

Obama Stepped Back From Brink, Will Hillary?

By Mike Whitney

Global Research, October 13, 2016

Counter Punch 12 October 2016

Region: <u>USA</u>

Theme: <u>US NATO War Agenda</u>

In-depth Report: SYRIA, U.S. Elections

The American people need to understand what's going on in Syria. Unfortunately, the major media only publish Washington-friendly propaganda which makes it difficult to separate fact from fiction. The best way to cut through the lies and misinformation, is by using a simple analogy that will help readers to see that Syria is not in the throes of a confusing, sectarian civil war, but the victim of another regime change operation launched by Washington to topple the government of Bashar al Assad.

With that in mind, try to imagine if striking garment workers in New York City decided to arm themselves and take over parts of lower Manhattan. And, let's say, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau decided that he could increase his geopolitical influence by recruiting Islamic extremists and sending them to New York to join the striking workers. Let's say, Trudeau's plan succeeds and the rebel militias are able to seize a broad swathe of US territory including most of the east coast stretching all the way to the mid-west. Thenover the course of the next five years– these same jihadist forces proceed to destroy most of the civilian infrastructure across the country, force millions of people from their homes and businesses, and demand that President Obama step down from office so they can replace him with an Islamic regime that would enforce strict Sharia law.

How would you advise Obama in a situation like this? Would you tell him to negotiate with the people who invaded and destroyed his country or would you tell him to do whatever he thought was necessary to defeat the enemy and restore security?

Reasonable people will agree that the president has the right to defend the state and maintain security. In fact, national sovereignty and security are the foundation upon which the international order rests. However, neither the US media nor the US congress nor the White House nor the entire US foreign policy establishment agree with this simple, straightforward principle, that governments have the right to defend themselves against foreign invasion. They all believe that the US has the unalienable right to intervene wherever it chooses using whatever means necessary to execute its regime change operations.

In the case of Syria, Washington is using "moderate" jihadists to topple the elected government of Bashar al Assad. Keep in mind, that no even disputes WHAT the US is doing in Syria (regime change) or that the US is using a proxy army to accomplish its objectives. The only area of debate, is whether these "moderates" are actually moderates at all, or al Qaida. That's the only point on which their is some limited disagreement. (Note: Nearly everyone who follows events closely on the ground, knows that the moderates are al Qaida)

Doesn't that strike you as a bit bizarre? How have we gotten to the point where it is "okay" for the US to topple foreign governments simply because their agents are "moderate"

troublemakers rather than "extremist" troublemakers?

What difference does it make? The fact is, the US is using foreign-born jihadists to topple another sovereign government, the same as it used neo Nazis in Ukraine to topple the government, the same as it used US troops to topple the sovereign government in Iraq, and the same as it used NATO forces to topple the sovereign government in Libya. Get the picture? The methods might change, but the policy is always the same. And the reason the policy is always the same is because Washington likes to pick its own leaders, leaders who invariably serve the interests of its wealthy and powerful constituents, particularly Big Oil and Israel. That's how the system works. Everyone knows this already. Washington has toppled or attempted to topple more than 50 governments since the end of WW2. The US is a regime change franchise, Coups-R-Us.

Hillary Clinton is a charter member of the regime change oligarchy. She is a avid Koolaid drinker and an devoted believer in American "exceptionalism", which is the belief that 'If the United States does something, it must be good.'

Hillary also believes that the best way to resolve the conflict in Syria is by starting a war with Russia. Here's what she said on Sunday in her debate with Donald Trump:

Clinton: "The situation in Syria is catastrophic. And every day that goes by, we see the results of the regime by Assad in partnership with the Iranians on the ground, the Russians in the air...I, when I was secretary of state, I advocated and I advocate today a no-fly zone and safe zones."

Repeat: "I advocate today a no-fly zone and safe zones."

This is a very important point. Hillary has supported no-fly zones from Day 1 despite the fact that-by her own admission- the policy would result in massive civilian casualties. And civilian casualties are not the only danger posed by no-fly zones. Consider the warning by America's top soldier, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Joseph Dunford. In response to a question from Senator Roger Wicker (R-Mississippi) on the potential dangers of trying to "control Syrian airspace," Dunford answered ominously, "Right now... for us to control all of the airspace in Syria would require us to go to war against Syria and Russia."

This is the Hillary Doctrine in a nutshell: Confront the Russians in Syria and start WW3. If there's another way to interpret Dunford's answer, then, please, tell me what it is?

Hillary also added that, "we have to work more closely with our partners and allies on the ground."

This means that the Obama-CIA policy of supporting militant jihadists on the ground to topple an elected government will continue just as it has for the last five years. Is that what Hillary supporters want; more intervention, more escalation, more Irags, more Syrias?

She also said this: "I do support the effort to investigate for crimes, war crimes committed by the Syrians and the Russians and try to hold them accountable."

Readers should pause for a minute and really try to savor the convoluted absurdity of Clinton's comments. As we pointed out in our analogy, Putin and Assad are trying to reestablish the central governments control over the country to establish security the same as if Obama found it necessary to fight armed rebels in lower Manhattan. Governments have

the right to govern their country. This shouldn't be hard to understand. What Hillary is proposing is that the Syrian and Russians (who were invited by Assad) be prosecuted for fulfilling the sworn duty of every elected leader while –at the same time– the countries (like the US) that have (by their own admission) armed, trained and financed foreign invaders that have torn the country to shreds and killed more than 400,000 civilians, be let off Scottfree.

It is a great tribute to our propagandist western media, that someone like Hillary can make a thoroughly asinine statement like this and not be laughed off the face of the earth. By Hillary's logic, Obama could be prosecuted for war crimes if civilians were killed while he attempted to liberate lower Manhattan. The whole idea is ridiculous.

Here's another Hillary gem from the debate:

"I do think the use of special forces, which we're using, the use of enablers and trainers in Iraq, which has had some positive effects, are very much in our interests, and so I do support what is happening."

"Positive effects"?

What positive effects? 400,000 people are dead, 7 million more are ether internally displaced or refugees, and the country has been reduced to a Fulluja-like rubble. There are no "positive effects" from Hillary's war. It's been a complete and utter catastrophe. The only success she can claim, is the fact that the sleazebag Democratic leadership and their thoroughly-corrupt media buddies have been more successful in hiding the details of their depredations from the American people. Otherwise its been a dead-loss.

Here's more Hillary:

I would go after Baghdadi. I would specifically target Baghdadi, because I think our targeting of Al Qaida leaders —"

Baghdadi, Schmaghdadi; who gives a rip? When has the CIA's immoral assassination program ever helped to reduce the fighting, ever diminished the swelling ranks of terrorist organizations, or ever made the American people safer?

Never, that's when. The whole thing is a fu**ing joke. Hillary just wants another trophy for her future presidential library, a scalp she can hang next to Gadhafi's. The woman is sick!

Here's one last quote from the debate::

"I would also consider arming the Kurds. The Kurds have been our best partners in Syria, as well as Iraq. And I know there's a lot of concern about that in some circles, but I think they should have the equipment they need so that Kurdish and Arab fighters on the ground are the principal way that we take Raqqa after pushing ISIS out of Iraq."

Obama is arming the Kurds already, but the Kurds have no interest in seizing Raqqa because it is not part of their traditional homeland and because it doesn't help them achieve

the contiguous landmass they seek for their own state. Besides, arming the Kurds just pisses off Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan who provides a critical airstrip at Incirlik from which the US carries out most of its airstrikes on enemy targets in Syria. In other words, Clinton doesn't know what the heck she's talking about.

While there's no time to get into Hillary's role in starting the war in Syria, there is a very thorny situation that developed last week that's worth considering for those people who still plan to cast their vote for Clinton in the November election.

Here's a quick rundown of what happened: Last Wednesday, the *Washington Post* leaked a story stating that the Obama administration was considering whether it should directly attack Syrian assets on the ground, in other words, conduct a covert, low-intensity war directly against the regime. (rather than just using proxies.)

On Thursday, the Russian Ministry of Defense spokesman Maj. Gen. Igor Konashenkov announced that Moscow had deployed state of the art defensive weapons systems (S-300 and S-400 air defense missile systems) to the theater and was planning to use them if Syrian or Russian troops or installations were threatened.

In a televised statement, Konashenkov said: "It must be understood that Russian air defense missile crews will unlikely have time to clarify via the hotline the exact flight program of the missiles or the ownership of their carriers."

Referring to the provocative article in the *Washington Post*, Konashenkov added: "I would recommend our colleagues in Washington carefully weigh possible consequences of the fulfillment of such plans."

The Russians were saying as clearly as possible that if US warplanes attacked either Russian installations or Syrian troops they would be shot down immediately. Reasonable people can assume that the downing of a US warplane would trigger a war with Russia.

Fortunately, there are signs that Obama got the message and put the kibosh on the (Pentagon's?) ridiculous plan. Here's a clip from an article at The Duran which may be the best news I've read about Syria in five years. This story broke on Friday and has been largely ignored by the major media:

"Following Russian warning of American aircraft being shot down, White House spokesman confirms plan for U.S. air strikes on Syria has been rejected....White House spokesman Josh Earnest confirmed this speaking to reporters on Thursday 6th October 2016.

"The president has discussed in some details why military action against the Assad regime to try to address the situation in Aleppo is unlikely to accomplish the goals that many envisioned now in terms of reducing the violence there. It is much more likely to lead to a bunch of unintended consequences that are clearly not in our national interest." ("U.S. backs down over Syria after Russian threat to shoot down American aircraft," Alexander Mercouris, The Duran)

As critical as I've been of Obama over the years, I applaud him for his good judgment. While the Pentagon warhawks and foreign policy hardliners are relentlessly pushing for a direct confrontation with Russia, Obama has wisely pulled us back from the brink of disaster.

The guestion is: Would Hillary do the same?

Mike Whitney lives in Washington state. He is a contributor to <u>Hopeless: Barack Obama</u> and the <u>Politics of Illusion</u> (AK Press). Hopeless is also available in a <u>Kindle edition</u>. He can be reached at <u>fergiewhitney@msn.com</u>.

The original source of this article is <u>Counter Punch</u> Copyright © <u>Mike Whitney</u>, <u>Counter Punch</u>, 2016

Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page

Become a Member of Global Research

Articles by: Mike Whitney

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: $\underline{publications@globalresearch.ca}$