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The American war against Libya grew in intensity on Sunday, raining death in all directions -- including on civilian vehicles and Libyan forces in full retreat. Behind the full-scale barrage launched by the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, the armed opposition led by recent henchmen of Moamar Gadafy pressed forward in a military offensive. Libyan soldiers were gunned down as they fled -- a reprise of the "turkey shoot" American forces conducted on retreating Iraqis back in the first glorious Gulf War.

(But weren't they supposed to retreat? Wasn't that the purpose of the UN directive? Oh, it's so confusing!)

[Here's](#) what [happened today](#) , following yesterday's hell-storm of 110 Tomahawk missiles:

American warplanes became more involved on Sunday, with B-2 stealth bombers, F-16 and F-15 fighter jets and Harrier attack jets flown by the Marine Corps striking at Libyan ground forces, air defenses and airfields, while Navy electronic warplanes, EA-18G Growlers, jammed Libyan radar and communications ...

Rebel forces ... began to regroup in the east as allied warplanes destroyed dozens of government armored vehicles near the rebel capital, Benghazi, leaving a field of burned wreckage along the coastal road to the city. By nightfall, the rebels had pressed almost 40 miles back west...

For miles leading south, the roadsides were littered with burned trucks and burned civilian cars. In some places battle tanks had simply been abandoned, intact, as their crews fled. ... To the south, though, many had been hit as they headed away from the city in a headlong dash for escape on the long road leading to a distant Tripoli.

In other words, the "no-fly zone" supposedly imposed to stop the fighting in Libya and secure the safety of its civilians morphed very quickly into what it was always intended to be: a military intervention on behalf of one side of a civil war, leading to more war -- and to many, many more civilian casualties.

Let us put it as plainly as possible: Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton and Nicolas Sarkozy and the ludicrous upper-class twit called David Cameron do not give one good goddamn about the "security and freedom" of the Libyan people. They simply do not. They care about one thing only: imposing the domination of their monied, militarized elites.

Or as Alexis de Tocqueville put it following his tour of the society that Europeans had imposed -- with great savagery and deceit -- in America:

"The European is to other races of men what man in general is to animate nature. When he cannot bend them to his use or make them serve his self-interests, he destroys them and makes them vanish little by little before him."

It seems that the hapless Arab League -- whose call for a no-fly zone in Libya gave the perfect cover for the new Western war -- have belatedly recognized the truth of de Tocqueville's insight. [They are now decrying](#) the berserker frenzy of the Western forces; it was not what they had in mind at all:

The Arab League chief said on Sunday that Arabs did not want military strikes by Western powers that hit civilians when the League called for a no-fly zone over Libya.

In comments carried by Egypt's official state news agency, Secretary-General Amr Moussa also said he was calling for an emergency Arab League meeting to discuss the situation in the Arab world and particularly Libya.

"What is happening in Libya differs from the aim of imposing a no-fly zone, and what we want is the protection of civilians and not the bombardment of more civilians," he said.

Support for Gadafy himself was virtually non-existent in the Arab world -- but unlike the spoon-fed, misinformed, incurious TV-gawkers back in the United States, the people of the region [recognized full well the true nature](#) and intentions of the onslaught:

The overthrow of Mubarak in Egypt and Tunisia's Zine al Abidine bin Ali -- as well as mass protests against leaders in Yemen and Bahrain -- have restored a dormant Arab pride which was crushed by decades of autocracy and foreign intervention.

But many people in the Arab world, while anxious to see the end of Gadhafi's rule, felt that the resort to Western military action has tarnished Libya's revolution.

"Who will accept that foreign countries attack an Arab country? This is something shameful," said Yemeni rights activist Bashir Othman.

Support for military action was also muted by deep-seated suspicions that the West is more concerned with securing access to Arab oil supplies than supporting Arab aspirations.

"They are hitting Libya because of the oil, not to protect the Libyans," said Ali al-Jassem, 53, in the village of Sitra in Bahrain, where protests by the Shi'ite Muslim majority against the Sunni ruling Al-Khalifa family have triggered military reinforcement by neighboring Gulf Arab forces.

A spokesman for Bahrain's largest Shi'ite opposition party Wefaq questioned why the West was intervening against Gadhafi while it allowed oil-producing allies to support a crackdown on protesters in Bahrain in which 11 people have been killed.

"We think what is happening in Bahrain is no different to what was happening in Libya," Ibrahim Mattar said. "Bahrain is very small so the deaths are significant for a country where Bahrainis are only 600,000."

Yet on the same day the Peace Laureate was drawing his first blood in Libya with his Zeus-like hurtling of a hundred and ten thunderbolts, his Secretary of State was [publicly supporting the Saudi incursion into Bahrain](#)

, which enabled the murderous crackdown there. At the same time, American officials admitted that they did, in fact,

[know of the Saudi incursion in advance](#)

-- despite their heartsworn denials just a few days ago.

Again: Obama, Clinton, Sarkozy and Cameron do not give a damn about the killing of unarmed protestors in Bahrain -- any more than they give a damn about the killing of protestors, armed or unarmed, in Libya. It suits their current purposes to wage war in Libya, and so they wage war in Libya. It suits their current purposes to stand with one of the most oppressive and extremist regimes on earth to suppress, with deadly force, the yearning for democracy in Bahrain; so that's what they do.

The Peace Laureate and the bipartisan war-lovers in the American political and media elite tell us over and over that the assault on Libya is a "humanitarian intervention" aimed solely at "protecting the Libyan people." Yet at the same time, the ever-bellicose but often brutally frank Clinton [states plainly, in public](#) : "a final result of any negotiations would have to be the decision by Colonel Gadhafi to leave."

How much plainer can it be? It is not a humanitarian intervention; it is a military operation to impose regime change -- which is, needless to say, patently illegal under the international laws

which the US and the UN say they are upholding. But who cares about that?

The fact that anyone takes anything these compulsive, demonstrable liars say at face value, even for a micro-second, is one of the great mysteries of our age. Yet how many oceans of newsprint, how many blizzards of pixels have already been spent in earnest disquisitions on the serious import of their statements!

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Then again, there is nothing novel about this murtherous absurdity, [as Arthur Silber reminds us](#) in his latest incendiary work of outrage and insight:

There isn't any "news" in these latest events. Another day, another set of war crimes. Where's the news in that? That's what the United States does now, as it has regularly and systematically for over a century. Wait, that's not right: as it has since [before it even became the United States](#). But hell, you don't want to think about any of that too deeply or too long. If you did, how could you continue with your lamentations about the "death" of the once-noble United States and its "true" values? What are the "true" values of a nation founded and developed in very significant part on not one, but two, genocides that lasted for centuries?

Silber has much more to say; read it all -- and the links as well. (And give him any financial support you can while you are there; he continues to be one of the brightest, deepest lights we have, even as he battles excruciating -- and expensive -- health problems.)

You can also find more insight into the deep roots of our current predicament in a remarkable book by Paul VanDevelder: [Savages and Scoundrels: The Untold Story of America's Road to Empire through Indian Territory](#). While the book is filled with little-known historical detail about the vast legacy of deceit and destruction in the forging of the American Empire, VanDevelder also looks deeper into history for the antecedents of the bloody actions we see across the world today. For example, he points out that "laws" used by our interventionists to justify their profitable carnage are secularized versions of the arbitrarily declared papal laws and edicts which lay behind --- what else? -- the Crusades.

VanDevelder outlines the thinking of the instigator of the Crusades, Pope Innocent III, who sought ways to "legitimize" the seizure of "the property and estate of pagans, savages and infidels" -- the land-grabbing and looting which were the essence of the Crusades. He found it in the amorphous idea of "natural law" -- whose precepts were, of course, determined by the divinely directed Church.

In his encyclical *Quod super his*, Innocent "had given his successors the tools with which to secure and enforce the papacy's authority over all secular powers, [Christian or pagan]. ... The pope was empowered by a universal right, one recognized in natural law, to enforce the union

of Christian civilization with that of the infidel races..."

"Consequently," VanDevelder writes, "the pope not only had jurisdiction over the wandering infidels, he was also duty-bound to intervene in situations where those infidels were found to be in violation of natural and divine laws." And of course, failure to surrender to Christianity -- and its militarized elites -- was an egregious violation of "natural and divine law," punishable by death, decimation and destruction.

Building on this, Church doctrine later declared that the pope had a duty to "deny that infidels had any valid legal right to own property and rule over their own lands." They could only do so on sufferance from the power that held "universal jurisdiction" over world affairs. Pope Eugenius IV "decreed that the pope could intervene in the internal affairs of foreign lands as the guardian of the wayward souls who lived there."

Reformation powers like Elizabethan England secularized these notions to justify their own conquests. As VanDevelder notes, both crown advocates and Protestant clergymen advanced the notion that "'the just quest by the sword' of savage pagans in foreign lands was the solemn duty of civilized people. ... Where the English were concerned, justifying the conquest of foreign lands was a simple matter of replacing hieratic authority with the secular crown. Lord Coke bundled all these arguments into one by telling King James I that his foremost responsibility as king was to subjugate the savages to civilized laws of natural justice and equity."

After the Revolution, the American elites adopted these by-now ancient -- and arbitrary -- principles of domination. They took on the mantle of "universal jurisdiction" -- i.e., the right to determine "the right way of life for mankind," as Innocent III had put it -- along with the solemn duty to impose civilization, by force if necessary, on all the wayward savages who lack it -- or even worse, refuse it. The end result, of course, was a relentless record of deceit (every single treaty signed with sovereign Indian nations in the course of the 18th and 19th centuries was broken), rapine and ethnic cleansing.

Today this militarized "universal jurisdiction" which sprang from the ambitions of the Crusader Pope has passed, nominally, to the United Nations (although as we have seen in recent years, our American elites still consider themselves to be the true possessors of this "right," and will eagerly use it unilaterally whenever the UN proves recalcitrant). Substitute "the will of the international community" for "Christianity" and so on, and you need hardly change a word from the historical documents reaching back centuries.

But from the horrendous atrocities of the First Crusade to the computerized carnage being wrought in Libya today, the noble rhetoric of freedom, enlightenment, protection and liberation has masked base self-interest, murderous racism, bottomless corruption, outrageous deceit and wanton destruction. As Silber notes, what we are seeing today is nothing new; it is just another deep, dirty, self-inflicted wound to the human spirit.

