

Why the Rise of Fascism is again the Issue

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The recent 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz was a reminder of the great crime of fascism, whose Nazi iconography is embedded in our consciousness. Fascism is preserved as history, as flickering footage of goose-stepping blackshirts, their criminality terrible and clear. Yet in the same liberal societies, whose war-making elites urge us never to forget, the accelerating danger of a modern kind of fascism is suppressed; for it is their fascism.

“To initiate a war of aggression...,” said the Nuremberg Tribunal judges in 1946, “is not only an international crime, it is the supreme international crime, differing only from other war crimes in that it contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole.”

Had the Nazis not invaded Europe, Auschwitz and the Holocaust would not have happened. Had the United States and its satellites not initiated their war of aggression in Iraq in 2003, almost a million people would be alive today; and Islamic State, or ISIS, would not have us in thrall to its savagery. They are the progeny of modern fascism, weaned by the bombs, bloodbaths and lies that are the surreal theatre known as news.

Like the fascism of the 1930s and 1940s, big lies are delivered with the precision of a metronome: thanks to an omnipresent, repetitive media and its virulent censorship by omission. Take the catastrophe in Libya.

In 2011, Nato launched 9,700 “strike sorties” against Libya, of which more than a third were aimed at civilian targets. Uranium warheads were used; the cities of Misurata and Sirte were carpet-bombed. The Red Cross identified mass graves, and Unicef reported that “most [of the children killed] were under the age of ten”.

The public sodomising of the Libyan president Muammar Gaddafi with a “rebel” bayonet was greeted by the then US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, with the words: “We came, we saw, he died.” His murder, like the destruction of his country, was justified with a familiar big lie; he was planning “genocide” against his own people. “We knew ... that if we waited one more day,” said President Obama, “Benghazi, a city the size of Charlotte, could suffer a massacre that would have reverberated across the region and stained the conscience of the world.”

This was the fabrication of Islamist militias facing defeat by Libyan government forces. They told Reuters there would be “a real bloodbath, a massacre like we saw in Rwanda”. Reported on March 14, 2011, the lie provided the first spark for Nato’s inferno, described by David Cameron as a “humanitarian intervention”.

Secretly supplied and trained by Britain's SAS, many of the "rebels" would become ISIS, whose latest video offering shows the beheading of 21 Coptic Christian workers seized in Sirte, the city destroyed on their behalf by Nato bombers.

For Obama, Cameron and Hollande, Gaddafi's true crime was Libya's economic independence and his declared intention to stop selling Africa's greatest oil reserves in US dollars. The petrodollar is a pillar of American imperial power. Gaddafi audaciously planned to underwrite a common African currency backed by gold, establish an all-Africa bank and promote economic union among poor countries with prized resources. Whether or not this would happen, the very notion was intolerable to the US as it prepared to "enter" Africa and bribe African governments with military "partnerships".

Following Nato's attack under cover of a Security Council resolution, Obama, wrote Garikai Chengu, "confiscated \$30 billion from Libya's Central Bank, which Gaddafi had earmarked for the establishment of an African Central Bank and the African gold backed dinar currency".

The "humanitarian war" against Libya drew on a model close to western liberal hearts, especially in the media. In 1999, Bill Clinton and Tony Blair sent Nato to bomb Serbia, because, they lied, the Serbs were committing "genocide" against ethnic Albanians in the secessionist province of Kosovo. David Scheffer, US ambassador-at-large for war crimes [sic], claimed that as many as "225,000 ethnic Albanian men aged between 14 and 59" might have been murdered. Both Clinton and Blair evoked the Holocaust and "the spirit of the Second World War". The West's heroic allies were the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), whose criminal record was set aside. The British Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, told them to call him any time on his mobile phone.

With the Nato bombing over, and much of Serbia's infrastructure in ruins, along with schools, hospitals, monasteries and the national TV station, international forensic teams descended upon Kosovo to exhume evidence of the "holocaust". The FBI failed to find a single mass grave and went home. The Spanish forensic team did the same, its leader angrily denouncing "a semantic pirouette by the war propaganda machines". A year later, a United Nations tribunal on Yugoslavia announced the final count of the dead in Kosovo: 2,788. This included combatants on both sides and Serbs and Roma murdered by the KLA. There was no genocide. The "holocaust" was a lie. The Nato attack had been fraudulent.

Behind the lie, there was serious purpose. Yugoslavia was a uniquely independent, multi-ethnic federation that had stood as a political and economic bridge in the Cold War. Most of its utilities and major manufacturing was publicly owned. This was not acceptable to the expanding European Community, especially newly united Germany, which had begun a drive east to capture its "natural market" in the Yugoslav provinces of Croatia and Slovenia. By the time the Europeans met at Maastricht in 1991 to lay their plans for the disastrous eurozone, a secret deal had been struck; Germany would recognise Croatia. Yugoslavia was doomed.

In Washington, the US saw that the struggling Yugoslav economy was denied World Bank loans. Nato, then an almost defunct Cold War relic, was reinvented as imperial enforcer. At a 1999 Kosovo "peace" conference in Rambouillet, in France, the Serbs were subjected to the enforcer's duplicitous tactics. The Rambouillet accord included a secret Annex B, which the US delegation inserted on the last day. This demanded the military occupation of the whole of Yugoslavia — a country with bitter memories of the Nazi occupation — and the

implementation of a “free-market economy” and the privatisation of all government assets. No sovereign state could sign this. Punishment followed swiftly; Nato bombs fell on a defenceless country. It was the precursor to the catastrophes in Afghanistan and Iraq, Syria and Libya, and Ukraine.

Since 1945, more than a third of the membership of the United Nations – 69 countries – have suffered some or all of the following at the hands of America’s modern fascism. They have been invaded, their governments overthrown, their popular movements suppressed, their elections subverted, their people bombed and their economies stripped of all protection, their societies subjected to a crippling siege known as “sanctions”. The British historian Mark Curtis estimates the death toll in the millions. In every case, a big lie was deployed.

“Tonight, for the first time since 9/11, our combat mission in Afghanistan is over.” These were opening words of Obama’s 2015 State of the Union address. In fact, some 10,000 troops and 20,000 military contractors (mercenaries) remain in Afghanistan on indefinite assignment. “The longest war in American history is coming to a responsible conclusion,” said Obama. In fact, more civilians were killed in Afghanistan in 2014 than in any year since the UN took records. The majority have been killed — civilians and soldiers — during Obama’s time as president.

The tragedy of Afghanistan rivals the epic crime in Indochina. In his lauded and much quoted book, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives*, Zbigniew Brzezinski, the godfather of US policies from Afghanistan to the present day, writes that if America is to control Eurasia and dominate the world, it cannot sustain a popular democracy, because “the pursuit of power is not a goal that commands popular passion . . . Democracy is inimical to imperial mobilisation.” He is right. As WikiLeaks and Edward Snowden have revealed, a surveillance and police state is usurping democracy. In 1976, Brzezinski, then President Carter’s National Security Advisor, demonstrated his point by dealing a death blow to Afghanistan’s first and only democracy. Who knows this vital history?

In the 1960s, a popular revolution swept Afghanistan, the poorest country on earth, eventually overthrowing the vestiges of the aristocratic regime in 1978. The People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) formed a government and declared a reform programme that included the abolition of feudalism, freedom for all religions, equal rights for women and social justice for the ethnic minorities. More than 13,000 political prisoners were freed and police files publicly burned.

The new government introduced free medical care for the poorest; peonage was abolished, a mass literacy programme was launched. For women, the gains were unheard of. By the late 1980s, half the university students were women, and women made up almost half of Afghanistan’s doctors, a third of civil servants and the majority of teachers. “Every girl,” recalled Saira Noorani, a female surgeon,

“could go to high school and university. We could go where we wanted and wear what we liked. We used to go to cafes and the cinema to see the latest Indian film on a Friday and listen to the latest music. It all started to go wrong when the mujaheddin started winning. They used to kill teachers and burn schools. We were terrified. It was funny and sad to think these were the people the West supported.”

The PDPA government was backed by the Soviet Union, even though, as former Secretary of State Cyrus Vance later admitted, “there was no evidence of any Soviet complicity [in the revolution]”. Alarmed by the growing confidence of liberation movements throughout the world, Brzezinski decided that if Afghanistan was to succeed under the PDPA, its independence and progress would offer the “threat of a promising example”.

On July 3, 1979, the White House secretly authorised \$500 million in arms and logistics to support tribal “fundamentalist” groups known as the mujaheddin. The aim was the overthrow of Afghanistan’s first secular, reformist government. In August 1979, the US embassy in Kabul reported that “the United States’ larger interests ... would be served by the demise of [the PDPA government], despite whatever setbacks this might mean for future social and economic reforms in Afghanistan.” The italics are mine.

The mujaheddin were the forebears of al-Qaeda and Islamic State. They included Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who received tens of millions of dollars in cash from the CIA. Hekmatyar’s specialty was trafficking in opium and throwing acid in the faces of women who refused to wear the veil. Invited to London, he was lauded by Prime Minister Thatcher as a “freedom fighter”.

Such fanatics might have remained in their tribal world had Brzezinski not launched an international movement to promote Islamic fundamentalism in Central Asia and so undermine secular political liberation and “destabilise” the Soviet Union, creating, as he wrote in his autobiography, “a few stirred up Muslims”. His grand plan coincided with the ambitions of the Pakistani dictator, General Zia ul-Haq, to dominate the region. In 1986, the CIA and Pakistan’s intelligence agency, the ISI, began to recruit people from around the world to join the Afghan jihad. The Saudi multi-millionaire Osama bin Laden was one of them. Operatives who would eventually join the Taliban and al-Qaeda, were recruited at an Islamic college in Brooklyn, New York, and given paramilitary training at a CIA camp in Virginia. This was called “Operation Cyclone”. Its success was celebrated in 1996 when the last PDPA president of Afghanistan, Mohammed Najibullah — who had gone before the UN General Assembly to plead for help — was hanged from a streetlight by the Taliban.

The “blowback” of Operation Cyclone and its “few stirred up Muslims” was September 11, 2001. Operation Cyclone became the “war on terror”, in which countless men, women and children would lose their lives across the Muslim world, from Afghanistan to Iraq, Yemen, Somalia and Syria. The enforcer’s message was and remains: “You are with us or against us.”

The common thread in fascism, past and present, is mass murder. The American invasion of Vietnam had its “free fire zones”, “body counts” and “collateral damage”. In the province of Quang Ngai, where I reported from, many thousands of civilians (“gooks”) were murdered by the US; yet only one massacre, at My Lai, is remembered. In Laos and Cambodia, the greatest aerial bombardment in history produced an epoch of terror marked today by the spectacle of joined-up bomb craters which, from the air, resemble monstrous necklaces. The bombing gave Cambodia its own ISIS, led by Pol Pot.

Today, the world’s greatest single campaign of terror entails the execution of entire families, guests at weddings, mourners at funerals. These are Obama’s victims. According to the New York Times, Obama makes his selection from a CIA “kill list” presented to him every Tuesday in the White House Situation Room. He then decides, without a shred of legal justification, who will live and who will die. His execution weapon is the Hellfire missile

carried by a pilotless aircraft known as a drone; these roast their victims and festoon the area with their remains. Each “hit” is registered on a faraway console screen as a “bugsplat”.

“For goose-steppers,” wrote the historian Norman Pollock, “substitute the seemingly more innocuous militarisation of the total culture. And for the bombastic leader, we have the reformer manqué, blithely at work, planning and executing assassination, smiling all the while.”

Uniting fascism old and new is the cult of superiority. “I believe in American exceptionalism with every fibre of my being,” said Obama, evoking declarations of national fetishism from the 1930s. As the historian Alfred W. McCoy has pointed out, it was the Hitler devotee, Carl Schmitt, who said, “The sovereign is he who decides the exception.” This sums up Americanism, the world’s dominant ideology. That it remains unrecognised as a predatory ideology is the achievement of an equally unrecognised brainwashing. Insidious, undeclared, presented wittily as enlightenment on the march, its conceit insinuates western culture. I grew up on a cinematic diet of American glory, almost all of it a distortion. I had no idea that it was the Red Army that had destroyed most of the Nazi war machine, at a cost of as many as 13 million soldiers. By contrast, US losses, including in the Pacific, were 400,000. Hollywood reversed this.

The difference now is that cinema audiences are invited to wring their hands at the “tragedy” of American psychopaths having to kill people in distant places — just as the President himself kills them. The embodiment of Hollywood’s violence, the actor and director Clint Eastwood, was nominated for an Oscar this year for his movie, *American Sniper*, which is about a licensed murderer and nutcase. The *New York Times* described it as a “patriotic, pro-family picture which broke all attendance records in its opening days”.

There are no heroic movies about America’s embrace of fascism. During the Second World War, America (and Britain) went to war against Greeks who had fought heroically against Nazism and were resisting the rise of Greek fascism. In 1967, the CIA helped bring to power a fascist military junta in Athens — as it did in Brazil and most of Latin America. Germans and east Europeans who had colluded with Nazi aggression and crimes against humanity were given safe haven in the US; many were pampered and their talents rewarded. Wernher von Braun was the “father” of both the Nazi V-2 terror bomb and the US space programme.

In the 1990s, as former Soviet republics, eastern Europe and the Balkans became military outposts of Nato, the heirs to a Nazi movement in Ukraine were given their opportunity. Responsible for the deaths of thousands of Jews, Poles and Russians during the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, Ukrainian fascism was rehabilitated and its “new wave” hailed by the enforcer as “nationalists”.

This reached its apogee in 2014 when the Obama administration splashed out \$5 billion on a coup against the elected government. The shock troops were neo-Nazis known as the Right Sector and Svoboda. Their leaders include Oleh Tyahnybok, who has called for a purge of the “Moscow-Jewish mafia” and “other scum”, including gays, feminists and those on the political left.

These fascists are now integrated into the Kiev coup government. The first deputy speaker of the Ukrainian parliament, Andriy Parubiy, a leader of the governing party, is co-founder of Svoboda. On February 14, Parubiy announced he was flying to Washington get “the USA to

give us highly precise modern weaponry". If he succeeds, it will be seen as an act of war by Russia.

No western leader has spoken up about the revival of fascism in the heart of Europe — with the exception of Vladimir Putin, whose people lost 22 million to a Nazi invasion that came through the borderland of Ukraine. At the recent Munich Security Conference, Obama's Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, Victoria Nuland, ranted abuse about European leaders for opposing the US arming of the Kiev regime. She referred to the German Defence Minister as "the minister for defeatism". It was Nuland who masterminded the coup in Kiev. The wife of Robert D. Kagan, a leading "neo-con" luminary and co-founder of the extreme right wing Project for a New American Century, she was foreign policy advisor to Dick Cheney.

Nuland's coup did not go to plan. Nato was prevented from seizing Russia's historic, legitimate, warm-water naval base in Crimea. The mostly Russian population of Crimea — illegally annexed to Ukraine by Nikita Krushchev in 1954 — voted overwhelmingly to return to Russia, as they had done in the 1990s. The referendum was voluntary, popular and internationally observed. There was no invasion.

At the same time, the Kiev regime turned on the ethnic Russian population in the east with the ferocity of ethnic cleaning. Deploying neo-Nazi militias in the manner of the Waffen-SS, they bombed and laid to siege cities and towns. They used mass starvation as a weapon, cutting off electricity, freezing bank accounts, stopping social security and pensions. More than a million refugees fled across the border into Russia. In the western media, they became unpeople escaping "the violence" caused by the "Russian invasion". The Nato commander, General Breedlove — whose name and actions might have been inspired by Stanley Kubrick's Dr. Strangelove — announced that 40,000 Russian troops were "massing". In the age of forensic satellite evidence, he offered none.

These Russian-speaking and bilingual people of Ukraine - a third of the population - have long sought a federation that reflects the country's ethnic diversity and is both autonomous and independent of Moscow. Most are not "separatists" but citizens who want to live securely in their homeland and oppose the power grab in Kiev. Their revolt and establishment of autonomous "states" are a reaction to Kiev's attacks on them. Little of this has been explained to western audiences.

On May 2, 2014, in Odessa, 41 ethnic Russians were burned alive in the trade union headquarters with police standing by. The Right Sector leader Dmytro Yarosh hailed the massacre as "another bright day in our national history". In the American and British media, this was reported as a "murky tragedy" resulting from "clashes" between "nationalists" (neo-Nazis) and "separatists" (people collecting signatures for a referendum on a federal Ukraine).

The New York Times buried the story, having dismissed as Russian propaganda warnings about the fascist and anti-Semitic policies of Washington's new clients. The Wall Street Journal damned the victims - "Deadly Ukraine Fire Likely Sparked by Rebels, Government Says". Obama congratulated the junta for its "restraint".

If Putin can be provoked into coming to their aid, his pre-ordained "pariah" role in the West will justify the lie that Russia is invading Ukraine. On January 29, Ukraine's top military commander, General Viktor Muzhemko, almost inadvertently dismissed the very basis for US

and EU sanctions on Russia when he told a news conference emphatically: “The Ukrainian army is not fighting with the regular units of the Russian Army”. There were “individual citizens” who were members of “illegal armed groups”, but there was no Russian invasion. This was not news. Vadym Prystaiko, Kiev’s Deputy Foreign Minister, has called for “full scale war” with nuclear-armed Russia.

On February 21, US Senator James Inhofe, a Republican from Oklahoma, introduced a bill that would authorise American arms for the Kiev regime. In his Senate presentation, Inhofe used photographs he claimed were of Russian troops crossing into Ukraine, which have long been exposed as fakes. It was reminiscent of Ronald Reagan’s fake pictures of a Soviet installation in Nicaragua, and Colin Powell’s fake evidence to the UN of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

The intensity of the smear campaign against Russia and the portrayal of its president as a pantomime villain is unlike anything I have known as a reporter. Robert Parry, one of America’s most distinguished investigative journalists, who revealed the Iran-Contra scandal, wrote recently,

“No European government, since Adolf Hitler’s Germany, has seen fit to dispatch Nazi storm troopers to wage war on a domestic population, but the Kiev regime has and has done so knowingly. Yet across the West’s media/political spectrum, there has been a studious effort to cover up this reality even to the point of ignoring facts that have been well establishedIf you wonder how the world could stumble into world war three – much as it did into world war one a century ago – all you need to do is look at the madness over Ukraine that has proved impervious to facts or reason.”

In 1946, the Nuremberg Tribunal prosecutor said of the German media:

“The use made by Nazi conspirators of psychological warfare is well known. Before each major aggression, with some few exceptions based on expediency, they initiated a press campaign calculated to weaken their victims and to prepare the German people psychologically for the attack In the propaganda system of the Hitler State it was the daily press and the radio that were the most important weapons.”

In the Guardian on February 2, Timothy Garton-Ash called, in effect, for a world war. “Putin must be stopped,” said the headline. “And sometimes only guns can stop guns.” He conceded that the threat of war might “nourish a Russian paranoia of encirclement”; but that was fine. He name-checked the military equipment needed for the job and advised his readers that “America has the best kit”.

In 2003, Garton-Ash, an Oxford professor, repeated the propaganda that led to the slaughter in Iraq. Saddam Hussein, he wrote, “has, as [Colin] Powell documented, stockpiled large quantities of horrifying chemical and biological weapons, and is hiding what remains of them. He is still trying to get nuclear ones.” He lauded Blair as a “Gladstonian, Christian liberal interventionist”. In 2006, he wrote, “Now we face the next big test of the West after Iraq: Iran.”

The outbursts — or as Garton-Ash prefers, his “tortured liberal ambivalence” — are not untypical of those in the transatlantic liberal elite who have struck a Faustian deal. The war

criminal Blair is their lost leader. The Guardian, in which Garton-Ash's piece appeared, published a full-page advertisement for an American Stealth bomber. On a menacing image of the Lockheed Martin monster were the words: "The F-35. GREAT For Britain". This American "kit" will cost British taxpayers £1.3 billion, its F-model predecessors having slaughtered across the world. In tune with its advertiser, a Guardian editorial has demanded an increase in military spending.

Once again, there is serious purpose. The rulers of the world want Ukraine not only as a missile base; they want its economy. Kiev's new Finance Minister, Nataliwe Jaresko, is a former senior US State Department official in charge of US overseas "investment". She was hurriedly given Ukrainian citizenship.

They want Ukraine for its abundant gas; Vice President Joe Biden's son is on the board of Ukraine's biggest oil, gas and fracking company. The manufacturers of GM seeds, companies such as the infamous Monsanto, want Ukraine's rich farming soil.

Above all, they want Ukraine's mighty neighbour, Russia. They want to Balkanise or dismember Russia and exploit the greatest source of natural gas on earth. As the Arctic ice melts, they want control of the Arctic Ocean and its energy riches, and Russia's long Arctic land border. Their man in Moscow used to be Boris Yeltsin, a drunk, who handed his country's economy to the West. His successor, Putin, has re-established Russia as a sovereign nation; that is his crime.

The responsibility of the rest of us is clear. It is to identify and expose the reckless lies of warmongers and never to collude with them. It is to re-awaken the great popular movements that brought a fragile civilisation to modern imperial states. Most important, it is to prevent the conquest of ourselves: our minds, our humanity, our self respect. If we remain silent, victory over us is assured, and a holocaust beckons.

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