

Generalissima Clinton Expanding the Empire

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Hillary Clinton has completed her four-year tenure as Secretary of State to the accolades of both Democratic and Republican Congressional champions of the budget-busting "military-industrial complex," that President Eisenhower warned about in his farewell address. Behind the public relations sheen, the photo-opportunities with groups of poor people in the developing world, an ever more militarized State Department operated under Clinton's leadership.

A militarized State Department is more than a repudiation of the Department's basic charter of 1789, for the then-named Department of Foreign Affairs, which envisioned diplomacy as its mission. Secretary Clinton reveled in tough, belligerent talk and action on her many trips to more than a hundred countries. She would warn or threaten "consequences" on a regular basis. She supported soldiers in Afghanistan, the use of secret Special Forces in other places and "force projection" in East Asia to contain China. She aggressively supported or attacked resistance movements in dictatorships, depending on whether a regime played to Washington's tune.

Because Defense Secretary Robert Gates was openly cool to the drum beats for war on Libya, Clinton took over and choreographed the NATO ouster of the dictator, Muammar al-Gaddafi, long after he had given up his mass destruction weaponry and was working to rekindle relations with the U.S. government and global energy corporations. Libya is now in a disastrous warlord state-of-chaos. Many fleeing fighters have moved into Mali, making that vast country into another battlefield drawing U.S. involvement. Blowback!

Time and again, Hillary Clinton's belligerence exceeded that of Obama's Secretaries of Defense. From her seat on the Senate Armed Services Committee to her tenure at the State Department, Hillary Clinton sought to prove that she could be just as tough as the militaristic civilian men whose circle she entered. Throughout her four years it was Generalissima Clinton, expanding the American Empire at large.

Here is some of what the candid camera of history will show about her record:

1. A Yale Law School graduate, she shared with President Obama, a former Harvard Law Review President, a shocking disregard for the law and separation of powers be it the Constitution, federal statutes or international treaties. Her legal advisor, former Yale Law Dean Harold Koh, provided cover for her and Obama's "drone ranger" (to use Bill Moyer's words), John Brennan, Obama's counterterrorism advisor. Brennan gave the president weekly opportunities (White House aides called decision day "Terror Tuesdays") to become secret prosecutor, judge, jury, and executioner. Imagine thousands of push-button deaths and injuries of internal resisters and civilian bystanders in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen and elsewhere who presented no threat to the U.S.

The war on Libya, which Clinton spearheaded for Obama, was conducted without a Congressional Declaration of War, without even a War Resolution or a Congressional authorization or appropriation. She and her boss outdid Cheney and Bush on that score.

2. Although touting “diplomacy” as a priority, Clinton made little attempt to bring the United States into the community of nations by signing or ratifying international treaties already having as signatories over a hundred nations. As a former senator with bi-partisan support, Clinton didn’t use much of her capital on climate change agreements.

Human Rights Watch reports that chief among the unratified treaties are “international conventions relating to children, women, persons with disabilities, torture, enforced disappearance, and the use of anti-personal landmines and cluster munitions.” The last two treaties are designed to save thousands of lives and limbs of the children and their parents who are major victims of these concealed, atrocious weapons. Clinton has not gone to bat against the advocates for those “blowback” explosives that the Pentagon still uses.

When the Senate recently failed to ratify the treaty on disabilities, Clinton, with former senator and injured veteran, Robert Dole on her side, still didn’t make the maximum effort of which she is capable.

3. Secretary Clinton had problems heralding accurate whistleblowers. A 24-year-Foreign Service Officer, Peter Van Buren spent a year in Iraq running two State Department Reconstruction Teams. He exposed State Department waste and mismanagement along with the Pentagon’s “reconstruction” efforts using corporate contractors. Unlistened to, Van Buren, true to his civil service oath of office, went public. Clinton fired him. (wemeantwell.com.)

4. Possibly the most revealing of Clinton’s character was ordering U.S. officials to spy on top UN diplomats, including those from our ally, the United Kingdom. Shockingly, she even ordered her emissaries to obtain DNA data, iris scans (known as biometric data) and fingerprints along with credit card and frequent flier numbers.

The disclosure of secret State Department cables proved this to be a clear violation of the 1946 UN convention. Clinton included in this crude boomeranging personal espionage, the Secretary General of the UN, Ban Ki-Moon and his top officials all around the world. As befits these lawless times, there were no Congressional hearings, no accountabilities, and no resignation by the self-styled civil libertarian Secretary of State, not even a public apology.

5. Clinton led a dangerous expansion of the Department’s mission in Iraq. As reported in the Wall Street Journal on December 10, 2011, “In place of the military, the State Department will assume a new role of unprecedented scale, overseeing a massive diplomatic mission through a network of fortified, self-sufficient installations.”

To call this a diplomatic mission is a stretch. The State Department has hired thousands of private security contractors for armed details and transportation of personnel. Simply guarding the huge U.S. embassy in Iraq and its personnel costs more than \$650 million a year – larger than the entire budget of the Occupational Health and Safety Agency (OSHA), which is responsible for reducing the yearly loss of about 58,000 lives in workplace-related traumas and sickness.

Another State Department undertaking is to improve the training and capability of Iraq’s

police and armed forces. Countless active and retired Foreign Service officers believe expanded militarization of the State Department both sidelines them, their experience and knowledge, in favor of contractors and military people, and endangers them overseas.

Blurring the distinction between the Pentagon and the State Department in words and deeds seriously compromises Americans engaged in development and diplomatic endeavors. When people in the developing countries see Americans working to advance public health or clean drinking water systems within their countries, they now wonder if these are front activities for spying or undercover penetrations. Violent actions, fueled by this suspicion, are already jeopardizing public health efforts on the border areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Clinton's successor, former Senator and war veteran, John Kerry, says he wants to emphasize peace, human rights, and anti-poverty endeavors. He doesn't have to prove his machismo should he strive to de-militarize the State Department and promote peaceful, deliberative missions in the world, from which true security flows.

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