

The War Crimes of Obama and Hillary Clinton: Libya, Syria and Yemen

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In-depth Report: [NATO'S WAR ON LIBYA, SYRIA](#)

"The crimes of the United States have been systematic, constant, vicious, remorseless, but very few people have actually talked about them. You have to hand it to America. It has exercised a quite clinical manipulation of power worldwide while masquerading as a force for universal good." (Harold Pinter, Nobel Prize speech 2005)(1)

Many people thought that US President Obama, who was in power from 2009 – 2017, would be a huge improvement over President Bush when it came to foreign policy. They believed that he would be far less militaristic. However, this view was somewhat naïve. US Presidents from the Democratic Party have historically been involved in many wars, and Obama virtually boasted of bombing 7 countries.(2) He ordered a new bombing campaign in Iraq, extended the Afghan war into Pakistan, destroyed Libya, and sent US forces to fight in Yemen, Somalia and Syria. He also openly assassinated people, including US citizens, using pilotless drones. Not only is this a serious crime, but for each person deliberately killed, it is estimated that, on average, somewhere between ten and fifty innocent bystanders were also killed.(3)

Some readers will be aware of a sequence of events beginning in 2011 that were called the 'Arab Spring', where populations in the Middle East protested against their governments. These events highlight a number of the points that we have already explored. There were large-scale protests in Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, but these regimes have historically been supported by the US, so the US has not provided assistance to the protestors in these countries,(4) despite the fact that these countries have very poor human rights records. Various commentators have noted that British and US journalists misleadingly use the term 'moderate arab states' when they are describing some of the most extreme religious governments, such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt.(5)

However, Libya under Colonel Gaddafi, and Syria under Bashar al-Assad, were considered to be official US enemies, so the US, Britain, France and other countries have supported the protestors there. It is important to be aware that events in these two countries are rather different from events in other 'Arab Spring' countries. Elsewhere, the protests have mostly been ordinary people engaging in protest. In Syria and Libya, eyewitness accounts indicate that many of the 'protestors' have been extremists (in other words, terrorists) who have been much more violent.(6)

Libya

The US and their allies flew 26,000 sorties to drop bombs on Libya in 2011. The actions of

US and British bombers, and the terrorists supported by the West, have led to “mass death, ethnic cleansing, mass displacement for millions of Libyans, and the destruction of the entire country.”(7) The US and Britain claimed that the reason for their involvement was humanitarian intervention, to avert a massacre, but this was yet another lie. An investigation in Parliament in the UK in 2016 showed that there was no evidence that a massacre would have taken place.(8) The US and Britain created other propaganda to generate support for the invasion. They claimed that Gaddafi was giving Viagra to his troops to encourage mass rape, but there was again no evidence for this.(9)

Wikileaks obtained over 250,000 documents about Libya,(10) and 10% of them referred to oil. Gaddafi had been concerned for a number of years that foreign oil companies had too much control over Libya’s oil, and was intending to change that. Wikileaks’ release of US Secretary-of-State Hillary Clinton’s e-mails has also provided good evidence about the real motives for French involvement in the military attacks on Libya. They show that the French President, Sarkozy, was motivated to support the war for the following reasons(11):

- 1) Access to Libyan oil reserves
- 2) For French firms to be rewarded with contracts
- 3) To ensure French influence in the region and to prevent Gaddafi’s influence in French-speaking parts of Africa. In particular, to stop the creation of an African currency that would replace the dominant French franc, and would help to unify Africa.
- 4) To increase Sarkozy’s reputation domestically
- 5) To assert French military power

Further emails indicate that a US motive for the war was to boost President Obama’s approval rating. The emails make it clear that the US government understood that overthrowing Gaddafi was likely to strengthen terrorist organisations in the region. They also understood that the people in Libya who were trying to overthrow Gaddafi were not moderate opponents, but were themselves terrorists committing widespread atrocities. There is one final issue that the emails highlight. Gaddafi’s son was actually trying to negotiate a peaceful resolution, but Hillary Clinton was not interested. Quite clearly, overthrowing Gaddafi in order to control resources, particularly oil, was the goal from the beginning.(12) The US government actively pursued another criminal war.(13)

The mainstream media have completely failed to acknowledge the importance of Gaddafi’s role in Africa. He introduced communications technology to Africa that gave the whole continent the opportunity to do telephone, television, radio and long-distance teaching without having to pay enormous fees to Europe.(14) He was trying to set up an African Monetary Fund, and African Banks, so that African countries could fund their development independently, without being exploited by the French or the Americans. The creation of an African currency (point 3 above) to replace the French currency that had effectively strangled development in much of Africa for many years, would be an enormously positive step. He intended that African oil would be traded in the new currency, displacing the US dollar.(15) The US considered this to be a serious threat to their ability to exploit the continent.(16)

It is worth noting that the quality of life in countries that the US attacks is often higher than most people realise (before the US start bombing.) The UN Human Development Index, which measures health, education and income, ranked Libya first in the whole of Africa before 2011.(17) Similarly, the standard of living in Iraq before the US began destroying the country in the early 1990s was close to the standard of living in advanced nations.(18)

Syria



In an article written in 2007, officials from the US admitted that they had worked with Saudi Arabia and Israel to create a 'militant front of extremists' (in other words, an army of terrorists) for the sole purpose of causing the destabilisation of Syria, with the aim of overthrowing the government.(19) This terrorist army has been supplied with huge quantities of weapons by the governments involved. The US spy agency, the CIA, has been training and arming thousands of terrorists, at a cost of \$1 billion per year. Syria is an example of what is known as a 'proxy' war, where the US and British governments do not use their own soldiers in large numbers. Instead they provide support for other groups who do most of the fighting. However, they do use their air force to fire missiles and drop bombs. The exact details of who was doing what in Syria are complex, with different parts of the US government disagreeing with each other, and policy being changed repeatedly. The US attempt to overthrow Assad has failed, partly because the Russian government intervened to help the Syrian government from 2015 onwards. Over 400,000 people have died since 2011(20) and parts of Syria are now in chaos. US sanctions are making the situation worse.

The British government originally claimed that its military was not involved in Syria, but British pilots were 'loaned' to the Canadian air force so that they could participate in attacks. By 2017 there were over 1,000 British military personnel in Syria and "the government reported that RAF operations in Syria far outstripped the intensity of the UK's operations in Iraq and Afghanistan".(21) The British government also had an important propaganda role in Syria, where they funded citizen journalists to promote the UK's strategic interests in Syria and the Middle East.(22) Many of these journalists in Syria had no idea that they were actually doing propaganda for the UK.

In order to justify their involvement in Syria, the US claimed that Assad was using chemical weapons. However, the evidence indicates that the chemical weapons were actually planted by the terrorists, to create a false justification for the US's involvement. Chemical weapons are inspected by an organisation called the OPCW (Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons) but whistleblowers have come forward to explain that the OPCW has been politically corrupted and that their reports are misleading.(23) This story should be as important as the lies about Weapons of Mass Destruction that were used to justify destroying Iraq, but it has been almost entirely covered-up by the mainstream media. In fact, the media have gone further than simply covering this up. Where critics of the US and

British governments have talked about the OPCW whistleblowers, the media have deliberately tried to discredit those critics.(24)

Yemen

Since 2015, the US, Britain and France have provided huge quantities of weapons to Saudi Arabia, which has used them to destroy Yemen. The three countries also provide logistical support, surveillance, and political cover - that is, they block the United Nations from investigating.(25) By 2016, 3 million people had been displaced. Out of a population of 27 million, 21 million needed aid. 58 hospitals had been deliberately destroyed and civilians had been targeted. Saudi Arabia blocked medicines from reaching affected areas and there is widespread malnutrition stunting the growth of children.

Image below: Creative Commons/Felton Davis



Whilst the Saudi Arabian government is doing most of the fighting, it is important to note that if the US, Britain and France stopped supplying weapons and maintaining equipment, the war would almost certainly end. Weapons companies from all three countries make big profits from this war. The details of who is fighting whom, and why, is quite complex in Yemen. The main point for this post is that Britain and the US are actively participating in serious war crimes, because they wish to retain Saudi Arabia as an ally. The British government repeatedly misled parliament over their role in Yemen. British people only became aware that British soldiers were operating in Yemen after newspapers reported that members of the SBS (Special Boat Squadron) had been killed.(26)

As with Afghanistan and Iraq, Libya and Yemen are now in chaos. Parts of Syria are also in chaos, although the Syrian government has regained control of some of the country with the help of the Russian military.

Fitting the Historical Pattern

The wars described in the last two posts are all separate events, but four of them (Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria) are easier to understand if we think of them as examples of an overall attempt by the US to control resources and trade, by overthrowing governments that were not sufficiently compliant. These countries had problems that were caused or made worse by a long history of outside interference. Our politicians and the media presented the one-size-fits-all warplan of Taliban/Saddam/Gaddafi/Assad bad; US and British white knights must ride to the rescue to make Afghanistan/Iraq/Libya/Syria safe for democracy. The false justifications for each war were repeated without adequate scrutiny by the mainstream media. The true motives for war were rarely mentioned. The result is

multiple failed states, whole cities destroyed by US bombing, chaos and lawlessness in much of the region, with violence and terrorism spilling over into neighbouring countries.

These actions enable us to see through the lies of the US and British governments. Both governments frequently claim that they have a 'responsibility to protect' others (this is known as R2P) but their support for Saudi Arabia's destruction of Yemen, and their supplies of weapons to terrorists in Libya and Syria, show that they have no genuine interest in protecting others. International polls show that outside the US and Britain, most people recognise the US as the biggest global threat to peace.(27)

There are many other US crimes this century that could have been discussed in these posts. They supported the attempted coup in Venezuela in 2002, and again in 2019. They invaded Haiti in 2004 and overthrew the government. They were involved in overthrowing the democratically elected leader of Honduras in 2009. They were secretly involved in fighting alongside the Ethiopian military when it invaded Somalia in 2006, and they have been killing people there ever since, leaving yet another country in chaos.

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Rod Driver is a part-time academic who is particularly interested in de-bunking modern-day US and British propaganda. This is the fourth in a series entitled Elephants In The Room, which attempts to provide a beginners guide to understanding what's really going on in relation to war, terrorism, economics and poverty, without the nonsense in the mainstream media.

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