

Supporting War, Opposing Genocide: “Watchers of the Sky” Documentary Falls in a Pit

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[War Is A Crime](#)

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The United States is a society incapable of producing a major documentary film opposing the institution of war and explicitly advocating its abolition. If it did so, the major corporate media outlets would not sing such a film's praises.

Yet *Watchers of the Sky* is beloved by the U.S. corporate media because it opposes genocide, not war. I'm not aware of any opponents of war who don't also oppose genocide. In fact, many oppose the two as a single evil without the stark distinction between them. But the anti-genocide academic nonprofit industrial complex has become dominated by leading advocates for war.

As we watch people lament Bosnia, Rwanda, and Darfur while supporting mass killing in Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere, we seem to be witnessing a sort of extended victors' justice running 70 years from the hypocritical “justice” that followed World War II right through the establishment of the International Criminal Court (for Africans).

Right-wing war supporters oppose “terrorism” which means small-scale killing my government disapproves of. Liberal war supporters oppose “genocide” which means killing my government disapproves of and which is motivated by backward drives like race or religion rather than enlightened projects like control of fossil fuels, profiteering off weapons, or maintaining global hegemony.

Selective outrage over killing within a country has become a common justification for killing across borders (and oceans).

Ben Ferencz, featured in *Watchers of the Sky*, was recently on my [radio show](#) pushing his idea of criminalizing war while refusing to consider recent U.S. wars to fit the category of wars worth criminalizing.

Samantha Power, star of *Watchers of the Sky*, [supports mass killing](#). I don't think she's pretending to be outraged by genocide any more than Madeline Albright who said killing a half million children had been a good policy is pretending when she claims to be outraged by genocide. I think such people are outraged by evils they have permitted themselves to see as evil, while blinding themselves to horrors they prefer not to recognize.

I recently gave a talk at a college and happened to mention Hillary Clinton's comment about obliterating Iran. A professor interrupted me to state that such a thing never happened. A student pulled up the video of Clinton on several websites on a phone, but the professor still denied it stating that it made no sense. That is to say, it didn't fit into his worldview. I later

happened to criticize Israel's treatment of Gaza, and the same professor got up and stormed out of the room. He could only deny what was done to Gaza by avoiding hearing it altogether. I have no doubt that he would have expressed sincere outrage over Rwanda if asked.

The problem with the focus on Yugoslavia and Rwanda is the pretense that there is something worse than, discrete from, and preventable by war. The myths about the origins and outcomes of those horrors play down the role that Western militarism had in creating them while playing up the role it had or could have had in preventing them. War is depicted as an under-utilized tool, while the effects of both war and genocide (such as refugee crises) are blamed entirely on genocide.

The odd thing is that people being slaughtered from the sky are almost always being slaughtered by the U.S. military and its allies. Those who can only see killing when it's done by people resisting U.S. domination can usually keep their eyes comfortably downward.

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