

# The United States and its Comrade-in-arms, Al Qaeda

And other tales of an empire gone mad

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Theme: [Terrorism](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

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*Afghanistan in the 1980s and 90s ...*

Bosnia and Kosovo in the 1990s ... Libya 2011 ... Syria 2012 ...

In military conflicts in each of these countries the United States and al Qaeda (or one of its associates) have been on the same side.<sup>1</sup>

*What does this tell us about the United States' "War On Terrorism"?*

*Regime change has been the American goal on each occasion: overthrowing communists (or "communists"), Serbians, Slobodan Milosevic, Moammar Gaddafi, Bashar al-Assad ... all heretics or infidels, all non-believers in the empire, all inconvenient to the empire.*

Why, if the enemy is Islamic terrorism, has the United States invested so much blood and treasure against the PLO, Iraq, and Libya, and now Syria, all mideast secular governments?

Why are Washington's closest Arab allies in the Middle East the Islamic governments of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Jordan, and Bahrain? Bahrain being the home of an American naval base; Saudi Arabia and Qatar being conduits to transfer arms to the Syrian rebels.

Why, if democracy means anything to the United States are these same close allies in the Middle East all monarchies?

Why, if the enemy is Islamic terrorism, did the United States shepherd Kosovo — 90% Islamist and perhaps the most gangsterish government in the world — to unilaterally declare independence from Serbia in 2008, an independence so illegitimate and artificial that the majority of the world's nations still have not recognized it?

Why — since Kosovo's ruling Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) have been known for their trafficking in women, heroin, and human body parts (sic) — has the United States been pushing for Kosovo's membership in NATO and the European Union? (Just what the EU needs: another economic basket case.) Between 1998 and 2002, the KLA appeared on the State Department terrorist list, remaining there until the United States decided to make them an ally, due in no small part to the existence of a major American military base in Kosovo, Camp Bondsteel, well situated in relation to planned international oil and gas pipelines coming from the vast landlocked Caspian Sea area to Europe. In November 2005, following a visit to Bondsteel, Alvaro Gil-Robles, the human rights envoy of the Council of Europe, described the camp as a "smaller version of Guantánamo".<sup>2</sup>

Why, if the enemy is Islamic terrorism, did the United States pave the way to power for the Libyan Islamic rebels, who at this very moment are killing other Libyans in order to institute a more fundamentalist Islamic state?

Why do American officials speak endlessly about human rights, yet fully support the Libyan Islamic rebels despite the fact that Doctors Without Borders suspended its work in prisons in the Islamic-rebel city of Misurata because torture was so rampant that some detainees were brought for care only to make them fit for further interrogation? 3

Why is the United States supporting Islamic Terrorists in Libya and Syria who are persecuting Christians?

And why, if the enemy is Islamic terrorism, did US Ambassador to the UN, Susan Rice — who daily attacks the Syrian government on moral grounds — not condemn the assassination of four Syrian high officials on July 18, in all likelihood carried out by al Qaeda types? RT, the Russian television channel broadcast in various parts of the United States, noted her silence in this matter. Does anyone know of any American media that did the same?

So, if you want to understand this thing called United States foreign policy ... forget about the War on Terrorism, forget about September 11, forget about democracy, forget about freedom, forget about human rights, forget about religion, forget about the people of Libya and Syria ... keep your eyes on the prize ... Whatever advances American global domination. Whatever suits their goals at the moment. There is no moral factor built into the DNA of US foreign policy.

## **Bring back the guillotine**

In July, the Canadian corporation Enbridge, Inc. announced that one of its pipelines had leaked and spilled an estimated 1,200 barrels of crude oil in a field in Wisconsin. Two years ago, an Enbridge pipeline spilled more than 19,000 barrels in Michigan. The Michigan spill affected more than 50 kilometers of waterways and wetlands and about 320 people reported medical symptoms from crude oil exposure. The US National Transportation Safety Board said that at \$800 million it was the costliest onshore spill cleanup in the nation's history. The NTSB found that Enbridge knew of a defect in the pipeline five years before it burst. According to Enbridge's own reports, the company had 800 spills between 1999 and 2010, releasing close to 7 million gallons of crude oil. 4

No executive or other employee of Enbridge has been charged with any kind of crime. How many environmental murderers of modern times have been punished?

During a period of a few years beginning around 2007, several thousand employees of stock brokers, banks, mortgage companies, insurance companies, credit-rating agencies, and other financial institutions, mainly in New York, had great fun getting obscenely rich while creating and playing with pieces of paper known by names like derivatives, collateralized debt obligations, index funds, credit default swaps, structured investment vehicles, subprime mortgages, and other exotic terms, for which, it must be kept in mind, there had been no public need or demand. The result has been a severe depression, seriously hurting hundreds of millions of lives in the United States and abroad.

No employee of any of these companies has seen the inside of a prison cell for playing such games with our happiness.

For more than half a century members of the United States foreign policy and military establishments have compiled a record of war crimes and crimes against humanity that the infamous beasts and butchers of history could only envy.

Not a single one of these American officials has come any closer to a proper judgment than going to see the movie “Judgment at Nuremberg”.

Yet, we live in the United States of Punishment for countless other criminal types; more than two million presently rotting their lives away. No other society comes even close to this, no matter how the statistics are calculated. And many of those in American prisons are there for victimless crimes.

On the other hand, we see the Chinese sentencing their citizens to lengthy prison terms, even execution, for environmental crimes.

We have an Iranian court recently trying 39 people for a \$2.6 billion bank loan embezzlement carried out by individuals close to the political elite or with their assent. Of the 39 people tried, four were sentenced to hang, two to life in prison, and others received terms of up to 25 years; in addition to prison time, some were sentenced to flogging, ordered to pay fines, and banned from government jobs. 5

And in Argentina in early July, in the latest of a long series of trials of former Argentine officials, former dictator Jorge Rafael Videla was convicted and sentenced to 50 years for a systematic plan to steal babies from women prisoners who were kidnapped, tortured and killed during the military junta’s war on leftist dissenters — the “dirty war” of 1976-83 that claimed 13,000 victims. Many of the women had “disappeared” shortly after giving birth. Argentina’s last dictator, Reynaldo Bignone, was also convicted and got 15 years. Outside the courthouse a jubilant crowd watched on a big screen and cheered each sentence. 6

As an American, how I envy the Argentines. Get the big screen ready for The Mall in Washington. We’ll have showings of the trials of the Bushes and Cheney and Rumsfeld and Obama. And Henry Kissinger, a strong supporter of the Argentine junta among his many contributions to making the world a better place. And let’s not forget the executives of Goldman Sachs, JP Morgan, Bank of America, and Enbridge, Inc. Fining them just money is pointless. We have to fine them *years*, lots of them.

Without imprisoning these people, nothing will change. That’s become a cliché, but we very well see what continues to happen without imprisonment. And it’s steadily getting worse, financially and imperially.

## **Items of interest from a journal I’ve kept for 40 years, part VII**

- Bantustanning the aboriginals all over the world: The Indians in America, the aboriginals in Australia, the blacks in South Africa, and the Palestinians in Palestine.
- From 1966 tape of President Lyndon Johnson: “I know we oughtn’t to be there [in Vietnam], but I can’t get out.” And he never did. And thousands more troops would die before Johnson left office. (*Washington Post*, March 12, 2006)

- The Germans had *Lebensraum*. Americans had Manifest Destiny.
- chinks, gooks, wogs, towelheads, ragheads — some of the charming terms used by American soldiers to describe their foes in Asia and the Middle East
- In June, 2005, Cong. Duncan Hunter (Rep.-CA) held a news conference concerning Guantánamo. Displaying some tasty traditional meals, he said the government spends \$12 a day for food for each prisoner. “So the point is that the inmates in Guantánamo have never eaten better, they’ve never been treated better, and they’ve never been more comfortable in their lives than in this situation.” (*Scripps Howard News Service*, June 28, 2005, Reg Henry column)
- Vice President Dick Cheney: Guantánamo prisoners are well treated. “They’re living in the tropics. They’re well fed. They’ve got everything they could possibly want.” (CNN.com, June 23, 2005)
- “[Defense Secretary Donald] Rumsfeld said Guantánamo’s operations have been more open to scrutiny than any military detention facility in history.” (*Associated Press*, June 14, 2005)
- “Their ‘coalition of the willing’ [in Iraq] meant the US, Britain, and the equivalent of a child’s imaginary friends.” Paul Loeb, *Truthout*, June 16, 2005
- Nobody has ever suggested that Serbia attacked or was preparing to attack a member of NATO, and that is the only event which justifies a military reaction under the NATO treaty, such as the 1999 78-day bombing of Serbia.
- Rumsfeld re Chinese military buildup: “Since no nation threatens China, one wonders: Why this growing investment?” (*New York Times*, June 6, 2005)
- Rumsfeld re Venezuelan major weapons buildup: “I don’t know of anyone threatening Venezuela, anyone in this hemisphere.” (*Washington Post*, October 3, 2006) [Is it possible that the response to both points raised is the same? A country in North America bordering on Mexico?]
- The failure of the United Nations — as an institution and its individual members — to unequivocally oppose and prevent the United States invasion of Iraq in 2003 can well be called “appeasement”.
- The Iraqi Kurds generally sided with Iran during the 1981-88 Iraq-Iran war; helped the United States before and during its bombing of Iraq in 2003 and during its occupation; and most Kurds don’t identify with being Iraqi according to polls.
- One of the military judges at Guantánamo said: “I don’t care about international law. I don’t want to hear the words ‘international law’ again. We are not concerned with international law.” (*Democracy Now*, April 12, 2005)
- George W. Bush, re al Qaeda types: “Iraqis are sick of foreign people coming in

their country and trying to destabilize their country. And we will help them rid Iraq of these killers.” (*Baltimore Sun*, May 6, 2004)

- “I think all foreigners should stop interfering in the internal affairs of Iraq. Those who want to come and help are welcome. Those who come to interfere and destroy are not.” Paul Wolfowitz, Deputy Secretary of Defense and unindicted war criminal (*Chicago Tribune*, July 22, 2003)
- Timothy McVeigh, Gulf War veteran who bombed a government building in Oklahoma City in 1995, killing 168 people: “What occurred in Oklahoma City was no different than what Americans rain on the heads of others all the time ... The bombing of the Murrah building was not personal, no more than when Air Force, Army, Navy or Marine personnel bomb or launch cruise missiles against government installations and their personnel. ... Many foreign nations and peoples hate Americans for the very reasons most Americans loathe me. Think about that.” (McVeigh’s letter to and interview with Rita Cosby, *Fox News Correspondent*, April 27 2001)
- Douglas Feith, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and unindicted war criminal: “Defense Department officials don’t lie to the public. ... The Defense Department doesn’t do covert action, period.” (*Washington Post*, February 21, 2002)
- The United States will “deal promptly and properly with the terrible abuses” of Iraqi prisoners by U.S. soldiers. “No country in the world upholds the Geneva Conventions on the laws of armed conflict more steadfastly than does the United States.” Douglas Feith, *Boston Globe*, May 5, 2004
- “The State Department plans to delay the release of a human rights report that was due out today, partly because of sensitivities over the prison abuse scandal in Iraq, U.S. officials said. One official who asked not to be identified said the release of the report, which describes actions taken by the U.S. government to encourage respect for human rights by other nations, could ‘make us look hypocritical’.” (*Los Angeles Times*, May 5, 2004)
- In the decades after 1945, as colonial possessions became independent states, it was widely believed that imperialism as a historical phenomenon was coming to an end. However, a new form of imperialism was in fact taking shape, an imperialism not defined by colonial rule but by the global capitalist market. From the outset, the dominant power in this imperialism without colonies was the United States.
- Francis Boyle re the capture and public display of Saddam Hussein: “This is the 21st century equivalent of the Roman Emperor parading the defeated barbarian king before the assembled masses so that they might all shout in unison: Hail Caesar!”
- The US-provided textbooks in Nicaragua after the US-instigated defeat of the Sandinistas in 1990 carefully excluded all mention of Augustino Sandino as a

national hero. (Z magazine, November, 1991)

- “Col. David Hogg, commander of the 2nd Brigade of the 4th Infantry Division, said tougher methods are being used to gather the intelligence. On Wednesday night, he said, his troops picked up the wife and daughter of an Iraqi lieutenant general. They left a note: ‘If you want your family released, turn yourself in.’ Such tactics are justified, he said, because, ‘It’s an intelligence operation with detainees, and these people have info.’ They would have been released in due course, he added later. The tactic worked. On Friday, Hogg said, the lieutenant general appeared at the front gate of the U.S. base and surrendered.” (*Washington Post*, July 28, 2003) [This is illegal under international law; in ordinary parlance we’d call it a kidnapping with ransom; in war, it’s the collective punishment of civilians and is forbidden under the Geneva Convention]
- “Never forget that everything Hitler did in Germany was legal.” — *Martin Luther King, Jr.*
- “Americans, who up until now had been so valued for their pragmatism, have become ideologues, ‘Bolsheviks’ of the Right, as Daniel Cohn-Bendit once described them.” (Jean-Marcel Bouguereau, concerning Iraq, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, September 8, 2003)
- Six months after its invasion of Iraq, the Bush administration defended its policy on the basis of schools and hospitals opening and strides made in providing water and electricity. (*Washington Post*, September 25, 2003) — These are all things 12 years of US bombing and sanctions had destroyed.

## Notes

1. For a summary of much of this, see: Peter Dale Scott, “[Bosnia, Kosovo, and Now Libya: The Human Costs of Washington’s Ongoing Collusion With Terrorists](#)”, *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*, August 7, 2011 ↵
2. [Camp Bondsteel entry on Wikipedia](#) ↵
3. *Washington Post*, January 27, 2012 ↵
4. [Enbridge entry on Wikipedia](#); *Washington Post*, July 29, 2012↵
5. *Reuters*, July 31, 2012 ↵
6. *Associated Press*, July 6, 2012 ↵

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**William Blum** is the author of:

- *Killing Hope: US Military and CIA Interventions Since World War 2*

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- *West-Bloc Dissident: A Cold War Memoir*
- *Freeing the World to Death: Essays on the American Empire*

Portions of the books can be read, and signed copies purchased, at [www.killinghope.org](http://www.killinghope.org)

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