

The West's Present "Misconduct" Has a Long History. America's Proclivity for War

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Region: [USA](#)
Theme: [History](#)

One of the persistent themes of western political leaders is that they support the notion of "the rule of law". By this they generally mean the system of law as developed by western nations, and in the international context the formulation over the past 120 years or so of international law.

By this of course, they mean "their law". Any deviation from this by non-western nations is to be deplored and where appropriate punished.

The epitome of this approach was to be found in the Nuremberg trials and their Japanese equivalent that followed victory in the Second World War. The waging of war was declared to be the supreme international crime. The chief American counsel at the Nuremberg Tribunal, Robert Jackson, stated that the Nuremberg trials placed "international law squarely on the side of peace as against aggressive warfare."

The Nuremberg and Tokyo trials may be seen in retrospect as the apogee of the concept that waging war was an offence against humanity. Since 1945 the major western powers, notably but not exclusively limited to the United States, have waged almost continuous war.

This has mostly been directed at countries that lack the ability, military or otherwise, to fight back.

Neither is this a new phenomena. Wikipedia has an astonishing list of wars involving the United States going back to the Revolutionary War of 1775-1783 and continuing almost unabated up to the present day. With unintentional humour, World War Two is listed as a "United States-Allied victory."

As any student of that war knows, the vast bulk of the fighting and the casualties, took place on the eastern front between Germany and its allies and the Soviet Union. The war had been waging for more than two years before the Americans became a formal party. Total American losses during World War II were just over 407,000, fewer than Russia lost in the battle of Stalingrad alone (478,000 killed or missing) over a period of five months.

The West's proclivity for war continued unabated after the end of World War Two. The Korean War (1950-53), the Vietnam War 1945-1975), Afghanistan (2001-?, Iraq 2003- ?) and Syria (2008 - ?) are only some of the better known conflicts. There were constant lesser battles carried out by the United States and its allies, particularly in the Caribbean and Latin America, seen (by the United States) as part of its own sphere of influence since the Munro doctrine was first proposed in December 1823.

One of the outstanding features of these post-World War II invasions, occupations, or warfare by other means, is that they have shown a diminishing degree of success. Where they have been unsuccessful on the battlefield, the United States has continued to wage economic and financial war on its foes.

The classic illustration of this is the Korean War, the origins and conduct of which has always been grossly misrepresented by the West. It is however, instructive on a number of levels. The North-South boundary was drawn by two United States functionaries following the defeat of the occupying Japanese in 1945. The Soviet army, which occupied the North following the end of the war, withdrew in 1948. The United States, which occupied the South, has never left and today sees South Korea as an essential element in its encirclement of China.

There are literally hundreds of United States military bases in proximity to or aimed at China, yet the western media are solely preoccupied with alleged Chinese “aggression” actual or potential. Apart from its multiple military bases, the United States regularly carries out military exercises with its regional allies such as Japan and Australia that are thinly disguised preparations for waging war on China. One such regular exercise practices blockading vital Chinese trade routes through the Straits of Hormuz.

The Korean War was instructive on a number of levels. The invasion of the North by United States and Allied troops reached the Chinese border, which threatened the new PRC. We now know that the United States military command sought President Truman’s consent to use their virtual monopoly of nuclear weapons (certainly China had none) to bomb the PRC.

The primary objective was to reinstate the Chiang Kai Shek Government that had fled to what was then called Formosa following its defeat in the Chinese Civil War.

The intervention of the PRC in the Korean War was decisive. United States and Allied troops were rapidly expelled from the North. What was instructive also however was that the United States used its overwhelming air superiority to effectively destroy North Korea’s civilian infrastructure and food producing capacity.

This was instructive on a number of levels. Not only was the destruction of civilian targets a monumental war crime (for which they hung Germans following the Nuremberg trials), but there has never been legal accountability for these crimes. Again, this precedent is instructive for the actions and lack of accountability for American war crimes to this day.

Despite enormous Western pressure, most of it illegal under international law, the North Koreans have survived to this day. There is still no peace treaty to formally end the war, although it is now more than 66 years since the armistice. North Korea is now a nuclear armed power and in this writer’s view any expectation that they will disarm is delusional.

Those nuclear weapons, and the military protection of Russia and China are the major deterrent to further United States aggression in the region.

Vietnam was a similar defeat for United States imperialism in the region. Again, a long war (1945-1975) fought first by the French and then by the United States and its Western allies following the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu In May 1954.

Although the United States did not use nuclear weapons, they employed a full range of other

chemical and biological mechanisms, the use of which were again war crimes perpetrated on a civilian population. The consequences of this chemical and biological warfare persist to the present day in the form of ravaged agricultural land, and most distressingly, children still being born with deformities directly attributable to the chemical and biological warfare agents employed by the United States throughout the war.

Again, in what is by now a manifestly common pattern, the perpetrators of these war crimes remain completely immune from prosecution, notwithstanding token prosecutions of low level military officers such as Lieutenant William Calley for the My Lai massacre. An article in the United States publication *Foreign Policy* (21 May 2019) is titled “America Loves Excusing its War Criminals” is a perfect encapsulation of the reality.

More recently two other major wars illustrate a number of facets, including deceptive motivations for the wars; persistent lying about the realities following the invasions; and the extraordinary difficulties by the victim nations in dislodging the invaders, even decades later.

The two wars in question are Afghanistan (2001 – to the present and counting) and Iraq (2003 to the present and counting). In both cases the ostensible justification for the invasion were blatant lies. Ron Susskind’s book on Bush’s Treasury Secretary Paul O’Neill (*The Price of Loyalty* 2004) revealed how the decision to invade Afghanistan was made well before the purported reason of the events of 11 September 2001. Rather, the invasion and occupation had more to do with Afghanistan’s strategic location and the oil routes from the Caspian Sea basin than any alleged role by Osama bin Laden who was alleged (falsely) to have orchestrated the use of aeroplanes to destroy public buildings in New York and Washington.

In Iraq’s case the monstrous lies told and repeated ad nauseam by loyal allies, was Saddam Hussain’s “weapons of mass destruction.”

It is not difficult to perceive recurring patterns here. Countries that are strategically located with valuable resources become the object of invasion, occupation and the theft of those resources and suffering enormous civilian casualties (well over 1 million people in the case of both countries). None of the allegations ever bear any resemblance to the truth.

Similarly, in another recurring pattern, none of the perpetrators of these monstrous activities ever face a court holding them to account for their crimes. There are of course many examples. When one examines the record of invasions, occupations, demonstrable lies uttered in justification, and ongoing theft of natural resources it is impossible to reconcile this history with the “rules based international law” mantra so solemnly repeated by western leaders.

There are however, some encouraging signs that this era of lawless banditry may be approaching its end days. I refer here to the rapid rise of China, or more accurately, the reemergence of China as the dominant power in the world.

Through a variety of initiatives, of which the BRI is the biggest and best known (and significantly, opposed by the United States and Australia). There are a variety of other economic and political initiatives that are of a truly transformative nature. Their very successful present and likely future trends are a major reason the United States is using every weapon in its political, economic and financial arsenal to oppose and undermine these predominantly Chinese led initiatives.

In this writer's view, that attempted sabotage will ultimately fail, although at considerable cost to a number of nations. As we enter 2020 however, these initiatives, from China in the East to Russia in the West and beyond, offer the best prospect of a stable world than the past disastrous two centuries of western dominance have proved to be.

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