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## Welcome to the Violent World of Mr. Hopey Changey

By John Pilger

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When Britain lost control of Egypt in 1956, Prime Minister Anthony Eden said he wanted the nationalist president Gamal Abdel Nasser "destroyed ... murdered ... I don't give a damn if there's anarchy and chaos in Egypt." Those insolent Arabs, Winston Churchill had urged in 1951, should be driven "into the gutter from which they should never have emerged."

The language of colonialism may have been modified; the spirit and the hypocrisy are unchanged. A new imperial phase is unfolding in direct response to the Arab uprising that began in January and has shocked Washington and Europe, causing an Eden-style panic. The loss of the Egyptian tyrant Mubarak was grievous, though not irretrievable; an American-backed counter-revolution is under way as the military regime in Cairo is seduced with new bribes and power shifting from the street to political groups that did not initiate the revolution. The western aim, as ever, is to stop authentic democracy and reclaim control.

Libya is the immediate opportunity. The NATO attack on Libya, with the UN Security Council assigned to mandate a bogus "no fly zone" to "protect civilians", is strikingly similar to the final destruction of Yugoslavia in 1999. There was no UN cover for the bombing of Serbia and the "rescue" of Kosovo, yet the propaganda echoes today. Like Slobodan Milosevic, Muammar Gadhafi is a "new Hitler", plotting "genocide" against his people. There is no evidence of this, as there was no genocide in Kosovo. In Libya there is a tribal civil war; and the armed uprising against Gadhafi has long been appropriated by the Americans, French, and British, their planes attacking residential Tripoli with uranium-tipped missiles and the submarine HMS Triumph firing Tomahawk missiles, a repeat of the "shock and awe" in Iraq that left thousands of civilians

dead and maimed. As in Iraq, the victims, which include countless incinerated Libyan army conscripts, are media unpeople.

In the "rebel" east, the terrorizing and killing of black African immigrants is not news. On 22 May, a rare piece in the *Washington Post* described the repression, lawlessness and death squads in the "liberated zones" just as visiting EU foreign policy chief, Catherine Ashton, declared she had found only "great aspirations" and "leadership qualities." In demonstrating these qualities, Mustafa Abdel Jalil, the "rebel leader" and Gadhafi's justice minister until February, pledged, "Our friends ... will have the best opportunity in future contracts with Libya." The east holds most of Libya's oil, the greatest reserves in Africa. In March the rebels, with expert foreign guidance, "transferred" to Benghazi the Libyan Central Bank, a wholly owned state institution. This is unprecedented. Meanwhile, the US and the EU "froze" almost US\$100 billion in Libyan funds, "the largest sum ever blocked", according to official statements. It is the biggest bank robbery in history.

The French elite are enthusiastic robbers and bombers. Nicholas Sarkozy's imperial design is for a French-dominated Mediterranean Union (UM), which would allow France to "return" to its former colonies in North Africa and profit from privileged investment and cheap labor. Gadhafi described the Sarkozy plan as "an insult" that was "taking us for fools." The Merkel government in Berlin agreed, fearing its old foe would diminish Germany in the EU, and abstained in the Security Council vote on Libya.

Like the attack on Yugoslavia and the charade of Milosevic's trial, the International Criminal Court is being used by the US, France and Britain to prosecute Gadhafi while his repeated offers of a cease-fire are ignored. Gadhafi is a Bad Arab. David Cameron's government and its verbose top general want to eliminate this Bad Arab, like the Obama administration killed a famously Bad Arab in Pakistan recently. The crown prince of Bahrain, on the other hand, is a Good Arab. On 19 May, he was warmly welcomed to Britain by Cameron with a photo-call on the steps of 10 Downing Street. In March, the same crown prince slaughtered unarmed protestors and allowed Saudi forces to crush his country's democracy movement. The Obama administration has rewarded Saudi Arabia, one of the most repressive regimes on earth, with a \$US60 billion arms deal, the biggest in US history. The Saudis have the most oil. They are the Best Arabs.

The assault on Libya, a crime under the Nuremberg standard, is Britain's 46th military "intervention" in the Middle East since 1945. Like its imperial partners, Britain's goal is to control Africa's oil. Cameron is not Anthony Eden, but almost. Same school. Same values. In the media-pack, the words colonialism and imperialism are no longer used, so that the cynical and the credulous can celebrate state violence in its more palatable form.

And as "Mr. Hopey Changey" (the name that Ted Rall, the great American cartoonist, [gives Barack Obama](#)), is fawned upon by the British elite and launches another insufferable presidential campaign, the Anglo-American reign of terror proceeds in Afghanistan and elsewhere, with the murder of people by unmanned drones – a US/Israel innovation, embraced by Obama. For the record, on a scorecard of imposed misery, from secret trials and prisons and the hounding of whistleblowers and the criminalizing of dissent to the incarceration and impoverishment of his own people, mostly black people, Obama is as bad as George W. Bush.

The Palestinians understand all this. As their young people courageously face the violence of Israel's blood-racism, carrying the keys of their grandparents' stolen homes, they are not even included in Mr. Hopey Changey's list of peoples in the Middle East whose liberation is long overdue. What the oppressed need, he said on 19 May, is a dose of "America's interests [that] are essential to them." He insults us all.