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Nelson Mandela: Obama, Clinton, Cameron, Blair – Tributes of Shameful Hypocrisy

By Felicity Arbuthnot

December 06, 2013



Accusing politicians or former politicians of “breathtaking hypocrisy” is not just over used, it is inadequacy of spectacular proportions. Sadly, searches in various thesaurus’ fail in meaningful improvement.

The death of Nelson Mandela, however, provides tributes resembling duplicity on a mind altering substance.

President Obama, whose litany of global assassinations by Drone, from infants to octogenarians – a personal weekly decree we are told, summary executions without Judge, Jury or trial – stated of the former South African’s President’s passing:

“We will not likely see the likes of Nelson Mandela again ... His acts of reconciliation ... set an example that all humanity should aspire to, whether in the lives of nations or our own personal lives.

“I studied his words and his writings ... like so many around the globe, I cannot fully imagine my own life without the example that Nelson Mandela set, (as) long as I live I will do what I can to learn from him ... it falls to us ... to forward the example that he set: to make decisions guided not by hate, but by love ...”

Mandela, said the Presidential High Executioner, had: “... bent the arc of the moral universe toward justice.”(i)

Mandela, after nearly thirty years in jail (1964-1990) forgave his jailors and those who would have preferred to see him hung. Obama committed to closing Guantanamo, an election pledge, the prisoners still self starve in desperation as their lives rot away, without hope.

The decimation of Libya had no congressional approval, Yemen, Somalia, Pakistan and Afghanistan’s dismembered. Drone victims are a Presidential roll call of shame and horror and the Nobel Peace Laureate’s trigger finger still hovers over Syria and Iran, for all the talk of otherwise. When his troops finally limped out of Iraq, he left the biggest Embassy in the world and a proxy armed force, with no chance of them leaving being on even the most distant horizon.

Clearly learning, justice and being “guided by love” is proving bit of an uphill struggle. Ironically, Obama was born in 1964, the year Mandela was sentenced to jail and his “long walk to freedom.”

Bill Clinton, who (illegally, with the UK) ordered the near continual bombing of Iraq throughout his Presidency (1993-2001) and the siege conditions of the embargo, with an average of six thousand a month dying of “embargo related causes”, paid tribute to Mandela as: “a champion for human dignity and freedom, for peace and reconciliation ... a man of uncommon grace and compassion, for whom abandoning bitterness and embracing adversaries was ... a way of life. All of us are living in a better world because of the life that Madiba lived.” Tell that to America’s victims.

In the hypocrisy stakes, Prime Minister David Cameron can compete with the best. He said:

“A great light has gone out in the world. Nelson Mandela was a towering figure in our time; a legend in life and now in death – a true global hero.

... Meeting him was one of the great honours of my life.

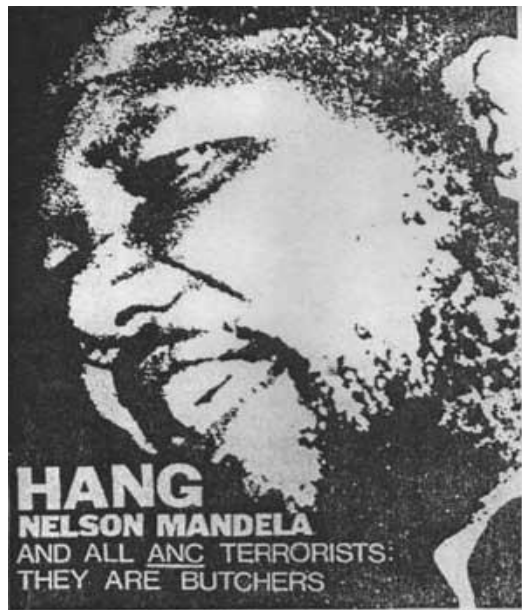
On Twitter he reiterated: “A great light has gone out in the world. Nelson Mandela was a hero of our time.” The flag on Downing Street was to hang at half mast, to which a follower replied: “Preferably by no-one who was in the Young Conservatives at a time they wanted him hanged, or those who broke sanctions, eh?”

Another responded: “The Tories wanted to hang Mandela. You utter hypocrite.”

The two tweeters clearly knew their history. In 2009, when Cameron was pitching to become Prime Minister, it came to light that in 1989, when Mandela was still in prison, David Cameron, then a “rising star of the Conservative Research Department ... accepted an all expenses paid trip to apartheid South Africa ... funded by a firm that lobbied against the imposition of sanctions on the apartheid regime.”

Asked if Cameron: “wrote a memo or had to report back to the office about his trip, Alistair Cooke (his then boss at Conservative Central Office) said it was ‘simply a jolly’, adding: ‘It was all terribly relaxed, just a little treat, a perk of the job ... ‘ “

Former Cabinet Minister Peter Hain commented of the trip:



“This just exposes his hypocrisy because he has tried to present himself as a progressive Conservative, but just on the eve of the apartheid downfall, and Nelson Mandela’s release from prison, when negotiations were taking place about a transfer of power, here he was being wined and dined on a sanctions-busting visit.

“This is the real Conservative Party ... his colleagues who used to wear ‘Hang Nelson Mandela’ badges at university are now sitting on the benches around him. Their leader at the time Margaret Thatcher described Mandela as a terrorist.” (ii)

In the book of condolences opened at South Africa House, five minutes walk from his Downing Street residence, Cameron, who has voted for, or enjoined all the onslaughts or threatened ones referred to above, wrote:

“ ... your generosity, compassion and profound sense of forgiveness have given us all lessons to learn and live by.

He ended his message with: “Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God.” Hopefully your lower jaw is still attached to your face, dear reader. If so, hang on to it, worse is to come.

The farcically titled Middle East Peace Envoy, former Prime Minister Tony Blair (think “dodgy dossiers” “forty five minutes” to destruction, illegal invasion, Iraq’s ruins and ongoing carnage, heartbreak, after over a decade) stated:

“Through his leadership, he guided the world into a new era of politics in which black and white, developing and developed, north and south ... stood for the first time together on equal terms.

“Through his dignity, grace and the quality of his forgiveness, he made racism everywhere not just immoral but stupid; something not only to be disagreed with, but to be despised. In its place he put the inalienable right of all humankind to be free and to be equal.

“I worked with him closely ... “ (iii) said the man whose desire for “humankind to be free and equal” (tell that to the Iraqis) now includes demolishing Syria and possibly Iran.

As ever, it seems with Blair, the memories of others are a little different:

“Nelson Mandela felt so betrayed by Blair’s decision to join the US-led invasion of Iraq that he launched a fiery tirade against him in a phone call to a cabinet minister, it emerged.

“Peter Hain who (knew) the ex-South African President well, said Mandela was ‘breathing fire’ down the line in protest at the 2003 military action.

“The trenchant criticisms were made in a formal call to the Minister’s office, not in a private capacity, and Blair was informed of what had been said, Hain added.

‘I had never heard Nelson Mandela so angry and frustrated.’ (iv)

On the BBC’s flagship morning news programme “Today” former Prime Minister “Iraq is a better place, I’d do it again” Blair, said of Nelson Mandela:

“ ... he came to represent something quite inspirational for the future of the world and for peace and reconciliation in the 21st century.”

Comment is left to former BBC employee, Elizabeth Morley, with peerless knowledge of Middle East politics, who takes no prisoners:

“Dear Today Complaints,

“How could you? Your almost ten minute long interview with the war criminal Tony Blair was the antithesis to all the tributes to the great man. I cannot even bring myself to put the two names in the same sentence. How could you?

“Blair has the blood of millions of Iraqis on his hands. Blair has declared himself willing to do the same to Iranians. How many countries did Mandela bomb? Blair condones apartheid in Israel. Blair turns a blind eye to white supremacists massacring Palestinians. And you insult us by making us listen to him while our hearts and minds are focussed on Mandela.

How could you?” (Reproduced with permission.)

As the avalanche of hypocrisy cascades across the globe from shameless Western politicians, Archbishop Desmond Tutu reflected in two lines the thoughts in the hearts of the true mourners:

“We are relieved that his suffering is over, but our relief is drowned by our grief. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.”

Notes

i. <http://www.businessinsider.com/nelson-mandela-dead-obama-statement-2013-12#ixzz2mg2vrGbd>

ii. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/camerons-freebie-to-apartheid-south-africa-1674367.html>

iii. <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/nelson-mandela-dead-live-updates-2895110#ixzz2mhBKAdVA>

iv. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/sep/12/nelson-mandela-tony-blair-peter-hain-iraq-invasion>