

Want Endless War? Love the U.S. Empire? Well, Hillary Clinton Is Your Choice

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Hillary Clinton likes to extol her foreign policy credentials, particularly her experience as secretary of state. She attaches herself to Barack Obama's coattails, pledging to continue his policies. But she is even more hawkish than the president.

Like Obama, Clinton touts American exceptionalism, the notion that the United States is better than any other country. In his State of the Union addresses, Obama has proclaimed America "exceptional" and said the U.S. must "lead the world." Clinton wrote in her book "Hard Choices" that "America remains the 'indispensable nation.' "

It is this view that animates U.S. invasions, interventions, bombings and occupations of other countries. Under the pretense of protecting our national interest, the United States maintains some 800 military bases in other countries, costing taxpayers tens of billions of dollars annually. Often referred to as "enduring bases," they enable us to mount attacks whenever and wherever our leaders see fit, whether with drones or manned aircraft.



Hillary Clinton greets workers at her campaign office Monday in Des Moines, Iowa. (Andrew Harnik / AP)

Obama, who continues to prosecute the war in Afghanistan 15 years after it began, is poised to send ground troops back to Iraq and begin bombing Libya. His aggressive pursuit of regime change in Syria was met with pushback by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, according to Seymour Hersh.

The president has bombed some seven countries with drones. But besides moving toward normalization of relations with Cuba, his signature foreign policy achievement is brokering the agreement to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

Although Clinton supports the nuclear deal, she talks tough about Iran. In September 2015, she provocatively declared, "I don't believe Iran is our partner in this agreement. Iran is the subject of the agreement," and added, "I will confront them across the board." She said, "I will not hesitate to take military action if Iran attempts to obtain a nuclear weapon."

During the 2008 presidential campaign, Clinton promised to "totally obliterate" Iran if it attacked Israel. Clinton was, in effect, pledging to commit genocide against the Iranian people.

In an August 2014 Atlantic interview with Jeffrey Goldberg, Clinton maintained, "There is no

such thing as a right to enrich.” Apparently, she has not read the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which gives countries like Iran the right to enrich uranium for peaceful purposes. Article IV of the treaty says, “Nothing in this Treaty shall be interpreted as affecting the inalienable right of all the Parties to the Treaty to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity with Articles I and II of this Treaty.”

One country that does possess nuclear weapons is Israel—which refuses to ratify the NPT. Clinton has consistently and uncritically supported the policies of the Israeli government. In the Atlantic interview, she placed the blame for Israel’s 2014 massacre in Gaza squarely with the Palestinians.

From July 8 to Aug. 27, 2014, Israel killed over 2,100 Palestinians—including more than 400 children—80 percent of them civilians. Sixty-six Israeli soldiers and seven Israeli civilians were killed.

When Goldberg asked Clinton whom she held responsible for the deaths of hundreds of Palestinian children, she demurred, saying, “[I]t’s impossible to know what happens in the fog of war.” She blamed only the Palestinians, saying, “There’s no doubt in my mind that Hamas initiated this conflict.” Claiming “Israel has a right to defend itself,” she said, “I think Israel did what it had to do to respond to the rockets.”

But Israel did not act in self-defense. In the first 10 days of June 2014, Israeli forces [abducted 17 Palestinian teenage boys](#) in the occupied West Bank. On June 12, three Israeli teenagers were abducted in the southern West Bank; Israel accused Hamas. After those three were found dead, a group of Israelis tortured and killed a Palestinian teenager in Jerusalem. On July 7, Israel launched a large military operation in the Gaza Strip, dubbed Operation Protective Edge. The Israel Defense Forces devastated Gaza. For 51 days, Israel bombarded Gaza with more than 6,000 airstrikes.

The United Nations Human Rights Council subsequently convened an independent, international commission of inquiry, which concluded that Israel, and to a lesser extent Palestinian armed groups, had likely committed violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, some constituting war crimes. “The scale of the devastation was unprecedented” in Gaza, according to the commission.

Yet Clinton was puzzled by what she calls “this enormous international reaction against Israel,” adding, “This reaction is uncalled for and unfair.”

She attributed the “enormous international reaction” to “a number of factors” but only mentioned anti-Semitism, never citing Israel’s illegal occupation of Palestinian lands or its periodic massacres in Gaza.

Indeed, just last month, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told the Security Council it was an “indisputable truth” that “Palestinian frustration is growing under the weight of a half century of occupation and the paralysis of the peace process.” He noted that it was “human nature to react to occupation, which serves as a potent incubator of hate and extremism.”

Clinton didn’t ponder why so many people around the world are participating in the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement against the Israeli occupation. Representatives of Palestinian civil society launched BDS in 2005, calling upon “international civil society

organizations and people of conscience all over the world to impose broad boycotts and implement divestment initiatives against Israel.”

In her November 2015 article titled “How I Would Reaffirm Unbreakable Bond With Israel—and Benjamin Netanyahu,” published in the Jewish newspaper Forward, Clinton vowed to continue to oppose BDS. “As secretary of state, I requested more assistance for Israel every year,” she boasted, adding that she opposed “the biased Goldstone report,” explained below.

After Israel’s 2008-2009 Operation Cast Lead, in which nearly 1,400 Palestinians (82 percent of whom were civilians) and 13 Israelis were killed, a U.N. Human Rights Council report by a commission headed by Justice Richard Goldstone concluded that “Disproportionate destruction and violence against civilians were part of a deliberate policy [by Israel].”

Israel responded to the report with threats and harassment against Goldstone, leading him to backtrack on one of the findings in the report that bears his name, namely, that Israel deliberately targeted civilians. But the other members of the commission stood fast on all of the report’s conclusions.

Clinton’s vote in favor of President George W. Bush’s illegal 2003 invasion of Iraq cost her the 2008 election. It also cost more than 4,500 Americans and hundreds of thousands of Iraqis their lives.

Yet Clinton cynically told corporate executives at a 2011 State Department roundtable on investment opportunities in Iraq, “It’s time for the United States to start thinking of Iraq as a business opportunity.”

The same year, Clinton led the campaign for forcible regime change in Libya, despite opposition by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Responding to the gruesome sodomizing of President Moammar Gadhafi with a bayonet, Clinton laughed and said, “We came, we saw, he died.”

Both the Iraq War and regime change in Libya paved the way for the rise of Islamic State and dangerous conflict in the Middle East. Obama is about to escalate his military involvement in Libya. Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs, said, “The president has made clear that we have the authority to use military force.” The New York Times reports that the expanded campaign is “expected to include airstrikes and raids by elite American troops.”

The Obama administration is reportedly changing the rules of engagement to allow more civilian casualties in the “war” against Islamic State. A senior military official told The Daily Beast, “Now I think you’ll see a little more willingness to tolerate civilian casualties in the interest of making progress.” But the Geneva Conventions prohibit the disproportionate killing of civilians.

Clinton has promised to escalate the wars in Syria and Iraq, including a no-fly zone in Syria. Since Islamic State doesn’t have an air force, her no-fly zone would be likely to capture Russian planes flying over Syria.

Talking tough on ABC’s “This Week,” Clinton declared, “We have to fight in the air, fight on the ground and fight them on the Internet.” She said nothing about diplomacy or an arms embargo to stop sending weapons that end up in the hands of Islamic State.

Although the corporate media fans the flames of fear about Islamic State, only 38 people in the United States have died in terror-related incidents since 9/11, according to Politifact.com. The “war on terror” has cost us more than \$1.5 trillion, in addition to U.S. lives and those of untold numbers in other countries.

Nevertheless, there is little doubt that a President Hillary Clinton would continue our “perpetual war.” She would do everything in her power to ensure the robust survival of the American empire.

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