

Clinton Bombs Iraq

Anarchists! You didn't vote for this guy, did you?

Fifth Estate Collective

Why isn't anyone doing anything to protest Clinton's bombing of Iraq? There seems to be a growing resignation about the U.S. bashing Saddam Hussein to boost the approval ratings of American politicians.

The reaction in Iraq, where 16 American Tomahawk cruise missiles slammed into the capital city of Baghdad June 26, was much different as 100,000 people took to the streets to protest the latest attack from the U.S. As usual, it was the civilian population who paid the cost in lives and destruction, not Saddam their belligerent ruler.

U.S. missiles struck in the early morning hours and as dawn broke in the Al Mansour residential district, rescue workers discovered the bodies of eight civilians including Layla al-Attar, a renown Iraqi artist, along with her husband under the debris of what had been their home. They and the others were "collateral damage" to the bombing of an Iraqi intelligence center in retaliation for what U.S. President Clinton claimed was an Iraqi government plot against ex-President George Bush when he visited Kuwait earlier in the year.

Clinton, functioning as current administrative chief of the Empire, expressed "regret" about the civilian deaths as he attended church the next day.

The raid by the unmanned missiles (no chance of U.S. battle casualties that would play bad in the domestic press), the third on Baghdad in two-and-a-half years, achieved the following results: the alleged nerve center for the Bush bomb plot (which could be argued, if it existed at all, would qualify as a victimless crime) was heavily damaged, 18 civilians were killed or wounded when three of the missiles "strayed" to an adjacent neighborhood, and Clinton's sagging popularity rose 11% in the instant polls taken following the raid.

The "liberal" Clinton administration has quickly shown it intends to operate no differently than the "reactionary" one which preceded it (see Spring and Summer 1991, and Spring 1993 FEs). The Saddam Hussein regime functions simultaneously as a convenient punching bag for presidents with low domestic ratings and as a justification for continued U.S. military presence protecting "its" interests, i.e., oil. Paradoxically, it also acts as a de facto ally, holding Iraq together against Kurdish and Shiite attempts to fracture the nation which U.S. policy makers fear would destabilize the region.

Flimsy Pretext for Raid

The flimsy pretext for the raid, launched from U.S. warships hundreds of miles away, was the anti-Bush bomb plot which had been detected and foiled by the Kuwaiti secret police. The U.S. presented evidence to the United Nations it claimed was "incontrovertible" that the car bomb to be used had been designed in the Baghdad complex targeted in the raid.

The U.S. contention is certainly not inconceivable (Hussein frequently has supported such activities), but the U.S. has such a sustained record of lying to justify its invasions of foreign countries, that if true, this would virtually be the first bout of honesty since the War of 1812. More credence might have been given to the U.S. presentation of

its “evidence” if the report in the Monday, June 28 *New York Times*, had not appeared along side an article rather candidly titled, “Pattern of Deception Seen At Pentagon.”

It detailed how the Pentagon had “misled” the U.S. Congress on the cost and necessity of many weapons systems built during the 1980s in response to the Soviet “threat.” Federal investigators said that the latter was “exaggerated,” the Pentagon purposely underestimated the cost of missiles, and over-stated the ability of new bombers. The same liars are expected to be taken seriously in the latest imperial adventure.

Land Grab Or Naked Self-Interest

Historically, the record of the U.S. is no better. Almost every American war was one of land-grabbing and/or naked self-interest which needed a manufactured excuse to commence hostilities. Consider:

- The Mexican War, 1846–48. Purely an expansionist war in which President Polk and his cabinet searched desperately for a pretext to annex Texas, California, and the Southwest. Gen. Zachary Taylor finally invaded Mexican territory and was attacked; the U.S. declared war.
- The Spanish-American War, 1898- 1901. The sinking of the U.S.S. Maine in the Spanish occupied Havana harbor, although never linked to Spain, was the pretext the U.S. needed to declare war and annex Puerto Rico and the Philippines.
- World War I, 1914–1918. Although neutral for the bulk of the European slaughter, U.S. banking interests were fearful of a German victory and manufactured the cause of entry on the Allies’ side in 1917. Chief among them was the claim of “unrestricted (German) submarine warfare” against American and British ships. Most famous was the sinking of the *Luisitania* with the loss of hundreds of civilian lives. This enflamed public sentiment in the U.S., but it was revealed 70 years later that the ship had indeed been secretly carrying munitions as the Germans had charged under a secret agreement between Britain and the U.S.
- World War II and the Korean War both have shaky histories, but warrant extensive discussion. Suffice it to say, neither conflict occurred as the common histories would have it.
- Vietnam War, 1960–73. The massive build-up of American troops began as a result of an entirely fabricated incident on the Tonkin Gulf which led to a Congressional resolution permitting full-scale escalation of the war. All historians now agree the alleged attack by North Vietnamese gunboats on U.S. ships did not take place. Result: 2 to 3 million Vietnamese civilians dead.
- Grenada and Panama, 1982 and 1989. The former saw the purpose of overthrowing a leftist government hidden behind a story about rescuing American students, and the latter, the arrest of an important U.S. “asset” to mask the larger purpose of abrogating the Panama Canal Treaty which would have ended U.S. sovereignty in the Canal Zone.
- Iraq, 1991. The intricate web of lies which preceded the U.S. ground war against a helpless army of recruits has been told numerous times in these pages. See the issues cited above.

Also, why the shock that an American ex-president would be the target of an assassination attempt? Given the Kennedy Administration’s numerous attempts on the life of Cuban President Fidel Castro between 1961 and 1963, wouldn’t Cuba be justified in bombing the U.S.? Reagan and Bush continued the lethal legacy of attempting to knock off dictators counter-productive to the American regime, such as the attacks on Libya’s Kadafy.

Pity The Poor Anarchist Voter

Liberals have historically had their hopes dashed by “progressive” politicians who they thought would carry out a social democratic agenda, only to discover that men like Franklin Roosevelt and John F. Kennedy (and now Bill Clinton) are only acting out another variant of corporate rule. Pity the poor anarchist voter who delusionally detected a mighty enough difference between Clinton and Bush so as to warrant a retreat from their principles and cast a ballot for a ruler.

Clinton has barely been in office six months and already his crimes, compromises and retreats are enough even to make a liberal blush, let alone an anarchist. This is his record as we thought of it off the top of our heads; we’re sure you can add some of your own.

Clinton at the Helm

Bombed Iraq; bombed Mogadishu as a show of force; wants more money for the CIA despite Congressional attempts to cut the spy agency’s budget; approved \$25 billion for a space station whose major purpose will be military; pledged to keep troops in S. Korea; backs a continuation of Junior ROTC; has backed down on ceasing the harassment of gays in the military; appointed a Reaganite creep who was heavily involved in Watergate as his press secretary; compromised on every environmental issue including logging, mining, and grazing after pressure from western Senators; permitted a toxic incinerator in E. Liverpool, Ohio after specifically promising to close it during his campaign; backed down on promises about Haitian refugees and continues the Bush policies; refused to meet with Rigoberta Menchu, the Guatemalan Nobel Peace Prize winner, to discuss freedom for Leonard Peltier; and, (this was going to be the key issue) has nominated a woman to be Justice of the Supreme Court who is only lukewarm on Roe v. Wade and could wind up as a conservative in the manner of her predecessor.

None of this is shocking in itself; it is simply business as usual for the empire with a different face at the helm. What was shocking is that any anarchist could think one politician or another would make much of a difference in the operation of the state.

Peltier Still Not Free

Leonard Peltier’s struggle for freedom has been dealt another blow by the Empire’s unjust judicial system. The latest appeal to grant the native activist a new trial was shot down in the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, July 7, in St. Paul, Minn.

The state hopes this will “lay the case to rest” forever. Peltier, who has been in prison for almost two decades for a crime he did not commit, and his supporters, will continue to fight for his freedom. For more info contact the defense committee at P.O. Box 583, Lawrence KS 66044.

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