s attitude today is any indication, they will fight rather than work with the new powers to create a multipolar international order.

While the American Empire is currently in decline, this could potentially lead to what has been called “a blossoming of the republic” in which the United States returns to its democratic and moral roots. No longer will the US support dictators and third-world governments, disregard international and domestic law, and prevent the self-determination of all peoples. Rather, the new America will respect the rule of law, support organic democratic uprisings, and reject its past history of militarism and unilateralism. This is the vision of America that I and many others around the world wish to see come to fruition.

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