

The Biden Doctrine: Cheerlead Wars, Feign Ignorance Later

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*If we look at the track record of **Joe Biden** during his political career first as a senator and then as Obama's vice president, he is a typical establishment Democrat who has played into the hands of the US national security establishment like Bill Clinton and Barack Obama before him.*

But considering his hawkish record in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, supporting the Yugoslav wars during the Clinton presidency in the nineties, voting in favor of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars in the Bush tenure and being a vocal proponent of the purported "humanitarian intervention" in Libya and the proxy war in Syria as Obama's vice president, the Biden presidency would risk plunging the world into many more devastating conflicts.

As head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Biden said in 2002 that Saddam Hussein was a threat to national security and there was no option but to "eliminate" that threat. In October 2002, he voted in favor of the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq, approving the US invasion of Iraq.

More significantly, as chair of the committee, he assembled a series of witnesses to testify in favor of the authorization. They gave testimony grossly misrepresenting the intent, history of and status of Saddam and his Baathist government, which was an openly avowed enemy of al-Qaeda, and touting Iraq's fictional possession of weapons of mass destruction.

Writing for The Guardian's "Comment is Free" in February, [Mark Weisbrot contends](#) [1] that Joe Biden was at the forefront of mustering bipartisan support for the illegal Iraq War and it would come back to haunt him in the forthcoming presidential elections like the criminal complicity of Hillary Clinton in lending legitimacy to the Bush administration's unilateral invasion of Iraq had thwarted her presidential ambitions, too, in the 2016 presidential elections.

Weisbrot observes:

"When the war was debated and then authorized by the US Congress in 2002, Democrats controlled the Senate and Biden was chair of the Senate committee on foreign relations. Biden himself had enormous influence as chair and argued strongly in favor of the 2002 resolution granting President Bush the authority to invade Iraq.

"I do not believe this is a rush to war,' Biden said a few days before the vote. 'I believe it is a march to peace and security. I believe that failure to overwhelmingly support this resolution is likely to enhance the prospects that

war will occur ...'

"But he had a power much greater than his own words. He was able to choose all 18 witnesses in the main Senate hearings on Iraq. And he mainly chose people who supported a pro-war position. They argued in favor of 'regime change as the stated US policy' and warned of 'a nuclear-armed Saddam sometime in this decade.' That Iraqis would 'welcome the United States as liberators' and that Iraq 'permits known al-Qaida members to live and move freely about in Iraq' and that 'they are being supported.'"

When the ill-conceived invasion and occupation of Iraq didn't go as planned and the country slipped into myriad ethnic and sectarian conflicts, in November 2006, Biden and Leslie H. Gelb, President Emeritus of the Council on Foreign Relations, released a "comprehensive strategy" to end sectarian violence in Iraq. Rather than continuing the previous approach or withdrawing the US forces, the plan called for "a third way": federalizing Iraq and giving Kurds, Shiites, and Sunnis "breathing room" in their own regions.

In September 2007, a non-binding resolution endorsing such a scheme passed the Senate, but the idea was unfamiliar, had no political legitimacy, and failed to gain traction. Iraq's political leadership denounced the resolution as a de facto "Balkanization of Iraq," and the US Embassy in Baghdad issued a statement distancing itself from it. Foreign policy "maven" Biden laughed it off as nothing more than one of his facetious gaffes.

Had supporting the illegal Iraq War been the only instance of Biden's hawkish interventionism, one could have overlooked it. But he was also a vocal supporter of the so-called "humanitarian intervention" in Libya and the proxy war in Syria as Obama's vice president.

Addressing a seminar at Harvard in 2014, [Joe Biden said](#) [2] that Saudi Arabia and the UAE had transferred hundreds of millions of dollars and large amounts of weaponry to a variety of Islamist militias inside Syria, including at least one with ties to al Qaeda.



"The Turks were great friends, and I've a great relationship with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, ... the Saudis, the Emiratis, etc. What were they doing? They were so determined to take down Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and essentially have a proxy Sunni-Shia war. What did they do?" Biden asked, according to a recording of the speech posted on the White House's website.

"They poured hundreds of millions of dollars and tens of thousands of tons of weapons into anyone who would fight against Assad, except that the people who were being supplied

were al-Nusra, and al Qaeda, and the extremist elements of jihadis coming from other parts of the world.”

To his credit, despite being a warmonger masquerading as “a pacifist,” former President Obama was at least smart. Having graduated as one of the poorest student from the law school, then-Vice President Biden didn’t realize the irony of his remarks.

The Gulf States, Turkey and Jordan didn’t funnel money and weapons into Syria’s proxy war without a nod from Washington. In fact, the CIA’s Operation Timber Sycamore to train and arm Syrian militants battling the Bashar al-Assad government from 2012 to 2017 in the border regions of Jordan and Turkey was approved and supervised by the Obama administration of which Biden was the vice president and second-in-command.

Over the decades, it has been a convenient stratagem of the Western powers with two-party political systems, particularly the US, to evade responsibility for the death and destruction brought upon the hapless Middle Eastern countries by their predecessors by playing blame games and finger-pointing, as exemplified by Joe Biden in his asinine remarks.

For instance, during the Soviet-Afghan jihad of the eighties, the Carter and Reagan administrations nurtured the Afghan jihadists against the Soviet-backed government in Kabul with the help of Saudi petro-riyals and Pakistan’s intelligence agencies. The Afghan jihad created a flood of millions of refugees who sought refuge in the border regions of Pakistan and Iran.

The Reagan administration’s policy of providing training and arms to the Afghan militants had the unintended consequences of spawning al-Qaeda and Taliban and it also destabilized the Af-Pak region, which is still in the midst of lawlessness, perpetual anarchy and an unrelenting Taliban insurgency more than four decades after the proxy war was fought in Afghanistan.

After the signing of the Geneva Accords in 1988, however, and the subsequent change of guard in Washington, the Clinton administration dissociated itself from the ill-fated Reagan administration’s policy of nurturing Afghan militants with the help of Gulf’s petro-dollars and Pakistan’s intelligence agencies and laid the blame squarely on minor regional players.

Similarly, during the Libyan so-called “humanitarian intervention” in 2011, the Obama administration provided money and arms to myriads of tribal militias and Islamic jihadists to topple the Arab-nationalist Gaddafi regime. But after the policy backfired and pushed Libya into lawlessness, anarchy and civil war, the mainstream media pointed the finger at Egypt, UAE and Saudi Arabia for backing the renegade general Khalifa Haftar in eastern Libya, even though he had lived for more than [two decades](#) [3] in the US right next to the CIA’s headquarter in Langley, Virginia.

Regarding Washington’s modus operandi of waging proxy wars in the Middle East, since the times of the Soviet-Afghan jihad during the eighties, it has been the fail-safe game plan of master strategists at NATO to [raise money](#) [4] from the oil-rich emirates of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, UAE and Kuwait; then buy billions of dollars’ worth of weapons from the [arms markets](#)[5] in the Eastern Europe; and then provide those weapons and guerilla warfare training to the disaffected population of the victim country by using the intelligence agencies of the latter’s regional adversaries. Whether it’s Afghanistan, Libya or Syria, the same playbook was executed to the letter.

Raising funds for proxy wars from the Gulf Arab States allows the Western executives the freedom to evade congressional scrutiny; the benefit of buying weapons from unregulated arms markets of the Eastern Europe is that such weapons cannot be traced back to the Western capitals; and using jihadist proxies to achieve strategic objectives has the advantage of taking the plea of “plausible deniability” if the strategy backfires, which it often does. Remember that al-Qaeda and Taliban were the by-products of the Soviet-Afghan jihad, and the Islamic State and its global network of terrorists were the blowback of the proxy war in Syria.

On the subject of the supposed “powerlessness” of the US in the global affairs, the Western think tanks and the corporate media’s spin-doctors generally claim that Pakistan deceived Washington in Afghanistan by providing safe havens to the Taliban; Turkey hoodwinked the US in Syria by using the war against the Islamic State as a pretext for cracking down on Kurds; Saudi Arabia and UAE betrayed the US in Yemen by mounting ground offensive and airstrikes against the Houthis rebels; and once again, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Egypt went against the ostensible policy of the US in Libya by destabilizing the Tripoli-based government, even though Khalifa Haftar is known to be a CIA stooge.

This perennially whining attitude of the Western corporate media that such and such regional players betrayed them, otherwise they were on top of their game is actually a clever stratagem that has been deliberately designed by the spin-doctors of the mainstream media and foreign policy think tanks to cast the Western powers in a positive light and vilify adversaries, even if the latter are their tactical allies in some of the regional conflicts.

Fighting wars through proxies allows the international power-brokers the luxury of taking the plea of “plausible deniability” in their defense, and at the same time, they can shift all the blame for wrongdoing on minor regional players. The Western powers’ culpability lies in the fact that because of them a system of international justice based on sound principles of morality and justice cannot be built in which the violators can be punished for their wrongdoing and the victims of injustice, tyranny and violence can be protected.

Leaving the funding, training and arming aspects of insurgencies aside, but especially pertaining to conferring international legitimacy to an armed insurgency, like the Afghan so-called “freedom struggle” of the Cold War, or the supposedly “moderate and democratic” Libyan and Syrian insurgencies of the contemporary era, it is simply beyond the power of minor regional players and their nascent media, which has a geographically and linguistically limited audience, to cast such heavily armed and brutal insurrections in a positive light in order to internationally legitimize them; only the Western mainstream media that has a global audience and which serves as the mouthpiece of the Western national security establishments has perfected this game of legitimizing the absurd and selling Satans as saviors.

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Notes

[1] Joe Biden championed the Iraq war. Will that come back to haunt him now?

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/feb/17/joe-biden-role-iraq-war>

[2] Joe Biden is the only honest man in Washington:

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2014/10/07/joe-biden-is-the-only-honest-man-in-washington/>

[3] Leaked tapes expose Western support for renegade Libyan general.

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/revealed-leaked-tapes-expose-western-support-renegade-libyan-general-185825787>

[4] U.S. Relies Heavily on Saudi Money to Support Syrian Rebels.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/24/world/middleeast/us-relies-heavily-on-saudi-money-to-support-syrian-rebels.html>

[5] Billions of dollars weapons flowing from Eastern Europe to Middle East.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/27/weapons-flowing-eastern-europe-middle-east-revealed-arms-trade-syria>

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