

War At Any Cost: Another Manufactured Pretext for War with Syria

By [Eric Draitser](#)

Global Research, June 26, 2012

26 June 2012

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

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

The downing of a Turkish jet by the Syrian military last week was not merely a military incident making the possibility of an intervention and regional war much more likely. This episode was the most recent in a long and storied history of “international incidents” or provocations used by imperial powers as pretexts for military aggression. Without such incidents, the forces of imperialism are seen as nothing more than aggressors, out to destroy weaker nations in their own interests. However, with the necessary justifications that such episodes provide, those same powers can portray their wars as justified, necessary, and wholly righteous.

This event last week was only the latest in a series of provocations specifically designed to justify a military intervention. However, as the façade of the Houla “massacre”, the use of children as human shields, and the countless other lies propagated by the Western media have been debunked or otherwise exposed, the Western imperialist ruling class looks for a new incident to legitimize their plan for total war on Syria.

Just the Facts

On June 21, a [Turkish jet was shot down by Syrian military forces](#). Initially, the Western media rushed to portray this incident as a blatantly aggressive action by Assad and his military, hoping to play off their many months of propagandizing the public into believing Assad to be the devil incarnate. [Vigorous condemnations were heard from all corners of the Western ruling establishment](#), as the world seemed to move closer to another so-called intervention. However, as the episode unfolded, the media had to backtrack and, as usual, reversed their initial story without a fraction of the fanfare that the initial lie had. They had to admit publicly that, in fact, the [Turkish jet had violated Syrian airspace](#) and so, according to international law, Syria was well within their rights to shoot it down. This fact gets lost in the narrative however, as the world looks to NATO, the military arm of US power projection around the world, to “act decisively”. This episode is merely the latest attempt by the imperialist establishment to drum up support for some form of military intervention by portraying the Assad regime as bloodthirsty monsters. Last month, we saw the world recoil in horror at the brutality of what came to be known as the Houla “massacre”. However, as the United States, France, and the other Western powers attempted to spin the event as a brutal example of why they must wage war on Syria, [the truth came out that](#), in fact, the victims of the massacre were not killed by government shelling, but by close range execution attributable to the NATO-sponsored death squads unleashed on the people of Syria.

Like the Houla massacre, the outrageous claim that the Syrian military was using children as human shields was designed to play on the emotions of the international community in hopes of eliciting a swift response and creating the a climate conducive to war. Naturally, no evidence exists to back up this claim other than [a dubious UN report](#) based on so-called “activists” and “eyewitnesses”. The Western propagandists are less interested in being able to support these claims than simply making them and implanting them into the public consciousness.

The Historical Precedent

These sorts of manufactured provocations are nothing new. There is a rich historical record of such incidents being manipulated, distorted, or entirely fabricated in order to create a pretext for war. One of the most famous examples of what has come to be known as the “false flag” phenomenon is the [Gleiwitz incident](#). Nazi operatives dressed as Polish soldiers attacked a German radio station and then claimed that this was the work of Polish saboteurs. The Nazis even went so far as to import bodies and stage an entire scene which could then be offered up to the press as “evidence” of the assault. Naturally, the incident was used as the direct pretext for the Nazi invasion of Poland and the official start of World War II.

A similar international false flag event, today known as the Gulf of Tonkin incident, led to the official start of the Vietnam War. The claim was that the North Vietnamese had deliberately fired on two separate US naval vessels and that this, as an act of war, justified the US officially entering the war. Of course, these incidents have since been totally debunked by [declassified documents that show](#), even at the time, lawmakers were skeptical of the claims. However, this episode illustrates the power of manufactured provocations to shape the course of foreign policy and the waging of war.

Perhaps no so-called “international incident” demonstrates more plainly the power of the media to influence public opinion and provide the necessary pretext for war than the sinking of the USS Maine. This event, which was manufactured by William Randolph Hearst and the US establishment in order to justify imperial aggression against Cuba, demonstrates the role of the media in making the case for war. In the lead-up to the sinking of the Maine, Hearst’s and other papers published wild stories of Spanish atrocities all throughout Cuba, the sorts of atrocities that required intervention. Naturally, the Maine incident provided the cover and the US entered into what came to be known as the Spanish-American War. More importantly, however, today’s observers should note that this moment in history is perhaps the official beginning of US imperialism (treatment of the indigenous Native population on the continent notwithstanding).

What To Do?

What makes this issue of false flag events and “international incidents” relevant is the fact that the imperialist ruling class will manufacture as many of these sorts of episodes as is necessary for their war. Because of this, it is incumbent on the forces standing in opposition to such aggression to uphold the principles of international law and justice. Syria was well within their rights to shoot down a foreign jet operating within their airspace, just as the US military would be within its rights to shoot down a Mexican warplane within US airspace. However, this episode is far larger than simply international law. Indeed, it strikes at the heart of the concept of the nation-state. It demonstrates first, the power of the nation, with its leaders, citizens, and institutions to resist the forces of imperialism. Conversely, it shows

the existential need of the imperialist ruling class to destroy strong, independent nations that refuse to be enslaved by the forces of finance capital and imperial economic domination. Syria is the frontline of the struggle against these forces, and those who believe themselves to be anti-imperialists must unite to denounce provocations, pretexts, and legitimizations manufactured by the imperialist ruling class and preempt all their attempts to drive the world ever closer to total war.

The original source of this article is Global Research
Copyright © [Eric Draitser](#), Global Research, 2012

[**Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page**](#)

[**Become a Member of Global Research**](#)

Articles by: [Eric Draitser](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca
www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.
For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca