Mondialisation.ca
Centre de recherche sur la mondialisation

US-Saudi War of Aggression: Washington Okay With Surgical Strikes on Yemen Hospitals

Par William Boardman
Mondialisation.ca, 26 août 2016
Reader Supported News 24 août 2016

Région : Middle East & North Africa, USA
Thème: Crimes against Humanity, Militarization and WMD

Waging genocidal war on a defenseless country was never so baldly and honestly put on any agenda for talks among US secretary of state John Kerry, representatives of Saudi Arabia's dictatorship, and their mutual allies, even though they are all engaged in an endless genocidal war on Yemen. This war is a war of aggression, started by Saudi Arabia in March 2015, with crucial US blessing, participation, personnel, and ordnance. The US has been a willing, guilty partner and enabler in 18 months of military atrocities in a one-sided war that everyone involved knew – or should have known – was a pure war crime based on a paranoid delusion.

American participation in this war of aggression was a war declared by press release from the National Security Council on March 25, 2015, another example of the imperial presidency's ability to act by fiat without fear of serious objection from the public, the media, or even Congress:

> President Obama has authorized the provision of logistical and intelligence support to GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council]-led military operations. [emphasis added]

The fundamental crime in Yemen is waging a war of aggression, which encompasses all the subsequent war crimes including bombing civilians, using cluster bombs, bombing hospitals, bombing food supplies, and trying to starve a population to submission or death. Yemen, with a population of 26 million people, was the poorest country in the region even before it was attacked. What the US supports and sanctions against Yemen makes any US complaint about Russian actions in Crimea sound like howling hypocrisy.

For all that the Saudis frame their war on Yemen as a defense against a threat from Iran, there has never been any credible evidence of any credible threat to Saudi Arabia from any element of the miniscule Iranian presence in Yemen. Yemen is fighting a civil war, a new version of the same old civil war Yemenis have been fighting for decades, both before and after Yemen was two separate countries. The Iran "threat" is the paranoid delusion supposedly justifying a merciless war on a civil population already beset by a four-sided civil war. There is no way that those who decided to wage this war of aggression could not have known the reality in Yemen if they had wanted to know it. Presumably they knew it all full well and chose a war of aggression anyway, recklessly, perhaps even thoughtlessly, but criminally all the same. The Saudi goal was always get rid of a longstanding threat on its southwestern border, where the tribal land of the Houthis lay both in Yemen and Saudi

Arabia. When the long-oppressed Houthis, a Shia minority in a Sunni world, drove out the Sunni government of Yemen in 2015, the Saudis, without saying so in so many words, decided on a course of action that could lead to a final solution. And everyone knew, at the time, and no one objected, according to this account by the highly reliable Andrew Cockburn on Democracy NOW (whose piece in Harper's Magazine for September 2016, ironically titled "Acceptable Losses," provides an excellent exegesis of the war on Yemen, but with a more elegiac tone):

> I was told, very early on in the war, Deputy Secretary of State Tony Blinken went to Riyadh to ask the—this is two weeks—yeah, it was two weeks into the war [mid-April 2015], when they had already been bombing away, using the U.S. bombs, U.S.-supplied bombs, using U.S. weapons, killing already dozens, if not certainly, you know, hundreds of civilians, destroying factories. And finally, Blinken turns up in Riyadh and asks, "By the way, what are you trying to accomplish here?" And the Saudis effectively said, or at least the Americans understood them to say, "Well, we basically want to wipe out the Houthis." Well, they termed it as "end all Iranian influence in Yemen." So, the Americans—Blinken was a bit shocked by that, so I'm told, and said, "Well, you know, that's going a bit far. But it's—you should certainly stop the Houthis taking over the country." And that, effectively, gave the Saudis carte blanche to continue this kind of mindless carpet bombing….

By 2015, American hands were already bloody with the US drone assassination program that had killed not only innocent civilians, but American citizens, without a trace of due process of law. In effect, already enmeshed in its own nexus of war crimes in Yemen, the US green-lighted the Saudi-led war of aggression that would make American crimes pale by comparison. As American policy over the years would have it, American weapons have been dispersed all over Yemen since 2006.

Kerry to consult on terrorism, but not US or Saudi terrorism

Terror bombing, an example of which is Saudi pilots flying American planes dropping American bombs on defenseless Yemeni civilian targets, is probably not the terrorism Secretary Kerry wants to discuss – ever – with the Saudis and their allies, never mind other weapons suppliers like France and the United Kingdom. As the official State Department notice put it in deadly opaque prose:

> Secretary Kerry will travel to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, for a series of meetings with senior Saudi leaders, his counterparts from the Gulf Cooperation Council, the United Kingdom, and the United Nations Special Envoy for Yemen. His discussion will focus on the ongoing conflict in Yemen and efforts to restore peace and stability….

Those "efforts to restore peace and stability" notably include the destruction of two schools, another hospital, and a potato chip factory, along with the associated men, women, and children, especially at the schools. Perhaps the latest great military "victory" achieved by the war criminals known as the Saudi-led coalition is to drive the world's leading medical crisis-zone organization out of Yemen by targeting its hospitals over and over and over and over since March 2015. Of course, America the Exceptional does not stand for this betrayal of human decency, and our presidential candidates of all parties have railed ceaselessly against this indiscriminate murder of patients, their families, their doctors and other medical

personnel, forcing the White House to take action to bring to an end 17 months of aggressive war and other war crimes and crimes against humanity – no, wait, that's not happening, is it?

Actually, if *any* presidential candidate of *any* political party has expressed the slightest objection to the Saudi-coalition's genocidal war on Yemen, such evidence is so hard to come by that it may as well not exist. (In August 2015, Jill Stein of the Green Party mentioned in passing that the Saudis "are committing war crimes right now in Yemen," and more recently she called for an end to US funding for Saudi Arabia and Israel because of their violations of human rights laws, but she does not tend to make a point of the US support for a war of aggression in Yemen. But she's better than any other candidate on Yemen.) At this point, a year and a half into our shared war of aggression, *every* candidate is complicit in this horrendous, unjustified war promoted and pursued with smug disdain for anything like peace by our peace prize winning President Obama. The blood drips from all their hands, their feet, their tongues and eyelashes, but most of all from every pore of our Nobel Laureate in the White House. (As the book *Double Down*reported in 2012: "*Turns out I'm really good at killing people," Obama said quietly, "Didn't know that was gonna be a strong suit of mine*.")

With the US at war, Congress has nothing to say about any of it

The US is at war with Yemen, in support of the Saudi-led coalition that launched its undeclared war of aggression on March 26, 2015. US war-making includes, but is not limited to: US intelligence services providing intelligence to the aggressor nations; US military personnel participating in daily target planning and attack assessment; US tanker aircraft re-fueling aggressor nation aircraft bombing Yemen (46,500 acknowledged sorties in the first 11 months of war); US drones targeting and attacking under US control; US military contractors servicing the Saudi F-15s that bomb Yemen; US personnel training Saudi military; US military personnel operating in Yemen; and the US Navy reinforcing the Saudi blockade intent on starving Yemen into submission.

The US Congress has never debated, never authorized US participation in a war of aggression against Yemen. The US president has never asked Congress for such authorization of a war of aggression against Yemen. Neither house of Congress has acted on any bill that directly addresses the war of aggression against Yemen. More than a year after the war started, two Democratic members of Congress (joined by two Republicans) introduced identical bills intended to respond to the war. California congressman Ted Lieu (joined by Florida congressman Ted Yoho) and Connecticut senator Christopher Murphy (joined by Kentucky senator Rand Paul) asked their colleagues to address the horrors of the war (briefly enumerated in the bill), not by ending the war, but only by *temporarily limiting US arms sales to Saudi Arabia*. That's it. They did not mention US participation in the war. Both their bills were referred to committee. At the time there was a spotty ceasefire in Yemen while peace talks proceeded in Kuwait (the talks were suspended in early August, leading to the Saudi escalation currently killing more civilians).

Incredibly, this non-response response to war crimes in Yemen has gotten Rep. Lieu some recent positive press coverage, in The Intercept of August 22 and elsewhere, even though his bill is designed to have no immediate impact on the carnage. Rep. Lieu is a colonel in the US Air Force Reserve. When he was on active duty he taught the law of war to other Air Force officers. His interview rhetoric, like most of his public action, is soft-edged even though he knows perfectly well his country is committing war crimes. He almost said as

much in an August 15 statement objecting to the Saudi attack on a school in Haydan, Yemen, that killed 10 children:

> The indiscriminate civilian killings by Saudi Arabia look like war crimes to me. In this case, children as young as 8 were killed by Saudi Arabian air strikes. By assisting Saudi Arabia, the United States is aiding and abetting what appears to be war crimes in Yemen. The Administration must stop enabling this madness now. [emphasis in original]

Rep. Lieu and others have also objected to the State Department's certification of another arms sale to Saudi Arabia: this one is $1.15 billion for 153 tanks, hundreds of machine guns, and other war materiel. This is in addition to the record $100 billion in arms sales to the Saudis already made by the Obama administration. The latest arms deal suggested to Rep. Lieu "that the administration is, at best, callously indifferent to the mass amount of civilians dying as a result of the Saudi-led coalition's bombing." He did not openly consider whether 153 Abrams Main Battle Tanks and other weaponry might open the way for the air war of aggression to be matched by an escalation of the ground war of aggression as well. Twenty of those new US tanks are specifically designated as replacements for tanks lost in combat, some of them in Yemen. On the other hand, the official State Department notice of the Abrams Tank sale assures Congress: "The proposed sale of this equipment and support will not alter the basic military balance in the region." That's hardly reassuring in a region where wars of attrition and military quagmires are killing not only thousands of Yemenis, but Palestinians, Israelis, Lebanese, Syrians, Saudis, Turks, Kurds, Iraqis, Afghans, and god knows who else, more often than not with Made-in-USA weapons and munitions.

The proposed US tank sale has drawn the attention of several NGOs (non-governmental organizations) looking to wash American hands of the war on Yemen by blocking the sale, or at least having a debate about it in Congress. Human Rights Watch (HRW) wrote a letter to Secretary Kerry August 19, with temperate language of concern about several countries, including Yemen. HRW asked Secretary Kerry "to emphasize the potential consequences if Saudi Arabia fails to improve its conduct." But it did not suggest what those consequences might be in light of the reality that the US has coordinated and condones all Saudi conduct to date. CODEPINK is supporting a petition to support the Congressional letter that urges President Obama to postpone the US tank sale to the Saudis.

Even The New York Times is expressing something shy of anguish over "American complicity" and "carnage" and targets that are not "legitimate" under international law as it supports efforts to block the tank sale in Congress. The Times doesn't mention that this is the same Congress that in June – supporting a White House request – refused to block the sale of cluster bombs to Saudi Arabia for fear of "stigmatizing" cluster bombs. That's a reflection of the American version of reality, since cluster bombs are already stigmatized by most countries of the world and using them on civilians, as US-Saudi forces do in Yemen, is widely understood to be a war crime. The solution, according to the Times:

> Congress should put the arms sales on hold and President Obama should quietly inform Riyadh that the United States will withdraw crucial assistance if the Saudis do not stop targeting civilians and agree to negotiate peace.

That can't happen in the real world, where the president and the Saudis all know they are war criminals and are, like Macbeth, so steeped in blood "that should I wade no

more,/Returning were as tedious as go o’er.”

There is no reason to expect any good to come to Yemen until a whole lot more Americans face the reality of their country’s support for a genocidal war of aggression. When enough Americans recognize that, then they will have to do a lot more about it than stop selling tanks to the aggressors. Until then the US-sponsored atrocity of ethnic cleansing in a poverty-stricken country that threatens no one will continue unabated.

William M. Boardman has over 40 years experience in theatre, radio, TV, print journalism, and non-fiction, including 20 years in the Vermont judiciary. He has received honors from Writers Guild of America, Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Vermont Life magazine, and an Emmy Award nomination from the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences.

La source originale de cet article est Reader Supported News
Copyright © William Boardman, Reader Supported News, 2016

Articles Par : William Boardman

Avis de non-responsabilité : Les opinions exprimées dans cet article n'engagent que le ou les auteurs. Le Centre de recherche sur la mondialisation se dégage de toute responsabilité concernant le contenu de cet article et ne sera pas tenu responsable pour des erreurs ou informations incorrectes ou inexactes.

Le Centre de recherche sur la mondialisation (CRM) accorde la permission de reproduire la version intégrale ou des extraits d'articles du site Mondialisation.ca sur des sites de médias alternatifs. La source de l'article, l'adresse url ainsi qu'un hyperlien vers l'article original du CRM doivent être indiqués. Une note de droit d'auteur (copyright) doit également être indiquée.

Pour publier des articles de Mondialisation.ca en format papier ou autre, y compris les sites Internet commerciaux, contactez: media@globalresearch.ca

Mondialisation.ca contient du matériel protégé par le droit d'auteur, dont le détenteur n'a pas toujours autorisé l’utilisation. Nous mettons ce matériel à la disposition de nos lecteurs en vertu du principe "d'utilisation équitable", dans le but d'améliorer la compréhension des enjeux politiques, économiques et sociaux. Tout le matériel mis en ligne sur ce site est à but non lucratif. Il est mis à la disposition de tous ceux qui s'y intéressent dans le but de faire de la recherche ainsi qu'à des fins éducatives. Si vous désirez utiliser du matériel protégé par le droit d'auteur pour des raisons autres que "l'utilisation équitable", vous devez demander la permission au détenteur du droit d'auteur.

Contact média: media@globalresearch.ca