

Hype of America's Mainstream Media: "Giving War a Chance"

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Theme: [Media Disinformation](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

NATO's one-month intervention in the Libyan civil war has demonstrated that – whether the West likes it or not – Col. Muammar Gaddafi retains significant political support in parts of the country and that a peace deal with him may be the only way to achieve the stated goal of saving civilian lives.

Meanwhile, back in the United States, the Pentagon continues to devour a large share of each budget dollar even as the gaping federal deficit is forcing cuts in many domestic programs, including nutrition and health care that can mean life-or-death for many Americans.

So, where do the neoconservative editors of the Washington Post and the New York Times come down?

Both continue to advocate an expanded U.S. military involvement in Libya while spurning the possibility of a political settlement with Gaddafi's regime. And the Post rejects the notion of deeper Pentagon spending cuts because it might jeopardize U.S. capabilities for a new war with Iran.

It seems that the neocons who dominate two of America's dominant newspapers can't get enough of "giving war a chance," an attitude reminiscent of their behavior prior to George W. Bush's invasion of Iraq in 2003.

The editorials of the Post and Times also underscore the fact that despite the worsening U.S. fiscal crisis, Washington's powerful neocons have not given up their grand scheme for remaking the Middle East by forcing "regime change" in Muslim countries that are considered hostile to Israel.

For instance, in [an April 21 editorial](#), the Post criticized President Barack Obama's plan to reduce military-related spending by \$400 billion over the next 12 years, roughly doubling the cost-cutting that Defense Secretary Robert Gates had previously identified.

"Reaching Mr. Obama's goal would probably require cuts in the size of the Army and Marines beyond the reduction of more than 40,000 troops already proposed by Mr. Gates," the Post wrote. "What will then happen if the United States is forced into more conflicts like those of the past decade — if it must intervene to prevent Iran's acquisition of a nuclear weapon or respond to aggression by North Korea, for example?"

"Mr. Gates, who is expected to leave office this year, said that big defense cuts 'would be disastrous in the world environment we see today.' While some reductions in defense are

inevitable, that is a warning that the administration and Congress cannot afford to disregard.”

Bombing Iran’s nuclear facilities has climbed to the top of Israel’s wish list in recent years. However, some American neocons believe U.S. military force would be needed to get the job done, much as U.S. troops were required to eliminate Iraq’s Saddam Hussein, whose removal had been near the top of earlier Israeli wish lists.

Old Enemy

Another old Israeli nemesis is Gaddafi, who supported Palestinian violent resistance to Israel in past decades.

Over the few weeks, the Post and Times have been out-front demanding that Obama reverse his decision to minimize U.S. military involvement in Libya, which has meant leaving enforcement of aerial attacks on Gaddafi’s forces to European members of NATO.

Castigating Obama’s refusal to recommit U.S. ground-attack planes, [the Post wrote](#) on April 17: “If his real aim were to plunge NATO into a political crisis, or to exhaust the air forces and military budgets of Britain and France — which are doing most of the bombing — this would be a brilliant strategy. As it is, it is impossible to understand.

“Mr. Obama appears less intent on ousting Mr. Gaddafi or ensuring NATO’s success than in proving an ideological point — that the United States need not take the lead in a military operation that does not involve vital U.S. interests.

“How else to explain his decision to deny NATO the two most effective ground attack airplanes in the world — the AC-130 and A-10 Warthog — which exist only in the U.S. Air Force and which were attacking Mr. Gaddafi’s tanks and artillery until April 4?”

The New York Times has been equally adamant about seeing the AC-130s and A-10 Warthogs put back into action mowing down Libyan troops loyal to Gaddafi. “Mr. Obama should authorize them to fly again under NATO command,” [the Times declared](#) on April 14, reiterating [a demand](#) made just a week earlier.

The Post and Times have continued this drumbeat for military escalation even as Gaddafi’s side embraced a peace proposal from the African Union, which included a cease-fire and acceptance of democratic reforms. The Libyan rebels rebuffed the offer, insisting that the ouster of Gaddafi and his family must be a precondition to any settlement.

That rejection came at a time of a worsening humanitarian crisis in the besieged rebel-held city of Misurata and amid reports of atrocities being committed by rebel troops against suspected Gaddafi loyalists.

There have also been [reports](#) that surface-to-air missiles seized by Libyan rebels are ending up in the hands of Al Qaeda terrorists who might use them to shoot down civilian airliners. Though most Libyan rebels appear to be motivated by a desire to oust Gaddafi from power, their stronghold around Benghazi has been [known as a hotbed](#) for radical jihadists.

However, instead of giving peace a chance, NATO nations – egged on by neocon opinion leaders on both sides of the Atlantic – are moving toward a long-term program of providing the rebels with military training, supplies and weapons. [For more on the U.S. press, see Consortiumnews.com’s “[Warriors of the Mainstream Media](#)” and “[Through the US Media’s Lens Darkly](#).”]

Peace Obstacles

The Washington Post’s editors also have chastised Obama for pressuring Israel regarding peace negotiations with the Palestinians, rather than concentrating American influence and power on unseating Israel’s principal adversaries in the Muslim world, in places like Libya and Syria.

[In an April 15 editorial](#), the Post criticized the Obama administration’s emphasis on an Israeli-Palestinian agreement, while faulting Obama for “eschewing active American leadership in Libya, Syria and elsewhere in the Arab world.”

The Post expressed special concern over a Palestinian plan to seek United Nations recognition of a Palestinian state in September. While denouncing this proposal, the Post argued that the real obstacle to an Israeli-Palestinian peace has been the obstinance of the Palestinians:

“Palestinian leaders have little interest in negotiating with the current Israeli government. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has met with Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu just twice in two years and has conditioned further talks on concessions that he knows Israel will not make — such as a freeze on all housing construction in Jerusalem.”

The editorial reiterated points made in [a column](#) last month by deputy editorial page editor Jackson Diehl. The newspaper headline for Diehl’s column had decried Obama as “a barrier to Mideast peace.” The online headline asked, “Whose side is he on?”

Diehl also absolved Likud hard-liners, while pointing the finger of blame at Abbas, who, Diehl wrote, “has repeatedly shrunk from committing himself to the painful concessions he knows would be needed for Palestinian statehood.”

On that point, Diehl and the Post editorial willfully ignored the evidence, since Al Jazeera reported earlier this year that [leaked documents](#) revealed Abbas making major land concessions to Israel including the surrender of almost all of East Jerusalem, infuriating many Palestinians. However, the Israelis still were not willing to reach an agreement with Abbas.

Washington’s influential neocons continue to frame the debate in ways most supportive of their long-held goal of applying U.S. military and diplomatic power to advance Israel’s geopolitical interests in the region.

[For more on these topics, see Robert Parry’s *Secrecy & Privilege* and *Neck Deep*, now available in a two-book set for the discount price of only \$19. For details, [click here](#).]

Robert Parry broke many of the Iran-Contra stories in the 1980s for the Associated Press and Newsweek. His latest book, Neck Deep: The Disastrous Presidency of George W. Bush, was written with two of his sons, Sam and Nat, and can be ordered at [neckdeepbook.com](#). His two previous books, Secrecy & Privilege: The Rise of the Bush Dynasty from Watergate to

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