

# West, Breeding Ground for Terrorism

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[Today, the war drums are beating again, and this time the target is Syria. "By ordering air strikes against Syria without UN Security Council support, Obama will be doing the same as Bush in 2003," writes Hans Blix, Swedish diplomat and politician. Blix was the head of United Nations monitoring, verification and inspection commission from March 2000 to June 2003, which searched Iraq for weapons of mass destruction, ultimately finding none."

"There are two ways to approach the study of terrorism," notes Noam Chomsky in widely-acclaimed book *Western State Terrorism*.

"One may adopt a literal approach, taking the topic seriously, or a propagandistic approach, construing the concept of terrorism as a weapon to be exploited in the service of some system of power. It comes as no surprise that the propagandistic approach is adopted by governments generally, and by their instruments in totalitarian states." Chomsky maintains that there are many terrorist states in the world, but the United States puts its rivals to shame when it comes to perpetuating 'international terrorism'. A 2010 research undertaken by Professor Marc Sageman of University of Pennsylvania lends credence to what Chomsky says. The research findings establish the fact that terrorism is a product of the West.



Syria, more than two years into the foreign-sponsored militancy

Let's make no bones about it, the menacing threat of 'nuclear terrorism' does not come from some ruthless jihadist cluster, but from the hard-nosed Western nuclear powers who form the core of the NATO alliance, and keeping intimidating and threatening the non nuclear weapon states.

The history of US imperialism is replete with stories of unilateral belligerent military strikes, gory massacres and socio-cultural aggression. In this no-holds-barred brinkmanship, the US and its allies have sought to impose their writ on other nations, more so on those who have refused to swear allegiance to Uncle Sam's hegemony. The blatant war-mongering and sinister desire to inflict suffering on others is best explained by these words of American writer Andre Vltchek. "West has always behaved as if it had an inherited, but undefined, right to profit from the misery of the rest of the world. In many cases, the conquered nations had to give up their own culture, their religions, even their languages, and convert to our set of beliefs and values that we define as 'civilized'.

Guatemala Civil War that continued from 1960 to 1996 was bitterly fought between the government of Guatemala and ethnic Mayans, in which the government of Guatemala committed worst human rights abuses and engineered genocide of Mayan population of Guatemala. Historical Clarification Commission set up under the Oslo Accords of 1994 concluded that the Guatemala military committed murder, torture and rape with the tacit support of CIA. The commission stated the “government of the United States, through various agencies including the CIA, provided direct and indirect support for some state operations.” Noam Chomsky in his book *What Uncle Sam Really Wants* writes, “Under Reagan, support for near-genocide in Guatemala became positively ecstatic. The most extreme of the Guatemalan Hitlers we’ve backed there, Rios Montt, was lauded by Reagan as a man totally dedicated to democracy. In the early 1980s, Washington’s friends slaughtered tens of thousands of Guatemalans, mostly Indians in the highlands, with countless others tortured and raped. Large regions were decimated.”

Direct or indirect support for death squads has been an integral part of CIA operations. CIA’s death squad operations in Vietnam led to killing of over 35,000 people. The Vietnam War dominated 30 long years of Vietnam’s history from 1940s to 1970s. President Ford, reacting to Senate and House committee reports, conceded that the CIA had become a ‘rogue elephant’ crushing foreign citizens under foot in its bid to win the Cold War. More than 20,000 Vietnamese were killed during the CIA-guided Operation Phoenix intended to weed out communist ‘agents’ from South Vietnam.

American role in the violent overthrow of the democratically-elected Popular Unity government of Salvador in 1980s was a watershed moment for the country. Bush family loyalists maintain that President Bush senior’s policies paved the way for peace, turning Salvador into a democratic success story. However, it took more than 70,000 deaths and grave human rights violations, before peace was brokered. To crush the rebels, the US trained an army that kidnapped and killed more than 30,000 people, and presided over large-scale massacre of old, women and children.

In the mid-1970s, a major scandal broke out after revelations that President Richard Nixon had ordered the CIA to ‘make the economy scream’ in Chile and to prevent Allende from coming to power. Years later, CIA acknowledged its deep involvement in Chile where it dealt with coup-plotters, false propagandists and assassins. In a review of Lubna Qureshi’s book *Nixon, Kissinger, and Allende: US Involvement in the 1973 Coup in Chile*, Howard Doughty writes, “The United States and its allies have an unseemly history of hostility to democracy abroad that seems to conflict with their expressed political principles and their stated purpose in engaging in military and diplomatic action abroad. Not only in Latin America, but in Africa, Asia and occasionally in Europe, it has openly and clandestinely supported dictatorships.”

The US government’s cozy relationship with its illegitimate offspring Israel is no secret. It has paid Israel almost one hundred billion dollars over the years, major part of which is used for occupying Palestinian territories, in blatant breach of international laws and umpteen UN resolutions. Veteran Middle East reporter Robert Fisk draws parallels between Israel and apartheid regime of South Africa. “No matter how many youths are shot dead by the Israelis, no matter how many murders and no matter how bloody the reputation of the Israeli Prime Minister, we are reporting this terrible conflict as if we supported the South African whites against the blacks.”

Likewise, Columbia, arguably one of the most violent countries in the world, is the

beneficiary of massive US aid. Some political observers like Professor John Barry are of the opinion that US influence has only managed to catalyze internal conflicts and substantially expand the scope and nature of human rights abuses in Colombia. And ironically, most American people remain naïve about the shady role of their country in Colombia's historical development and the unremitting violence.

In Cuba, America's record is again appalling. It has been involved in attempted assassinations of state heads, bombings, military invasions, crippling sanctions et al. And, recent reports suggest that the US government's covert attack on Cuba's sovereignty continues unabated. Even after half a century, economic blockade remains in force. The country has been designated a 'terrorist state', figuring prominently on the State Department's list of 'State Sponsors of Terrorism'. The five Cuban political prisoners are still behind bars. Now a report from the US General Accounting Office reveals that money is being pumped into projects directed at changing Cuba's government.

Washington's support for the Contra terrorists in Nicaragua between 1981 and 1990 is one of the most shocking and shameful secrets. The heinous terrorist activities contras engaged in had full backing of their masters in Washington. "The decision of the International Court of Justice in June 1986 condemning the United States for the 'unlawful use of force' and illegal economic warfare was dismissed as an irrelevant pronouncement by a 'hostile forum'," notes Noam Chomsky in *Western State Terrorism*. "The guiding principle, it appears, is that the US is a lawless terrorist state and this is right and just, whatever the world may think, whatever international institutions may declare."

On March 8, 1985, in an assassination bid on Sheikh Mohammed Fazlullah by CIA, a powerful car bomb exploded outside a Beirut mosque in Lebanon, leaving 81 civilians dead. Celebrated investigative reporter Bob Woodward says that CIA director William Casey had admitted personal culpability in the attack while he lay on his deathbed, which he said was carried out with funding from Saudi Arabia. In December 1989, almost 27,000 US soldiers invaded a small Central American country of Panama to arrest General Manuel Noriega, a CIA asset-turned-rebel. In the 'Operation Just Cause', bombs rained down on three neighborhoods – Colon, San Miguelito and El Chorrillo. El Chorrillo was burnt to the ground and got a new nickname – 'Little Hiroshima'. As per conservative estimates, between 2,000 and 6,000 people were killed in the events that unfolded. Many of them were dumped into mass graves.

Congo has been through violent times since its independence. Many observers trace it to the murder of Patrice Lumumba, the first prime minister of independent Congo, which was apparently done at the behest by the then U.S. President Eisenhower. In Haiti, the U.S. backed the Duvalier family dictatorship for 30 years, during which the CIA worked closely with death squads, executioners, and drug traffickers. The father-son duo's three decades at helm was marked by brutally crushing dissent with the assistance of secret police and the Haitian army. Thousands were killed and tortured – many of them dumped in mass graves. Hundreds of thousands fled the country to escape from mindless violence.

The 1983 invasion of Grenada was the first major American military assault since Vietnam War. The news was blocked as the US government didn't want the world to witness the great superpower bashing up a small island nation. Why did the United States invade Grenada? "Many believe that Grenada was seen as a bad example for other poor Caribbean states," opines Stephen Zunes, author of *Tinderbox: US Middle East Policy and the Roots of Terrorism*. "Its foreign policy was not subservient to the American government and it was

not open to having its economy dominated by U.S. corporate interests.”

In Greece, America supported a coup against an elected leader George Papandreou, which followed the years of murder, torture, and fear in the late 1960s. In Cambodia, the US resorted to carpet bombing to overthrow President Prince Sihanouk, who was replaced by Pol Pot and Khmer Rouge and that led to millions of civilian casualties between mid 1950s and 1970s. In 1965, which New York Times called ‘one of the most savage mass slayings of modern political history’, US embassy had compiled lists of ‘Communist’ operatives in Indonesia, from top echelons down to village cadres, as many as 5,000 names, and handed them over to the army, which then hunted them down and killed.

Between 1946 and 1958, the US used the Marshall Islands to conduct nuclear tests. All the inhabitants had to flee their homes. It is still not safe to consume food grown there. In the words of Robert Alvarez, “the people of the Marshall Islands had their homeland and health sacrificed for the national security interests of the United States”. The nuclear attack on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 remain the darkest chapter of history. Almost 150,000 people paid for their lives instantly, while millions more died of radiation poisoning later. Truman ordered the atom bomb dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, followed by a plutonium bomb on Nagasaki on August 9. The same day, the Soviet Union attacked the Japanese and, in the following two weeks 84,000 Japanese were killed.

Back in 1953, a joint British-American operation toppled the democratic government chosen by the Iranian parliament, and installed their loyal dictator. The coup restored the Shah to absolute power, initiating a period of 25 years of repression and torture, while the oil industry was restored to foreign ownership, with the US and Britain each getting 40 percent. That was before Ayatullah Khomeini mobilized masses and threw out the Western puppet.

Marjorie Cohn, a professor of international law, in an article written in November 2001 maintained that the bombings of Afghanistan by the United States were illegal. His argument was based on the premise that, according to UN Charter, disputes have to be brought to the UN Security Council, which alone may authorize the use of force. Also, if your nation has been subjected to an armed attack by another nation, you may respond militarily in self-defense. Afghanistan did not attack the United States. Indeed, the 19 men charged with the crime were not Afghans. Twelve years down the line, the foreign military troops are still stationed in Afghanistan, hundreds of billion dollars have been spent, and at least 31,000 people in Afghanistan (civilians, insurgents, Afghan military forces, and others) have been killed in the war.

The myth of the “outside enemy” and the threat of “Islamic terrorists” was the cornerstone of the Bush administration’s military doctrine, used as a pretext to invade Afghanistan and Iraq, writes Michel Chossudovsky, author of *The Globalisation of Poverty*. More than a decade after US invaded Iraq, it’s still not clear why they did it. But it’s a fact, even acknowledged by the western media, that the war for Iraq was a war for oil. “Before the 2003 invasion, Iraq’s domestic oil industry was fully nationalized and closed to Western oil companies. A decade of war later, it is largely privatized and utterly dominated by foreign firms,” reads a CNN report

There is this concept of ‘good terrorism’ and ‘bad terrorism’. For the US and its closest ally Israel, the Tunis bombing was not an act of terror but justifiable retaliation for the murder of three Israelis in Cyprus. The 1985 Iron Fist operation of the Israeli army in southern Lebanon was also guided by the same logic. “From 1945 to the end of the 20th century, the USA

attempted to overthrow more than 40 foreign governments, and to crush more than 30 populist-nationalist movements struggling against intolerable regimes. In the process, the USA caused the end of life for several million people, and condemned many millions more to a life of agony and despair,” writes William Blum in his book *Rogue State*. It will not qualify as ‘terrorism’ because the perpetrator is the world’s only super-power. In a 1986 interview, Noam Chomsky argued that the word “terrorism” had been redefined in political and popular discourse to only refer to the violent acts of small or marginal groups – what he refers to as “retail terrorism”. This is in contrast with violent acts performed by the State in its own interest which orthodox terrorism studies often exclude from consideration.

The political leaders and scholars in Muslim countries have to muster courage to condemn the so-called ‘good’ terrorism spearheaded by US and its allies like Britain, Israel, France. On May 09 this year, Iran’s parliament speaker Ali Larijani took the lead, blaming the West for spreading terrorism across Asia, and warning that the policy will ultimately backfire. “This evil phenomenon is the gift of the West to the region, but nurturing terrorist and extremist groups is bad and worrying even for the future of Western countries, notably the United States,” said Larijani.

Today, the war drums are beating again, and this time the target is Syria. “By ordering air strikes against Syria without UN Security Council support, Obama will be doing the same as Bush in 2003,” writes Hans Blix, Swedish diplomat and politician. Blix was the head of United Nations monitoring, verification and inspection commission from March 2000 to June 2003, which searched Iraq for weapons of mass destruction, ultimately finding none.

President Obama and Kerry look adamant even though there is no favorable international climate for a Syria strike. Arab League has refused to support the call for military intervention. Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria and some other Arab countries forthrightly have also denounced the idea. NATO has also expressed reluctance in supporting the strike, citing past experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan.

If the US still goes ahead and launches the military strike against Syria, Iran and Russia will also get into the act and so will Hezbollah, and that will lead to disastrous consequences for peace in the Middle East. But does Obama care? You know the answer.

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