* **Is this not outright plundering?**

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The recent statement by President Donald Trump regarding the oil reserves of Syria in the country’s northeast reflects the imperial arrogance of Washington. The incumbent of the Oval Office has hinted at taking away Syrian oil and doling it out to American companies.

Trump, who wanted to pull out American troops from the Arab state, is now amenable to the idea of deploying them there to protect Syrian oil, indicating that he could even indulge in a new conflict to defend this black blood which is considered a lifeline for Western industries. Some hawks in the US administration and tedious acolytes of the president have suggested that the sole superpower should exploit these reserves to meet the expense of the US troops stationed in the war-torn country – as if the oil is a war booty and can be stolen at the whims of American politicians.

The obnoxious designs of American ruling elites are visible to everyone now. Those who were lured into believing that Washington and its Western allies wanted to rid the Syrian people of a brutal dictator must be shocked. The gullible Western masses, who seem to have an unshakable belief in corporate media, may have been stunned but for those that have a keen interest in history and are aware of Western machinations, this is not a revelation.

These dissenting voices had, from day one, been countering the Western claims of liberating Syria. They knew it was not a revolution but an orchestrated Jihadi show staged by Western ruling elites in collaboration with Arab monarchs who have turned their own states into graveyards of human rights, democracy and freedom of expression. If this intervention had been about republicanism or the will of the people then obscurantist elements in the Arab world would have been its first target. If democracy were the goal of Western capitalist states then the Egyptian dictator would have been in The Hague facing the crimes against humanity and not seen shaking hands with Donald Trump. If the prevention of human rights violations were the main purpose of American or Western administrations then their jets should have been targeting those who created one of the largest prisons in the Palestinian territories.

But the goal was very clear from day one: topple a defiant government and install a pliant one. Remove a leader who may challenge the Zionist hegemony and bring someone whose strings could be pulled from Tel Aviv, London and Washington. The intervention was aimed at fragmenting Syria and sowing the seeds of chaos in the region. To achieve this devilish plan, the West went to the extent of throwing support behind throat-slitting Jihadis.

It is naive to say that the Western intelligence agencies equipped with modern tools of spying were surprised when they discovered the presence of thousands of Jihadis from Europe and other parts of the world on Syrian soil. They were arriving in Turkey and other states of the region in droves and these super intelligence agencies were aware of it. In fact, they not only turned a blind eye but overtly or covertly also patronised these worst enemies of Western civilisation. Their complicity is partly to be blamed for the decimation of over 550,000 Syrians, the displacement of around 11 million hapless souls and the loss of over $200 billion caused to the war-torn country.

This is not the first time that the Western ruling elites have used the excuse of human rights and democracy to destroy a country. They invaded Iraq, bringing democratic norms to that hapless country with the ruthless force of B52, strafing its cities and targeting its towns in blind blitzkrieg its towns. The intervention led to an apocalyptic conflict engulfing more than 2.5 million souls besides tearing the social fabric of Iraqi society. The country is still grappling with the myriad of problems spawned because of the illegal war. This was in addition to 500,000 Iraqi children who fell prey to inhuman sanctions slapped by Western democracies and a pliant UN after the First Gulf War. The pretext of weapons of mass destruction was used to reduce the country to ashes. Libya was also devastated in the name of democracy and human rights. Today its infrastructure lies in a shambles and brigands of tribal thugs are ruling over a country that once had one of the best living standards in North Africa.

It is difficult to understand why the Western masses are repeatedly deluded into believing that their ruling elites have altruistic aims. Before the invasion of Iraq, Dick Cheney and his tedious acolytes openly talked about ten percent of the world’s oil reserves that lay in the Arab state. Cheney went to the extent of calling Americans patients who needed an oil dialysis. Such clear statements left no doubts in the minds of millions of people in the Global South about the actual intentions of George Bush and his administration. One wonder why it did not trigger any stir in the Western corporate media that claimed to be carrying out objective reporting of Iraq in the aftermath of the invasion. Surprisingly, the pliant intellectual elite described the outright aggression as a big mistake, ignoring the war crimes committed during the aggression.

They seem to be committing the same mistake in the case of Syria. Trump's statement falls within the definition of war crimes. One retired senior officer of the American armed forces has already declared it a war crime but the American people, the intellectual elite and the media in particular are still trying to put a spin on this statement. It seems that they are firm believers in American exceptionalism. While they are very judgmental about Cuba, Venezuela, North Korea, Iran and other alleged enemies of the military-industrial complex, they tend to turn a blind eye when Washington seeks immunity for its soldiers, fiercely resisting any move that could allow the International Court of Justice to prosecute the military personnel of the largest military power on the earth.

American presidents, including the sagacious Obama, ordered the killings of thousands of people in drone strikes in Yemen, Pakistan, Afghanistan and other states of the world but these killings created no storm in American media or society. The American ruling elite first caused the deaths of close to a million children in Iraq and now they are indulging in economic terrorism by slapping sanctions on Iran, North Korea, Venezuela and other states.

The Trump statement reflects the machinations of the corporate world and the military-industrial complex, for which American lives are likely to be used as cannon fodder. Such actions clearly violate international law and constitute a war crime. Therefore, it is important that the American public pressurise their government into dropping these plans of outright plundering in their name; these plans only benefit the rapacious individuals of private capital and end up stoking hatred against common Americans.

he UN and other international bodies should also spring into action; otherwise, this plundering will encourage other global powers to pillage the natural resources of weaker states. Russia and China should not wait for this to happen and rather move the international body against such designs. The sooner this is done, the better it is.

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