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Hillary Clinton: the Queen of Chaos and the Threat of World War III

By Maidhc Ó Cathail
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Maidhc Ó Cathail: In your latest book, you dub Hillary Clinton the “Queen of Chaos”. Can you explain why you chose this derogatory sobriquet to describe Hillary?

Diana Johnstone: Libya, in a word. Hillary Clinton was so proud of her major role in instigating the war against Libya that she and her advisors initially planned to use it as basis of a “Clinton doctrine”, meaning a “smart power” regime change strategy, as a presidential campaign slogan.

The Libyan catastrophe actually inspired me to write this book, along with the mounting danger of war with Russia.

War creates chaos, and Hillary Clinton has been an eager advocate of every U.S. aggressive war in the last quarter of a century. These wars have devastated whole countries and caused an unmanageable refugee crisis. Chaos is all there is to show for Hillary’s vaunted “foreign policy experience”.

MÓC: What would you say to women who want to see Hillary as president because she’s a woman? You claim that “[a]voiding World War III is somewhat more urgent than ‘proving’ that a woman can be President of the United States.” Why do believe that Hillary is likely to launch World War III?

DJ: There are two questions here. As for the second part, I don’t believe anyone will consciously launch World War III. The situation now is more like the eve of World War I, when great powers were armed and ready to go when an incident set things off. Ever since Gorbachev naïvely ended the Cold War, the hugely over-armed United States has been actively surrounding Russia with weapons systems, aggressive military exercises, NATO expansion. At the same time, in recent years the demonization of Vladimir Putin has reached war propaganda levels. Russians have every reason to believe that the United States is preparing for war against them, and are certain to take defensive measures. This mixture of excessive military preparations and propaganda against an “evil enemy” make it very easy for some trivial incident to blow it all up.

My answer to the first part of the question is that “voting for Hillary because she is a woman” makes no sense to me at all. Yes, women should get together for causes that affect women in general: equal pay for equal work, equal recognition of abilities, reproductive rights, maternity leave and child care, that sort of thing. But Hillary Clinton is an individual, she is not women in general. Women together might fight for women’s right to be elected President, but that right exists. It cannot be reduced to one particular woman’s right to be President.

The President of the United States is not a purely symbolic position. It involves crucial decision-making powers. Hillary Clinton has demonstrated dangerously poor judgment in fateful questions of war and peace. That should disqualify her.

MÓC: One of your chapters is titled “Libya: A War of Her Own.” Considering the key role of the pro-Israeli Bernard-Henri Lévy in persuading France to support the so-called “rebels,” why do you single out Hillary for blame for NATO’s destruction of the formerly richest country in Africa?

DJ: Bernard-Henri Lévy repeatedly stated that he supported military intervention in Libya “as a Jew”, perhaps meaning that he considered overthrowing Gaddafi to be good for Israel. The French government was perhaps motivated by fear that Gaddafi’s scheme to create a gold-backed African currency might replace the French-backed CFA franc used throughout France’s former African colonies. But neither France nor France and Britain together had the military capacity to carry out the operation that finally overcame Libyan resistance. The U.S. leadership was divided, and it was Hillary Clinton who overcame the reluctance of President Obama and Defense Secretary Gates to enter the war. It was the United States that provided the means to destroy Libya.

MÓC: In the chapter titled “The War Party” you write that “[s]ince the War Party dominates both branches of the Two-Party-System , the recent track record suggests the Republicans will nominate a candidate bad enough to make Hillary look good.” It sounds like you anticipated the incredible rise of Donald Trump, doesn’t it?

DJ: As a matter of fact I didn’t. But I did anticipate the rise of Trump’s main rival, Ted Cruz, who may actually be worse than Trump. As Robert Reich has pointed out, Cruz is a radical right-wing fanatic, with solid reactionary convictions, who is sure to do the wrong thing. Trump shoots off his mouth in all directions, so much so that there’s no telling what he might do. At least he does seem interested in avoiding war with Russia.

Nor did I anticipate the rise of Bernie Sanders, and the enthusiasm he has aroused among young people at the prospect of nominating a decent alternative to Hillary Clinton.

Both phenomena show the deep dissatisfaction among Americans with the country’s dysfunctional political system.

MÓC: In “Queen of Chaos,” you predicted that “[a]s things look now, the 2016 presidential race could be a contest between Haim Saban and Sheldon Adelson. In either case, the winner would be Israel.” Could you elaborate on Saban’s “devotion” to another Clinton presidency and what it would mean for U.S. foreign policy?

DJ: If you think U.S. policy couldn’t be more pro-Israel than it is now, just wait until you see Hillary in the White House. After Haim Saban pledged to spend “as much as necessary” to make her President, Hillary Clinton has pledged to invite Netanyahu to the White House in her first month as President, to use the occasion to “reaffirm the unbreakable bonds of friendship and unity” between America and Israel, and to do everything to destroy the Boycott-Divestment-Sanctions (BDS) movement. She continues to echo Israeli denunciations of Iran as a dangerous “terrorist state”. She has previously equated criticism of Israeli policies with “anti-Semitism” and blamed the people of Gaza for Israeli assaults on their wretched territory.

Previous Presidents, including Obama, have often had their moments of exasperation with Israel’s uncontrollable conduct. With Hillary, it seems that there would be no objections to further Israeli destruction of Gaza or even to attacks on Iran. She is perfectly in line with Israel’s tacit policy to destroy and dismember Syria.

MÓC: When asked which women in the world “inspired” her, Hillary cited Pussy Riot. What does this tell us about Hillary? And what does it mean for U.S-Russia relations?

DJ: Can you imagine Hillary having group sex with Bill in a museum, as radical anarchist Nadezhda Tolokonnikova did in one of her performance art protests against the system? An “inspiration”? As is so often the case, Hillary doesn’t say what is true, but grabs the chance to show how anti-Putin she is. The joke is that Tolokonnikova recently expressed her preference for Bernie Sanders.

MÓC: If the so-called “responsibility to protect,” or R2P, is to be the organizing principle of Hillary’s foreign policy, can you explain why this would be bad for human rights around the world?

DJ: The Libyan disaster proved to most of the world—although not to Hillary—that R2P is a dangerous doctrine. Supposedly to “protect” certain Islamist rebels in Benghazi, the NATO R2P intervention totally destroyed the modern city of Sirte, provided cover for racist lynching of Libya’s black population, killed thousands of civilians and left the country in a shambles.

R2P might make sense if there really existed a neutral, all-knowing world police force to intervene on the basis of solid, unbiased evidence. This is most surely not the case

In the case of Libya, the evidence for the “humanitarian emergency” was manufactured by internal opponents of the regime and relayed to the world by a docile mainstream media. It was almost entirely untrue, but conflicting sources were ignored. (See Maximilian Forte, *Slouching Towards Sirte: NATO’s War on Libya and Africa.*)

With the current relationship of forces in the world, R2P can only be applied by a great power to a smaller one, according to the great power’s own interpretation of events in the smaller one. In reality, R2P is simply used by the United States against regimes it doesn’t like, period.

MÓC: You write that the Nobel Peace Prize-winning Barack Obama “went on to outdo even his predecessors in useless aggressive war-making—with moments of hesitation, however, which we cannot expect from Hillary”. What makes you believe that a Clinton presidency would be less hesitant than Obama to use U.S. military force?

DJ: Simple: whenever Obama hesitated, Hillary did not. She urged war in Libya, a no-fly zone in Syria, and from all she says, would have been urging stronger action against Russia when her former spokeswoman Victoria Nuland was leading the anti-Russian coup in Kiev. Her chuckling over the bestial murder of Gaddafi shows an absence of any human feeling for her adversaries. She dismisses them as subhuman. In addition to her absence of compassion, she seems to have no doubts about the ultimate ability of the United States to prevail in any armed conflict—and this is most dangerous of all. She is ready to push every adversary as far as possible, apparently certain that the “bad guy” will back down—even if it happens to be nuclear-armed Russia.

Obama apparently lacks Hillary’s assurance. His lavish use of murderous drones reflects the military recognition of the limits of U.S. ground forces. He has been under constant pressure

from the War Party. Sometimes he has resisted their pressure, as in the case of chemical weapons in Syria, after Kerry had replaced Clinton as Secretary of State.

MÓC: In your concluding chapter titled “The War Party” you write that “[t]he rise of Hillary Clinton should make clear the total failure of clinging to the Democratic Party as the “lesser evil.” But if the demagogic Donald Trump is running against Hillary, do you think it’s possible to convince voters that she isn’t the lesser of two evils?

DJ: That looks impossible on the face of it. Who knows, perhaps Trump will make the danger of war a major issue. But it seems to me now that an election contest between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton will be decided at the gut level, not on issues. I may be wrong, but foreign policy seems of minor concern in this election, even though it should be a top concern. Trump appalls the elite, but internet comments show that hostility to Hillary is reaching the boiling point. It will be strengthened if Bernie Sanders loses the nomination as a result of what looks like cheating. The way things are going, the November election risks being a race between the two most hated people in America.

MÓC: You propose a “Peace Party” as an alternative to the “War Party” that dominates both branches of the Two-Party-System. You suggest two admirable women to serve as part of a “peace team” to support a “peace candidate”, namely, Cynthia McKinney and Coleen Rowley. They couldn’t be more different from the women with whom Hillary has surrounded herself, such as Madeleine Albright, Suzanne Nossel, Susan Rice, and Samantha Power, could they? Are you optimistic that one day the American people will become sufficiently aware to know the difference?

DJ: By Peace Party, I mean something broader than a political party. I mean a network of knowledgeable, principled people who are intent on saving the country and the world from what has become an insanely arrogant policy of world domination. The difficulty is that the so-called neocons and the liberal interventionists have more or less taken over the State Department and have recently purged the Pentagon. The Peace Party could be made up of diplomats, scholars, military officers, politicians, editors. I would suggest that individuals who want to avoid World War III need to study the example of the neocons, who through a web of think tanks, editorial pages, financial interest and infiltration of the executive branch have seized control of the policy-making apparatus. Can this process be reversed, and if so, how? It is not up to me to answer this question. But it needs to be asked.

At the popular level, the Peace Party could be built on economic demands: cut back the insane military budget in order to finance useful and productive domestic activities, shut down superfluous military bases, stop expanding NATO to conquer the world, stop subsidizing Israel to the tune of three billion dollars per year. American riches, the American people and the American future are being squandered to wage increasingly destructive wars. The real enemy is the U.S. military industrial complex, which survives and expands because the government provides sure profits on financial investment. If the American people were fully aware of this, the Peace Party would grow naturally.