

Women as Pawns in the Political War Game

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& [Civil Rights](#), [Terrorism](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#), [Women's Rights](#)
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In 1990, it was a Kuwaiti 'witness' testifying how [marauding Iraqi troops](#) charged into a Kuwaiti hospital and tore babies from their incubators. In 2001, it was [videos of an Afghan woman](#) tied to a pole, stoned to death before a cheering crowd. (These practices continue despite that nation's 'liberation' by the US and allies). Today, we have a Yazidi sex slave testifying to the American Congress how she was brutalized by her ISIS captors. She pleads: "The US must act".

The 1990 Kuwait "incubator story", later [exposed as a fabrication](#), was presented by the daughter of a Kuwaiti ambassador, part of a major PR campaign by Kuwait and USA. It helped sell the Gulf War/Operation Desert Storm that introduced American troops into Arab Gulf States (they're still there) to occupy Kuwait and repel the Iraqis, driving them out with brutal, inhuman means that elsewhere would be designated as war crimes. In 2001, images of the Taliban as heartless beasts were spread with the help of western women in their newfound compassion for downtrodden Afghan sisters. (Never mind how Afghan women fared during the Russian occupation, and earlier.) If any liberal anti-war citizens of western democracies had doubts about a military invasion of Afghanistan, they were won over by that widely distributed image of the blue-shrouded female corpse in the execution stadium.

In 2003, unable to locate downtrodden Iraqi women, or desperate Libyan women in 2011, our human rights-driven military planners found other means (Weapons of Mass Destruction and Responsibility to Protect) to destroy those nations.

Things have been somewhat delayed about how western democracies should take Syria and reinvade Iraq. After the Syrian leadership, ISIS is the stated target. For the time being voices of caution prevail- those aware of the economic costs and the tens of thousands of dead and maimed US military personnel. But the war heroes ("hawks") in the US legislature and the military establishment are endeavoring to devise a ruse to justify invasion. Enter the Yazidi people—both minority and non-Muslim—with ready women victims. The testimony last week by a Yazidi woman sex slave is the latest in this inexorable campaign. Forget about any Shi'ia widow or orphan, any lost boys and uneducated Sunni girls; forget about poverty and separated families or the rise in heart attacks and PTSD lived every day by millions of Syrians, Afghans and Iraqis; ignore highly educated women and men working as servants in exile or those millions of parents forced to send their children abroad. Those stories have become humdrum "horrific tales of refugees". We need a dramatic woman victim.

Yazidi women are not only impoverished and homeless; they are sex slaves too! Somehow these women were able to escape their captors to bring us firsthand accounts. Our [media](#)

[launched its Yazidi campaign](#) last September offering a sequence of unarguable testimonials. The culprit is not war, not occupation, not militarization, not a crushed, dysfunctional state's inability to provide. It is ISIS!

Somehow these select victims find human rights organizations to introduce them to [CNN's Amanpour](#); one "brave victim" provides details of the rapes and how, for example, her ISIS brutalizer prayed before and after his assaults on her. Most recently human rights agents brought a woman we know as "Bazi" before a US congressional committee. "The US must act", this former sex slave tells Congress. She calls "on the USA and other countries to establish a safe zone for Iraqi and Syrian religious minorities...or they'll be wiped out."

No one asks about the chaotic outcome of the "responsibility to protect-R2P" rationale for the invasion of Libya, or about how women and men survive there today. In Afghanistan, we hear from the occasional women community leader. But what about the general population of Afghan women, still closeted, still shrouded, probably poorer than ever, subject to drone strikes that kill their children, their uncles and fathers on the only happy occasions, weddings, in their more severely circumscribed lives?

John Pilger is a tireless critic of biased journalism and the supporting role of media in war policies. Pilger would also agree that human rights organizations work with media to carry out [the west's war agenda](#), and the exploitation of women are a handy pawn in these assaults.

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