

Waging an Illegal US-NATO Led War on Syria with the Endorsement of “International Criminal Law”

Former Chief Prosecutor of the ICC Luis Moreno Ocampo Calls for NATO Military Intervention in Syria

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Ocampo, Front Man For The Empire

On November 9, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) conducted an interview with Luis Moreno-Ocampo, former chief prosecutor for the International Criminal Court (ICC).¹ During the interview, Ocampo called for the ICC to prepare an indictment against President Bashar Al-Assad of Syria and for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to issue a warrant for his arrest. The warrant, he added, should be enforced by sending NATO troops, including Canadian forces, to Syria or “bombing to arrest him.”

Ocampo explained that, because Assad is commander-in-chief of the Syrian armed forces and since there have been civilian casualties resulting from military actions on the part of the Syrian government, there would be a strong case against Assad, though he neglected in the interview to outline what the charges against Assad might be. (Is it a criminal offence under ICC rules to use your army to repel a foreign aggression?) Ocampo didn't mention the role of foreign powers, such as the USA, Canada, Britain, France, Turkey, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, or indeed the collection of 70 countries in the so-called “Friends of Syria” formation, meddling in the internal affairs of Syria with the illegal purpose of regime change. He also failed to note the glaring war crimes against civilians and the terrorist bombings committed by the foreign-backed mercenaries inside Syria, whose crimes have been repeatedly recorded in graphic detail by international news networks, broadcast on Youtube, and have even been condemned on at least one occasion by the United Nations Security Council.

Noting that, due to feelings on the part of Russia, China, and South Africa of being tricked by the West over the “no-fly zone” for Libya (which quickly morphed into a bombing campaign for regime change there), Ocampo distanced himself from the idea of a full-scale invasion of Syria, citing the lack of a consensus within the international community.

This is not the first time that Mr. Ocampo has played the role of front man for the US empire. In fact, in every instance during the last nine years when the ICC, under his leadership, became involved with political leaders, the leaders indicted were always African and at odds with the foreign policy goals of the USA. Among them were Omar Al-Bashir of Sudan, Muammar Gaddafi of Libya, and his son, Saif. It should be noted that the USA has not accepted the jurisdiction of the the court over its citizens. In other words, the ICC is a one-way street along which the racist and neo-colonial goals of US foreign policy are driven in

Africa, but the crimes of racism and neo-colonialism go unpunished.

During his nine years in office, however, Ocampo was not very successful as a prosecutor. Twenty-nine Africans were indicted but only one was convicted and not on the original charges contained in the indictment.² Ocampo was also ridiculous for announcing that he was taking his lead from US Ambassador to the UN, Susan Rice, and launching an investigation into the outrageous slander that the Gaddafi government of Libya was distributing Viagra to soldiers loyal to the state in order to promote mass rapes of women civilians.³

The ICC fits into a new international legal pattern of special tribunals (often paid for directly by the USA) for certain global trouble spots such as the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone, in which the leaders of countries targeted by the USA and NATO for regime change are prosecuted, following the military aggression that removes them from power. In his nine years in office, Ocampo ignored the war crimes of George W. Bush, Colin Powell, and Tony Blair in fomenting an invasion in Iraq; the misdeeds of David Cameron and Nicholas Sarkozy in promoting an attack on Libya; and the extra-legal assassination drone attacks personally unleashed by Barak Obama against innocent civilians in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen, Somalia and Sudan. In fact, not one western leader has ever been indicted for the wars or occupations in the former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Rwanda, Somalia, Libya, or Palestine. In a few words, the ICC and the regime of special international tribunals represents the imperial victor's justice.

But why did the CBC choose to interview Ocampo about Syria? To any fan of hockey, the national game of Canada, the answer is obvious. In professional hockey, from which the CBC makes piles of money, the job of the referee is to watch for infractions of rules by players. Players who break the rules are singled out for punishment, their offences announced over the public address system, and they are consigned to the penalty box for various intervals of time, up to and including the remainder of the game. During that interval, the player is out of play. Similarly, in the world of international politics, when players like Syrian President Assad get out of line, in terms of the needs of the US empire, a referee (such as Ocampo) is needed to single them out for public excoriation (echoed by mainstream media outlets such as the CBC) and, if possible, to put them out of play, or by making them international pariahs. President Al-Bashir of Sudan, for example, cannot leave his own country because there is a warrant out from Ocampo for his arrest.

Ocampo actually said in the interview that he favoured a NATO operation in Syria modelled on the recent military intervention in Libya because NATO forces involved in the Libyan operation were able to provide support from a safe distance while local "rebel" fighters carried out the regime change on the ground. Very neat, in theory, according to Ocampo but not true in practice. Actually, many warring NATO countries had special forces on the ground in Libya, organizing and leading the Libyan "rebels" to victory. Today, Libya is a failed state with warring factions vying for control. However, the Libyan oil concessions have been returned to their original owners (pre-Gaddafi): trans-national corporations. The new "government" of Libya has reneged on all contracts and loans previously signed with Russian and Chinese firms.

Ocampo was in Toronto at the Canadian Forces College for a joint session of Canadian Pugwash and the Canadian Voice of Women for Peace.⁴ They might have chosen a better

keynote speaker than Ocampo, a serial front man for the empire.

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www.hamiltoncoalitiontostopthewar.ca

Notes

¹ <http://www.cbc.ca/player/News/Politics/ID/2302716024/>

² <http://www.thestar.com/news/world/article/1206605—international-criminal-court-prosecutor-reaches-end-of-his-term-with-mixed-record>

³

<http://www.france24.com/en/20110609-libya-gaddafi-linked-systematic-rape-opposition-says-icc-prosecutor-ocampo>

⁴

<http://blogs.ottawacitizen.com/2012/11/08/international-criminal-court-prosecutor-to-speak-at-armour-heights-officers-mess-in-toronto/>
<http://vowpeace.org/event/vow-joins-canadian-pugwash/>

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