

# NATO and the Mainstream Media

By [Colin Todhunter](#)

Theme: [Media Disinformation](#)

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*There are lies, more lies and then there is the media. Take the BBC, for instance. As Britain's national state broadcaster, it is duty bound to provide impartial news coverage – after all, it is the ordinary person who funds it. However, the question to be asked is why folk should pay for a 'service' that consistently misleads or lies in order to secure compliance for state-corporate policies?*

As the West acts to destabilise and intervene to topple Iran's ally Syria, it is worth looking back to the reporting on events in Libya last year because we can expect more of the same this time around. The BBC and other mainstream media's reporting on the Libyan conflict was disgracefully one-sided. This comes as no surprise, though, given the pious narrative the media and the BBC in particular puts forward at the best of times, which implies the British government and NATO are essentially civilising forces in a barbaric world.

During times of war, this narrative becomes even more strident. Picture a different world for a moment, one in which the African Union (AU) had intervened in British affairs on the back of the street riots last year in the UK, in order to 'protect' rioters and then 'liberate' them from an oppressive regime. With a bit of arm twisting, it managed to get a UN resolution to implement a no fly zone over Britain.

The AU media then embed themselves with the British 'rebels', who had been illegally armed with weapons from AU countries, or its allies elsewhere, in order to overthrow the corrupt Cameron regime. The media report the conflict from the rioters-cum-rebels' point of view, fail to seriously question the legitimacy of the conflict – indeed, tacitly support it – and jump on every utterance from British PM David Cameron with sneering contempt to portray him as an irrational maniac.

As Cameron and his cronies flee for their lives, AU countries' TV channels show images from inside his home and those of his millionaire government associates to highlight the opulent lifestyles they indulged in. The message is implied that all such riches were robbed from the ordinary people of Britain by Cameron and his ilk through the system they presided over. Finally, as a no-fly zone policy morphs into a killing campaign from the air, the deaths caused are largely underreported or downplayed.

Substitute NATO for the AU, Gadhafi for Cameron and Libya for Britain, and you get the picture concerning the hypocrisy the mainstream media in Britain has indulged in. It is a media that portrayed those involved in the street riots in a wholly negative light, and a media which glorifies the unjust opulence and the corporate tyranny that has wrecked the economy. Yet, when it comes to events abroad, when it suits, members of the mainstream media all too readily trip over themselves to praise violent uprisings and rant against perceived injustice, tyranny and leaders who live in opulence.

Peel back the veneer of 'objectivity', and the media's record on the Libyan conflict is laid bare.

How many times did broadcasters fail to focus on the role of Western special forces and intelligence agencies before and during the conflict or where Libyan rebels were getting their arms from in the face of a UN sanctioned arms embargo on Libya?

How many times did broadcasters question NATO's legal and moral right to attack Libya?

And how many times did broadcasters question mission drift, whereby a path for Libyan rebels into the heart of Tripoli was blasted from the air, courtesy of a massive NATO bombing campaign?

A compliant, toothless media too often rolled over, peddled the notion of a widespread popular uprising and tended to focus merely on the processes of intervention, rather than the legality or morality of the whole affair. The same is happening now with Syria.

The mainstream media could have done a lot worse by focusing on a news item that was largely (if not completely) ignored, that of the 200 prominent African figures who accused western nations and the International Criminal Court of "subverting international law" in Libya. The UN has been misused to militarise policy, legalise military action and effect regime change, according to University of Johannesburg professor Chris Landsberg. He says it is unprecedented for the UN to have outsourced military action to Nato in this way and challenges the International Criminal Court to investigate Nato for "violating international law."

Many ordinary people rely on mainstream sources for their 'news', which, apart from a brief allusion to oil now and then, forwarded the notion that NATO's involvement in Libya was perfectly legitimate because it was about removing a crazy man from power who was oppressing his own people. Like the West cares about the plight of ordinary people! The rich and powerful corporations that run the west have complete contempt for their own populations, never mind those in far away places.

The portrayal of the Libyan conflict and now the Syrian one along with the absence of reporting on Western intelligence and special forces involvement on the ground is a damning indictment of a self congratulatory media that continually back slaps itself for being 'impartial' and 'free'. It's been damning indictment of western 'democracy' too, which continually sets out to fool its people of the need to topple regimes under the outright lie of 'humanitarian interventionism' in order to disguise imperialist intentions.

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