

SYRIA: “Human Rights” Warriors for Empire

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have chosen the side of Empire in the Washington-backed belligerency

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“Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have chosen sides in the Washington-backed belligerency – the side of Empire.” Syria has no choice but to secure every square foot of its territory. “Faced with the certainty of superpower-backed attack under the guise of ‘protecting’ civilians in “liberated” territory, Syria cannot afford to cede even one neighborhood of a single city – not one block! – or of any rural or border enclave, to armed rebels and foreign jihadis.”

The largest imperial offensive since the Iraq invasion of March, 2003, is in full swing, under the banner of “humanitarian” intervention – Barack Obama’s fiendishly clever upgrade of George Bush’s “dumb” wars. Having failed to obtain a Libyan-style United Nations Security Council fig leaf for a “humanitarian” military strike against Syria, the United States shifts effortlessly to a global campaign “[outside the U.N. system](#)” to expand its NATO/Persian Gulf royalty/Jihadi coalition. Next stop: Tunisia, where Washington’s allies will assemble on February 24 to sharpen their knives as “Friends of Syria.” The U.S. State Department has mobilized to shape the “Friends” membership and their “mandate” – which is warlord-speak for refining an ad hoc alliance for the piratical assault on Syria’s sovereignty.

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch are swigging the ale with their fellow buccaneers. These “human rights” warriors, headquartered in the bellies of empires past and present, their chests shiny with medals of propagandistic service to superpower aggression in Libya, contribute “left” legitimacy to the imperial project. London-based Amnesty International held a global “day of action” to rail against Syria for “crimes against humanity” and to accuse Russia and China of using their Security Council vetoes to “betray” the Syrian people – echoing the war hysteria out of Washington, Paris, London and the royal pigsties of Riyadh and Doha. New York-based Human Rights Watch denounced Moscow and Beijing’s actions as “[incendiary](#)” – as if it were not the empire and its allies who were setting the Middle East and Africa on fire, arming and financing jihadis – including hundreds of veteran [Libyan Salafists](#) now operating in Syria.

Under Obama’s “intelligent” (as opposed to “dumb”) imperial tutelage, colonial genocidaires like France now propose creation of “[humanitarian corridors](#)” inside Syria “to allow NGOs to reach the zones where there are scandalous massacres.” NATO flatly rejected such a corridor in Libya when sub-Saharan Africans and black Libyans were being massacred by militias armed and financed by the same “Friends” that now besiege Syria.

Turkey claims it has rejected, for now, the idea of setting up humanitarian “[buffer zones](#)” along its border with Syria – inside Syrian territory – while giving arms, training and sanctuary to Syrian military deserters. In reality, it is Syrian Army troop and armor concentrations on the border that have thwarted the establishment of such a “buffer” – a bald euphemism for creating a “liberated zone” that must be “protected” by NATO or some agglomeration of U.S.-backed forces.

NATO, which bombed Libya non-stop for six months, inflicting tens of thousands of casualties while refusing to count a single body, wants desperately to identify some sliver of Syrian soil on which to plant the “humanitarian” flag of intervention. They are transparently searching for a Benghazi, to justify a replay of the Libyan operation – the transparent fact that prompted the Russian and Chinese vetoes.

Faced with the certainty of superpower-backed attack under the guise of “protecting” civilians in “liberated” territory, Syria cannot afford to cede even one neighborhood of a single city – not one block! – or of any rural or border enclave, to armed rebels and foreign jihadis. That road leads directly to loss of sovereignty and possible dissection of Syria – which western pundits are already calling a “hodge-podge” nation that could be a “failed state.” Certainly, the French and British are experts at carving up other people’s territories, having drawn the national boundaries of the region after World War One. It is an understatement to say that Israel would be pleased.

With the Syrian military’s apparent successes in securing most of Homs and other centers of rebellion, the armed opposition has stepped up its terror tactics – a campaign noted with great alarm by the Arab League’s own Observer Mission to Syria, leading Saudi Arabia and Qatar to suppress the Mission’s report. Instead, the Gulf States are pressing the Arab League to openly “provide all kinds of political and material support” to the opposition, meaning arms and, undoubtedly, more Salafist fighters. Aleppo, Syria’s main commercial and industrial city, which had seen virtually no unrest, was struck by two deadly car bombs last week – signature work of the al-Qaida affiliate in neighboring Iraq.

The various “Friends of Syria,” all nestled in the U.S./NATO/Saudi/Qatar cocoon, now openly speak of all-out civil war in Syria – by which they mean stepped up armed conflict financed and directed by themselves – as the preferred alternative to the protracted struggle that the regime appears to be winning. There is one caveat: no “Western boots on the ground in any form,” as phrased by British Foreign Secretary William Hague. It is the Libya formula, and might as well have come straight from Barack Obama’s mouth.

Syria is fighting for its national existence against an umbrella of forces mobilized by the United States and NATO. Of the 6,000 or so people that have died in the past 11 months, about a third have been Syrian soldiers and police – statistical proof positive that this is an armed assault on the state. There is no question of massive foreign involvement, or that the aim of U.S. policy is regime change, as stated repeatedly by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton (“[Assad must go](#),” she told reporters in Bulgaria).

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have chosen sides in the Washington-backed belligerency – the side of Empire. As groups most often associated with (what passes for) the Left in their headquarters countries, they are invaluable allies of the current imperial offensive. They have many fellow travelers in (again, what passes for) anti-war circles in the colonizing and neo-colonizing nations. The French “Left” lifted hardly a finger while a million Algerians died in the struggle for independence, and have not proved

effective allies of formerly colonized people in the 50 years, since. Among the European imperial powers, only Portugal's so-called [Carnation Revolution](#) of 1974, a coup by young officers, resulted in substantial relief for the subjects of empire: the withdrawal of troops from Portugal's African colonies.

The U.S. anti-war movement lost its mass character as soon as the threat of a draft was removed, in the early Seventies, while the United States continued to bomb Vietnam (and test new and exotic weapons on its people) until the fall of Saigon, in 1975. All that many U.S. lefties seemed to want was to get the Republicans off their backs, in 2008, and to Hell with the rest of the world. Democrat Barack Obama has cranked the imperial war machine back into high gear, with scarcely a peep from the "Left."

There was great ambivalence – the most polite word I can muster – among purported leftists in the United States and Europe to NATO's bombardment and subjugation of Libya. Here we are again, in the face of existential imperial threats to Syria and Iran, as leftists temporize about human rights while the "greatest purveyor of violence in the world today" blazes new warpaths.

There is no such thing as an anti-war activist who is not an anti-imperialist. And the only job of an anti-imperialist in the belly of the beast is to disarm the beast. Absent that, s/he is useless to humanity.

As we used to say: You are part of the solution – or you are part of the problem. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch are part of the problem.

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