

# Never Let a Good Crisis Go to Waste. Relentless Ukraine Reporting Helps Conceal other Conflicts

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*It is astonishing how many observers of war in Ukraine who should know better have been inclined to take at face value the assertions of “sources” that clearly originate among the various governments that are involved in the conflict. Those leaders who are engaged in the inexorable march by the US and its allies to turn the Ukraine crisis into World War 3 surely have learned the lesson that managing the narrative of what is taking place is the greatest weapon that the war hawks have in their possession. One recalls how post-9/11 and leading up to the Iraq War the George W. Bush White House and the neocons in the Pentagon lied about nearly everything to convince the public that Saddam Hussein was a terrorist supporting megalomaniac armed with weapons of mass destruction, inevitably describing him as a man in some ways comparable to Adolf Hitler. Nevertheless, many observers of what was occurring were not fooled and there were large scale demonstrations in a number of cities prior to the invasion in March 2003, which, of course, were rarely reported in the mainstream media in order to control the message.*

Iraq in some ways was a learning experience for those in government and also for those in the media who did the heavy lifting by propagating the deception to a largely unsuspecting public. What we are seeing now relating to Ukraine and Russia, however, makes the Iraq experience look like child’s play in terms of the sheer audacity of the alleged information that makes it, or does not make it, into the news. I note particularly the recent terrorist car bombing of Russian activist journalist Dalya Dugina by a Ukrainian assassin made the news for roughly forty-eight hours before disappearing, but not before the lie that Prime Minister Vladimir Putin was responsible was firmly planted in a number of places in the mainstream media.

Now that Joe Biden is [about to designate](#) a two or three star general to head the Ukraine campaign and has pledged billions of dollars more in aid, Ukraine will be all the news all the time. The US involvement will also feature a catchy name. I would suggest Operation Empty Wallets, which is what Americans will soon be experiencing due to government bailouts and

other profligate spending, or maybe Operation Give Me a Break. And it will also create a new dimension to the narrative-shaping in that Ukraine reporting's domination of what comes out of the newsrooms already is effectively killing much of what else might otherwise be appearing on TV or in the newspapers. That selective management of information provides cover for neglecting stories that might prove embarrassing for those in power. It in effect means that there has been plenty of room for the usual players to engage in business as usual with hardly any scrutiny by the public over what is going on outside Ukraine in secondary theaters like the Middle East and Africa.

All of which leads one to examine what the two countries that have unilaterally declared themselves to be rules makers and enforcers have been up to. Those two countries are perhaps not surprisingly the United States and Israel. The US is, in fact, [increasing its combat role in Africa](#) featuring airstrikes in Somalia, all of which have taken place since US President Joe Biden [approved](#) the redeployment of hundreds of special forces troops to that country in May, reversing a decision by former President Donald Trump to reduce troop levels in AFRICOM. The two latest attacks killed at least twenty Somalis, all of whom were of course described as "terrorists" by the US command. Independent sources state that US forces have bombed Somalia at least 16 times under Biden, killing between 465 and 545 alleged al-Shabaab militants, including no less than 200 individuals in a single drone plus ground forces strike on March 13<sup>th</sup>.

Describing the paucity of reporting on the issue, Kelley Beaucar Vlahos, a senior adviser at the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, [observed](#) "If you were unaware that we were bombing Somalia, don't feel bad, this is a completely under-the-radar news story, one that was curiously absent from the headlines in all of the major newspapers..."

And then there is Syria, where a paucity of information in the media reflects White House policy. The United States, which has possibly as many as a dozen illegal bases in Syria, has a major airbase located in the al-Omar oil field in Syria's northeastern Deir Ezzor province. Several weeks ago, three US soldiers were reportedly slightly wounded in rocket attacks directed at the base by alleged "Iranian-backed militants." The US responded to the claimed attacks by [launching strikes from Apache helicopters against three vehicles](#) belonging to an Afghan Shia militia, killing between six and ten "militants," and there are reports that more tit-for-tat exchanges of fire are likely. CENTCOM afterwards claimed that President Joe Biden personally ordered the strikes in "self-defense" and justified them by citing Article II of the US Constitution. But the Constitution was never intended to cover illegal activity in a foreign land where US forces are occupying a country with which it is not at war and which has a functioning government that opposes the American presence. The US reportedly has [its illegal bases](#) mostly located in the oil producing and agricultural bread basket of the country. Both the grain and oil are routinely stolen by the US and much of the oil winds up in Israel.

So, one inevitably comes to Israel, which has used the cover provided by Ukraine not only to bomb Syria frequently but also to kill Palestinians both in Gaza and on the occupied West Bank. Recently the pace has accelerated with the Israeli Army and police killing on average several Palestinians every day, very little of which is reported in the US media, a fatality rate five times higher than that which prevailed in 2021. It is clearly a deliberate policy to step up the pressure on the Palestinians and a vital part of the process is to let it happen with minimal scrutiny by the media and public, so Israel is widely publicizing the support it is giving to Ukraine to draw attention away from what it does locally.

In short, Israel is increasing efforts to make the historic Palestine Palestinian-free by rendering life so miserable that many Arabs will decide to leave. The use of selective violence and constant harassment is all part of that effort and Palestinians have found that describing Israel as an “apartheid” state does not accurately describe the intensity of the indiscriminate punishments and killings by soldiers which have become all too common.

Israel meanwhile is also doing its best to delegitimize Palestinian national identity by [labeling Arab human rights groups as “terrorists.”](#) Israeli police recently raided the offices of seven such groups, confiscated their office equipment and communications, and ordered the premises to be shut down completely. Ironically, a CIA assessment of the groups determined that they were not in any way terrorist linked. The Joe Biden administration characteristically responded to the development by indicating that it was “concerned” but did not condemn the Israeli action.

So, if you open a newspaper or turn on the television and watch or read the international news, you will be told what to think about what is going on in Ukraine. And it will be from the Ukrainian/US government point of view. If you are interested in what the US and Israel are up to in the Middle East, you will most often be out of luck as “defending democracy” in Ukraine while also demonizing Russia is providing cover for Washington and Jerusalem to get into all kinds of mischief. It is a reality derived from how the media and government work collectively to shape policies that in no way benefit the American public. Instead, powerful interest groups with plenty of cash drive the process and are the ones who gain still more power and money through it. It is the sad reality of what has happened to our “land of the free and home of the brave.”

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