

Toxic Modus Operandi of the UN Security Council. Ban Ki-moon: “It Is Unacceptable For Member States To Exert Undue Pressure.”

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Theme: [United Nations](#)

Global Research, August 07, 2016

Human Rights Watch stated during today’s UN Security Council meeting on Children and Armed Conflict: “Unlawful air strikes by the Saudi-led coalition have killed and maimed hundreds of children in Yemen and damaged dozens of schools, but the coalition strong-armed the Secretary-General in an attempt to escape scrutiny. The coalition should be returned to the Secretary-General’s list of shame until it stops its indiscriminate bombardment of Yemen’s civilians.”

Among the most incriminating disclosures at a press briefing held by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International at the United Nations on June 29th is the information that the US and UK have been active participants in this mass slaughter of civilians in Yemen, by providing intelligence to Saudi Arabia which has led to 3,000 civilian deaths in Yemen from Saudi air strikes. The US and UK are legally responsible for these war crimes, which can only be described as deliberate. According to Philippe Bolojian of Human Rights Watch, the Pentagon has been providing targeting assistance to the “coalition forces” led by Saudi Arabia, and a letter sent by Human Rights Watch to US Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter more than one year ago, demanding cessation of this complicity has received no reply one year later. Human Rights Watch Deputy-Director Bolojian described Yemen as “one of the most hellish places on earth for children.”

In a call to suspend Saudi Arabia from the UN Human Rights Council, Amnesty International stated that Saudi Arabia has cynically manipulated its membership in the Human Rights Council to shield itself from accountability:

“As a member of the Human Rights Council Saudi Arabia is required to uphold the highest standards of human rights. In reality, it has led a military coalition which has carried out unlawful and deadly airstrikes on markets, hospitals and schools in Yemen. The coalition has also repeatedly used internationally banned weapons in civilian areas. At home it has carried out hundreds of executions, put children on death row after grossly unfair trials, and ruthlessly repressed opposition and human rights activists....In recent weeks, Saudi Arabia has evaded accountability by pressuring the UN to remove the military coalition it leads in Yemen from a list of states and armed groups that violate childrens rights in armed conflict. Saudi Arabia threatened to disengage from the UN, withdraw its financial support including humanitarian projects, and to take its close allies with it. Key allies of Saudi Arabia, including the USA and UK, have failed to halt transfers of arms for use in Yemen despite mounting evidence of war crimes.”

In a howl of protest against what the Spokesman for UN Secretary-General described as overwhelming pressure, the UN Secretary-General exposed what has been the toxic modus operandi of the United Nations since the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 678 in 1990, authorizing the military action against Iraq which “destroyed the infrastructure necessary to support human life in Iraq,” as attested to by Marti Ahtissari in his report on the consequences of that 1991 US UK coalition’s relentless bombing of Iraq throughout the winter of 1991.

Ban Ki-moon’s highest level disclosure of the threats and blackmail to which he was subjected after issuing a report denouncing coalition attacks (the ‘list of shame’) massacring children in schools and patients and doctors in hospitals reveals the way “business as usual” is too often conducted, at all levels at the United Nations, leading to the discrediting of the legitimacy of the United Nations. Ban Ki-moon denounced as “unacceptable for member states to exert undue pressure.”

At a press encounter on June 9th, the Secretary-General, after submitting to “bullying” by Saudi-Arabia, and removing their name from the “list of shame” stated:

“There has been fierce reaction to my decision to temporarily remove the Saudi-led Coalition countries from the report’s annex. This was one of the most painful and difficult decisions I have had to make. The report describes horrors no child should have to face. At the same time, I also had to consider the very real prospect that millions of other children would suffer grievously if, as was suggested to me, countries would de-fund many UN programmes. Children already at risk in Palestine, South Sudan, Syria, Yemen and so many other places would fall further into despair. It is unacceptable for Member States to exert undue pressure. Scrutiny is a natural and necessary part of the work of the United Nations.”

Although the coalition has been accused of “indiscriminate” bombing of non-military and civilian targets in Yemen, the involvement of the Pentagon in providing targeting assistance leads to a more sinister interpretation of possibly deliberate “coalition” action, substantiating allegations of war crimes.

In his final months in office, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon may have rendered a great service to the UN, exposing the process which is betraying the original purpose of the UN, desecrating and transforming the UN into an instrument of war.

Twenty-five years ago, during the inexorable drumbeat of the UN Security Council leading to the “coalition” attack which devastated Iraq, and began the transformation of that country into an incubator of terrorism, I asked the Ambassador of a non-permanent member of the Security Council, representative of a country adamantly opposed to military action against Iraq, whether he had been subjected to pressure to change his position by the then Soviet Union. He replied: “Never.” I then asked him whether he had been subjected to pressure by the US, and he replied: “Constantly.” When I asked whether I could quote him, he replied: “If you do, I will never speak to you again.” Ultimately, the then US Secretary of State James Baker wrung the arm of the Ambassador’s Foreign Minister, and the country reversed its position, and supported the “War Resolution, 678” in violation of its own principles. Perhaps if that Ambassador had agreed to expose this pressure to which his country was being subjected, the ensuing perversion of the United Nations could have been prevented, and the devastation of Iraq, with its deadly and tragic consequences could have

been avoided.

Ban Ki-moon's howl of protest against the "undue pressure" to which he has been subjected, compelling him to act against his own conscience, may have proved his most important service to the United Nations, as he affirmed that "Scrutiny is a natural and necessary part of the work of the United Nations."

After two terms in office, and almost a decade at the job, this may become his parting gift to the organization he must lead, and his legacy.

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