

The Responsibility of Intellectuals Redux: Humanitarian Intervention and the Liberal Embrace of War in the Age of Clinton, Bush and Obama 改めて知識人の責任を問う クリントン、ブッシュ、オバマの時代における人道的介入とリベラル派の戦争承認

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In a *New York Times* op-ed following the public's rejection of president Barack Obama's call for air strikes on Syria, Michael Ignatieff, a professor at the Harvard Kennedy School and former leader of the Canadian liberal party, sought to reaffirm the doctrine of humanitarian intervention, stating that while the public had become weary over the failure of wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya, Western democracies had a responsibility to protect civilians when they are threatened with mass killing. In his view, the use or threat of force may be "illegal but legitimate," and the US sometimes needs to "go at it alone to stop atrocity crimes....Rebuilding popular democratic support for the idea of our duty to protect civilians when no one else can or will," thus represents "a critical challenge in the years ahead."¹



Samantha Power at the United Nations

With colleagues such as Nicholas Kristof of the *New York Times* and Samantha Power, US ambassador to the UN and author of the book, *"A Problem From Hell,"* which criticizes the US for failing to intervene historically to halt genocide, Ignatieff has for years been an influential liberal intellectual championing military intervention on humanitarian grounds. He and his associates in the "cruise missile left," as Edward S. Herman labeled them, have often been more hawkish than neo-conservatives, championing wars in Libya, Syria and initially Iraq as well as escalation in Afghanistan-Pakistan. In their race to "protect," they seem oblivious to the mass killing that inevitably accompanies each of these interventions. Their analysis is deeply flawed furthermore in that it grossly oversimplifies the nature of international conflicts, always painting one side (the US side) as good and the other evil. They ignore the legacy of colonialism and the structural and economic variables underlying Western military intervention throughout history, including desire to access military bases and raw materials and to undercut challenges to Western hegemony. They also ignore US and Western complicity in major human rights violations through arms sales, and military and police training programs.

This essay seeks to critically scrutinize the doctrine of humanitarian intervention,

discussing how Ignatieff and colleagues seeking a useable past distorted history and served a useful function for what C. Wright Mills termed the “power elite” by allowing them to appropriate a human rights rhetoric that in the 1960s was adopted by liberal antiwar activists to condemn America aggression in Vietnam.² Replicating the role played by their predecessors in World War I, liberal interventionists helped to save the US military-industrial complex from oblivion by building public consensus for dubious military interventions that Ignatieff now laments threaten to reinvigorate the pacifist and isolationist sentiments of the 1930s.

In 1917, Randolph Bourne penned a critique of progressive intellectuals including his mentor John Dewey who had aligned with the country’s worst reactionaries in supporting US involvement in World War I. Applying the insights of Sigmund Freud, Bourne analyzed how support for the war brought a primitive kind of psychological gratification and gave these intellectuals a feeling of purpose and connection to power. They were naïve in their belief that violence could be controlled and could lead to democratic outcomes, accepting “with little question, the ends as announced from above.”³

Fifty years later, in another landmark essay, “The Responsibility of Intellectuals,” Noam Chomsky invoked Bourne’s insights in pointing to the complicity of liberal social scientists with the crimes against humanity committed by the United States in Vietnam. The responsibility of intellectuals, Chomsky wrote, was to “speak truth to power” but these intellectual mandarins, among them Samuel Huntington of Harvard, were doing just the opposite, as they undertook studies, often funded by the government, designed to improve management of the war and assist in population control and

counter-insurgency efforts. Under the guise of objectivity, their writings furthermore provided ideological support for America’s drive for hegemony in the Asia Pacific and the counter-revolutionary bloodbaths that accompanied it.⁴

In the 1990s, Chomsky published a follow-up book called *A New Generation Draws the Line*, which took aim at a new generation of intellectual mandarins who now sought to provide rationalization for the persistence of the permanent warfare state following the end of the Cold War. Motivated in part by the same kinds of psychological drives and access to power described by Bourne, the new generation, writing in *The New York Review of Books* and other liberal establishment journals, helped to uphold the myth of American self-righteousness and good intentions in foreign affairs, calling for the necessity of military intervention in trouble spots around the world to halt human rights violations and genocide.

Chomsky asks a simple question in his book – why did the liberal intelligentsia fixate on the crimes of Slobodan Milosevic when the United States was abetting parallel or worse atrocities in Turkey, where the US supplied 80 percent of the arms used to crush Kurdish rebels, Colombia, and East Timor, whose people were being slaughtered by the Indonesian military. The answer for Chomsky was simple – these intellectuals were ideologists not interested primarily in truth but illusory access to power, which could be obtained by focusing on the victims of American government enemies, and not allies, and by embracing the state religion that the US role in the world was benign and its intentions well meaning.⁵

Ignatieff and Samantha Power, both formerly of the Carr Center for Human Rights at Harvard’s Kennedy School, fit right into Chomsky’s critique. They were influential in championing the doctrine of humanitarian intervention which argued, in an updating of the “white man’s burden,” that the United States as the

dominant global power had the responsibility to protect civilians from oppressive governments' and that this imperative trumped the bedrock of international law mandating the protection of state sovereignty. Resolution 688 of the UN charter, which passed on April 5, 1991, had condemned the repression of the Iraqi population, including the Kurds by Saddam Hussein after the first Gulf War, the consequences of which were said to threaten international peace. The UN charter in turn allowed the Security Council to take measures in response to threats to peace, a reversal of the previous standard that the internal affairs of a nation were inviolable.⁶

Although the majority of US interventions were still subsequently carried out extra-legally, the resolution provided a basis for supporting "humanitarian intervention" in an era following the collapse of the Soviet Union where there was no countervailing superpower and where neoconservatives were calling for full-spectrum military dominance including over outer space.⁷ "Humanitarian intervention" was first advanced under Operation Provide Comfort, where UN troops pushed the Iraqi army out of Kurdish territory and helped to ensure the safe passage of refugees, and then in Somalia to help extend famine relief, though the latter culminated in the infamous Black Hawk down incident where US soldiers were ambushed and their bodies dragged through the streets by clan fighters.⁸ In a 1999 address to the UN General Assembly, Secretary-General Kofi Annan spoke of the failure of the UN to subsequently stop large-scale killings in Kosovo and Rwanda, noting that "if humanitarian intervention is indeed an unacceptable assault on sovereignty....how should we respond to gross and systematic violations of human rights that offend every precept of our common humanity?"

In 2001, the government of Canada established an International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), which drafted a report co-authored by Ignatieff calling on the

international community to protect vulnerable populations from human rights abuses and genocide through force.⁹ The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) was codified in a 2005 UN resolution supported by George W. Bush, and has been used to justify repeated military interventions at a time when the United States has established what military intellectual John Nagl called an "industrial scale counter-terrorism killing machine" in over 100 countries, with the ICISS supporting the War on Terror.¹⁰



In the abstract, R2P's goal of protecting vulnerable populations is a noble one, accompanied by efforts to establish a framework for prosecuting human rights offenders through the International Criminal Court (ICC) and to promote post-conflict reconciliation.¹¹ The ICISS report is deeply flawed, however, in failing to consider global economic inequalities and Western intervention as a source of "failed states."¹² There are no safeguards, furthermore, against the dominant powers using humanitarian pretexts to trample on the sovereignty of weaker states and to apply R2P's standards selectively in their interest. Ramesh Thakur of the ICISS acknowledged that for many non-western people, "[humanitarian intervention] conjures historical memories of the strong imposing their will on the weak in the name of spreading Christianity to the cultivation and promotion of human rights."¹³

Both Ignatieff and Samantha Power, as US ambassador to the UN, invoked R2P in promoting air strikes against Syria after charging President Bashar al-Assad with

deploying chemical weapons “and poisoning over 1,000 men, women and children with chemical agents, some in their sleep,” as Power claimed before the UN.¹⁴ When British intelligence obtained a sample of Sarin gas used in the August 21st attack, analysis demonstrated, however, that the gas used didn’t match the batches known to exist in the Syrian army’s chemical weapons arsenal. Actual exposure to Sarin appears to have been minimal or non-existent for 31 of the 36 people sampled (88%) in a UN probe.¹⁵ These facts epitomize how R2P has been used to champion wars based on deception in a country long targeted for regime change by imperial planners seeking to remake the Middle East.¹⁶

In making the case for attacking Syria, Ignatieff and Power disregarded the brutality of the al-Qaeda affiliated Free Syrian Army (FSA), which has carried out torture, assassinations and civilian massacres.¹⁷ Far from being neutral, the US, with the Saudis and other allies, covertly armed and trained the FSA, giving at least some credence to President Assad’s characterization of it as a “terrorist organization backed by foreign powers.”¹⁸ The Syrian conflict fits a pattern in which proponents of R2P make it seem like one side is evil and the other is comprised of saintly victims crying out for foreign support, when both sides have their hands dirty. And rather than being reluctant bystanders, the US and its allies often play an important role behind the scenes in fomenting conflict and backing major atrocities, using a human rights rhetoric to sell ruthless intervention and to consolidate the permanent warfare state.¹⁹

In only a few cases in recent history have wars led to humanitarian outcomes, notably the allied-Russian liberation of Europe from Nazism, the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia terminating Pol Pot’s atrocities, and Tanzania’s invasion of Uganda ending Idi Amin’s rule. *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof predicted in September 2001 that “our invasion

of Afghanistan may end up saving one million lives over the next decade,” and that “troops can advance humanitarian goals just as much as doctors or aid workers.” The reality however has been different, with US forces and their proxies responsible for “cowboy-like excessive force” in night-time raids, civilian killings, torture and acts of body mutilation. Bombers have killed thousands, striking at least four wedding parties.²⁰

This outcome is not surprising as soldiers are trained with one goal in mind: to defeat and kill their enemy. They undergo a conditioning process in boot camp that desensitizes them from human suffering. Vietnam veterans testified about being given a rabbit to care for, only to have its neck snapped on the day of their graduation.²¹ Once in country, a counterfeit universe developed in which deviant behavior became socially accepted. One soldier wrote that “a very sad thing happened while we were there...there were so many deaths and so many wounded, we started to treat death and loss of limbs with callousness, and it happens because the human mind can’t hold that much suffering and survive.”²²

Since World War II, American military interventions have been consistently based on fraudulent pretexts and have resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of civilians while empowering brutal and corrupt regimes. They have yielded unintended consequences, blowback and resistance and have made the world a more violent and dangerous place.²³ Proponents of R2P consistently sanitize and distort this history and discount the moral breakdown that occurs in war. Americans can best try to advance human rights not through more war but by promoting an end to arms sales to oppressive regimes like Saudi Arabia, Uganda and Colombia, by urging the signing on to UN human rights treaties and the ICC, and by demanding the closure of Guantanamo Bay, the end of drone strikes and assassination

programs and the removal of all troops and mercenaries from Afghanistan. Thirteen years of the War on Terrorism should teach us that violence only begets more violence and does not address the underlying grievances fueling the rise of political extremism in our time.

Michael Ignatieff, doyen of the liberal war hawks, actually marched against the Vietnam War as a student and began his academic career with a Foucauldian history of the prison system in England and its importance as a mechanism of social control. As the political winds shifted, he reinvented himself in the 1990s as a proponent of humanitarian intervention, capturing the prevailing post-Cold War triumphalist mood in a series of essays that landed him appointment to Harvard's Kennedy School. From 1993-1997, as he details in his book, *The Warriors' Honor: Ethnic War and the Modern Conscience*, Ignatieff traveled through the landscapes of modern ethnic war – to Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia, Rwanda, Burundi and Afghanistan. His experiences affirmed his own faith in the “universalistic ethic of the West based on multi-culturalism and concern for human rights,” over the “particularistic ethic that defines the tribe or nation,” and manifested in the ethnic cleansings and violence he attempted to chronicle. In Ignatieff's view, Serb attempts at aggrandizement were to blame for the outbreak of war in the Balkans. He disapproved of UN Secretary Boutros-Boutros Ghali visiting Africa while corpses mounted in Srebrenica, the largest ethnic cleansing on European soil since World War II, and laments the UN's ineffectiveness in halting genocide and ethnic cleansing.²⁴

Ignatieff notes his excitement that a community of human rights and development activists which had emerged since the early 1960s had acquired a dominant constituency of support

and sufficient institutional power to influence the foreign policies of major states in positive ways, including the “Gulf War to reverse a dictator's conquest of a neighboring state, international humanitarian efforts to rescue the Kurds and provide a safe haven for them and intervention in Somalia to put down factional fighting and get food to famine victims.” He believes that “had we been more ruthlessly imperial, we might have been a trifle more effective.....If General Schwarzkopf had allowed himself to become the General MacArthur of a conquered Iraq, the Iraqi opposition abroad might now be rebuilding the country; if the Marines were still patrolling the streets of Mogadishu, the prospects of moving Somalia forward from the world of Hobbes to the world of Locke might be significantly brighter; and if NATO had defended the Bosnian government with air strikes against the Serbian insurrection in April 1992, it is possible that Europe might not have had to witness the return of the concentration camp.”²⁵

Ignatieff expanded on this analysis in a now famous essay for the *New York Review of Books* in January 2003 entitled “The American Empire: The Burden,” in which he voiced support for an invasion of Iraq. Characterizing the United States as an “‘empire light’ whose grace notes are free-markets, human rights and democracy enforced by the most awesome military power the world has ever known,” he wrote that “multilateral solutions to the world's problems are all very well, but they have no teeth unless America bares its fangs.” Considering “regime change” an “imperial task par excellence,” he said it “remains a fact – as disagreeable to those left-wingers who regard American imperialism as the root of all evil as it is to right-wing isolationists who believe that the world beyond our shores is none of our business – that there are many people who owe their freedom to an exercise of American military power,” including most recently “Bosnians whose nation survived because American air power and diplomacy forced an

end to a war the Europeans couldn't stop, Kosovars who would still be imprisoned in Serbia if not for General Wesley Clark and the Air Force [and] Afghan and Iraqis whose freedom depends on US air power."²⁶

Ignatieff is an eloquent writer capable of sharp insights (for example he writes in *Warrior's Honor* that Bosnia became a "theater of displacement in which political energies that might otherwise have been expended in defending multi-ethnic society at home were directed instead at defending mythic multiculturalism far away; the *bête noir* of a generation that had tried ecology, socialism and civil rights only to watch all these lose their romantic momentum.") His judgment however, has proven with time to have been circumspect. While acknowledging the imperial premise behind nation building efforts in which "wealthy strangers are taking upon themselves the right to rule over those too poor, too conflict ridden to rule themselves," he sanitizes the history of American foreign policy and creates the false dichotomy of an enlightened West needing to go in and save backward, anti-modern peoples. Underplaying the wide social inequality and divisions in US society, his writings mirror government officials in their concern for individual rights only when they are being violated by anti-Western leaders, and he callously disregards the civilian atrocities that are an inevitable product of modern total war.²⁷

Supporting indefinite detention and torture as a "lesser evil" in the fight against terrorism, Ignatieff's analysis of the 1st Gulf War evades Iraq's importance to US energy interests and the legacy of previous British and American intervention in provoking and exacerbating sectarian divisions and helping to empower Saddam Hussein and the Baath Party. He pays little heed to the slaughter of an estimated 100,000 Iraqis compared to 133 Americans in what one critic referred to as the "the most cowardly war ever fought on this planet," and

expresses concern for the plight of the Kurds only in Iraq and not US ally Turkey.²⁸ For Somalia, Ignatieff disregards the US role in contributing to the Hobbesian state by pouring aid to Dictator Siad Barre following the Ethiopian revolution and killing of an estimated 600 to 1,500 Somalis, half of them women and children.²⁹ He does not tell us that American envoy Robert Oakley had close relations with the Continental Oil Company (Conoco) which provided military intelligence and helped plan logistics for the Marine landing.³⁰

Ignatieff's analysis of the Bosnian conflict³¹ as Gibbs has demonstrated in *First Do No Harm: Humanitarian Intervention and the Destruction of Yugoslavia*, is equally disingenuous. Holding the underlying goal of preserving NATO and establishing new military bases, the United States along with several European countries, most notably Germany, contributed to the breakup of the Yugoslav federation by blocking diplomatic settlements such as the Vance-Owen plan capable of unifying the different ethnic factions. They promoted neoliberal structural adjustment programs through the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that aggravated economic difficulty and helped fuel the rise of nationalist demagogues like Milosevic, who was not the only brutal one.³²

Croatia's Franjo Tudjiman, for example, extolled the virtues of the pro-Nazi Ustasa movement and sponsored ethnic cleansing campaigns against the Serbs, while Bosnian leader Alija Izetbegovic was an Islamist supported by Tehran and Osama bin Laden. His armies employed paramilitary gangs which committed atrocities against Croats after their anti-Serb alliance broke down.³³ The State Department established an arms pipeline that violated an international embargo and contracted private mercenary companies such as MPRI and DynCorp to train Islamic fundamentalists and the Croat military who responded to the Srebrenica massacre by shelling the Serb-controlled Krajina region with

the “tacit blessing of the United States,” killing several thousand Serbs and expelling between 150,000 and 200,000 in the war’s largest act of ethnic cleansing.³⁴

The bombing of Kosovo meanwhile caused between 500 and 2,000 civilian deaths while killing 10,000 Yugoslav soldiers. The US used cluster bombs and pioneered the use of drone surveillance. The attacks triggered an intensification of Serb ethnic cleansing and then reprisal killings by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), which had ties to heroin traffickers and Al Qaeda and was branded a terrorist organization by the State Department only months before the invasion.³⁵ Prime Minister Hashim Thaci allegedly ran a criminal organization which sent more than 400 captured Serbs to Albania to be killed so their organs could be extracted and sold for transplants, while another key US military and intelligence asset, Ramush Haradinaj, was accused of rape and murder.³⁶

These kinds of facts were suppressed or dismissed as inconsequential by Ignatieff and other pro-war intellectuals who failed to elucidate on the structural imperatives that drive military intervention – promoting instead the myth of a virtuous America that needed to intervene more to halt human rights abuses and genocide. His analysis dovetailed nicely with the agenda of the foreign-policy making elite, which was looking for new pretexts and rationalizations for war, and the maintenance of high military budgets after the end of the Cold War. And liberal left sectors could be won over by Ignatieff’s arguments which played into public concern for human rights that had emerged in the 1960s movements.

Perry Anderson in a special issue of *New Left Review* entitled “American Foreign Policy and its Thinkers” points to a tradition in which international relations specialists, some of them with direct ties to the Pentagon, develop their

own version of an American grand strategy in which they frequently emphasize the necessity of military control of the Persian Gulf and access to Southeast Asian markets. Evading discussion of the violence and corruption bred by US interventions, or comparisons with previous colonial powers, and neglecting the influence of special interest groups, authors such as Zbigniew Brzezinski, George Kennan and Robert Art assume that US worldwide hegemony serves the universal interests of humanity and suggest that the alternative would be genocide, depression, famine and war.³⁷ British imperial apologists dating to the era of John Stuart Mill felt the same way.³⁸

There is a counter-tradition to the phenomenon Anderson describes that dates to at least the revisionist literature on World War I, which has tended to come from history rather than political science departments. In 1959, influenced by Charles A. Beard, William A. Williams published his classic, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* focused on the economic underpinnings of American global expansion.³⁹ Dovetailing with the analysis of pan-African thinkers like W.E. B. DuBois and later Malcolm X., Williams inspired student activists and scholars who considered the Vietnam War to be a product of an imperialist foreign policy. Books on the warfare state and military industrial complex and on covert deception and government collusion with corporate interests and organized criminals proliferated throughout the 1960s and 1970s.⁴⁰ Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) president Carl Oglesby in *Containment and Change* linked Vietnam to CIA coups in Guatemala and Iran, the revival of gunboat diplomacy in the Dominican Republic, and toppling of Guiana’s socialist government.⁴¹ Fred Brannman’s book, *Voices from the Plain of Jars*, as another iconic book of the era, recorded the voices of Laotian peasants subjected to the largest bombing campaign in history. The author foresaw a new kind of automated warfare “fought not by men but machines and which could erase distant

and unseen societies clandestinely, unknown to and even unsuspected by the world outside.”⁴²

The anti-Vietnam war movement led to concrete reforms, including the War Powers Act limiting executive ability to wage war and helped to spawn a human rights consciousness among the public, which wanted to reign in the military establishment. Jimmy Carter won election in 1976 calling for a human rights based foreign policy. Particularly in his first two years, Carter took some concrete measures that could satisfy new leftists – cutting the CIA budget and halting funding to some oppressive regimes, like Chile and Guatemala. Staffed by advisors who served in the elite Trilateral commission bent on restoring US economic and military power after Vietnam, the Carter administration was also crucial, as James Peck shows in his important book, *Ideal Illusions: How the US Government Co-Opted Human Rights*, in channeling public concerns for human rights away from US backed client regimes, and towards its enemies, primarily condemning violations of human rights in the Soviet Union and in Soviet clients states. Vietnam was re-imagined as a war of equals, with Carter stating that “we owe Hanoi no debt because the destruction [from the war]...was mutual.” The media and liberal intellegensia followed the administration’s lead, focusing at length on Soviet dissident writers like Andrei Sakharov and Alexander Solzhenitsyn and on the plight of people living behind the Iron Curtain, while paying little heed to dissidents in US client regimes or the backing of state repression in countries like Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, El Salvador and Iran (where Carter toasted the Shah in 1977). Peck writes that “the media fixated on the Soviet dissidents, giving them a huge platform for their views, while few Americans could name any dissidents from Latin America, South Korea or the Philippines.”⁴³

Around this time, liberal intellectuals and neoconservatives began an offensive against

the antiwar movement and New Left, claiming they were naïve about communism and were apologists for human rights abuses in Vietnam after the war ended (Solzhenitsyn made this charge). Post-revisionists like John L. Gaddis, who blamed the Soviet Union for the outbreak of the Cold War and attacked New Left “revisionists” received choice appointments, their star rising in the academy.⁴⁴ The same was true of neo-realist scholars, many of them Pentagon-sponsored, whose writing lent support to large-scale military appropriations and covert interventions.⁴⁵ C. Wright Mills once called these kinds of scholars “crackpot realists....[who know of] no solutions to the paradoxes of the Middle East and Europe, the Far East and Africa except the landing of Marines. [They] prefer the bright, clear problems of war...for they still believe that ‘winning’ means something, although they never tell us what.”⁴⁶

During the Reagan years, the Global South, Peck notes, was portrayed as a “world of despots, torturers, and terrorists, a veritable wasteland of backward cultures and brutal regimes....Such portrayal of the South served powerful interests in Washington and Europe, for an atrocity ridden South seemed to legitimize a Western helping hand without calling for any transformation of the Western structures of wealth and control.”⁴⁷ It in turn helped to lay the groundwork for the humanitarian intervention doctrine which followed the drug war as the main basis for military aggression after the end of the Cold War and justified the rewriting of international legal norms mandating the protection of state sovereignty. This even though the United States had one of the worst records among the Western democracies when it came to the ratification of multilateral human rights organizations and treaties and had replaced apartheid South Africa as the world’s leading carceral state.⁴⁸

Failing to note these latter paradoxes or the

connection between imperial pursuits and the growth of domestic inequality, racism and violence,⁴⁹ public intellectuals in the 1990s, as Noam Chomsky pointed out, fulfilled their traditional function as mandarins to the elite by providing ideological justification for the expansion of American military power. Those who critiqued the American thrust for empire had long been marginalized, losing their platform with the *New York Review of Books* (which in the early 1970s published radical critiques by Chomsky and scholars like Peter Dale Scott) and mainstream media. Prominence instead was given to neoconservatives like Francis Fukuyama who gained fame for his essay *The End of History and the Last Man*, which argued that the fall of the Berlin Wall confirmed the superiority of liberal capitalism. "What we may be witnessing was not just the end of the Cold War," he wrote, "but the end of history as such: That is the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government."⁵⁰ Another influential voice of the time, Thomas L. Friedman, argued that a strong military was necessary to protect the sea lanes and stabilize "failed states," enabling their integration into the global marketplace. "The hidden hand of the market will never work without a hidden fist," he wrote. "McDonald's cannot flourish without McDonnell Douglas, the designer of the F-15. And the hidden fist that keeps the world safe for Silicon Valley's technologies to flourish is called the US Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps."⁵¹

The 1990s saw a revival of just war theory and its premise that any means of destruction could be warranted under emergency conditions and in the face of moral evil.⁵² Robert Kaplan's intellectual star rose after writing a series of dispatches for *The Atlantic Magazine* from Africa, Central Asia and the Balkans depicting these regions as cauldrons of ethnic violence, poverty and savagery which called out for enlightened Western leadership and

intervention. In *Imperial Grunts*, he celebrated the US military as an heir to the Indian fighters and frontiersmen of the past.⁵³ Like Ignatieff, Samantha Power fit right into the intellectual milieu of the times. She emerged as a proponent of "humanitarian intervention" as a journalist covering conflicts in Bosnia and sub-Saharan Africa. A piece on Zimbabwe for *The Atlantic* echoed Kaplan in pointing to the need for more Western intervention in order to secure "majority rule" and stabilize Zimbabwe's economy.⁵⁴ Power won the Pulitzer Prize for her 2002 book, *"A Problem From Hell:" America in the Age of Genocide*, which purports to show that America did nothing to prevent genocides in the past. In her view, U.S. policymakers should learn from this disgraceful history and intervene more readily to prevent human rights crimes. Even when they don't have perfect information, a president must have a "bias towards belief" that massacres are imminent, justifying in turn preemptive war.⁵⁵

Reviewers hailed Power's book as "one of the decade's most important" on US foreign policy and a standard text on genocide prevention," with *The New Republic* calling it a "book from heaven." Richard Holbrooke of the State Department passed out copies to co-workers and President Bush, after being read a summary of the chapter on Rwanda, wrote in the margins: "NOT ON MY WATCH."⁵⁶

Then-Senator Barack Obama Jr. hired Power as an aide, meanwhile, after reading the whole thing.⁵⁷

In reality, studying US foreign policy through response to genocide is problematic because the term genocide is sometimes applied to describe war-time atrocities during counter-insurgency operations and is often politicized, and because it avoids critical scrutiny into political economy and imperialism.⁵⁸ Most international relations specialists recognize that states are not moral agents; they intervene only when it is deemed to be in the national

interest by dominant groups who control the governing structure, and the United States is no exception.⁵⁹ Assuming that complex regional conflicts can only be solved by outsiders, “*A Problem From Hell*” disregards the structural variables underlying most US military interventions in the 20th century, notably the quest for overseas military bases, access to mineral resources, and the imperatives of the military industrial complex. Power pays no heed to the fact that the United States was founded in genocide as a settler colonial state.⁶⁰

She presents wide-scale Turkish killing of Armenians as the first genocide of the 20th century that the US supposedly could have prevented, though ignores the US pacification of the Philippines which resulted in anywhere from 200,000 to upwards of a million deaths, and the exterminatory campaign by the Marines under the Wilson administration in Haiti whose discussion would invariably challenge the book’s main thesis.⁶¹ Identifying with war hawk Theodore Roosevelt and his exhortation of an Armenian lobby group for its “peace at any price” attitude when “people were being murdered and their women raped,” Power fails to provide proper historical context for the Armenian massacres, neglecting that roughly two hundred thousand Armenians fought with the allies in World War I and were credited with keeping the Turks out of the Baku oil fields, hence depriving the Central Powers of much needed fuels, which German Admiral Erich Von Ludendorff believed was a key cause of their military defeat.⁶²

Horrendous wartime atrocities were committed by the Turks resulting in an estimated 600,000 deaths (40% of the population) from disease, famine and massacre, with burning of villages and torture, but the existence of a premeditated plan of extermination has been difficult to prove. The large Armenian communities of Constantinople, Smyrna and Aleppo survived the war largely intact, probably because they were not in a position to

assist the invading Russians.⁶³ According to an eyewitness, eight hundred defenceless Turks were slaughtered in Erzincam, with Armenian soldiers stuffing the corpses in hastily dug trenches.⁶⁴ In a memoir, Armenian Haig Shiroyan recalled the sad fate of his hometown of Bitlis: “The Turks had killed or exiled all Armenians, looted ...or burned their houses. The Russian victorious armies, reinforced with Armenian volunteers, had slaughtered every Turk they could find, destroyed every house they entered. The once beautiful Bitlis city was left in fire and ruins.”⁶⁵ Such accounts point to both sides committing terrible atrocities, making Power’s account misleading.

Undertaking no primary research of her own, and failing to master the secondary literature, much of Power’s chapter is based around the ghost-written memoirs of Ambassador Henry Morgenthau Sr., which as he acknowledged in a letter to Woodrow Wilson, were written as an appeal to “the mass of Americans in small towns and country districts... to convince them of the necessity of carrying the Great War to a victorious conclusion.”⁶⁶ Dismissing allegations of allied atrocities known to have happened, Morgenthau blames the Germans for supporting the Turks as part of a scheme for world conquest (thwarted heroically in Latin America in his view by US intervention under the Monroe doctrine). He fabricated a story, based on a mythic conversation with German ambassador Baron Hans Von Wagenheim of a meeting where the Kaiser allegedly gave German financiers two weeks to unload their Wall Street securities before a planned offensive against Britain and France, which was later introduced as primary evidence for imposing a punitive peace at the Versailles conference.⁶⁷

Written by Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Burton Hendrick Jr. with the unacknowledged assistance of Armenian staff and Secretary of State Robert Lansing, Morgenthau’s book alleged that two million Armenians were

deported when this was less than the number living under Ottoman rule. Lacking knowledge of the local languages and failing to visit the affected areas, Morgenthau relied on lurid missionary and refugee reports and made-up conversations with Young Turk leaders Enver Pasha and Talaat Bey and Baron Von Wagenheim different from those recorded in his diary. The book was colored by derogatory and racist characterizations of the Turks as “psychologically primitive” “bloodthirsty savages” and “Mohammedan fanatics” and by his ignorant claim that “the Koran instructed Muslims to kill Christians.”⁶⁸ Morgenthau later appealed for an American mandate over Constantinople, Armenia and Anatolia and hoped to secure for the United States rights to the Straits of Gibraltar.⁶⁹

Disregarding his prejudice and the political calculation underlying his championing of the Armenian cause, Power considers Morgenthau a hero, claiming that earlier American intervention in World War I would have saved the Armenians. The Wilson administration had limited military and diplomatic options to stop the killing, however, with US armed forces being small and not particularly adept. One of the few American journalists who witnessed the deportations, George Schreiner felt that Morgenthau’s exaggerations and Western meddling actually made the plight of the Armenians worse, with Lord James Bryce, co-author of a propagandistic tract on Turkish atrocities, noting “better it would have been for the Christians of the East [Armenians] if no [Western] diplomatist had ever signed a protocol or written a dispatch on their behalf.”⁷⁰ Applying equally to other oppressed groups supported then abandoned when they lost their strategic utility⁷¹, Bryce’s remarks undermine Power’s analysis which sidesteps the fact that American intervention in the Great War caused the death of an estimated 460,000 Americans and contributed because of the postwar settlement to the rise of Nazism. Power ought to read Dalton Trumbo’s novel

Johnny Got His Gun about a soldier who returns without arms or legs and with his face blown off, as it voiced the anguish of a generation who felt the war had been instigated by arms merchants and bankers and that the waste in human life was in vain.⁷²

At one point, Power falsely suggests that propaganda about systematic rape by German soldiers in Belgium during World War I was mostly accurate, leaving the impression that antiwar critics were “genocide apologists,” just like today.⁷³ Distrust for government manipulation of the media was a key factor accounting in her view for a lackadaisical response to the Jewish Holocaust. She ignores the scholarship, however, detailing how anticommunist ideology combined with longstanding preference for right-wing dictatorship among corporate elites resulted in the FDR administration’s “neutrality” in the Spanish civil war and support for Adolph Hitler and Benito Mussolini until a late date.⁷⁴ Power also fails to consider that the beginning of wide-scale commemoration of the Holocaust in the late 1960s was largely political, coinciding with the solidification of America’s ties to Israel after the six-day war.⁷⁵

Overall, despite the book being advertised as a comprehensive account of response to genocide in the twentieth century, “*A Problem From Hell*” is selective in its case studies, leaving out mass killings in which the US government was not simply a bystander, but actively collaborated with the perpetrators or directed the slaughter. She neglects the American sponsored massacres in Cheju-do island on the eve of the Korean War where whole families and villages were wiped out simply because one relative or villager supported insurgent rebels⁷⁶, and the killings that followed a CIA backed coup and decade-long destabilization campaign in Indonesia. After seizing power in 1965, General Suharto ordered army officers, including allegedly Obama’s stepfather Lolo Soetoro, and Muslim gangs to attack members

of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) identified through lists provided by US military intelligence. The CIA channeled weapons to the new regime while US corporations like Lockheed Martin and Stanvac (later Exxon-Mobil) also provided covert support. Between 250,000 to a million people were slaughtered, including thousands of ethnic Chinese, with thousands more imprisoned and tortured.⁷⁷ A CIA report boasted that the PKI had “suffered a massive defeat” and that “reverence for Sukarno [previous socialist leader]” was finally “broken. . . . Suharto is now inviting the IMF [International Monetary Fund] to help develop policies and restoring to foreign owners some plantations and mines taken over by Sukarno.”⁷⁸

Ten years later, Suharto's government invaded East Timor with the support of the Ford administration, killing 200,000 civilians. Only briefly mentioning East Timor, Power claims “the US looked away” (147) but declassified government records reveal that US complicity went much further as Secretary of State Henry Kissinger gave Suharto a green light for the invasion and the US continuously supplied arms and training to elite army battalions through the Clinton era.⁷⁹

Guatemala is another case ignored by Power. From 1981-1983, the Reagan administration provided nearly a billion dollars in assistance to Gen. Efraim Rios Montt while he carried out scorched earth campaigns targeted against Mayan Indians who supported left-wing guerrillas. Montt's word for the peasants was allegedly simple: “if you're with us, we'll feed you, if not we'll kill you.” In 2012, the Christian fundamentalist was convicted by a Guatemalan court of genocide and crimes against humanity, though the case was overturned under suspicious circumstances. Journalist Chase Mader noted that Power “may not have wanted to offend the retired Guatemalan Colonel down the hall,” referring to Hector Gramajo, architect of the counterinsurgency who was

given a fellowship at the Kennedy School.⁸⁰

In another egregious omission, “*A Problem From Hell*” fails to discuss the wide-scale killing that resulted from American military pacification campaigns in Vietnam. As Nick Turse shows in *Kill Anything That Moves*, during Operation Speedy Express from December 1968 through May 1969, the Ninth Infantry Division under the command of Julian Ewell and Ira Hunt claimed an enemy body count of 10,899 at a cost of 267 American lives, while only 748 weapons were seized. General David Hackworth acknowledged that “a lot of innocent Vietnamese civilians got slaughtered because of the Ewell-Hunt drive to have the highest count in the land.” In May 1970, a “grunt” who participated in Speedy Express wrote a confidential letter to William Westmoreland, then Army Chief of Staff, saying that the Ninth Division's atrocities amounted to “a My Ly” each month for over a year.⁸¹ Large-scale carpet bombing meanwhile prompted military analyst Bernard B. Fall to warn that South Vietnam as a “cultural and historical entity” was threatened with “extinction... [as]...the countryside literally dies under the blows of the largest military machine ever unleashed on an area of this size.”⁸²

Similar devastation was inflicted on Laos and Cambodia, which Power also disregards. In her chapter on Cambodia, Power fails to address the circumstances in which the Khmer Rouge came to power following the Nixon administration's secret bombing and a CIA backed coup that overthrew the neutralist Prince Norodom Sihanouk and installed a brutal right wing regime. Taylor Owen and Ben Kiernan write that “civilian casualties [from the US bombing] drove an enraged population into the arms of an insurgency that had enjoyed relatively little support until the bombing began, setting in motion the...rapid rise of the Khmer Rouge, and ultimately the Cambodian genocide.” It was not by coincidence that a Finish commission referred to the 1970s as a

“decade of genocide” in Cambodia, though you would not learn this from reading Power.⁸³ Showing her conservative colors and disdain for the New Left, Power at one point refers to Malcolm Caldwell, a professor at the University of London’s School of Oriental Studies murdered during a visit to Cambodia as “an ideologue” and “communist true believer” duped by Khmer Rouge propagandists.⁸⁴ She leaves the impression that communist revolutionary regimes were genocidal in nature and that anti-imperialists were somehow complicit in their crimes.

Power’s chapter on Iraq has some good material on Saddam Hussein’s killing of the Kurds and American support for him in the Iran-Iraq war, though avoids discussing the geopolitical and economic imperatives underlying US policy in the Middle East, saying erroneously that the US has a “tendency to write off the region.” (p. 178). She mentions the Persian Gulf War in only one sentence, finding it unimportant that the US Air Force launched 11,160 strikes and over 88,000 tons of explosives (greater than that in all of World War II), with 70 percent of bombs missing their targets. Paul W. Roberts testified at Montreal commission hearing that the air attack was unlike anything that he had witnessed as a war correspondent in Vietnam: “after 20 minutes of this carpet bombing there would be a silence and you would hear screaming of children and people, and then the wounded would be dragged out. I found myself with everyone else trying to treat injuries, but the state of the people generally was one of pure shock. They were walking around like zombies and I was too.”⁸⁵ Sanctions after the war prevented Iraq from repairing its water, sanitation and electrical systems. On 60 *Minutes*, Lesley Stahl asked UN ambassador and later secretary of state Madeline Albright whether she believed the price of a reported half million Iraqi deaths was worth it; she replied: “I think it’s a very hard choice but the price – we think the price is worth it.”⁸⁶ Power obviously thinks so too,

championing sanctions against countries like Zimbabwe and Iran under R2P, which mainly punished the civilian population while failing to advance the goal of “regime change.”

Power’s analysis of the Bosnian and Kosovo war adopts superficial Nazi analogies and simplistically blames Slobodan Milosevic exclusively for “stoking nationalist flames” and igniting the conflict whose historical origins go unexplored. She lambastes the Bush and Clinton administrations for “failing to save Bosnia” through military intervention, ignoring their role in covertly arming Croat rebels and al Qaeda-backed Islamists whom she compares with antifascists in the Spanish civil war. Like her Harvard colleague, Power also fails to mention the criminal nature of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and humanitarian consequences of the bombing, including use of cluster bombs that continue to cripple and maim farmers, and its role in exacerbating ethnic violence. In her view, the NATO war was a “stunning success” which saved hundreds of thousands of lives,” though proof of this is lacking.⁸⁷

Power’s discussion of Rwanda promotes the myth that the Clinton administration stood by idly while Hutu extremists slaughtered the Tutsi in one of the world’s worst genocides.⁸⁸ She relies on the partisan reporting of Philip Gourevitch⁸⁹ which caricatures the conflict as one of good versus evil, the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) being the good guys, and the Hutu the bad. The mass killings of 1994 ensued following a civil war however, instigated by the RPF’s invasion from Uganda, and evidence of an exterminatory plan by Hutu hardliners has been difficult to authenticate. An alleged “genocide fax” sent by Gen. Romeo Dallaire, commander of UN peacekeeping forces, was proven to have been a fabrication. The number of deaths has also been disputed and more Hutu may have died than Tutsi.⁹⁰

Power takes little account of the fact that the

conflict in Rwanda is a product of the country's colonial history. The 1959 Hutu power revolution resulted in the expulsion of thousands of Tutsi who had been elevated under the Belgians. Treated badly in exile, they longed for return and were repeatedly massacred by the Hutu after organizing small-scale guerrilla raids.⁹¹ Following the 1990 invasion, backed by the US and UK, the RPF committed myriad atrocities extending into Burundi, killing an estimated 10,000 Hutu civilians per month in campaigns designed to clear areas for Tutsi habitation. A French commission along with other independent investigations found RPF commander and current president Paul Kagame culpable in the shooting of Hutu leader Juvenal Habyarimana's aircraft following his return from peace talks in Arusha, Tanzania in April 1994, an act which precipitated the mass killing and which Kagame considered essential to an RPF takeover following previous destabilization measures.

The Clinton and Major administrations backed Kagame as a means of reestablishing Anglo-American supremacy in mineral-rich Central Africa over the French who supported Habyarimana (also a former CIA asset) and ailing Congolese leader Joseph Mobutu. According to a former government official, the RPF served as the "cat's paw of the British government," having been groomed by them to take power for years. Strategic considerations explain why the US-UK failed to support the UN peacekeeping mission. A UN report determined that the CIA sold Soviet-made surface to air missiles confiscated from Iraq to an elite RPF strike force team to shoot down the presidential aircraft and that a company linked to the CIA leased the warehouse used to assemble the launchers.⁹² Kagame trained in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas and received large-scale American assistance after consolidating his power. American aid and covert support continued even after his armies invaded Congo and helped install client rulers (Laurent and

then Joseph Kabila), killed tens of thousands of refugees and sponsored militias which raped and plundered Congo's diamond wealth. Kagame's regime also murdered many dissidents including those who threatened to reveal the truth about Habyarimana's assassination.⁹³

Ignoring these facts and simplifying Rwanda's history, Power's book, *"A Problem From Hell"* is more fiction than history. Power has advanced to the highest reaches of power not on the strength of her scholarship but rather on the ideological serviceability of her message to what C. Wright Mills termed the "power elite." The US political economy is dominated by defense industries who command billions of dollars for the manufacture of arms and weapons. Their profitability depends on a permanent war footing.⁹⁴ When Cold War pretexts for intervention lost their viability, government officials began to claim that military intervention was necessary on humanitarian grounds, appropriating some of the language used by the 1960s protestors. Power's book came just at the right time to help advance the message that America had not done enough to prevent genocide and needed to intervene militarily to save people. She was an inspiration behind the Save Darfur movement which channeled student activist energy away from the illegal war in Iraq, where the death toll was far greater.⁹⁵

Power herself supported air strikes in Darfur and has been a proponent of military intervention in Africa, including in Uganda where she has championed the government's war against the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), whose crimes she has sought to broadcast. Her first speech as US ambassador to the UN was at a conference organized by Invisible Children, an evangelical organization behind the propaganda film *Kony 2012*, which was distributed over the internet to help engender support for the sending of US Special Forces into Uganda. Power leaves out that the

insurgency in northern Uganda developed largely in response to campaigns of “murder, intimidation, bombing and the burning of entire villages” by the Ugandan military with the aim of driving the Acholi population into refugee camps (The Acholi supported previous leader Milton Obote, a socialist opposed by the West). If carried out by official government enemies, Uganda’s actions would have no doubt earned the moniker genocide, as they were characterized by the UN Secretary General’s Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict, though Ugandan leader Yoweri Museveni is a long-standing US ally once characterized by Bill Clinton as part of the “new face of democracy in Africa.”⁹⁶

Ethiopian crimes also amounted to possible genocide against the Anuak minority in the resource-rich Gambella district and in Somalia where its troops “slaughtered men and women like goats” by slitting their throats and went on “rampages of looting and gang rapes” in 2006. Power and the media paid no attention because Meles Zenawi was another key US ally and America provided gunships while launching its own commando raids and strikes into Somalia to dislodge the Islamic Courts Union (ICU).⁹⁷

An elitist who scorns domestic policy, Power generally sees war as “an instrument to achieve her liberal, even radical values.”⁹⁸ She faulted the Bush administration in a 2007 *New York Times* article for tactical and strategic blunders in Iraq but writes that “just because Bush hyped the threat [of Islamic terrorism], doesn’t mean the threat should be played down.” Power then went on to praise the re-release of the Army Counterinsurgency manual, with a foreword by David Petraeus and Harvard colleague Sarah Sewall, which she thinks provides a blueprint for limiting civilian casualties and winning back hearts and minds through renewed commitment to civic action and nation building.⁹⁹ Power however fails to note that similar rhetoric about counterinsurgency was adopted by the military

in Vietnam and that the US cannot win popular legitimacy while propping up corrupt regimes and launching assassination campaigns and drone attacks that have terrorized and killed thousands of civilians.¹⁰⁰

During her time in Washington, the “femme fatale of the humanitarian assistance world,” has done little to push for the signing of international human rights treaties barring unlawful killings and torture and showed no concern for the victims of US-trained forces such as Congolese units in Nigeria accused of mass rapes and killing.¹⁰¹ She championed instead the troop surge in Af-Pak, war in Syria and French intervention in the Central Africa Republic (CAR) to halt atrocities by radical Islamists, through Christian militias also carried out sweeping ethnic cleansing, with violence escalating after the French invasion.¹⁰²

Power was a chief architect of the war in Libya where US-NATO forces committed significant war crimes in “liberating” the country, backing rebel leaders bent on opening Libya’s economy to foreign exploitation and who were linked to Islamic fundamentalist groups, including Al-Qaeda. Claiming that failure to intervene would have been a “stain on our conscience,” Power and colleagues helped to spread disinformation that Qaddafi was giving his soldiers Viagra to carry out rape and was employing black foreign mercenaries when many in Libya’s black population supported Qaddafi as he had long championed their interests.¹⁰³ Qaddafi imprisoned dissidents, some for decades, and had suppressed anti-regime demonstrators in the wake of the Arab Spring, though the protests were of a different character to those in Tunisia and Egypt, as they were predominantly regional and sectarian in character, were backed by the CIA and British and French intelligence and were violent from the outset.

The *London Daily Telegraph* reported that under rebel control “Benghazi residents are

terrorized, many too frightened to drive through the dark streets at night fearing a shakedown or worse at proliferating checkpoints...Moreover about 15 million black African migrants feel trapped under suspicion of supporting the wrong side. Numbers have been attacked, some hunted down, dragged from apartments beaten and killed. So-called 'revolutionaries and 'freedom fighters' are in fact rampaging gunmen committing atrocities airbrushed from mainstream reports." Qaddafi and his family were eventually lynched in a gross violation of international law. Power though considered the whole operation a great success even as Libya descended into chaos and fighters loyal to Qaddafi destabilized Mali.¹⁰⁴ The Libyan war was fought in violation of the War Powers resolution limiting the executive branch's ability to wage war without the consent of Congress, and in violation of UN provisions mandating the protection of civilians, which Power evidently cared little about. The United States carried out roughly 20 percent of over 26,000 bombing sorties in the seven month NATO mission, which resulted in high "collateral damage," epitomized by the bombing of refugees in Zlitan causing the death of 33 children, and destruction of Sirte, a Qaddafi stronghold.¹⁰⁵

Like with Syria, Power's role in the Obama administration was to convince the public that the US-NATO onslaught was designed for humanitarian motives and to stop "genocide" when in reality there were deeper geopolitical calculations. The Nixon administration had first considered assassinating Qaddafi in 1969 after he had overthrown the Sanussi King Idris, a staunch US and British ally who brokered an agreement allowing for an American military base at Wheelock and granted concessions to Western oil companies. Qaddafi's regime kicked out the US military and nationalized Libya's oil industry, whose profits he reinvested in health, education and infrastructure, leading to marked decline in poverty and illiteracy and a huge rise in life expectancy.¹⁰⁶ In the 1980s,

after falsely claiming he had sent hit teams to kill President Reagan and had bombed a West Berlin discotheque, the US dropped 60 tons of ordnance in an attempt to assassinate Qaddafi, killing instead his adopted daughter. Journalist Haynes Johnson noted at the time that the demonization of Qaddafi was "reminiscent of the talk about Castro in the days when the United States was planning the Bay of Pigs invasion and commissioning assassination schemes against Castro," with the same formula repeated by Power and her associates in 2011.¹⁰⁷

To the dismay of Gulf State monarchies backing his ouster, Qaddafi had recently picked up the mantle of Ghana's late-president Kwame Nkrumah, an advocate of African unity overthrown in a CIA-backed coup in 1965. As chairman of the African Union (AU), Qaddafi provided 15 percent of its operating budget and promoted an African Court of Justice and Central Bank capable of lessening Africans' dependency on the ICC, IMF and World Bank. Much like Hugo Chavez of Venezuela, Qaddafi called for economic integration as a means of undercutting Western exploitation of labor and mineral resources and invested millions of dollars in building up Africa's industrial infrastructure in order to raise the price of its exports. He planned to renationalize significant parts of the oil sector (after a period where it was privatized) and refused to cooperate with the expansion of the US military's African command (AFRICOM), stating that he preferred the giant military base to remain "headquartered in Europe."¹⁰⁸

In *Arab Spring, Libyan Winter*, historian Vijay Prashad shows the double standards of the US in backing the repression of pro-democracy demonstrators in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain and how the Arab Spring turned sour in Libya. The Western powers successfully exploited growing disaffection with Qaddafi's autocratic methods to pry open Libya's oil markets and advance neo-liberalism in a former socialist bastion. He

writes that “behind the new electoral process, the technocrats who demonstrated their fealty to the international bond markets and the IMF will control the central bank and the oil company... the section of the old guard beholden to the revolution of 1969 has now exited from power.” On the day Tripoli fell, he adds, the *New York Times* ran a story with the headline, “The Scramble for Access to Libya’s Oil Wealth Begins.” (August 22, 2011). This is the same word used to describe the scramble for Africa in the 1890s, when Bismarck had said that the “map of Africa is Europe.”¹⁰⁹

It is no surprise that Power and other liberal intellectuals would support neocolonial wars of the 21st century. With the exception of the Western trained technocrats and a few favored dictators whom they admire (eg. Kagame and Museveni), their worldview considers Third World peoples mainly as victims of diabolical rulers incapable of resolving political conflict on their own. They have to be saved by the West.¹¹⁰ Those who resist are branded as terrorists and extremists, hence deserving of their fate. Like their forbearers in the World War I era, the liberal war hawks have been proven wrong time and again in their belief that war could be antiseptic and state violence controlled. Playing off public concern for human rights that developed in the 1960s, their writing has provided important ideological rationalization that has enabled the expansion of America’s permanent warfare state after the collapse of the Soviet Union. And they have been richly rewarded for doing so, while serious humanistic scholars toil in obscurity. In November 1965, speaking at the second national antiwar demonstration against the Vietnam War, Carl Oglesby said that “the industrial war apparatus was the creation of a government that since 1932 had considered itself to be fundamentally liberal. Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy - they were all liberals. And leading policy makers in the Johnson administration - McGeorge Bundy, Robert McNamara, Dean Rusk, Henry Cabot Lodge,

Arthur Goldberg and Johnson himself were not moral monsters. They are all honorable men. They are all liberals.”¹¹¹ Sadly, Oglesby’s comments are applicable in the present where the most brazen champions of war are men and women like Power serving conservative administrations who consider themselves liberal. They exemplify what Chris Hedges has called the “death of the liberal class” in America, which has been accompanied by the atrophying of democratic debate and a catastrophic growth of the national security complex.¹¹²

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Notes

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¹Michael Ignatieff, "The Duty to Protect Still Urgent," *New York Times*, September 13, 2013. See also Ignatieff, "With Syria, Diplomacy Needs Force," *New York Times*, February 25, 2014.

² For a history of distortions that often accompany the politicization of the past and result from the ingrained prejudices of historians, see Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The Objectivity Question and the American Historical Profession* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

³ Randolph S. Bourne, *War and the Intellectuals: Collected Essays, 1915-1919*, edited and with an introduction, by Carl Resek (Indianapolis, Hackett Publishing, 1964).

⁴Noam Chomsky, *American Power and the New Mandarins* (New York: Pantheon, 1967). Arthur Schlesinger Jr., Cold War liberal and Kennedy advisor was another main target of Chomsky's critique.

⁵Noam Chomsky, *A New Generation Draws the Line: Kosovo, East Timor and the Standards of the West* (London: Verso, 1999).

⁶ Strobe Talbott, 'Birth of the Global Nation', *Time*, 20 July 1992; John Laughland, *Travesty: The Trial of Slobodan Milosevic and Corruption of International Justice* (London: Pluto, 2007), 39.

⁷See e.g. Patrick Tyler, "U.S. Strategy Plan Calls for Insuring No Rivals Develop," *New York Times*, March 8, 1992; US Department of Defense, "[Defense Planning Guidance, FY 1994-1999](#)," February 18, 1992; Noam Chomsky, *World Orders Old and New* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 7; John Stockwell, *The Praetorian Guard: The U.S. Role in the New World Order* (Boston: South End Press, 1991).

⁸ Taylor B. Sebolt, *Humanitarian Military Intervention: The Conditions for Successes and*

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⁹ "The Responsibility to Protect," Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (Ottawa: International Development Research Center, 2001), VII, 3.

¹⁰Mary Kaldor, "A Decade of the 'War on Terror' and the Responsibility to Protect: The Global Debate About Military Intervention," in *Global Civil Society 2012: Ten Years of Critical Reflection* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Michael Mandel, *How America Gets Away with Murder: Illegal Wars, Collateral Damage and Crimes Against Humanity* (London: Pluto Press, 2004); Nick Turse, *The Changing Face of Empire: Special Ops, Drones, Spies, Proxy Fighters, Secret Bases, and Cyberwarfare* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2012), 13.

¹¹ "The Responsibility to Protect," Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, VII, 19, 29, 31, 39.

¹² Antony Fenton, "[Finally a Real Debate on R2P](#)" Global Research July 26, 2009. For examples of how Cold War interventions produced failed states, see Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Intervention and the Making of Our Time* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

¹³ In Introduction, *Critical Perspectives on the Responsibility to Protect: Interrogating Theory and Practice*, ed. Philip Cunliffe (New York: Routledge, 2011); Ramesh Thakur, *The UN, Peace and Security: From Collective Security to the Responsibility to Protect* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 250-251.

¹⁴ Michael Ignatieff, 'How to Save the Syrians,' New York Review of Books blog, September 13, 2013; Samantha Power, "[Statement by](#)

Ambassador Samantha Power, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, U.S. Mission to the United Nations," New York, NY, September 11, 2013.

¹⁵ See Seymour M. Hersh, "The Red Line and the Rat Line: Seymour Hersh on Obama, Erdogan and the Syrian rebels," *London Review of Books*, April 17, 2014; D. Gareth Porter, "In Search of Truth: U.N. Probe Chief Doubtful on Syria Sarin Exposure Claims," May 7, 2014, *Counterpunch*, www.counterpunch.org.

¹⁶ D. Gareth Porter, "Yes, the Pentagon Did Want to Hit Iran," *The Asia Times*, May 7, 2008; Douglas Feith, *War and Decision: Inside the Pentagon at the Dawn of the War on Terrorism* (New York: Harper, 2009).

¹⁷ Laura Smith-Spark and Saad Abedine, "Syrian Rebel Fighters Guilty of Serious Abuses Says human Rights Watch," CNN, October 11, 2012. In one incident, the FSA attacked an Allawite village near Latekia, killing 190.

¹⁸ Eric Schmitt, "CIA Said to Aid in Steering Arms to Syrian Opposition," *New York Times*, June 21, 2012.

¹⁹ Jean Bricmont, *Humanitarian Imperialism: Using Human Rights to Sell War* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2006).

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²¹ See Robert Jay Lifton, *Home From War: Vietnam Veterans Neither Victims Nor Executioners* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1973); *Winter Soldier* (Millarium Zero and

Winterfilm in Association with Vietnam Veterans Against the War, 1972); Chris Hedges, *War is a Force That Gives us Meaning* (New York: Anchor Books, 2003).

²² Lifton, *Home From War*, 109.

²³ Chalmers Johnson, *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of the American Empire* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2002); William Blum, *Killing Hope: CIA and US Military Interventions Since World War II* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1998); John Tirman, *The Deaths of Others: The Fate of Civilians in America's Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). On deception, see Peter Dale Scott, *American War Machine: Deep Politics, the CIA Global Drug Connection, and the Road to Afghanistan* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011).

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²⁵ Ignatieff, *The Warriors' Honor*, 94.

²⁶ Michael Ignatieff, "The American Empire: The Burden," *New York Review of Books*, January 5, 2003.

²⁷ For a critical view of Ignatieff's career, see Derrick O'Keefe, *Michael Ignatieff, The Lesser Evil?* (London: Verso, 2011); Neda Atanasoski, *Humanitarian Violence: The U.S. Deployment of Diversity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), and Jeanne Morefield, *Empires Without Imperialism: Anglo-American Decline and the Politics of Deflection* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

²⁸ See Rashid Khalidi, *Resurrecting Empire: Western Footprints and America's Perilous Path in the Middle East* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2005); Ramsey Clark, *The Fire This Time: U.S.*

War Crimes in the Gulf (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1992). On Ignatieff's support for torture in the War on Terror, see his book, *The Lesser Evil: Politics and Ethics in an Age of Terror* (Princeton: University of Princeton Press, 2004).

²⁹ On Somalia, see Mohammed Diriye Abdullahi, "In the Name of the Cold War: How the West Aided and Abetted the Barre Dictatorship of Somalia," in *Genocide, War Crimes, and the West: History and Complicity*, ed. Adam Jones (London: Zed Books, 2004), 241–60, and on the Black Hawk Down fiasco and war crimes, Mark Bowden, *Black Hawk Down: A Story of Modern War* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1999), 10; Alex de Waal, "US War Crimes in Somalia," *New Left Review*, July–August, 1998; Mohamed Diriye Abdullahi, *Fiasco in Somalia: U.S.-U.N. Intervention* (Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa, 1995); Seybolt, *Humanitarian Military Intervention*, 59. The numbers killed were probably more than the lives saved in famine relief operations. Thousands more were wounded.

³⁰ David N. Gibbs, "Realpolitick and Humanitarian Intervention: The Case of Somalia," *International Politics*, March 2000.

³¹ Michael Ignatieff, *Virtual War: Kosovo and Beyond* (New York: Viking, 2000). See as a counterpart, David Rieff, *Slaughterhouse: Bosnia and the Failure of the West* (New York: Touchstone, 1996); Roy Gutman, *A Witness to Genocide* (New York: Element Books, 1993).

³² David Gibbs, *First Do No Harm: Humanitarian Intervention and the Destruction of Yugoslavia* (Vanderbilt University Press, 2009).

³³ Gibbs, *First Do No Harm*, 164; Hedges, *War is a Force that Gives us Meaning*, 70; John R. Schindler, *Unholy Terror: Bosnia, Al-Qaida, and the Rise of Global Jihad* (Zenith Press, 2007). Tony Blair's former Cabinet Minister Michael Meacher noted: "For nearly a decade the US

helped Islamist insurgents linked to Chechnya, Iran and Saudi Arabia destabilize former Yugoslavia."

³⁴ Peter Dale Scott, "Bosnia, Kosovo, and Now Libya: The Human Costs of Washington's Ongoing Collusion with Terrorists," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, Vol. 9, Issue 31, August 2011; Gibbs, *First Do No Harm*, 67, 111, 115, 129; Schindler, *Unholy Terror*; Peter Singer, *Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Private Military Industry* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 126; Edward S. Herman and David Peterson, *The Politics of Genocide*, foreword by Noam Chomsky (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2010).

³⁵ Robert Fisk, "Serbs Murdered by the Hundred since 'Liberation,'" *The Independent*, November 24, 1999; *Degraded Capability: The Media and the Kosovo Crisis*, ed. Philip Hammond and Edward S. Herman (London: Pluto Press, 2000), 203.

³⁶ Gibbs, *First Do No Harm*; Peter Dale Scott, *American War Machine: Deep Politics, the CIA Global Drug Connection and the Road to Afghanistan* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2011); Paul Lewis, "Report IDs Hashim Thaci as Big Fish in Organized Crime," *Guardian*, January 24, 2001; Peter Klebnikov, "Heroin Heroes," *Mother Jones*, January/February 2000; Laughland, *Travesty*, 21.

³⁷ Perry Anderson, "American Foreign Policy and Its Thinkers," *New Left Review*, September/October 2013.

³⁸ For a recent example, see Niall Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World* (New York: Penguin, 2004). On Mill, see Mark Tunick, "Tolerant Imperialism: John Stuart Mill's Defense of British Rule in India," *Review of Politics* 68 (2006), 586–611; and Morefield, *Empires Without Imperialism*.

³⁹ William A. Williams, *The Tragedy of American*

Diplomacy, 50th anniversary edition (New York: The New Press, 2009).

⁴⁰Eg. Fred Cook, *The Warfare State*, foreword by Bertrand Russell (New York: McMillan, 1962); Seymour Melman, *Pentagon Capitalism: The Political Economy of War* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1970); Peter Dale Scott, *The War Conspiracy* (New York: Bobbs Merrill, 1972); Alfred W. McCoy, *The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia*, with Leonard P. Adams II and Cathleen B. Read (New York: Harper, & Row, 1972).

⁴¹Carl Oglesby and Richard Shaull, *Containment and Change* (New York: McMillan, 1967); "The New Left and Empire" in David Barber, *A Hard Rain Fell: SDS and Why it Failed* (University of Mississippi Press, 2008).

⁴²Fred Branfman, *Voices from the Plain of Jars: Life under an Air War*, rev. ed. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012).

⁴³James Peck, *Ideal Illusions: How the US Government Coopted Human Rights* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2010). See also Noam Chomsky, "Visions of Righteousness," in *The Vietnam War in American Culture*, ed. John Carlos Rowe and Rick Berg (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991). The shift in the Carter administration's rhetoric and priorities in the last two years and influence of neoconservative lobbies in shaping this shift is skillfully detailed in Jerry Sanders, *Peddlers of Crisis: The Committee on the Present Danger and the Politics of Containment* (Boston: South End Press, 1983).

⁴⁴John L. Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (New York: Oxford, 1997). On the transformation of Jewish intellectuals who "made it" in America from liberals to neoconservatives, see Benjamin Balint, *Running Commentary: The Contentious Magazine that Transformed the Jewish Left into the Neoconservative Right* (New York: Public Affairs, 2010). The New Left was also accused,

without merit, of being anti-Semitic after people like Daniel Berrigan and Noam Chomsky began voicing criticism of Israeli policies. See Noam Chomsky, "The Peace Movement and the Middle East," In *Middle East Illusions* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004).

⁴⁵Perry Anderson, "American Foreign Policy and Its Thinkers," *New Left Review*, September-October 2013.

⁴⁶C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956); Alexander Cockburn, *A Colossal Wreck* (London: Verso, 2013), 348.

⁴⁷Peck, *Ideal Illusions*.

⁴⁸See Noam Chomsky, *Failed States: the Abuse of Power and Assault on Democracy* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006). On the carceral state, see Sasha Abramsky, *American Furies: Crime, Punishment and Vengeance in the Age of Mass Incarceration* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2008).

⁴⁹Black intellectuals like W.E.B. DuBois and Paul Robeson had long made the connection. See Noam Chomsky, *The Year 501: The Conquest Continues* (Boston: South End Press, 1993); James W. Gibson, *Warrior Dreams: Paramilitary Culture in Post-Vietnam America* (New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1994); Michael Moore, *Bowling for Columbine* (United Artists, 2002) which points out that the Columbine killings and rise of right wing militia movements coincided with the bombing of Kosovo and other violent foreign policies in the 1990s.

⁵⁰Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1991); *Cold War Triumphalism: The Misuse of History After the Fall of Communism*, ed. Ellen Schrecker (New York: The New Press, 2004).

⁵¹Thomas L. Friedman, "A Manifesto for the Fast World," *New York Times Magazine*, March

28, 1999, 65. For a critique of Friedman, see Belen Fernandez, *The Imperial Messenger: Thomas L. Friedman at Work* (London: Verso, 2011).

⁵² Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars* (New York: Basic Books, 1992); Jean Bethke Elshtain ed. *Just War Theory* (New York: NYU Press, 1991). For an intellectual statement in support of the War on Terror, see [“What We’re Fighting For”](#) February 2002.

⁵³ Robert Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Throughout History* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1993); Kaplan, “The Coming Anarchy” *The Atlantic*, December 1994; *Imperial Grunts: On the Ground with the American Military, from Mongolia, to the Philippines to Iraq and Beyond* (New York: Vintage, 2006). For insightful analysis of Kaplan’s work and its impact, see Atanasoski, *Humanitarian Violence*, 66-67.

⁵⁴ Samantha Power, “How to Kill a Country: Turning a Breadbasket into a Basket case in Ten Easy Steps – The Robert Mugabe Way,” *The Atlantic*, December 1, 2003 which blamed “limited western intervention” for contributing to the country’s catastrophe. She indicts Robert Mugabe for turning a breadbasket into a basket-case, though failed to discuss the deep social divisions bred by colonial rule that contributed to the post-colonial violence under Mugabe, the effect of Western sanctions that she herself championed and wide inequalities that resulted in support for Mugabe’s land reform and seizure policies among a considerable percentage of the population. For more sophisticated analysis, see Mahmood Mamdani, “Lessons of Zimbabwe” *London Review of Books* (December 2008).

⁵⁵ Samantha Power, *A Problem From Hell: America in the Age of Genocide* (New York: Basic Books, 2002).

⁵⁶ Celestine Bohlen, “On a Mission to Shine a Spotlight on Genocide,” *New York Times*,

February 5, 2003, E1; Stephen Wertheim, “A Solution From Hell: The United States and the Rise of Humanitarian Interventionism, 1991-2003,” *Journal of Genocide Research*, 12 (304); September-December 2010, 163. Even publications on the progressive-left sang its praises and the book is often used in college courses today.

⁵⁷ Sheryl Gay Stolberg, “Still Crusading, but Now on the Inside,” *New York Times*, March 29, 2011.

⁵⁸ See Mahmood Mamdani, “Responsibility to Protect or Right to Punish,” in *Critical Perspectives on the Responsibility to Protect*, ed. Cunliffe, 125-139; Herman and Peterson, *The Politics of Genocide*.

⁵⁹ See e.g. Hans Morgenthau et al. *Politics among Nations*, rev ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 2005); John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2014); Noam Chomsky, *For Reasons of State* (New York: Pantheon, 1973).

⁶⁰ See Walter Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism: A History* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013); Ward Churchill, *A Little Matter of Genocide: Holocaust and Denial in the Americas, 1492-Present* (San Francisco: City Light Books, 2001).

⁶¹ See Paul Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States and the Philippines* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Hans Schmidt, *The United States Occupation of Haiti, 1915-1934*, rev ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995).

⁶² Donald Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide: Imperialism, Nationalism and the Destruction of the Ottoman Armenians* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Robert L. Daniel, “The Armenian Question and American Turkish Relations, 1914-1927,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 46, 2 (September

1959), 254; Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey: A Disputed Genocide* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2005), 116; Herbert Adams Gibbon, "Armenia in the World War," (Armenian Committee Opposed to the Lausanne Treaty, 1926). Col. John Price Jackson said that "had Armenian fighting men not done their duty so heroically at a critical place and time, the war most likely would have lasted another year, with the result that our losses in men and money would have been twice greater." Turkish Gen. Ihsan Pasha said: "Had it not been for the Armenians, we would have conquered the Caucasus." The Armenians were also credited with assisting British Gen. Edmund Allenby's campaigns in Palestine.

⁶³ Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey*, 251. See also Raymond Kevorkian, *The Armenian Genocide: A Complete History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011); Michael M. Gunter, "What is Genocide? The Armenian Case," *Middle East Quarterly* (Winter 2013), 37-46; Gunter, *Armenian History and the Question of Genocide* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011); *A Question of Genocide: Armenians and the Turks at the End of the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Ronald Grigor Suny, Fatma Muge Goçek and Norman M. Naimark (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 9. There is no scholarly consensus that the term genocide is appropriate, and no premeditated plan has ever been found in archives. Turkish documents, historian Bernard Lewis noted "prove an intent to banish but not to exterminate."

⁶⁴ Gunter, *Armenian History and the Question of Genocide*, 15-16.

⁶⁵ Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey*, 116.

⁶⁶ Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* (New York: Doubleday, 1918); Heath W. Lowry, *The Story Behind Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* (Istanbul: ISIS

Press, 1990), 2. Morgenthau was a real estate broker who served as finance committee chairman for Wilson's 1912 presidential campaign. His book was widely publicized, sold well and there were even plans to turn it into a Hollywood movie. For more on Morgenthau, see Henry Morgenthau, with French Strother, *All in a Lifetime* (New York: Doubleday, 1922).

⁶⁷ Thomas Fleming, *The Illusion of Victory: America in World War I* (New York: Basic Books, 2003), 374. Historians reviewing the evidence have determined that Morgenthau was lying. As Fleming points out, in the early months of the war, Germany was trying to convince the United States that hostilities had been forced on it. Wagenheim would have never thus boasted to an American official that precisely the opposite was true. State Department files show no report from Morgenthau of his conversation with Wagenheim who conveniently died in 1915. If such an exchange had taken place, Morgenthau should have (and would have) instantly informed the government.

⁶⁸ Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, 168, 251; Lowry, *The Story Behind Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*; Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey*, 140, 141. Morgenthau's book coincided with British propaganda written by Arnold Toynbee and Lord James Bryce, who was also responsible for spreading stories about German rapes in Belgium. Lowry and Lewy scrutinized Morgenthau's diaries and found documents pointing to the hidden motives underlying the books' publication. Ronald Grigor Suny, Charles Tilly professor of political science at the University of Michigan attempts to rehabilitate Morgenthau's reputation without having consulted his papers.

⁶⁹ "Morgenthau for Turkish Mandate: Launches Appeal for US to Take Over Constantinople, Armenia and Anatolia: Thinks Allies Deserve It: Britain Would Grant Equal Rights to Strait of

Gibraltar," *New York Times*, October 18, 1919, 1; Henry Morgenthau, "Mandates or War? World peace Held to be Menaced Unless the United States Assumes Control of the Sultan's Former Dominions," *New York Times*, November 9, 1919, SM1. Morgenthau characterized the Turks as "the habitual criminal of history" ruling over the "most revolting tyranny that history has ever known" and wrote that "we cannot hope sanely for peace unless America reestablishes at Constantinople a center from which democratic principles shall radiate and illuminate that dark region of the world."

⁷⁰ Lowry, *The Story Behind Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, 62, 63; Lord Bryce quoted in Gunter, *Armenian History and the Question of Genocide*, 4. See also George A. Schreiner, "Armenia's Red Caravan of Sorrow" in *From Berlin to Baghdad: Behind the Scenes in the Near East* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1918), 183-214; George A. Schreiner, *The Craft Sinister: A Diplomatic-Political History of the Great War and Its Causes* (G. Albert Gayer, 1920), 110-136. Schreiner wrote a letter to Morgenthau stating: "In the interest of truth, you saw little of the cruelty you fasten upon the Turks. Besides that, you have killed more Armenians than ever lived in the districts of the uprisings. The fate of those people was sad enough without having to be exaggerated as you have done. I have probably seen more of the Armenian affair than all Armenian attaches of the American embassy together...If we are to take for granted that we of the West are saints, then no Turk is any good.....Of diplomatic events on the Bosphorus, more will be heard as soon as I can get my notes and documents...Being a newspaper man instead of a diplomat, I must be careful in what I say."

⁷¹ Examples that come to mind include the Hmong in Laos, Miskito Indians in Nicaragua, Tibetans and Kurds. With the Armenians there was little moral outcry when the Kemalist state carried out a renewed wave of pogroms in the

mid 1920s because by that point the US had re-established strong diplomatic relations with Ankara. See Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide*; Roger Trask, *The United States Response to Turkish Nationalism and Reform, 1914-1939* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971).

⁷² Fleming, *The Illusion of Victory: America in World War I*, 307; Adam Hochschild, *To End all Wars: A Story of Loyalty and Rebellion, 1914-1918* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2011); Dalton Trumbo, *Johnny Got His Gun*, rev ed. (New York: Bantam Books, 1970).

⁷³ For refutation of this charge, see Fleming, *The Illusion of Victory*, 494-95. On government propaganda in World War I, see Stewart Halsey Ross, *Propaganda for War: How the United States Was Conditioned to Fight the Great War of 1914-1918* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1996).

⁷⁴ See David Schmitz, *Thank God They're on Our Side: The United States and Right Wing Dictatorship, 1921-1965* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Schmitz, *The United States and Fascist Italy, 1922-1940*, rev. ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009); Stephen Kinzer, *The Brothers: John Foster Dulles, Allen Dulles and Their Secret World War* (New York: Times Books 2013); Antony Sutton, *Wall Street and Hitler* (New York: GSG & Associates, 1976).

⁷⁵ See Norman G. Finkelstein, *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering* (London: Verso, 2003). Finkelstein also details the exploitation of Jewish suffering by Jewish organizations demanding victim compensation, whose leaders fleeced the survivors.

⁷⁶ See Hun Joon Kim, *The Massacres at Mt. Halla: Sixty years of Truth Seeking in South Korea* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014), 16; Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War, Vol II: The Roaring of the Cataract, 1947-1950*, rev ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University

Press, 2004), 250-259. The Truth commission found the South Korean military and paramilitary youth gangs responsible for 88 percent of atrocities, with at least 30,000 killed. Tens of thousands more were killed after constabulary regiments in Yeosu mutinied, refusing orders to “murder the people of Cheju-do fighting against imperialist policy.”

⁷⁷ See John Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006); Bradley Simpson, *Economists with Guns* (Stanford University Press, 2008); George McT. Kahin and Audrey Kahin, *Subversion as Foreign Policy: The Secret Eisenhower and Dulles Debacle in Indonesia* (New York: New Press, 1995); Bradley R. Simpson, *Economists with Guns: Authoritarian Development and U.S.-Indonesian Relations, 1960-1968* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2008); Wayne Madsen, *The Manufacturing of a President: The CIA's Insertion of Barrack Obama Jr. Into the White House* (self-published, 2012); Kathy Kadane, “Ex-Agents Say CIA Compiled Death Lists for Indonesia,” *San Francisco Examiner*, May 20, 1990; Peter Dale Scott, “The United States and the Overthrow of Sukarno,” *Pacific Affairs*, 58 (Summer 1985). Based on confidential sources, Madsen posits that Soetoro, a Lieutenant-Colonel was recalled from a CIA-Pentagon sponsored program at the University of Hawaii prior to Suharto's coup and later participated in a bloody crackdown on a secessionist movement in West Papua. Rather than being a hippie ignorant of Suharto's crimes as Obama depicts it in his memoir, Obama's mother Ann Dunham allegedly worked for the CIA gathering political information on Javanese villagers under the Operation PROSYMS. These allegations appear to have merit, though are impossible to corroborate unless more information comes to light. The book proves at the very least that Obama lied in his memoir about his mother's knowledge of the genocide, as it was reported in the mainstream media at the time, favorably.

⁷⁸ CIA Director of Intelligence, “Indonesia: Prospects for Economic Stability,” Papers of LBJ, NSF, Country File, July 1968, box 249, LBJ Library, Austin Texas. See also Gabriel Kolko, *Confronting the Third World* (New York: Pantheon, 1989), 182; Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman, *The Political Economy of Human Rights: The Washington Connection and Third World Fascism* (Boston: South End Press, 1979), 154, 155.

⁷⁹ Blum, *Killing Hope*, 197, 198. Obama revived training of units responsible for human rights crimes as part of his “tilt to Asia” strategy.

⁸⁰ See Greg Grandin, *Empire's Workshop: The U.S., Latin America and the Rise of the New Imperialism* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006); Chase Mader, “Samantha Power and the Weaponization of Human Rights,” *Counterpunch*, June 6, 2013. On Gramajo's exploits, see Noam Chomsky, *Turning the Tide: The United States in Latin America and the Struggle for Peace* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1987).

⁸¹ Nick Turse, *Kill Anything that Moves: The Real American War in Vietnam* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2013). See also Bernd Greiner, *War without Fronts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); Deborah Nelson, *The War Behind Me: Vietnam Veterans Confront the Truth About U.S. War Crimes* (New York: Basic Books, 2008). Earlier works by anti-war activists also chronicled the wide scale of atrocity. See eg. Edward S. Herman, *Atrocities in Vietnam: Myths and Realities* (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1970) and it is also detailed in the memoirs of soldiers.

⁸² Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, rev ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 2002), 183; Bernard Fall, *Last Reflections on a War* (New York: Doubleday, 1967); James W. Gibson, *The Perfect War: Technowar in Vietnam* (Atlantic Monthly Press,

1986), 225.

⁸³ Ben Kiernan and Taylor Owen, "Bombs Over Cambodia: New Light on US Air War," *Japan Focus*, May 12, 2007; Kimmo Kiljunen ed. *Kampuchea: Decade of Genocide: Report of the Finish Inquiry Commission* (London: Zed Books, 1984); Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman, *After the Cataclysm: Postwar Indochina and the Reconstruction of Imperial Ideology* (Boston: South End Press, 1979); Ben Kiernan, *How Pol Pot Came to Power*, rev ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

⁸⁴ Power, "A Problem From Hell," 148, 149. A professor in the school of Oriental studies at the University of London who had co-written important studies of US intervention in Cambodia and Indonesia, Caldwell was probably murdered by Khmer Rouge cadres who didn't want the story of their abuses getting out to the international left. It remains in question if Caldwell remained an apologist for the Khmer Rouge, or as his brother suggests, he had begun to revise his original enthusiasm for the revolution they had led. Even if he was an unreconstructed Maoist, why is Power bent on referring to Caldwell is an "ideologue" and not neo-Reaganites for example who willfully sponsored genocidal or quasi-genocidal regimes promoting a market fundamentalist ideology and in many cases remain proud of doing so?

⁸⁵ Clark, *The Fire This Time*, 68; Barton Gellman, "US Bombs Missed 70% of the Time," *Washington Post*, March 16, 1991, A1; Robert Fisk, *The Great War for Civilization: The Conquest of the Middle East* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2006).

⁸⁶ See the volume *Iraq Under Siege: The Deadly Impact of Sanctions and War*, ed. Anthony Arnone (Boston: South End Press 2003).

⁸⁷ Mader, "Samantha Power and the Weaponization of Human Rights."

⁸⁸ For deconstruction of this myth and discussion of its political ramifications, see Robin Philpot, *Rwanda and the New Scramble for Africa: From Tragedy to Useful Imperial Fiction* (Montreal: Baraka Books, 2013).

⁸⁹ Philip Gourevitch, *'We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow You Will be Killed': Stories from Rwanda* (New York: Harper, 1998). Gourevitch was married to a top State Department staffer and was a good friend of Kagame.

⁹⁰ Hazel Cameron, *Britain's Hidden Role in the Rwandan Genocide: the Cat's Paw* (London: Routledge, 2013), 126; Christopher Black, "The Dallaire Genocide Fax: A Fabrication," December 7, 2005. The source of the information on this alleged extermination plot, Abubakar Turatsinze, "AKA" Jean Pierre, was a defector from Habyarimana's MRND party of dubious reliability. According to another study by Christian Davenport and Allen Stamm, census figures show there were only 600,000 Tutsi in the whole country and at least 300,000 are said to have survived. Power's numbers are thus inflated. Michael McGehee, "New York Times Coverage of the 20th Anniversary of the Rwandan Genocide," *New York Times Examiner*, February 4, 2014.

⁹¹ See Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and Genocide in Rwanda* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001).

⁹² Cameron, *Britain's Hidden Role in the Rwanda Genocide*, 80; Herman and Peterson, *The Politics of Genocide*; Wayne Madsen, *Genocide and Covert Operations in Africa, 1993-1999* (New York: Edwin Mellen, 1999); Ellen Ray, "US Military and Corporate Recolonization of the Congo," *Covert Action Quarterly* (Spring-Summer 2000); Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *Unvanquished: A US-UN Saga* (New York: Random House, 1999), 129-141. According to Boutros-Ghali, the US is "100 percent responsible for the genocide." On

CIA support for Habyarimana, see Jeremy Kuzmarov, *Modernizing Repression: Police Training and Nation Building in the American Century* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012), ch. 8.

⁹³ Marie Beatrice Umutesi, *Surviving the Slaughter: The Ordeal of a Rwandan Refugee in Zaire* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004); Madsen, *Genocide and Covert Operations in Africa, 1993-1999*; Gérard Prunier, *Africa's World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009). Prunier had the integrity to admit that he promoted an overly romanticized view of the RPF in his first book (*The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide*. Columbia University Press, 1997).

⁹⁴ See Nick Turse, *The Complex: How the Military Invades Our Everyday Lives* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2009).

⁹⁵ Samantha Power, "Dying in Darfur: Can the Ethnic Cleansing in Sudan be Stopped?" *New Yorker*, August 30, 2004. For critical analysis of the Save Darfur movement, see Mahmood Mamdani, *Saviors and Survivors: Darfur, Politics, and the War on Terror* (New York: Pantheon, 2009). Power also championed covert intervention in Zimbabwe following Robert Mugabe's intervention in the Congo war. However, she did not call for similar sanctions against Rwanda or Uganda who caused the war and looted the country's mineral wealth far more systematically (both regimes also repressed domestic dissent).

⁹⁶ See Adam Branch, *Displacing Human Rights: War and Intervention in Northern Uganda* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Mamdani, "Responsibility to Protect or Right to Punish?" In *Critical Perspectives on the Responsibility to Protect*, ed. Cunliffe, 130-131. On domestic repression and record numbers of journalists imprisoned under Museveni, see Olive Kobusingye, *The Correct Line? Uganda Under Museveni* (New York: Authorhouse,

2010). For the double-standards of US rhetoric and policy in sub-Saharan Africa, see also Steven Fake and Kevin Funk, *The Scramble for Africa: Darfur - Intervention and the US* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2008).

⁹⁷ See Mark Mazetti, *The Way of the Knife: The CIA, a Secret Army and a War at the Ends of the Earth* (New York: Penguin, 2013), 148-149; Scahill, *Dirty Wars*, 127, 128; Keith Harmon Snow, "State Terror in Ethiopia," *Z Magazine*, June 1, 2004.

⁹⁸ Tom Hayden, "Samantha Power Goes to War," *The Nation*, March 30, 2011.

⁹⁹ Samantha Power, "Our War on Terror," *New York Times*, July 29, 2007.

¹⁰⁰ For a critical assessment of the army counterinsurgency manual that draws on historical parallels, see *Hearts and Minds: A People's History of Counterinsurgency*, ed. Hannah Gurman (New York: The New Press, 2013).

¹⁰¹ L. Michael Hager, "Double Standards? Panel Cites US Human Rights Treaty Breaks," *Truthout*, March 31, 2014; Nick Turse, "The Terror Diaspora: The U.S. Military and the Unraveling of Africa," June 18, 2013. The brutality of the Nigerian military, financed and trained for years by the US, has been key to the growing extremism of Boko Haram little considered in media discussion following the schoolgirl kidnapping. The crisis there demands a public commitment to eradicating poverty and corruption underlying the alienation of Muslim youth, not further militarization. See Horace Campbell, "The Menace of Boko Haram and Fundamentalism in Nigeria," May 30, 2014.

¹⁰² Colum Lynch, "Can Samantha Power Wage a War on Atrocities in Central African Republic," *Foreign Policy*, December 19, 2013; Nick Turse, "Washington's Back-to-the-Future Military Policies in Africa: America's New

[Model for Expeditionary Warfare,](#) March 13, 2014.

¹⁰³ Sheryl Gay Stolberg, "Still Crusading, but Now on the Inside," *New York Times*, March 29, 2011. On the actual realities of Libya, see Maximilan Forte, *Slouching Towards Sirte: NATO's War on Libya and Africa* (Montreal: Baraka Books, 2012); *The Illegal War on Libya*, ed. Cynthia McKinney (Atlanta: Clarity Press, 2012).

¹⁰⁴ Forte, *Slouching Towards Sirte; The Illegal War on Libya*, ed. Cynthia McKinney; Peter Dale Scott, "Bosnia, Kosovo, and Now Libya: The Human Costs of Washington's Ongoing Collusion with Terrorists," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, Vol. 9, Issue 31, August 2011; Patrick Cockburn, "[Lawlessness and Ruin in Libya](#)," September 5, 2013, *Counterpunch*.

¹⁰⁵ Forte, *Slouching Towards Sirte; The Illegal War on Libya*, ed. McKinney; C.J. Chivers, "In Strikes on Libya by NATO, an Unspoken Civilian Toll," *New York Times*, December 17, 2011.

¹⁰⁶ See Ruth First, *Libya: The Elusive Revolution* (New York: Penguin Books, 1974); Geoff Simmons, *Libya and the West: From Independence to Lockerbie* (London: I.B. Taurus, 2003); Blum, *Killing Hope*, 283. Libyan life expectancy increased under Qaddafi from 54 to 71.

¹⁰⁷ Jonathan Marshall, Peter Dale Scott and Jane Hunter, *The Iran Contra Connection: Secret Teams and Covert Operations in the Reagan Era* (Boston: South End Press, 1987), 215. On the 1986 bombing and its consequences, see Seymour Hersh, "Target Qaddafi," *New York Times Magazine*, February 22, 1987; Noam Chomsky, *Pirates and Emperors, Old and New: International Terrorism in the Real World*, rev ed. (Boston: South End Press, 2002), 92.

¹⁰⁸ Forte, *Slouching Towards Sirte*; Horace Campbell, *Global NATO and the Catastrophic Failure in Libya* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2012); Peter Dale Scott, "American Power and the Decline of the Petrodollar System," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, Vol. 9, Issue 18, May 2, 2011.

¹⁰⁹ Vijay Prashad, *Arab Spring, Libyan Winter* (Oakland: AK Press, 2012).

¹¹⁰ For neo-imperialist attitudes in Western culture, see Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Pantheon, 1993).

¹¹¹ Quoted in Barber, *A Hard Rain Fell*, 62.

¹¹² Chris Hedges, *The Death of the Liberal Class* (New York: Nation Books, 2011). See also Sheldon Wolin, *Democracy Incorporated: Managed Democracy and the Specter of Inverted Totalitarianism* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2010).