

# Hillary Clinton: Neocon War-Hawk in Waiting

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**If there were any doubts that Hillary Clinton favours a neo-conservative foreign policy, her performance at Thursday's debate should have laid them to rest. In every meaningful sense, she is a neocon and – if she becomes President – Americans should expect more global tensions and conflicts in pursuit of the neocons' signature goal of “regime change” in countries that get in their way.**

Beyond sharing this neocon “regime change” obsession, former Secretary of State Clinton also talks like a neocon. One of their trademark skills is to use propaganda or “[perception management](#)” to demonize their targets and to romanticize their allies, what is called “*glueing white hats*” on their side and “*glueing black hats*” on the other.

So, in defending her role in the Libyan “regime change,” Clinton called the slain Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi “genocidal” though that is a gross exaggeration of Gaddafi’s efforts to beat back Islamic militants in 2011. But her approach fits with what the neocons do. They realize that almost no one will dare challenge such a characterization because to do so opens you to accusations of being a “*Gaddafi apologist*.”



Similarly, before the Iraq War, the neocons knew that they could level pretty much any charge against Saddam Hussein no matter how false or absurd, knowing that it would go uncontested in mainstream political and media circles. No one wanted to be a “*Saddam apologist*.”

Clinton, like the neocons, also shows selective humanitarian outrage. For instance, she laments the suffering of Israelis under crude (almost never lethal) rocket fire from Gaza but shows next to no sympathy for Palestinians being slaughtered by sophisticated (highly lethal) Israeli missiles and bombs.

She talks about the need for “safe zones” or “no-fly zones” for Syrians opposed to another demonized enemy, Syria’s President Bashar al-Assad, but not for the people of Gaza who face the wrath of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

*“Yes, I do still support a no-fly zone [in Syria] because I think we need to put in safe havens for those poor Syrians who are fleeing both Assad and ISIS and have some place that they can be safe,”* Clinton [said](#). But she showed no such empathy for Palestinians defenseless against Israel’s “*mowing the grass*” operations against men, women and children trapped in Gaza.

In Clinton’s (and the neocons’) worldview, the Israelis are the aggrieved victims and the Palestinians the heartless aggressors. Referring to the Gaza rocket fire, she said:

*“I can tell you right now I have been there with Israeli officials going back more than 25 years that they do not seek this kind of attacks. They do not invite the rockets raining down on their towns and villages. They do not believe that there should be a constant incitement by Hamas aided and abetted by Iran against Israel. ...*

*“So, I don’t know how you run a country when you are under constant threat, terrorist attack, rockets coming at you. You have a right to defend yourself.”*



*Gaza one year after Israel's Operation Protective Edge 2014*

### **Ignoring History**

Clinton ignored the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which dates back to the 1940s when Israeli terrorist organizations engaged in massacres to drive Palestinians from their ancestral lands and murdered British officials who were responsible for governing the territory. Israeli encroachment on Palestinian lands has continued to the present day.

But Clinton framed the conflict entirely along the propaganda lines of the Israeli government:

*"Remember, Israel left Gaza. They took out all the Israelis. They turned the keys over to the Palestinian people. And what happened? Hamas took over Gaza. So instead of having a thriving economy with the kind of opportunities that the children of the Palestinians deserve, we have a terrorist haven that is getting more and more rockets shipped in from Iran and elsewhere."*

So, Clinton made clear – both at the debate and in her recent AIPAC speech – that she is fully in line with the neocon reverence for Israel and eager to take out any government or group that Israel puts on its enemies list. While waxing rhapsodic about the U.S.-Israeli relationship – promising to take it *"to the next level"*

Clinton vows to challenge Syria, Iran, Russia and other countries that have resisted or obstructed the neocon/Israeli *"wish list"* for *"regime change."*

In response to Clinton's Israel-pandering, Sen. Bernie Sanders, who once worked on an Israeli kibbutz as a

young man, did the unthinkable in American politics. He called out Clinton for her double standards on Israel-Palestine and suggested that Netanyahu may not be the greatest man on earth.

*“You gave a major speech to AIPAC,” Sanders said, “and you barely mentioned the Palestinians. ... All that I am saying is we cannot continue to be one-sided. There are two sides to the issue. ... There comes a time when if we pursue justice and peace, we are going to have to say that Netanyahu is not right all of the time.”*

But in Hillary Clinton’s mind, the Israeli-Palestinian dispute is essentially one-sided. During her speech to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee last month, she [depicted](#) Israel as entirely an innocent victim in the Mideast conflicts.

*“As we gather here, three evolving threats — Iran’s continued aggression, a rising tide of extremism across a wide arc of instability, and the growing effort to de-legitimize Israel on the world stage — are converging to make the U.S.-Israel alliance more indispensable than ever,” she declared.*

*“The United States and Israel must be closer than ever, stronger than ever and more determined than ever to prevail against our common adversaries and to advance our shared values. ... This is especially true at a time when Israel faces brutal terrorist stabbings, shootings and vehicle attacks at home. Parents worry about letting their children walk down the street. Families live in fear.”*

Yet, Clinton made no reference to Palestinian parents who worry about their children walking down the street or playing on a beach and facing the possibility of sudden death from an Israeli drone or warplane. Instead, she scolded Palestinian adults.

*“Palestinian leaders need to stop inciting violence, stop celebrating terrorists as martyrs and stop paying rewards to their families,” she said.*

Then, Clinton promised to put her future administration at the service of the Israeli government. Clinton said:

*“One of the first things I’ll do in office is invite the Israeli prime minister to visit the White House. And I will send a delegation from the Pentagon and the Joint Chiefs to Israel for early consultations. Let’s also expand our collaboration beyond security.”*

## **Pleasing Phrases**

In selling her neocon policies to the American public, Clinton puts the military aspects in pleasing phrases, like “safe zones” and “no-fly zones.” Yet, what she means by that is that as President she will invade Syria and push “regime change,” following much the same course that she used to persuade a reluctant President Obama to invade Libya in 2011.

The Libyan operation was sold as a “humanitarian” mission to protect innocent civilians though Gaddafi was targeting Islamic militants much as he claimed at the time and was not engaging in any mass slaughter of civilians. Clinton also knew that the European allies, such as France, had less than noble motives in wanting to take out Gaddafi.

As Clinton confidant Sidney Blumenthal explained to her, the French were concerned that Gaddafi was working to develop a pan-African currency which would have given Francophone African countries greater freedom from their former colonial master and would undermine French economic dominance of those ex-colonies.

In an April 2, 2011 [email](#), Blumenthal informed Clinton that sources close to one of Gaddafi sons reported that Gaddafi's government had accumulated 143 tons of gold and a similar amount of silver that "was intended to be used to establish a pan-African currency" that would be an alternative to the French franc.

Blumenthal added that "*this was one of the factors that influenced President Nicolas Sarkozy's decision to commit France to the attack on Libya.*" Sarkozy also wanted a greater share of Libya's oil production and to increase French influence in North Africa, Blumenthal wrote.



*Sarkozy and Gaddafi before they fell out. Photo Telegraph.*

But few Americans would rally to a war fought to keep North Africa under France's thumb. So, the winning approach was to demonize Gaddafi with salacious rumors about him giving Viagra to his troops so they could rape more, a ludicrous allegation that was raised by then-U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice, who also claimed that Gaddafi's snipers were intentionally shooting children.

With Americans fed a steady diet of such crude propaganda, there was little serious debate about the wisdom of Clinton's Libyan "regime change." Meanwhile, other emails show that Clinton's advisers were contemplating how to exploit Gaddafi's overthrow as the dramatic moment to declare a "Clinton Doctrine" built on using "smart power."

On Oct. 20, 2011, when U.S.-backed rebels captured Gaddafi, sodomized him with a knife and then murdered him, Secretary of State Clinton couldn't contain her glee. Paraphrasing a famous Julius Caesar quote, she [declared](#) about Gaddafi, "*we came, we saw, he died.*"



But this U.S.-organized “regime change” quickly turned sour as old tribal rivalries, which Gaddafi had contained, were unleashed. Plus, it turned out that Gaddafi’s warnings that many of the rebels were Islamic militants turned out to be true. On Sept. 11, 2012, one extremist militia overran the U.S. consulate in Benghazi killing U.S. Ambassador Christopher Stevens and three other Americans.

Soon, Libya slid into anarchy and Western nations abandoned their embassies in Tripoli. President Obama now terms the Libyan fiasco the biggest mistake of his presidency. But Clinton refuses to be chastened by the debacle, much as she appeared to learn nothing from her support for the Iraq invasion in 2003.

### **The Libyan Mirage**

During Thursday’s debate – instead of joining Obama in recognition of the Libyan failure – Clinton acted as if she had overseen some glowing success:

*“Well, let me say I think we did a great deal to help the Libyan people after Gaddafi’s demise. ... We helped them hold two successful elections, something that is not easy, which they did very well because they had a pent-up desire to try to chart their own future after 42 years of dictatorship. I was very proud of that. ...*

*“We also worked to help them set up their government. We sent a lot of American experts there. We offered to help them secure their borders, to train a new military. They, at the end, when it came to security issues, ... did not want troops from any other country, not just us, European or other countries, in Libya.*

*“And so we were caught in a very difficult position. They could not provide security on their own, which we could see and we told them that, but they didn’t want to have others helping to provide that security. And the result has been a clash between different parts of the country, terrorists taking up some locations in the country.”*

But that is exactly the point. Like the earlier neocon-driven “regime change” in Iraq, the “regime change” obsession blinds the neocons from recognizing that not only are these operations violations of basic international law regarding sovereignty of other nations but the invasions unleash powerful internal rivalries that neocons, who know little about the inner workings of these countries, soon find they can’t control.



Yet, America's neocons are so arrogant and so influential that they simply move from one catastrophe to the next like a swarm of locust spreading chaos and death around the globe. They also adapt readily to changes in the political climate.

That's why some savvy neocons, such as the Brookings Institution's Robert Kagan, have endorsed Clinton, who The New York Times [reported](#) has become

*"The vessel into which many interventionists are pouring their hopes."*

Kagan told the Times:

*"I feel comfortable with her on foreign policy. If she pursues a policy which we think she will pursue it's something that might have been called neocon, but clearly her supporters are not going to call it that; they are going to call it something else."*

Now with Clinton's election seemingly within reach, the neocons are even more excited about how they can get back to work achieving Syrian "regime change," overturning Obama's nuclear deal with Iran, and – what is becoming their ultimate goal – destabilizing nuclear-armed Russia and seeking "regime change" in Moscow.

After all, by helping Assad bring some stability to Syria and assisting Obama in securing the Iranian nuclear deal, Russian President Vladimir Putin has become what the neocons view as the linchpin of resistance to their "regime change" goals. Pull Putin down, the thinking goes, and the neocons can resume checking off their to-do list of Israel's adversaries: Syria, Iran, Hezbollah, Hamas, etc.

And what could possibly go wrong by destabilizing nuclear-armed Russia and forcing some disruptive "regime change"?

By making Russia's economy scream and instigating a Maidan-style revolt in Moscow's Red Square, the neocons see their geopolitical path being cleared, but what they don't take into account is that the likely successor to Putin would not be some malleable drunk like the late Russian President Boris Yeltsin but, far more likely, a hardline nationalist who might be a lot more careless with the nuclear codes than Putin.

But, hey, when has a neocon "regime change" scheme veered off into a dangerous and unanticipated direction?

### **A Neocon True-Believer**

In Thursday's debate, Hillary Clinton showed how much she has become a neocon true-believer. Despite the catastrophic "*regime changes*" in Iraq and Libya, she vowed to invade Syria, although she dresses up that reality in pretty phrases like "*safe zones*" and "*no-fly zones*."

She also revived the idea of increasing the flow of weapons to "*moderate*" rebels although they, in reality, [mostly fight under the command umbrella of Al Qaeda's Nusra Front](#).

Clinton also suggested that the Syria mess can be blamed on President Obama's rejection of her recommendations in 2011 to authorize a more direct U.S. military intervention.

*"Nobody stood up to Assad and removed him,"* Clinton said, *"and we have had a far greater disaster in Syria than we are currently dealing with right now in Libya."*

In other words, Clinton still harbors the "*regime change*" goal in Syria. But the problem always was that the anti-Assad forces were penetrated by Al Qaeda and what is now called the Islamic State. The more likely result from Clinton's goal of removing Assad would be the collapse of the Syrian security forces and a victory for Al Qaeda's Nusra Front and/or the Islamic State.

If that were to happen, the horrific situation in Syria would become cataclysmic. Millions of Syrians, Alawites, Shiites, Christians, secularists and other "*infidels*", would have to flee the beheading swords of these terror groups. That might well force a full-scale U.S. and European invasion of Syria with the bloody outcome probably similar to the disastrous Iraq War.

The only reasonable hope for Syria is for the Assad regime and the less radical Sunni oppositionists to work out some power-sharing agreement, stabilize most of the country, neutralize to some degree the jihadists, and then hold elections, letting the Syrian people decide whether "*Assad must go!*" – not the U.S. government. But that's not what Clinton wants.

Perhaps even more dangerous, Clinton's bellicose rhetoric suggests that she would eagerly move into a dangerous Cold War confrontation with Russia under the upside-down propaganda theme blaming tensions in Eastern Europe on "*Russian aggression*," not NATO's expansion up to Russia's borders and the U.S.-backed coup in Ukraine in 2014 which ousted an elected president and touched off a civil war.

That coup, which followed neocon fury at Putin for his helping Obama avert U.S. bombing campaigns against Syria and Iran, was largely orchestrated by neocons associated with the U.S. government, including Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Victoria Nuland (Robert Kagan's wife), Sen. John McCain and National Endowment for Democracy President Carl Gershman.





### *Nuland and the famous cookies.*

After the violent coup, when the people of Crimea voted by 96 percent to secede from Ukraine and rejoin Russia, the U.S. government and Western media deemed that a “*Russian invasion*” and when ethnic Russians in eastern Ukraine rose up in resistance to the new authorities in Kiev that became “*Russian aggression*.”

### **NATO on the Move**

Though President Obama should know better – and I’m told that he does know better – he has succumbed this time to pressure to go along with what he calls the Washington “*playbook*” of saber-rattling and militarism. NATO is moving more and more combat troops up to the Russian border while Washington has organized punishing economic sanctions aimed at disrupting the Russian economy.

Hillary Clinton appears fully onboard with the neocon goal of grabbing the Big Enchilada, “*regime change*” in Moscow. Rather than seeing the world as it is, she continues to look through the wrong end of the telescope in line with all the anti-Russian propoganda and the demonization of Putin, whom Clinton has compared to Hitler.

Supporting NATO’s military buildup on Russia’s border, Clinton said:

*“With Russia being more aggressive, making all kinds of intimidating moves toward the Baltic countries, we’ve seen what they’ve done in eastern Ukraine, we know how they want to rewrite the map of Europe, it is not in our interests [to reduce U.S. support for NATO]. Think of how much it would cost if Russia’s aggression were not deterred because NATO was there on the front lines making it clear they could not move forward.”*

Though Clinton’s anti-Russian delusions are shared by many powerful people in Official Washington, they are no more accurate than the other claims about Iraq’s WMD, Gaddafi passing out Viagra to his troops, the

humanitarian need to invade Syria, the craziness about Iran being the principal source of terrorism (when it is the Saudis, the Qataris, the Turks and other Sunni powers that have bred Al Qaeda and the Islamic State), and the notion that the Palestinians are the ones picking on the Israelis, not the other way around.

**However, Clinton's buying into the neocon propaganda about Russia may be the most dangerous – arguably existential – threat that a Clinton presidency would present to the world.**

Yes, she may launch U.S. military strikes against the Syrian government (which could open the gates of Damascus to Al Qaeda and the Islamic State); yes, she might push Iran into renouncing the nuclear agreement (and putting the Israeli/neocon goal to bomb-bomb-bomb-Iran back on the table); yes, she might make Obama's progressive critics long for his more temperate presidency.

But Clinton's potential escalation of the new Cold War with Russia could be both the most costly and conceivably the most suicidal feature of a Clinton-45 presidency.

Unlike her times as Secretary of State, when Obama could block her militaristic schemes, there will be no one to stop her if she is elected President, surrounded by like-minded neocon advisers.

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*Investigative reporter Robert Parry broke many of the Iran-Contra stories for The Associated Press and Newsweek in the 1980s. You can buy his latest book, America's Stolen Narrative, either in [print here](#) or as an e-book (from [Amazon](#) and [barnesandnoble.com](#)).*

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