

Demonize, Distract and Conquer - Sanitizing Perpetual War for the Masses

by Jason Hirthler via darcy - Counterpunch Monday, Sep 12 2016, 3:37am

international / prose / post

An excellent piece: factually accurate, informative and compelling. Well done Mr Hirthler -- Eds



Summoning the Humanitarian Pretext

The arch pragmatist Machiavelli once wrote that, *"If you watch the ways of men, you will see that those who obtain great wealth and power do so either by force or fraud, and having got them they conceal under some honest name the foulness of their deeds."* You couldn't pen a better description of the relationship between the imperial corporate state and its supplicant media. Once the coffers of vulnerable nations are ransacked by American wars of aggression, it is the media that sweeps the crimes of state beneath a carpet of piety. The truth may come out in due time, although it is always ex post facto. Thanks to the the coordination between the corporate sector, the state, and the media, the American doctrinal system is largely a self-contained narrative. It comes complete with a smooth internal logic. Corporations set priorities, the state produces a storyline that rationalizes the pursuit of those priorities, and the media distributes and reifies the storyline until it is gospel. This is no surprise, since the corporations own the politicians and the presses. Yet one way to examine the functioning of this kind of systemic propaganda is by looking at some of the keywords on which the stories hinge.

The foul deeds Machiavelli mentioned now principally occur in the Middle East, where vast resources lie and where power may be usefully projected deep into Eurasia. The Syrian proxy war between forces east and west is a nice example of how the dissimulations initiated in Washington are disseminated through the MSM. For instance, The New York Times, and its deputies in the vast clearinghouses of state propaganda, would have us [believe](#) that the White House is supporting freedom-loving rebels in Syria who are politically [moderate](#) and [fighting](#) for their lives in a civil war against a despotic regime led by an evil optometrist, Bashar al-Assad.

But we know that the entire Syrian fiasco was [engineered](#) by the CIA with cash, guns, and training, and unceasing support from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) at our behest. It is a [long-standing](#) neoconservative plan to break the so-called Shia Crescent that runs from Lebanon through Syria to Iran. These are, of course, the independent-minded states that have thus far refused to accept either Israeli colonization of Palestinian land or permit Western-backed energy [projects](#) to take shape on

their territory. Hence the need to dismember them into tiny, feckless statelets that pose no challenge to either Tel Aviv or Washington.

But this is hidden behind the fog of war and a domestic haze of media nuance. This entire conflict could reasonably be said to hinge on a single phrase: “moderate rebels.” The words “moderate” and “rebel” make all the difference in the telling of this [fable](#). The truth is that we have [hijacked](#) Arab Spring discontent and festooned it with brigades of [terrorist mercenaries](#) procured from around the Middle East and Asia, all with the singular mandate to take down the Assad government. [Tens](#) of thousands of jihadists have been injected by [NATO](#) into a multi-confessional state governed by an elected leader who won a larger percentage of the electorate than our liberal messiah Barack Obama.

But this more truthful interpretation of events is unacceptable. To concede that the White House is now backing [al-Qaeda](#) terrorists in an effort to capsize a Middle Eastern democracy would implode the religion of American exceptionalism on which elite power depends. Thus the media cannot point out that the Pentagon’s recent admission of having troops in Syria violates the Nuremberg Principles on wars of aggression as well as the United Nations Charter. Omissions of this kind are what prevent average Americans from a) knowing what we’re really doing; and b) resisting it.

Demonize and Distract

But it isn’t enough to simply cloak our own crimes in the holy cloth of exceptionalism. We must defame our enemies. We must plant false flags in their soil now so that we can bury bombs in them later. It happens the same way every time. ‘Shocking’ discoveries are made about one of our most reviled enemies, usually provided by a defector with a farcical alias (think “Curveball”). Instantaneous mainstream reports issue a coordinated condemnation of the country in question. Each media outlet chooses a particular keyword to drive home the horror. Popular terms include “crimes against humanity”, “war crimes”, the words “industrial scale” in front of any noun or verb, the word “mass” in front of any noun or verb, “brutal crackdown”, “regime”, and so on. Grisly images are plastered across the front pages of the MSM. Often the images are fakes or are from unrelated incidents.

Once the reader has been stupefied, at least one columnist or politician will draw a deep breath, and then ‘draw comparisons’ to either Hitler and Auschwitz or Slobodan Milosevic and mass graves. (Recently Milosevic was declared innocent of all genocidal charges by the International Criminal Tribunal on Yugoslavia, albeit years after he died in prison after being denied medical treatment by his civilized captors. This process of posthumous exoneration is now practiced on an “industrial scale” by Obama’s drone assassination when various innocents are discovered to have been innocent after they’ve been “terminated”).

Not only is the supposedly noble Syrian uprising a fraud, but so is our equally principled goal of wiping ISIS from the face of the earth, if the facts on the ground are of any import. Washington has gone after ISIS in a strangely half-hearted way. Why hasn’t it provided air cover for Syrian Arab Army when its helicopters were rendered useless by terrorist TOW missiles? Missiles sold by the United States to Saudi Arabia, likely for the express purpose of funneling them to al Nusrah and other rogue bandits in Syria. Why did the U.S. not immediately attack ISIS-controlled oil wells and oil trading routes-ISIS’ chief source of funding-as Russia did on its entry into the conflict? Why did the Obama administration produce a record-setting arms deal with the Saudis, the leading proselytizer of Wahhabism in the world? Why do we refuse to work with Moscow or the SAA or Iran? Why do we not share grids and [intelligence](#) and join their joint operations room in Baghdad?

Isn't it obvious? We have different goals. We want Assad out and a daft, pliant puppet in charge, presiding over a vast arsenal of domestic police, ready to crush resistance on contact. Of course, any such resisters would be legitimate freedom fighters, as are the Palestinians. But the media takes care to call Palestinians "terrorists" and called citizens resisting the Iraqi occupation "insurgents". Words matter. They shade the story and bring neutral readers over to the side of empire. They blame the victim for the violence that victimized them.

The dissimulation becomes even clearer when you realize that ISIS [emerged](#) from an American interrogation camp in Iraq, in a way that [suggests](#) CentCom was more than happy to release radicalized Islamists into the wild. To what purpose? The failed state in Libya and the collapsing scenery of the Syrian state provide plenty of fodder for speculation.

The Wages of Propaganda

Thanks to years of conditioning by the media, the population will do little to resist the escalation to come. Eventually the Syrian "regime" to be eventually overthrown by relentless American-backed violence. Hillary Clinton will win the election and gain control of the Oval Office. As Glen Ford [wrote](#) at Black Agenda Report, Clinton will "...ride into the White House on a warhorse". She is the thinking man's neocon, unlike President Bush, who represented the anti-intellectual strain of the American character, and Barack Obama, whose reluctance to pour troops into Arab prairie fires was widely predictably condemned as a sign of weakness.

Hillary is neither stupid nor soft. She will doubtless find a useful pretext by which to declare a no-fly zone in Syria, which would inhibit the efficacy of Russia's campaign against various terrorist clans. (A House resolution is already afoot to lay the groundwork.) She will move more troops into the polder of northern Syria, violating all kinds of charters and conventions and declarations with an icy mixture of contempt and indifference. (See the UN Charter, Geneva Conventions, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights for the bootless scraps of paper she will trample.) Perhaps most importantly, she will green light the transport of more arms, ammunition, and psychopaths into Syria to make a push for Damascus in the hopes of repeating the Libyan calamity.

Should that project succeed, Hillary will quite possibly 'discover' that Iran has been violating its bogus nuclear agreement with the P5 +1. Anonymous administration sources will be "troubled" by the development. This isn't idle speculation. For lack of a better title, the long-term strategy for the "new world order," as George H.W. Bush put it, is contingent on splitting the Shia Crescent, removing Iran as a regional antagonist, then moving farther into Eurasia to control Sino-Russian development. And we know how a confrontation with Tehran would play out. With rabid spittle cresting his white beard, Wolf Blitzer will escort numberless brigadier generals through The Situation Room to reassure Americans that the bearded mullahs in Qom are indeed a fearsome clan. Hillary will threaten, and perhaps use, tactical nuclear weapons (B-61s) on Iranian nuclear sites, backed by either a UN Security Council resolution of dubious authority or a coalition of the bullied, bought, and willing. As the mushroom cloud envelops the region in radioactive waste, Israel will be seen fastidiously colonizing more West Bank land, Benjamin Netanyahu rubbing his hands in frenzied anticipation, a dogeared copy of the Yinon plan stuffed in his jacket pocket. Saudi Arabia's Deputy and Crown Princes will celebrate the fall of their hated rivals. Laconic onlookers in Washington and Europe will shrug and say nothing. CIA plants in D.C. will fastidiously distance Hillary's bombs from Hiroshima's, and Tel Aviv will move against Hezbollah in a final confrontation, since the Shia Crescent will by then be nothing more than a few shards of Mesopotamian culture atop a flaming midden.

With the Middle East finally brought "to heel," as Hillary once proposed doing to young black boys,

the ground will have been cleared for the pulse-racing showdown with Russia itself, the greatest thorn in Washington's side. With Assad out of the way and Tehran chastened, the Kremlinologists and conspiracy theorists can be set loose to harrow the public into a state of high anxiety about the "expansionist" state to the East. NATO will inch closer to Russian borders and shout that Russia is moving closer to NATO. Destabilization will proceed apace. It will be called "democracy promotion" and will be paid for by fronts called "endowments". Sanctions will tighten the economic screws. Verbal salvos will hit targets on either side of the water. New proxy wars will be touched off. Only a giant peace movement or stray asteroid could prevent something like this from happening. Perhaps the BRICS will halt the spread of empire with a collective stance, but Washington is agile if not artful at executing its core strategy to destabilize, divide, and rule its rivals. Until then, if you want to know what contempt looks like, look at this [picture](#) of Barack Obama and Vladimir Putin meeting at the G20 in China last week. The tenor of tomorrow is written all over their faces.

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<http://www.counterpunch.org/2016/09/09/demonize-and-distract-sanitizing-syria-for-the-masses/>

Jungle Drum Prose/Poetry. <http://jungledrum.lingama.net/news/story-2356.html>