

Media Pretend Not To Know About British Boots on the Ground in Libya

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

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

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Yesterday Philip Hammond, UK foreign secretary, visited a naval base in Tripoli to be shown docking facilities for British military vessels. The authoritative Jane's Defence Weekly published that the 150 strong amphibious [Special Purpose Task Group](#) of commandos and special forces is in the Mediterranean on the amphibious warfare vessel Mounts Bay. Obviously purely a coincidence with Hammond's visit!

Just as in Syria and in Yemen it will not be admitted that British forces are in combat. In classic Cold War fashion, they are "military advisers and trainers." There is a specific development which disconcerts me in Yemen, where the SAS operatives supporting the devastating Saudi bombings of the Houthi population have been seconded to MI6. There is a convention that military operations are reported to Parliament and MI6 operations are not, so the sole purpose of screening the SAS as MI6 is to deceive the UK's own parliament.

That of course only adds to the utter immorality of British support of the appalling Saudi bombing campaign. Britain's supplying the arms to the Saudis and lending direct military assistance amounts to complicity [in war crime](#).

Saudi Arabia pursued the overproduction of oil initially to force out high cost US fracking producers. That objective has largely been achieved with a substantive fall in US production. But Saudi strategists have now been struck by the potential for continued low oil prices to cause pressure for the Russian budget. This was a key factor in the Saudi decision to block any moves towards OPEC production curbs. The Saudis are now obsessed with the notion of full Sunni control over Syria, and aim to pile economic pressure on Russia to achieve this. But it is by no means clear that the level of pain which would be required to force Putin to end military support for Assad, would not also put so much strain on the Saudi budget that it would risk destabilising the Saudi regime itself.

Just what could cause western elites to acknowledge that Saudi Arabia is the largest single problem in the Middle East, and that continued support of the House of Saud is entirely counterproductive, it is difficult to envisage. The problem of course is that what is bad for the world can be very profitable for the 1%.

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