

WaPo Editors: We Have to Help Destroy Yemen to Save It

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Over the past year, the **Washington Post** editorial board has routinely ignored the US's involvement in the siege of Yemen—a bombing and starvation campaign that has killed over 15,000 civilians and left roughly a million with cholera. As FAIR noted last November ([11/20/17](#)), the **Washington Post** ran a major editorial ([11/8/17](#)) and an explainer ([11/19/17](#)) detailing the carnage in Yemen without once mentioning the US's role in the conflict—instead pinning it on the seemingly rogue Saudis and the dastardly Iranians.

This was in addition to an op-ed that summer by editorial page editor Jackson Diehl ([6/26/17](#)), which not only ignored the US's support of Saudi bombing but actually spun the US as the savior of Yemenis, holding up Saudi Arabia's biggest backer in the Senate, Lindsey Graham, as a champion of human rights.

In recent months, however, the **Post** has charted a new course: vaguely acknowledging Washington's role in the bloody siege, but insisting that the US should remain involved in the bombing of Yemen for the sake of humanitarianism.



Washington Post ([3/24/18](#)) says that the Saudi war on Yemen “has helped create the world’s most dire humanitarian crisis”—but argues for continued participation in that war.

In two recent editorials, “Can Congress Push the Saudi Prince Toward an Exit From Yemen?” ([3/24/18](#)) and “The World’s Worst Humanitarian Crisis Could Get Even Worse” ([5/28/18](#)), the **Washington Post** board has cooked up a new, tortured position that the US should not stop supporting the Saudis—a move 30-year CIA veteran and Brookings fellow Bruce Riedel [argued](#) in 2016 would “end the war overnight”—but mildly chide the Saudis into committing slightly fewer war crimes while moving towards some vague exit strategy.

In the March editorial, the **Post** insisted “the United States...should use its leverage to stop this reckless venture,” and that Trump “condition further American military aid on humanitarian relief measures.” A step in the right direction, right? Quite the opposite. When one reads closer, it’s clear that while the **Post** wanted Trump to moderately roll back the most egregious war crimes, it still lobbied against the [Lee/Sanders bill](#) that would have actually ended the war.

Monday’s editorial took this faux-humanitarian half-measure one step further with this bit of revisionist history:

Both the Obama and Trump administrations have offered limited support to the Saudi coalition, while trying to restrain reckless bombing and the exacerbation of the humanitarian crisis.

The idea that Obama and Trump offered the Saudis “limited” support is a glaring lie. The US’s support—from [logistical support, to refueling](#), to selling [\\$110 billion in arms](#), to [political cover at the UN](#), to [literally choosing targets on a map](#)—has been crucial to carrying out the three-and-a-half-year campaign. Again, according to one of the most white-bread, establishment commentators, US support isn’t ancillary, it’s essential. Without it, there is no bombing campaign.

The Post’s View • Opinion

The world’s worst humanitarian crisis could get even worse



Obama and Trump “have offered limited support” to the Saudi-led war on Yemen, says the Washington

Post ([5/28/18](#))—and by “limited,” they mean “\$110 billion worth.”

The problem is the **Washington Post** is charged with a contradictory task: to act as a Very Concerned champion of human rights while propping up the core tenets of America’s imperial foreign policy. It’s an extremely difficult sleight-of-hand when the US is backing a bombing campaign targeting some of the poorest people on Earth, so their support of this slaughter is actually spun as an attempt to rein it in. The US is going to bring down the system from the inside!

The most logical way the US can stop the slaughter of Yemen is to stop engaging it in it. But to the **Washington Post**, this runs against the US policy of bombing and/or sanctioning anything that has the most remote connection to Iran, so this simple course is just not on the table. Instead, the **Post**’s propaganda objective—after years of simply ignoring the US role altogether—is to paint its participation in war crimes as a way of preventing slightly worse war crimes; a good cop to Saudi’s bad cop. This permits business as usual while maintaining the pretense the US cares about human rights—in other words, the **Post**’s basic ideological purpose.

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