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Hillary Clinton's Foreign Policy Resumé: What the Record Shows

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Very competent, very professional, very intelligently moving towards the center, very shrewdly and effectively serving on the Armed Services Committee.

— Rep. Newt Gingrich, referring to fellow committee member Hillary Clinton, April 2005

She ran the State Department in the most effective way that I have ever seen.

— Henry Kissinger, referring to Hillary Clinton, Sept. 9, 2014

Her so-called foreign policy 'experience' has been to support every war demanded by the US deep security state run by the military and the CIA.

— Jeffrey Sachs, referring to Hillary Clinton, Feb. 5, 2016

Yes of course, one has to acknowledge it. Barring an indictment, or the surfacing of some extremely embarrassing Goldman Sachs speech transcripts before July, Hillary Clinton will be the Democratic Party's presidential nominee and Bernie Sanders a historical footnote of yet indeterminate significance.

Then—unless scandal hits her between July and November (which Trump could exploit mercilessly), or her cell phone electrocutes her in the shower—Hillary will become the next Commander-in-Chief. People should of course ask themselves and others what that will mean to them and the world. Here are some suggestions about what may be in store.

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Hillary sells herself to the electorate first and foremost as a woman, whose time has come. The first woman president to follow the first Black president. A woman who has fought for women, girls, children and families—including especially people of color—all her life. That's her brand. As required she identifies as liberal and progressive, and she has campaigned as these in the contest with Sanders.

(Sanders' campaign indeed has drawn hers "towards the left," in terms of her slick shift from supporting a $ 12 to $15 minimum wage—effectively parodied on Saturday Night Live—and her position on the TPP agreement, calling it the "gold standard" of trade agreements in a public speech in 2012 but opposing it suddenly last November.)

But Hillary—have you noticed?—doesn't much boast of her actual performance in her main executive position to date, that of as Secretary of State between 2009 and 2013. That is, she doesn't crow about what she achieved as the person mainly in charge—under the president—of U.S. foreign policy during those years.

You remember those years, don't you? The "surge" in Afghanistan; the winding down of the Iraq occupation; the huge increase in drone strikes in Pakistan and Afghanistan, killing hundreds of civilians and terrorizing whole regions; the total failure of the Obama administration to end U.S. client state Israel's illegal settlements on the West Bank and indeed a general deterioration in high-level U.S.-Israeli relations; various U.S. interventions during the "Arab Spring;" the U.S./NATO assault on Libya that destroyed that modern state, etc.? Hillary was a key player in all these events. It's all in her record, for all to see.

We don't really know what Trump foreign policy would look like. Some speculate that, given his characterization of U.S. involvements in Iraq, Syria and Libya (as "stupid," "failures" etc.), Trump would be a "non-interventionist." This is, I suppose, barely possible, although his calls for the mass expulsion of immigrants and the construction of a wall on the Mexican border and his boasts about building up the military, torturing terrorists, making "America great again" and placing "America first" all reek of neo-fascism. Given all this alongside his contempt for the conduct of Middle East wars (which he damns not on moral grounds but deplores as incompetent), Trump's foreign policies are hardly predictable.

Clinton's policies are in contrast highly predictable on the basis of her record and recent public pronouncements. (She has all but declared war on Syria, for example, and will continue to provocatively expand NATO while pressuring Europe to maintain unpopular and painful sanctions against Russia.) By this record I mean the record of "experience" touted by her supporters, and referred to by corporate media talking heads in their matter-of-fact way as though its substance were an unquestionable plus for Hillary.

"Well she *does* have the experience," they say. She was First Lady, after all. (This unelected position and traditionally decorative role, fulfilled in varied ways by very different "ladies" is rarely touted as a qualification for high office. But the list of Clinton's credentials usually begins with this, and as it happens, she *was* a very strong influence on her husband in every major move he made while president.)

She was a New York state senator, the hagiographers continue. Not that she introduced any significant new legislation. Her years as senator were mainly designed to give her credibility as a 2008 presidential candidate. They weren't enough to clinch that for her, though, especially since she defended her war vote up to the end against the *faux* peace candidate Barack Obama.

The clincher: gracious in defeat, she became Secretary of State under Obama, showing what a good team player she could be, and providing (as Madeleine Albright and Condoleezza Rice had done before her) an example of a "strong" woman in that position. What an impressive apprenticeship, the pundits declare, for the presidency!

The more it gets said, re-iterated by the likes of the golden-throated actor Morgan Freeman, the more it strikes the most impressionable as true. Rather like the oft-repeated claim that African-Americans in general love the Clintons because… well, because they just do. And forget about that Crime Bill of 1994 that has pushed more black youth into prison than were in slavery in 1860.

But her very experience recommends her to another, far smaller, community: the warmongers, from the neoconservatives of the Cheney-Wolfowitz-McCain ilk to the "liberal interventionists" like pundits Paul Krugman, Thomas Friedman, and Fareed Zakaria and Clinton advisors Sidney Blumenthal and Anne-Marie Slaughter. These are people who rarely encounter a war they don't like.

To the uninformed, Hillary is best-known for her advocacy of a national health care system, her assertion that it takes a village to raise a child, and of course her championing of women's empowerment (to be realized through her own election as president). The world knows her better for her passion for bombing.

That she is the hawks' hawk is the Clinton campaign's dirty little secret and potential Achilles' heel. Behind the mother-like affectations is a calculating, enthusiastic agent of imperialism. That latter face is easy to expose, to any who want to do so. Let me try to now.

Hillary's Foreign Policy Resume: The First Lady Years

This passion (for bombing) of Hillary's appeared in adolescence, when she volunteered at age 17 as a "Goldwater Girl" to aid the presidential campaign of Barry Goldwater in 1964. The Republican senator from Arizona had suggested the French should have used nuclear weapons against the Vietnamese at Dienbienphu and that U.S. commanders in Vietnam and Europe be given the authority to use tactical nuclear weapons without presidential approval.

"I liked Senator Goldwater," she explained in her book *Living History*(2003), "because he was a rugged individualist who swam against the political tide." (By the way, she was paid $ 8 million to produce that book—ghost-written, actually, by three others—and this payment was thought by some in the Senate to be a violation of Senate ethical standards. But in February 2001 the Senate Ethics Committee approved the deal.)

Four years later (at age 21) Hillary had shifted allegiance to Eugene McCarthy, the antiwar candidate of the Democratic Party. Her party loyalty was apparently strengthened when she met Bill Clinton two years later at Yale. But she was never a peacenik. On the contrary.

Mark Landler in the *New York Times Magazine* reports that in 1975—at age 27, the year she married Bill—Hillary visited a Marine recruiting station in Arkansas to inquire about joining the active forces or reserves as a lawyer.

You have to wonder why—just after the "fall" of Saigon (spring 1975), sealing the triumph of the North Vietnamese and the National Liberation Front and marking a huge geopolitical defeat for the U.S.—when mass awareness of U.S. atrocities in Southeast Asia was quite high after the My Lai revelations (1969), when mistrust for authority prevailed among the youth after the invasion of Cambodia (1970) and the publication of the *Pentagon Papers* detailing the mendacity surrounding the Vietnam War (1971), Watergate and the fall of Nixon—young Hillary wanted to join the Marines.

Was she incensed that the communists had won in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia? Where did she suppose the next battlefield would be? There was some talk in Congress about deploying forces to fight the communist guerrillas coming to power in the former Portuguese colonies in Africa, Angola and Mozambique.

Anyway she was turned away, as too old and unfit. As she told military women at a Capitol Hill lunch in 1994, "I decided, maybe I'll look for another way to serve my country."

That desire for intimacy with the military apparently persists. The*New York Times* cites an Army commander who relates how years later when Clinton was senator she visited his post in New York State. “She sat down, took her shoes off, put her feet up on the coffee table and said, ‘General, do you know where a gal can get a cold beer around here?’ ”

Lander adds that “Clinton quickly took a liking” to retired Army general and resident Fox News hawk Jack Keane, “because ‘She loves that Irish gruff thing’…. One of her former aides explained, ‘She likes the nail-eaters’—people like Keane, Stanley McChrystal, and David Petraeus—‘Real military guys, not these retired three-stars who go into civilian jobs.’”

Hillary as secretary of state immediately impressed Secretary of Defense, Bush/Cheney holdover Robert Gates. “I thought, this is a tough lady,” he told Lander.

Hillary’s hawkishness was already clear during her stint as Bill Clinton’s “First Lady” from January 1993 to January 2000. Hillary was not your typical First Lady, embracing an uncontroversial cause and centering her public appearances around it. (She did famously advocate for health system reform, failing in her efforts.) She was Bill’s principal advisor, and quite likely the more bellicose of the pair.

The belligerency was directed principally against vulnerable, crisis-ridden Russia. Clinton came to office just thirteen months after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and eighteen months after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact. (Recall that the latter had been formed in 1956 to counter NATO, which had been formed seven years earlier as an anti-Soviet military alliance and just expanded to include West Germany.)

NATO had never been deployed in war. (In retrospect Europe during the Cold War seems remarkably peaceful and stable.) When the Clintons came to office, Russia was governed by President Boris Yeltsin—an alcoholic buffoon perhaps best known for ordering the army in 1993 to bombard the Duma building after the parliament rejected his unconstitutional order for it to dissolve. Until he stepped down at the end of 1999, Yeltsin presided over a period of precipitous economic decline, general misery and military weakness. The Clintons exploited this.

As the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, Clinton’s predecessor George H. W. Bush had told Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev that in exchange for the USSR’s acceptance of German reunification as a NATO member state, NATO would not expand “one inch” further east. When the Warsaw Pact dissolved it was expected that NATO, now irrelevant, would follow suit.

Instead, 1990 NATO redefined itself. In its London Declaration in July the alliance noted that the Soviet threat had receded but that “regional instability” now “posed new threats to regional peace.” In other words, NATO would now be Europe’s policeman. The Clintons were fully on board this new program. Why not, in the changed circumstances, use NATO to project U.S. power more broadly throughout the once divided continent?

The fall of the Soviet Union had produced ethnic tensions and bloody secessionist movements in Georgia, Azerbaijan, Chechnya, Dagestan and elsewhere. Secessionism also swept eastern Europe; Czechoslovakia would eventually split into its component parts. In Yugoslavia, led by an ostensibly Marxist-Leninist party but neutral all during the Cold War, relatively prosperous and friendly with the U.S., the fabric of the pan-Slavic union was being torn apart.

The Yugoslav republics of Slovenia, Croatia, and Macedonia had declared their independence in 1991, and what is now Bosnia-Herzegovina fell into a state of civil war between Croatians, Serbians and Bosniaks.

Sharing a common language (Serbo-Croatian) and Slavic ethnicity, these communities were divided by religion. Long dormant ethnic tensions suddenly flared; there were (exaggerated) charges of genocide, with Bosnian Serbs especially accused to massacring Bosniaks and confining them to concentration camps. Various options for international response were available.

But Clinton insisted on dispatching NATO air forces to pound Serbian positions in Bosnia, resulting in a ceasefire followed by the U.S.-dictated "Dayton Agreement" of November 1995. This produced the utterly dysfunctional state of Bosnia-Herzegovina, divided into Bosniak, Croatian and Serbian states. For a time the U.S. stationed forces at Tuzla Air Base in Bosnia.

Following this first time display of its regional police power, NATO expanded on March 12, 1999 to include Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. (Ironically, the Soviet-backed leaders of these countries in 1956 had been most supportive of the idea of an anti-NATO fact, fearing as they did a remilitarized West Germany.) NATO had expanded much more than one inch, and Russia was understandably upset. Twelve days after this NATO planes were again bombing Yugoslavia—at Hillary's urging, as we will see.

Once again sensationalistic charges of genocide were used to justify NATO action. Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic had (foolishly, in deference to Serbian nationalism) revoked the autonomous status of the Serbian province of Kosovo. Regarded as the historical Serbian homeland, it had become overwhelmingly inhabited by ethnic Albanians. The Kosovar Albanians like the Slovenians, Croats, Bosniaks and Macedonians before them sought to secede from the Yugoslav state entirely. The Kosovo Liberation Army (once frankly characterized by U.S. diplomats as a terrorist organization) responded to Milosevic's move by attacking state police, causing Belgrade to send in military forces that killed both militants and unarmed civilians.

Madeleine Albright (Forerunner of Madame Secretary Clinton)

The U.S. secretary of state at this time was Hillary Clinton's good friend Madeleine Albright. (Recall how Albright recently, in February, in championing Hillary's presidential campaign, controversially declared that there was "a special place in hell for women who don't vote for women.") This is the person who had told 60 Minute's Lesley Stall in May 1996 that the "price" of causing the deaths of half a million Iraqi children due to UN sanctions Washington refused to lift had "been worth it."

Because Albright is so similar to Clinton, and so politically close to her, it's worth discussing her record at length here as it pertains to the First Lady years.

Albright is almost surely the person who had told the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Hugh Shelton, at a White House breakfast in 1998, "What we really need in order to go in and take out Saddam is a precipitous event—something that would make us look good in the eyes of the world." According to Shelton's memoir, his interlocutor (a cabinet member) then asked, "Could you have one of our U-2s fly low enough—and slow enough—to guarantee that Saddam could shoot it down?"

Gen. Shelton, incensed, replied that it could be done “as soon as we get your ass qualified to flying it,” causing the official to back off. (But isn’t interesting that the general was so appalled about a fellow cabinet member’s indifference to human life—including the life of a U.S. pilot—-that he included this incident in his book?)

The dishonesty and inhumanity of Bill Clinton’s secretary of state were again manifest in the U.S. reaction to violence in Kosovo. In April the U.S. State Department claimed that up to 500,000 Kosovars had been killed by Serbian forces in acts of ethnic cleansing in the province. Defense Secretary William Cohen used a 100,000 figure. After the war researchers concluded that from 2,500 to 10,000 Kosovars and Serbs were in fact killed—perhaps 1,500 after NATO began to bomb. The chairwoman of the British Parliaments Balkans committee, Labour MP Alice Mahon, stated in October “When you consider that 1,500 or more civilians were killed during the NATO bombing, you have to ask whether the intervention was justified.”

While a campaign of disinformation not dissimilar in some ways to that preparing public opinion for the coming Iraq War in 2003 proceeded apace, Albright organized a gathering of U.S., Russian, Yugoslav and Kosovar representatives in Rambouillet, France. The Kosovars included an obscure figurehead who has since disappeared and leaders of the KLA since implicated in drug smuggling and worse crimes.

At the meeting Albright gave Belgrade an ultimatum: either withdraw forces from Kosovo, accept the stationing of 30,000 NATO troops in the province; allow NATO forces unhindered passage through the whole of Yugoslavia (at this point, whittled down to Serbia and Montenegro)—essentially a demand for military occupation; and accept NATO troops’ immunity from prosecution under Yugoslav law—*or* be bombed mercilessly until you surrender.

No government could accept these terms. Belgrade and Yeltsin’s Russia rejected them, appalled at their arrogance. Even the foreign minister of key NATO member France opined that the U.S. was behaving like an “hyper-puissance”—more than a superpower, a hyper-power.

A Republican official later told a think tank that a certain “top official” had explained the U.S. position as follows: “We intentionally set the bar too high for the Serbs to comply. They need bombing, and that’s what they’re going to get.” This was probably again Albright speaking, expressing the concept of statesmanship that prevails within the Clinton circle.

Even Henry Kissinger commented at the time, “The Rambouillet text, which called on Serbia to admit NATO troops throughout Yugoslavia, was a provocation, and excuse to start bombing. Rambouillet is not a document that an angelic Serb could have accepted. It was a terrible diplomatic document that should never have been presented in that form.”

From March 24 to June 10, NATO—lacking any UN mandate, and confronting opposition from most of the world, including the populations of many NATO states—did the unthinkable. It bombed a European capital for the first time since 1945. This war crime produced, according to Human Rights Watch, around 500 civilians deaths. Others put the civilian death toll as a result of the bombing of Yugoslavia (excluding the province of Kosovo) at up to 5,700.

The bombing ended when Russia mediated an agreement whereby Belgrade would do what it had already promised to do: withdraw its forces from Kosovo. But it still did not agree to

NATO occupation of the whole country. The U.S., having wreaked havoc, accepted a deal it could have accepted before the bombing. It established Camp Bondsteel in Kosovo, the largest U.S. army base outside the U.S. And in 2008—having long accepted the fact that Kosovo remained a province of Serbia under international law, the U.S. and many of its allies recognized Kosovo as an independent state. (Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice described Kosovo as a "sui generis" case.)

Russia, now under the leadership of Vladimir Putin, expressed outrage at this move at the expense of a traditional Slav ally, warning that if the U.S. could do that, Russia might accept the claims of independence of the breakaway Georgian republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia (as it since has).

Today Kosovo's main exports are economic refugees and heroin from Afghan opium. It is one of the most corrupt societies on earth, and a failed state. Naturally it has applied for NATO membership. What role did Hillary play in all this? She boasts about it, in interviews and in her memoir. While traveling in Africa in March 1999, she called Bill and, as she declares: "I urged him to bomb."

One must also mention the Clintons' bombing of Iraq in December 1998. Recall that Albright was agitating for war at this time, suggesting a staged U-2 incident. Iraq had acceded to intrusive visits of UN arms inspectors since the end of the first Gulf War but suspended cooperation in January 2008 charging (validly) that the UNSCOM inspectors included spies for the U.S. Diplomatic intervention by UN chief Kofi Annan restored the inspections regime. But when inspectors demanded access to Baath party headquarters in August, Baghdad balked. President Clinton then used this as a pretext to bomb Iraq as his predecessor had.

Clinton first ordered the UN inspectors out (so as to escape the immanent bombing campaign), falsely telling the world that Saddam had expelled them. Dozens of civilians were killed in the three-day otherwise inconsequential mission.

In the interim (October 31) Bill Clinton signed the neocon-authored Iraq Liberation Act declaring it U.S. policy to "support efforts to remove the regime headed by Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq and promote the emergence of a democratic government to replace that regime." This directly paved the way to the law authorizing the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

The Senate Years (2001-2008)

Hillary Clinton was an unremarkable senator, sponsoring 363 bills, only three of which (inconsequential ones at that, renaming or designating historic sites) became law. She sat on five committees, including the Armed Services Committee. In her latter capacity she garnered the designation (in 2005, from the *Village Voice*) of "Mama Warbucks." She was commended by fellow committee member (and fellow hawk) Republican Rep. Newt Gingrich, as "very competent, very professional, very intelligently moving towards the center, very shrewdly and effectively serving on the Armed Services Committee."

Curiously, in her recent book *Hard Choices*, she says almost nothing about her Senate years. As Byron York in the *Washington Examiner*puts it, "Clinton was a lackluster, team-player senator. There was just one big moment in her career as a lawmaker—her vote to authorize U.S. forces to go to war in Iraq—and it's one many of her supporters would like to forget."

She was not just a supporter, she was an *avid* supporter and a strong proponent of now

discredited lies. In a speech on the Senate floor in 2002 she declared: “I believe the facts that have brought us to this fateful vote are not in doubt. Saddam Hussein is a tyrant who has tortured and killed his own people, even his own family members, to maintain his iron grip on power. He used chemical weapons on Iraqi Kurds and on Iranians, killing over 20,000 people.”

And: “In the four years since the inspectors left [she doesn’t mention that they left because Bill Clinton told them to, before he bombed], intelligence reports show that Saddam Hussein has worked to rebuild his chemical and biological weapons stock, his missile delivery capability, and his nuclear program. He has also given aid, comfort, and sanctuary to terrorists, including Al Qaeda members… “

Hillary began backing off on her vote to authorize war in 2005 but didn’t truly repudiate it until the political requirements of the campaign against Obama forced to confess error as late as 2008.

Madame Secretary (2009-2012)

The newly elected President Obama, thinking to emulate the example of Abraham Lincoln (who had appointed his archrival William H. Seward in the 1860 Republican primaries) chose his rival Hillary Clinton as his secretary of state after his own election. He perhaps came to regret it, and has implicitly criticized her recommendations for war in Syria and her role in the (disastrous) NATO destruction of the Libyan state in 2011. But compared to her insignificant record (her vaunted “experience” to support her current power aspirations) as senator, her history as Madame Secretary is rich.

This after all was her main gig, her main opportunity to show her stuff. What she showed was the same old propensity to use military force and threats. She was encouraged in this by her newfound friend Henry Kissinger, secretary of state under Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford and associated with the secret bombing and invasion of Cambodia in 1970; the 1971 “tilt towards Pakistan” in which U.S. arms were used to slaughter civilians in what became Bangladesh; the Christmas bombings of Hanoi and Haiphong in 1972; the coup that brought down President Allende in Chile in 1973; the bloody Indonesian seizure of East Timor in 1975, etc. He is widely perceived in the world as a war criminal.

But Clinton has written that while secretary of state she “relied on [Kissinger’s] counsel. He checked in with me regularly, sharing astute observations about foreign leaders and sending me written reports on his travels.” Clinton has even praised Kissinger’s most recent book, concluding a laudatory review with this paean to his wisdom: “America, [Kissinger] reminds us, succeeds by standing up for our values, not shirking them, and leads by engaging peoples and societies, the sources of legitimacy, not governments alone.”

Would these be, for example, the values of the bombing of dikes during the Vietnam War? The Nixon tapes include a conversation before the Christmas bombing between Nixon and Kissinger. The president asks, “How many did we kill in Laos?” Kissinger replies: “In the Laotian thing we killed about ten, fifteen [thousand].”

Nixon turns to “the attack in the North that we have in mind, power plants, whatever’s left — petroleum, the docks. And, I still think we ought to take out the dikes now. Will that drown people?” Kissinger replies: “About two hundred thousand people.” This is presumably what Hillary calls not shirking from your values.

And how does Kissinger, this champion of coups and invasions, engage peoples as the source of legitimacy? Following the election of the socialist Salvador Allende in Chile in 1970 Kissinger declared that he "didn't see why we need to stand by and watch a country go communist due to the irresponsibility of its own people." The CIA set about planning the bloody military coup of September 11, 1973. Years of fascism ensued under Augusto Pinochet.

How can candidate Clinton so validate this discredited figure? Kissinger for his part returns the compliments, telling *USA Today* that "I've known [Clinton] for many years now, and I respect her intellect." He declares that she ran the State Department "in the most effective way" he had ever seen.

But to turn to Hillary's record as secretary of state. Among her achievements one must list further provocations of Russia, further havoc in the Middle East, the blessing of a coup in Honduras, and unnecessary confrontation with China. Let us begin with her advocacy of more war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Iraq. At the end of his presidency George W. Bush negotiated, with the government the U.S. had midwifed into power after the invasion, an agreement to withdraw all U.S. troops by the end of 2011. This agreement reflected the opposition of Iraqi politicians and civil society to the continued, unwelcome U.S. presence. (Wasn't a new poll just published, showing that over 90% of Iraqi youth regard the U.S. as an enemy?) Obama was obliged by law to withdraw the troops as scheduled, because the people had never liked them and did not want them there, in their country.

Still, he and his secretary of state tried to convince Baghdad to agree to a remnant force of 10,000 troops. Only in October 2011, after President Nouri al-Maliki stated unequivocally that no troops could be accepted if they were shielded from Iraqi law, did Washington relent. Obama had in any case called the war "dumb" and focused from his first days in office on the "war of necessity" in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan. The question was, how much of a "surge" should be attempted in ("the necessary war" in) Afghanistan? There were already 70,000 U.S. troops there in 2009. Vice President Joe Biden questioned the efficacy of any surge. The brass wanted 40,000. Hillary supported the brass. Obama sent 33,000. (The surge was in fact ineffectual, and the Obama years have seen relations between U.S. troops and the Afghans they're supposed to train deteriorate into conditions of mutual contempt and "green-on-blue" incidents. Desertion rates are high, corruption pervades the Afghan army and the Taliban controls more territory than at any time in the last 14 years.)

During Clinton's years as secretary of state, the relations between President Hamid Karzai and the U.S. careened from crisis to crisis as Karzai was obliged to express outrage at U.S. bombings of civilian targets and attacks on innocent civilians. At one point he order the U.S. army to withdraw Special Forces from Helmand Province entirely following reports of abuses there. Where these cannot be blamed on Madame Clinton, they are just one more example of the consequences of the militarism she's always championed.

Syria. One consequence of the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq was the alienation of the country's Sunnis and the establishment of an al-Qaeda foothold. Indeed, the scattered network of terrorists first emerged as a land army able to hold territory in Anbar Province in 2004. The 2007 "surge" dealt al-Qaeda in Iraq a major blow, but the group established a

foothold in neighboring Syria.

In 2011, as Arab regimes were toppled in the "Arab Spring," Hillary's state department decided to withdraw diplomatic recognition from Syria. Both the president and secretary of state pontificated that President Bashar Assad, having shot down demonstrators, had "lost his legitimacy" and had to go. They decided to actively aid the armed opposition, covertly at first.

It soon became abundantly clear that the "moderate opposition" forces the U.S. hoped to assist in bringing down the secular Syrian regime were Islamists aligned with the al-Nusra Front, a branch of al-Qaeda. U.S. arms provided to these (imaginary) moderates have passed into al-Qaeda hands. Meanwhile al-Qaeda in Iraq morphed into ISIL (also known as ISIS, the Islamic State, or Daesh). The latter—a direct product of Bush's invasion of Iraq in 2003 that (repeat! Hillary had passionately supported)—is among the most horrific, despicable organizations in the world today.

Hillary's solution? Why, arms shipments, of course! She has since leaving the administration to pursue her presidential ambitions openly disparaged Obama's stated principle that in formulating foreign policy you "don't do stupid shit." She apparently thinks that that "mantra" reflects timidity, an unwillingness to take the sort of risk she opted for when she voted for the invasion of Iraq. As she assesses it, the ongoing war in Syria shows the "failure to help build up a credible fighting force of the people who were the originators of the protests against Assad — there were Islamists, there were secularists, there was everything in the middle — the failure to do that left a big vacuum, which the jihadists have now filled."

In other words, why not use anyone willing to take our arms, in order to topple a nationalist leader who won't kowtow to Washington?

Obama himself responded to her comments with restraint, simply noting "there's a difference between running for president and being president. And the decisions that are being made and the discussions that I'm having with the joint chiefs become much more specific, I think, and require a different kind of judgment." And both he and Biden have repeatedly pooh-poohed the idea of creating an armed force in Syria out of "former farmers or teachers or pharmacists" or "dentists or maybe some radio reporters."

(But as it happens, the Obama administration has ratcheted up support for the Syrian "opposition" even as it—finally concluding that ISIL is also an enemy needing to be "destroyed"—bombs Islamic State targets. It has pursued a policy of targeting both the regime and the jihadis, insisting that they both have to go, to be succeeded by something else at least as suitable to Washington as the regimes which now govern in Afghanistan and Iraq. The problem is that the "moderate opposition" is illusory, and the fall of the Baathist regime would likely mean Islamists taking Damascus, with dire consequences for any but the most compliant Sunnis.)

Hillary's policy—to demonize Assad, deny his legitimacy, and back the armed opposition—has been superseded by that of her successor John Kerry, shaped in part by energetic Russian diplomacy. The Russian decision (in September 2015) to begin bombing Islamist forces in Syria, in support of the Syrian Arab Army—which, along with the Kurdish peshmerga—has been the most effective force against al-Nusra and ISIL, has been a game-changer. The Assad regime, which has a definite social base (especially among Christians and other religious minorities) has gained the upper hand in the war. Kerry has been forced

to work with the Russians to back peace talks between the (non-terrorist) forces involved, and to concede that Assad's departure, while still a U.S. goal, need not be immediate. This is why there's been an intermittent partial ceasefire since February.

One need not wonder about how Hillary would handle the situation; she has stated in the presidential debates that she is "advocating the no-fly zone both because I think it would help us on the ground to protect Syrians; I'm also advocating it because it gives us some leverage in our conversations with Russia"—conversations that involve U.S. insistence that Assad's "future" be "put in the political and diplomatic track, where it belongs." It's been estimated (by then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin E. Dempsey) that this act of war would require 70,000 U.S. troops to dismantle the Syrian antiaircraft system and impose a 24-hour watch on the country.

It's a fair bet Clinton will order this. This time Russia might say: *No, you can't destroy another country in this region close to us and far from you. We've been cooperating on Syria; the Russian air force has bombed both ISIL and al-Nusra forces helping Syrian state forces (the mostly Sunni but secular-led soldiers of the Syrian Arab Army and numerous militia loyal to the state and opposed to Islamism). We have said all along that while the Assad regime is not ideal it defends the rights of women and religious minorities, including Alawites and other Shiite groups, Druze and Christians. The people you are supporting belong to hundreds of militias that usually have an understanding with the local al-Nusra operation about joint action against the Syrian army. You have accused us of directing our bombing attacks against "opposition" forces in Syria, as opposed to the terrorists which are ISIL and al-Nusra. But we think it is difficult to differentiate groups like Ahrar ash-Sham (which Saudi Arabia and Turkey openly support) and which has played a key role—with tanks and anti-tank missiles—in most of the major battles with the Syrian army. You consider these terrorists as "moderate opposition" and want to protect them with a "no-fly zone." Sorry, we will not back off from our support of the secular state and let you play at reckless regime-change again!*

Think about it. How will President Clinton respond? She wants so bad to look strong.

Libya. In the same year that civil war broke out on Syria (2011—again in the course of the Arab Spring) the government of Libya came under attack by protesters including armed opponents. Never mind that Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi was at that point on good terms with the U.S., indeed in close touch with the CIA pertaining to anti-terrorism efforts. He had dismantled his WMD programs, restored diplomatic relations with western countries, and was on especially cordial terms with Italian Prime Minister Berlusconi.

No matter; it looked like he too would be toppled in short order by a mass movement. So why—thought quite a number of western leaders, thinking as they always do opportunistically—why not get in on the action in the beginning, so that after the revolution, the U.S. and its allies can pose as friends of the Libyan people?

Hillary's role in arranging the NATO bombing of Libya (yet another deployment of NATO having nothing to do with its original purpose, quietly protested, indeed, by some member governments) is clear. Indeed the bombing of Libya was her crowning achievement as Secretary of State. She destroyed a whole country, just as George W. Bush had.

Obama himself was hesitant to intervene in the civil strife in Libya that began in February 2011. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates was publicly unenthusiastic about U.S. action in

the region. But Hillary had other plans. She proposed that the U.S. and its allies establish a no-fly zone (on a humanitarian basis) to protect Libyans from the "genocidal"—yes, that term again—plans of the dictator.

French president Nicolas Sarcozy wanted to attack the former Italian colony, partly (it has been plausibly suggested) to block Gaddafi's plan to introduce a new pan-African gold currency challenging the euro. He found a firm ally in Clinton, who leaned on Obama to "lead from behind" by providing the bulk of the fire-power for a coalition of NATO forces and forces from the Gulf monarchies to intervene in Libya.

The strategy was to get a UNSC resolution authorizing a humanitarian mission. Russia and China (to their later regret) abstained rather than vetoed the resolution, which was soon used, not to protect threatened civilians, but to target Gaddafi himself and bring down his government. In short order, Gaddafi was captured by jihadis and gleefully murdered after being sodomized with a knife, all on camera.

Hillary's reaction? Asked about her reaction to Gaddafi's death by ABC's Diane Sawyer in a TV interview she could scarcely contain her delight. Paraphrasing Julius Caesar's statement after the Roman conquest of Carthage, she declared: "We came, we saw, he died!" Priceless!

If you haven't already, watch it on YouTube right now.

Yes, and after he died, Libya quickly descended into absolute chaos, a situation for which Hillary refuses to take any responsibility. Indeed, she solidly defends the attack that destroyed the old order, insists it was followed up by two successful elections, and that any current problems are due to insufficient U.S. involvement since. (She is, that is to say, in a state of total denial.)

Clinton supporters rail at the suggestion that she somehow misrepresented the facts after al-Qaeda related jihadis killed four U.S. diplomats and CIA agents in Benghazi on Sept. 11, 2012. In fact, she indicated the day after the attack, in an email to her daughter Chelsea, that al-Qaeda was responsible for these attacks. And she subsequently had State Department officials blame mob action resulting from an anti-Islam YouTube video rather than Islamists empowered by the toppling of Gaddafi. Yes, she misinformed the public. But that's a comparatively minor sin. The larger crime was the destruction of the Libyan state itself, based—like the destruction of the Iraqi state—on lies.

An email made public (due to the FBI investigation of Clinton's use of her email accounts while secretary) makes Hillary's central role in the crime crystal clear. It's from Clinton confidant and former employee Anne-Marie Slaughter, once dean of the Woodrow Wilson School and a queen among liberal interventionists. She had begged Clinton to arrange a U.S. strike against Libya, arguing this would "change the image of the United States overnight."

On March 19, 2011, the day after the NATO bombing of Libya began, she sent this message (subject line "Bravo!") to her former boss. "I cannot imagine how exhausted you must be after this week, but I have NEVER been prouder of having worked for you. Turning POTUS [President of the United States] around on this is a major win for everything we have worked for."

Everything we have worked for! What does that mean, but that Clinton and Slaughter (and

Sid Blumenthal among others) were struggling to push Obama further and further towards a neocon, regime-change-based-on-noble-lies foreign policy agenda? How can anyone look at this record and extol Clinton's "experience?"

Repeat: Libya has now descended into absolute chaos, with three rival wannabe national governments, ISIL and al-Qaeda footholds, and unprecedented ethnic conflict destabilizing neighboring countries. And Hillary continues to call her signature war "smart power at its best." Both the EU and the U.K. are now considering dispatching military forces to Libya to fight the formerly non-existent problem of ISIL. The Islamic State with 5-6000 fighters is now firmly headquartered in the coastal city of Sirte, the hometown of the man whose death Clinton laughed at.

If (some) Europeans push for more intervention, expect President Clinton to order more bombing, with dire ramifications for all North Africa and the Sahel.

NATO. But let us turn from the Middle East and North Africa to Russia and NATO expansion. NATO is of course a military pact requiring each country to devote 2% of its GDP to military expenses and requiring all to support any member attacked by a non-member nation. It remains—all straight-faced denials notwithstanding—an anti-Russian pact designed to encircle and isolate the core of the old Soviet Union.

While Bill Clinton was president he had made the decision to expand NATO, a move that senior U.S. diplomat and Russian specialist George F. Kennan in 1998 called "a tragic mistake" with "no reason whatsoever," showing "little understanding of Russian history and Soviet history."

It is, in a word, in the post-Cold War world, nothing other than a provocation justified on vapid premises. (Donald Trump would not agree with that but he does significantly question the current role of NATO and its value to the America he wants to "make great again." This just tells us that certain staple institutions of the Cold War might get unhinged as the world evolves.)

As mentioned above, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary were added to NATO in 1999 as Clinton bombed Yugoslavia. During the next (George W. Bush) administration, NATO further expanded to include Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia, and even the former Soviet republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania bringing the alliance to the very Russian border. This expansion has produced very little comment in the U.S. corporate media over the years and certainly no serious debate.

Ukraine. During Clinton's tenure as secretary of state, NATO further expanded to include Albania and Croatia. But the real goal for her neocon/liberal imperialist coalition—or as National Endowment for Democracy chief Carl Gershman put it publicly in 2013, its "the biggest prize"—was the inclusion of Europe's largest state: Ukraine.

It's no accident that Clinton chose Victoria Nuland, a former top aide of Dick Cheney (himself possibly the most fully exposed and fully discredited, manifestly dishonest and hated neocon imaginable) to head the State Department's European and Eurasia desk, a position she still holds. Nuland is the wife of Brookings Institution neocon commentator Robert Kagan, who was a foreign policy advisor to the Bush-Cheney administration, proponent of the Iraq invasion and advocate of regime-change now joining an array of Republican neocons endorsing Hillary over the Republican candidates.

Nuland has made it her life's work to engineer regime change in Ukraine to draw it into NATO, pull it away from Russia, and pluck the Crimean Peninsula (home for over 230 years of the Russian Black Sea Fleet, hosting the only year-round warm water port of that vast country) for NATO use.

The Obama administration, steered in this regard by Clinton and Nuland, arranged for the "National Endowment of Democracy" and other so-called NGOs to pour $ 5 billion dollars into affecting regime change in Ukraine. This led to the coup against the elected government of February 22, 2014. (Nuland has boasted about this amount; it is no secret. Albright has crowed about it too. These women make no apologies about throwing money at friends—including in this case, a lot of neo-fascists—to transform the world as they see fit.)

The February putsch in Ukraine did not occur under Hillary's watch, so I will not go into further detail about it. My point here is that Clinton chooses and works comfortably with people like Nuland (who in an intercepted phone call virtually dictated that the post-coup leader would be Arseniy Yatsenyev, as turned out to be—disastrously—true), and that she might very well choose such a figure as the next Secretary of State.

After Yatsenyev, a proponent of NATO membership, took power through the actions of violently anti-Russian forces in multi-ethnic Ukraine, the Russian population of east Ukraine (which has been there for many centuries preceding the Bolshevik establishment of the current boundaries) rose in revolt. The Russian population of Crimea rejected continued inclusion in the Ukrainian state under the circumstances, and Russia bloodlessly reasserted sovereignty to what everyone paying attention observes has been general approval.

(The fact is, the region had been transferred from the Russian Federated Soviet Socialist Republic to the Ukrainian Socialist Republic in 1956 as an administrative measure when Ukrainian neo-fascism was not an issue. But now it was, after the February coup. And the voters in Crimea overwhelmingly supported reunification with Russia.)

Hillary's response, as ex-secretary of state and presidential prospect? The least creative imaginable! Just as George H. W. Bush had called Saddam Hussein "a new Hitler," and Bill Clinton had hurled the same tired charge against Milosevic, Hillary compared Vladimir Putin to Hitler and the Russian re-acquisition of Crimea to Hitler's annexation of the Sudetenland.

"Claims by Putin," proclaimed candidate Clinton, "that [Russia] had to go into Crimea, because they had to protect Russian minorities, is reminiscent of claims made back in the 1930s's…, Germany, under the Nazis claimed that they had to protect German minorities in Czechoslovakia… and throughout Europe."

This is sheer fear-mongering, and once again the pot calling the kettle black. Russia's alleged aggressions involve Georgia and Ukraine, states neighboring Russia which Clinton has sought to incorporate into an anti-Russian military alliance; the U.S. aggressions supported by Hillary involve a host of nations from Libya to Afghanistan and incalculable death toll.

Expect a President Hillary Clinton to advocate further expansion of NATO. The governments of Finland and Sweden are considering NATO's overtures, and public opinion has shifted in favor of membership. Georgia and Ukraine are formally waiting for inclusion. By pushing for expansion Hillary will provoke Russia while not necessarily retaining current allies' firm support. (U.S. pressure on Europe to maintain sanctions against Russia is hardly welcome

among the merchants, farmers and wageworkers most badly affected in Germany, France, Poland and elsewhere.)

China and Japan. Turning to the former secretary's record of experience in Asian affairs, one can begin with her alliance with Japanese warmongers versus rising China. The most outstanding issue between the PRC and Tokyo is the Senkaku (Daioyu) islands dispute. Departing from the State Department's traditional stance that "we take no position" on the Sino-Japanese dispute about sovereignty over these islands in the East China Sea, seized by Japan in 1895, Clinton as secretary of state emphasized that the islands fall within the defense perimeters of the U.S.-Japanese alliance. (That is to say, should the PRC attempt to establish control over the rocks and their resource-rich waters, the U.S. would fight with Japan to take them back.) The warmongering neocon *National Review* in a piece entitled "In Praise of Hillary Clinton" praised her for "driving the Chinese slightly up a wall."

Clinton helped bring down a Japanese prime minister who, in response to public opinion, opposed U.S. plans for military base construction on the island. In 2009 the new prime minister Yukio Hatoyama, whose Democratic Party of Japan had defeated the slavishly pro-U.S. Liberal Democratic Party in the general election, promised to move the U.S. base in the heart of Ginowan city universally opposed for the noise, air pollution and public safety hazards it causes. Obama met with Hatoyama, listened sympathetically, and just said "no," showing him who was boss.

Hatoyama was obliged to apologize to the people of Okinawa, essentially conceding that Japan remains an occupied nation that doesn't enjoy sovereignty. Nationwide his public support ratings plummeted immediately from 70 to 17% and he was obliged to resign in shame after eight months in office, paving the way for the pro-U.S. militarist regime of the current (very frightening) prime minister Abe Shinzo.

India. Hillary as secretary of state made countless trips to India, signing bilateral economic and nuclear cooperation agreements with a country her husband had placed under sanctions for its nuclear tests in 1998. (Sanctions against both India and Pakistan were lifted, swiftly and without controversy or explanation, by George W. Bush in late Sept. 2001.)

While castigating North Korea for its nuclear weapons program (and Iran for its imagined one), Clinton signaled that India's nukes were no longer an issue for the U.S. India was, after all, a counterweight to China. A CIA analyst called her position a "more hard line, more conditional, more neoconservative [approach] than Bush during the last four years of his term." Some praise!

Israel/Palestine. On the question of Israel, Hillary has been a career-long total, unprincipled opportunist. In 1999 (as First Lady), Hillary Clinton hugged and kissed Yassir Arafat's wife Suha during a trip to the West Bank. She advocated the establishment of a Palestinian state. She changed her tune when she ran for the New York Senate seat and has since been an unremitting supporter of Israeli aggression, whenever it occurs. She postured as an opponent of Israel's unrelenting, illegal settlements of Palestinian territory in 2009, but backed down when Netanyahu simply refused to heed U.S. calls for a freeze. In her memoir she notes "our early, hard line on settlements didn't work"—as though she's apologizing for the official stance of the U.S. and virtually all the world's countries that the occupation of the West Bank is illegal and wrong. The Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* has described her as "Israel's new lawyer" given her sympathetic view of Binyamin Netanyahu's 2014 brutal

bombardment of Gaza.

Honduras. In Latin America, suffice it to mention Clinton's role in the aftermath of the military coup in Honduras in June 2009. President Manuel Zelaya, a millionaire logger but ally of the left-wing Bolivarian Alliance, had planned to conduct a referendum preparing the way for constitutional reforms. In an action Barack Obama correctly recognized as a "coup," he was removed from office and dumped in Costa Rica. Hillary studiously avoided calling out reality for what it was, and resisted international calls for his reinstatement.

According to her own account, she worked with the new Honduran authorities to make sure that Zelaya would not return to office. "In the subsequent days [after the coup]," she records in *Hard Choices*, "I spoke with my counterparts around the hemisphere, including Secretary [Patricia] Espinosa in Mexico. We strategized on a plan to restore order in Honduras and ensure that free and fair elections could be held quickly and legitimately, which would render the question of Zelaya moot."

In other words: let's just accept the coup, change the subject, and proclaim the legitimacy of a more compliant government that can be packaged as the product of "free and fair elections."

As Matthew Rothschild noted in *The Progressive* at the time (March, 2010), "Hillary Clinton continues with her hawkish ways, making Obama's foreign policy less distinguishable from Bush's every day." When Latin American governments questioned the legitimacy of the next "elected" government, Hillary complained, "Other countries of the region say that they want to wait a while. I don't know what they're waiting for."

That's just it. She doesn't know what democracy, or "free and fair elections" are all about. But, receiving hundreds of thousands from Wall Street for short secret talks she refuses to make public, she well knows the logic of the almighty U.S. dollar. (By the way, $ 350 million have flowed in to Honduras from the U.S. government since the coup.)

Hillary as Candidate, 2016

Karl Marx famously noted that the capitalist "is only capital personified. His [let us add, or her] soul is the soul of capital." The record outlined above is that of a mercenary for the One Percent, what Bernie calls the "billionaire class" and in particular its military-industrial complex in league with the neocon disinformation apparatus. As Columbia University economist Jeffrey Sachs has said of Clinton, "Her so-called foreign policy 'experience' has been to support every war demanded by the US deep security state run by the military and the CIA."

Bernie Sanders has all along labeled Clinton a Wall Street candidate, and this is surely true. His own fatal mistake has been to merely make that allegation, encountering the Clinton campaign's reaction (Where's your proof?) but neglecting to hit her where's she's most vulnerable: her experience as Secretary of State. Instead of exposing that record as "the most experienced candidate" as one of (at best) reckless misjudgment with horrific impacts on many people, he's treated her with kid gloves.

(I read now that Sanders foreign policy advisor Joseph Cirincione has told an interviewer that "Sanders should have talked more, and earlier, about his national security vision." I imagine that in "vision" would include a critique of Hillary's record on Libya.)

Let us say that in the coming weeks somebody somewhere for some amount of money sells a tape of a Clinton talk to Goldman Sachs and it's suddenly all over YouTube, and highly embarrassing. Or the Department of Justice will announce Hillary's indictment. Bernie could, while sticking it out and hoping for that miracle, start hammering her campaign with the details listed above, especially as they pertain to her record and experience on Libya.

Seriously. He could sway voters and delegates by (for example) repeating again and again that Hillary "in the words of her former State Department employee Marie-Anne Slaughter 'worked hard to turn the president's mind around' to agree to the 2011 attack on Libya that was misrepresented to the UN as a humanitarian mission but was in fact a mission for regime change that destroyed the prosperous modern state of Libya, produced new al-Qaeda and ISIL bases, and resulted in its leader's brutal execution-by-sodomy to which Hillary responded with obscene glee as anyone can see on YouTube."

Just popularizing that "We came, we saw, he died" clip could highlight the difference between the pensive Bernie and Hillary the warmonger. Grandma's giddy cackle lingers so unpleasantly in the ears.

Sanders could contrast Hillary's obsequious promise before AIPAC to meet with Netanyahu in the White House "during my first month in the White House" to bring the relationship to some undefined "next level" with his own suggestion that there should be "balance" in the White House approach to the Israeli/Palestinian issue. (The fact that a candidate had mentioned Palestinians by name has itself been found newsworthy by the corporate press.)

He could cite her statement in the course of the debates that Libya's Gadaffi was "threatening to massacre large numbers of Libyan people" and therefore bowed to European and Arab pressure to "use smart power". He could point out how the U.S. intelligence community itself questioned and has even since exposed as dubious Clinton's dire predictions of "genocide;" these and the stupid charge that Libyan troops were getting issued Viagra to facilitate gang-rape were cynically manufactured and designed to "turn POTUS around" and agitate and confuse the public on the Libya attack issue.

And Bernie could ask thought-provoking questions. Like: *Clinton says she wants to take the U.S.-Israel relationship "to the next level." Does she think the present level—the highest amount of foreign aid to a nation the U.S. provides annually, despite Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian land that the U.S. and the rest of the world officially oppose—inadequate?*

Or: *In 2011 Hillary Clinton wanted the U.S. military to arm opponents of the Syrian government. But then as now almost all the effective military forces in the Syrian opposition are aligned with al-Qaeda or ISIL, and U.S. efforts to create a military force for regime change in Syria have resulted in nothing but embarrassment. Now Clinton says she "feels strongly" that we should impose a "no-fly zone" in Syria—just like she proposed in Libya—which means using the U.S. Air Force to unilaterally carve out this zone and engage militarily with Syrian or other including Russian forces to bring down the Assad regime whose forces are seriously fighting al-Qaeda. Does that show good judgment, or is that inviting World War Three?*

I could make further suggestions but I have a feeling the Sanders campaign isn't interested. Its staffers are strategizing about how best to observe Bernie's pledge to support the Democratic nominee with the fact that in doing so he'll need to say that being a Wall Street

stooge isn't as bad as being Donald Trump—and in doing so disappoint and disillusion followers who see no major difference between these two, other that one's a carefully rehearsed former First Lady and the other a spontaneous buffoonish billionaire man.

Can You Vote For a Known Warmonger?

In recent days Bernie while reiterating his commitment to the Democratic ticket boasts that he's been drawing "millions of new voters into the political system"—as though that were a good in itself. Hillary's people will be courting these folks big-time. But surely many will stay home, making their own statement.

This would be a statement that they're unwilling—or their dignity does not allow them–to pretend that some vote for a "lesser evil" or impossible third party has real meaning other than to state that they wish to proactively register their acceptance of what is in fact a rigged political system. Anyone voting between two nauseating candidates is really just voting for the process itself. Maybe when the dutiful voter reads through the post-election figures and notices he/she was among the 55% of eligible voters who participated he/she will feel proud (of having made their "voice heard"), if not morally superior to those neglecting to use their precious hard-won "right to vote."

But I think there are at least as many who see a choice between Hillary and Trump as anything but a clear choice of Good versus Evil, or even lesser and greater evils summoning them to the ballot box to help Hillary. What we have is a well-known evil with a long record versus a less-known evil who exudes racism and Islamophobia, caters to the anti-immigrant right, and panders to the Zionist lobby while stating he wants peace with Russia and China, can make deals with Putin, wants NATO to pay for more of its expenses (which could actually lead to countries balking and opting out of that unnecessary anti-Russian military alliance), wants to stay out of Syria, thinks Iraq and Libya were disasters, etc.

If one is concerned about world peace (more than, say, electing a woman of some sort as president as an imagined good-in-itself), and you're wondering how it's possible that the hawkish Hillary with her known history—as someone who's never learned the lessons of the Afghan, Iraqi, Libyan conflicts but wants a broader war in Syria—the choice is in fact not that clear. Not at all.

In such circumstances, it's hard to feign enthusiasm, or posture as someone proud to be an American, because at least you know you have the right to vote.

Because in fact the campaign showed you how little that right to vote means. It showed you how the apportionment of delegates was skewed from the start by the Democratic Party's rules to favor the establishment candidate, and in this case to allow the Democratic Party establishment to exult in Hillary's strong showing among African-Americans in the south over Vermont senator Bernie Sanders.

It showed how the institution of super-delegates further shapes the race; how caucus and primary rules depending on the state severely limit participation; how "participation" means requiring you to follow rules about of party primary registration well in advance; how money corrupts the entire ritual etc.

The 18-year-old voting for this first time in November can't remember the vote in November 2000, when he or she was just two, and George W. Bush triumphed over Al Gore in an

unfair, undemocratic presidential election. But a lot of the young people who've flocked to Bernie are somewhat aware of this history and have been cynical all along about what Marxists call "bourgeois democracy."

Bernie's tragedy was to attract those who didn't believe in the "political process" (or yet have enough exposure to adequately disillusion them) into that process only to find it hopelessly unfair. And worse, he'll have to tell them at the end of the day to believe in a warmonger.

When that happens they will, many of them will perhaps suddenly feel a very different sort of burn.

I sense the disillusionment already settling in. And just conceivably, youth's lack of enthusiasm for Hillary plus Trump's likely hammering her on the details of her "foreign policy experience" might even throw the race to the billionaire.

That, as Bernie-backer Susan Sarandon hinted in a "controversial" interview, might even be the *preferable* outcome—if only it prompts a revolution. And I don't mean one led by him.

Trump in a rare speech before a teleprompter announced the other day that "war and aggression will not be my first instinct" and pledged to deploy boots on the ground only as a last resort. As the two-person race gets underway, he will hone in on Clinton's "foreign policy experience" (maybe citing the Jeff Sachs quote about her supporting every war proposed by the military or CIA). He will pose himself as the brilliant peacemaker, able to make deals with Putin and the Chinese.

Trump could win. However frightening that might be, would a Clinton victory be less frightening?

The warmongers planning the next several wars are huddling, confident that their Shield Maiden has the women's and the African-American votes (inherited from Obama who turned out to be so amenable to the military-industrial complex) in hand, but wondering how to channel all this hopefully malleable new youthful socialist-friendly energy to help sweep Hillary to power.

But they might discover that the quixotic Sanders campaign has produced new networks of new friends talking about income inequality, student debt relief, universal health care, criminal justice system reform, Wall Street regulation, the disastrous results of regime change, revolution, socialism, Marx, Lenin, etc. But chatting amongst themselves, they might, it seems to me, get more and more radicalized, more alienated from the broken system, more inclined to boycott the rigged process and move beyond Bernie in building towards that "political revolution" the nice old guy put on the table for general discussion. Before he gave up.

And so, unless Hillary gets run over by a bus, it will be either her or Trump—two of the most unpopular political figures in the country, oddly enough, whose negative poll ratings both hover around 60%—in the White House nine months from now.

Either will provoke—you would hope—immediate mass opposition. The total bankruptcy of the system is being exposed, to all with eyes to see. So let's see things as they really are and (with Sarandon) think optimistically.

Join the debate on Facebook

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