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by BRIAN CLOUGHLEY  
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## *The Malevolent Hypocrisy of Selective Sanctions*



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George W Bush used the phrase ‘Axis of Evil’ in his [State of the Union address](#) in January 2002, referring to North Korea, Iran and Iraq, accusing the last of having “plotted to develop anthrax and nerve gas and nuclear weapons for over a decade.” There were already comprehensive UN sanctions on Iraq, but as pointed out by [Global Policy Forum](#), “The US and UK governments always made it clear that they would block any lifting or serious reforming of sanctions as long as Hussein remained in power. After more than twelve years of sanctions had passed, the US and the UK made war on Iraq again in March, 2003, sweeping away Hussein’s government.” And the rest is history.

By 1996 “as many as 576,000” Iraqi children had died as a result of sanctions, and an independent analysis determined that there was “a strong association between economic sanctions and increase in child mortality and malnutrition rates.”

On realizing this, it would be expected that the United States and its allies would cease employing economic sanctions as a weapon of coercion because it was definitively shown that the suffering caused to innocent children was catastrophic to the point of genocide.

But of course they didn’t stop. These people really enjoy imposing sanctions because they think it makes them look virtuous and powerful — and if sanctions kill kids, then too bad.

In a November 2001 television appearance by the US Secretary of State an interviewer said in relation to sanctions against Iraq that “We have heard that a half million children have died. I mean, that’s more children than died in Hiroshima. And, you know, is the price worth it?” The Secretary of State replied “I think this is a very hard choice, but the price — we think the price is worth it.”

The policy of the United States in regard to sanctions has not changed.

On November 2 America’s Grim Reaper, the National Security Adviser John Bolton, announced imposition of further sanctions to those already in force in the Caribbean and South America. He declared that “Under this administration, we will no longer appease dictators and despots near our shores. We will not reward firing squads, torturers and murderers. We will champion the independence and liberty of our neighbors. And this President, and his entire administration, will stand with the freedom fighters. The troika of tyranny in this hemisphere — Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua — has finally met its match.”

The United States has gone from condemning an ‘Axis of Evil’ to denouncing a ‘Troika of Tyranny’ in sixteen blood-soaked years during which it reduced several countries and regions to ungovernable chaos. It seems there will be another round of vicious punishment of Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua, first by increased sanctions, then most likely by increasing support for CIA-subsidized “freedom fighters” who will be encouraged to murder the countries’ leaders and establish regimes more acceptable to the Washington Establishment.

It all seems quite clear, but there is an intriguing qualification in Reaper Bolton’s pronouncement. His exact phrase was “we will no longer appease dictators and despots near our shores”, which means that Washington will continue to appease despots and dictators who are *not* near the shores of the United States — like the dictatorship in Saudi

Arabia, which, as noted in the [CIA Factbook](#), is an absolute monarchy with no political parties.

The State Department [goes into a little more detail](#) about the Saudi regime, recording that there are numerous human rights violations, including “unlawful killings, executions for other than the most serious offenses and without requisite due process; torture; arbitrary arrest and detention, including of lawyers, human rights activists, and anti-government reformists; political prisoners; and arbitrary interference with privacy.”

So what about Mr Bolton’s much-valued “independence and liberty” in Saudi Arabia? Why are there no US sanctions on the Riyadh Regime?

Reflect on the conduct of Saudi Arabia’s absolute monarchy following the murder of the journalist Jamal Khashoggi in Turkey, after he entered the Saudi Arabian consulate in Istanbul on October 2 and was never seen again. There were many reports that hard evidence in video of his torture and death was held by the Turks, but they have played things down, presumably because they don’t want the world to know they spy on diplomatic missions of various countries, which would excite the amusement of such organizations as the US National Security Agency and the British techno-dweeb spy agency, Government Communications Headquarters, or GCHQ, which spy on everybody. When [the Saudis stated that](#) Khashoggi had died in a fistfight in the consulate, Donald Trump said this was credible and a “good first step.” Then on October 23, three weeks after the murder, the United States [announced that](#) Washington is “taking appropriate actions” against Saudi Arabia. These actions involved revoking visas of those identified as being implicated in the murder.

Then the Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, who travelled to Saudi Arabia to smilingly discuss the killing of Khashoggi with the Saudi dictator, Mohammad bin Salman, [declared](#) “These penalties will not be the last word on this matter from the United States. We will continue to explore additional measures to hold those responsible accountable.”

But there has been no further action of any sort.

All was explained by Lockheed Martin’s chief executive Marillyn Hewson who [announced](#) on October 25 that “Lockheed has made selling to foreign governments a key target for growth. Further, “Hewson said her company’s international sales had jumped from 17 percent of total sales in 2013 to 30 percent in 2017. Saudi Arabia played a key role in that growth, she said, and made it clear that the relationship would continue. ‘Saudi Arabia has expressed its intent to procure integrated air and missile defense systems, combat ships, helicopters, surveillance systems and tactical aircraft in coming years’.”

The message is clear: Washington is steadfast in its support of the Saudi dictatorship in pursuit of money-spinning arms industries, no matter what evil excesses may be perpetrated by the Riyadh regime. On the other hand, the US is determined to damage and if possible destroy Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua and will use economic sanctions to do so, no matter the suffering that might be caused

The price is worth it.

The moral posturers of the Washington Establishment are malevolent hypocrites.