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The Logic of the US Imperial Security State

By Luciana Bohne

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What to think of a policy that bombs countries and leaves them to their fate? Most observers of US foreign policy since 2001 regard this policy as a failure. They look upon the ruins of Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Somalia, Yemen, and see no victory parade, no reconstruction, no stable government, no democracy, and no human rights. These are observers whose mindset is stuck in models of the past. They may have in mind WW II, a declared war, battles, victory, negotiations, treaties, and reconstruction. Say, Europe and the Marshall Plan or Japan. They may be thinking of a world order ruled by international law, Geneva Conventions, the United Nations, and of America as safeguarding this order. Consequently the disorder that the United States is sowing across the planet makes no sense. The politicians on the Potomac must be crazy—is the conclusion.

No such thing. They may be megalomaniacs, but they have a plan for precisely disorder, no less a plan than to subdue the world to its economic will militarily. America is slipping from its rank as the #1 economy in the world, a record held since the 1870s. History instructs that it is impossible to maintain a global empire without economic primacy. The American empire has its back to the wall, but it still has military supremacy, after the exit of its main challenger, the USSR, the greatest tragedy to relative peace in the world of our era. The world really did change on 11 September 2001. It gave America the excuse to choose the military option to keep

dominating the world, which it could no longer do economically. The United States, too, took the opportunity to effect a silent coup at home, starting with the Patriot Act, and moving gradually forward to change the US from a democracy to a security state and to destroy, unopposed by a frightened domestic population, pieces of the world, one inconvenient country at a time. It's a way of doing WW III without anybody but the victims noticing.

Failure? Look at Iraq, the epitome of a cancer cell eating the vital organs of the body, producing pain and suffering as it dies. But do, too, look at Iraq's border with Iran and see that it is dotted with US military bases. Afghanistan? Permanent and indefinite US military occupation, clothed as a security agreement between Washington and Kabul, squeezing Iran on its eastern border. Libya? The removal of Muammar Qaddafi in 2011 has left the whole continent bereft of protection from neo-colonial penetration. Since then, we've had the French invasion of Mali. Since the fall of Qaddafi, Libya's North-African coast has become a gigantic refugee port, where thousands of desperate people gather chaotically to flee war and famine to reach Italy, 200 miles away, in inflatable boats. According to the United Nations, 90% of those fleeing Libya land in Italy. Only a few weeks ago 300 of these refugees drowned off the coast of Lampedusa, the volcanic island north of Sicily. According to Amnesty International's latest report, 37,000 refugees are waiting to brave the sea to reach the shores of Europe. Two governments, two parliaments, and two armies currently rule Libya. Both vie for power and for control of the oil fields on the Gulf of Sirte. Islamist militia rule in Tripoli; a government recognized by the international "community" rules in Tobruk. In this institutional vacuum, the IS are moving in. They are in Derna, applying the whip to young men known to have imbibed alcohol. Perhaps in two months, IS will control the Libyan coast. The US is not stopping them.

Libya, in fact, provides the example, as good as any, of the logic of American imperial policy. After the bombing and the grotesque spectacle of the leader's assassination, chaos ensues. Then, the "terrorists" move in to mop up the territory. Is there anyone sentient who still believes that the "terrorists" are the enemies of the empire? Is there anyone who still doesn't see that the "terrorists" are the equivalent of the *einsatzgruppen* of the Hitlerite SS? With their sadistic theatre of public and grotesque terror, they provide the empire with reasons for intensifying interventions (Iraq) and renewing bombing campaigns for regime change (Syria). Moreover, the supposed advance of the "terrorist threat" serves to bind the empire's vassals together in a common goal in the supposed struggle against terrorism— to "tighten security" at home and "to internationalize" foreign policy abroad. In reality, to get with the empire's long-term goal of world domination.

Italy currently provides a good example of this vassalage to the empire's goal. With the advance of IS in Libya, feudatory Italy prepares "to internationalize" a response to this perceived threat. To this end, it raises the specter of the black flag of IS flying on top of St. Peter's. Italian Foreign Minister, Paolo Gentiloni, alerted viewers recently on SkyTg24 that Italy is threatened by the alarming situation in Libya, failing to note that the crisis is the result of Italy's participation in the coup in Libya. Gentiloni warned that if mediation fails to produce results in reconciling the

warring parties in Libya it is necessary “to do something more. . . . Italy is prepared to fight in a scenario of international legality.”

The “war on terror” was a brilliant propaganda idea. It created a state of exception to democratic order throughout the West, one that facilitated a craven and unquestioned transition from constitutional democracies to control states. In the US, the Patriot Act inaugurated this control state, which politologists like to call a “security state” to avoid calling it a police state, in which every citizen is regarded as a potential terrorist. The function of this type of state is not to promote order but to manage the disorder that it produces. On the world stage, terrorism is used as the instrument for creating the disorder that the world’s policeman—the United States—and its “allies” are called to manage.

Unquestionably, America is a basket case—and should be hospitalized in one of history’s asylums for states with Napoleonic delusions—but not because of its failures but because of its successes in achieving their ends: they make a wreckage of democracy and call it security; they terrorize the world one country at a time and call it . . . what? Anti-terrorism. They create the effect and call it the cause.

Is this a failure? In moral terms, yes. In imperial-policy terms, no.