

The US Will Eventually Bomb Iran As It Bombed Other Countries: William Blum

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Global Research, April 19, 2015

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Obama's time as leader of the US is coming to an end – his term concludes next year. Wannabe presidents have already joined the race to the White House. And as President Obama goes through the final year of his rule, Washington suddenly changes its tone – now Iran is an appropriate nation to talk to, and it's okay to meet with Cuban and Venezuelan leaders. But what is in that change?

Has Washington finally dropped its previous policies? What does Obama want to achieve? And will the new, as yet unknown, leader of America make any difference? We pose these questions to prominent historian, author of bestsellers on US foreign policies, William Blum, who is on Sophie&Co today.

Transcript

William Blum: I don't think US foreign policy will change at all, regardless of who is in the White House, Bush or Clinton, or who else is running. Our policy does not change... I can add Obama to that. It wouldn't even matter which party it is, Republican or Democrat, they have the same foreign policy.

SS: *Why do you think it's the same policy for both parties? Why do you think they are not different from each other?*

WB: Because America, for two centuries has had one basic, overriding goal, and that is world domination, at least from 1890s if not earlier, one can say that. World domination is something which appeals to both Republicans and Democrats or Liberals or Conservatives. The idea that we're the exceptional nation and have something very important to impart to the rest of the world, our marvelous values, American exceptionalism... Each party believes in that very strongly. They don't argue about that at all, except through their campaign debate, they'll take certain opposing views just to appear different. But, in power, they have the exact same policy – world domination.

SS: *Now back in 2009 President Obama made it clear that the missile shield in Europe would no longer be necessary if the threat from Iran was eliminated – and nuclear deal with Iran was struck. Now, historic deal is close, but NATO is saying there will be no change in missile shield plans – why not?*

WB: Because NATO shares America's desire to dominate the world. NATO is just an arm of the U.S. foreign policy, there's no point actually in making a distinction between US foreign

policy and NATO policy – they are the same. If US were not in NATO, NATO would not exist. US founded NATO, US is its main supporter and financial source, there's no distinction between US and NATO, and they share the same view of American world domination. So, it doesn't matter whether Iran is doing this or that – they know that Iran is not a lover of an Empire, and anyone who's not a lover of the Empire has a short life span. Iran, Venezuela, Cuba, whatever. That is the test, do you love Empire or not.

SS: But, can we be a little bit more precise about this “domination” theory – NATO has been strengthening its eastern borders with military building up on Russia's doorsteps, and a rapid reaction force to include 30,000 personnel – why this deployment? Who is it aimed against?

WB: It is aimed against Russia. The US cannot stand anyone who might stay in the way of the Empire's expansion – and Russia and China are the only nations which can do that. Other nations, like Cuba or Iran or Venezuela are regarded as enemy just as well, because they have the polity influence: Cuba has influence over all of the Western hemisphere. That makes them a great enemy. But the basic criteria of Empire's expansion is whether you support Empire or not, and that excludes all the countries I've named – from Cuba to Russia.

SS: Do you think U.S. would go as far as using force against its enemies?

WB: Well, the US has used force against its enemies on a regular basis for two centuries. Of course they would use force! They've used force against Cuba, they invaded Cuba and they've supported Cuban exiles in all kinds of violent activities for 60 years. Violence is never far removed from the U.S. policy. Let me summarize something for the benefit of listeners: since 1946 the US has attempted to overthrow more than 50 foreign governments. In the same time period it has attempted to assassinate more than 50 foreign leaders. It has bombed the people of 30 countries, it has suppressed revolutionary parties in at least 20 nations – and I forgot other factors on my list. This is a record unparalleled in all of human history, and there's no reason to think it is changing or will change, except if some superior force comes on a scene, that can actually defeat U.S.

SS: But, you know, French intelligence – and France seems to be an ally of the U.S. – the French intelligence chief has recently said that they found no evidence of Russia planning to invade Ukraine. So why has NATO been pressing these claims of an imminent invasion so hard and for so long?

WB: Because Russia has two characteristics of an enemy, which Washington cannot tolerate: one, it has very powerful military capabilities, and two, it is not a kind of Washington's policy, it is not a great admirer of the Empire. The same applies to China. That's all it takes: you don't admire us and have military force – that's all it takes to be an enemy of Washington.

SS: The problem is, there's a ceasefire that seems in place, right? But US paratroopers have arrived in Ukraine to train forces in the country, and it's not the first such deployment we've seen. So, with ceasefire agreement and peace deal on the way, why is Washington sending troops now?

WB: They know very well that Ukraine is not...or those who live in Ukraine and support Russia, Washington knows very well that these people are not on their side, and will not be on their side, and there's no way to make them on our side, so, US is expecting to wipe

them out militarily at some point in the near future. As soon as they can get all the politics in place, there's no backtracking from these policies. I must repeat myself again: Washington wants to dominate the world and anyone, including people in the south-eastern part of Ukraine, who don't share that view, they are enemies, and at some point they may be met with military force.

SS: So are you saying that America doesn't want peace in Ukraine, because US is sending military personnel to Ukraine – like I've said – while Europeans are negotiating peace without America's involvement?

WB: Washington is not looking for peace or war. It is looking for domination, and if they can achieve domination peacefully – that's fine. If they can't, they'll use war. It's that simple.

SS: So, like you've said, America is one of the main financiers of NATO; there's also Estonia and they meet NATO's funding goals. Why are the rest of its members lagging behind? Isn't the alliance important to them as well?

WB: They have their own home politics that they deal with, they each have their own financial needs to deal with, they each have their own relation with Washington to deal with, it varies. It is not exactly the same in these countries, but overall, no member of NATO is going to fight against Washington. No member of NATO was going to support the insurgence in Ukraine – not one. So there's no need to go upon who is not paying and who is paying – none of them will ever go against Washington's policies in Ukraine or elsewhere.

SS: Now, on the other hand, Europe, U.S. and Russia – they share similar security threats, issues like Syria, Islamic State, there's Afghanistan, and they are not going anywhere. Can these states work together if it is absolutely necessary, for example?

WB: They don't have the same security threats. Washington just announces that people of various countries are enemies of the U.S. – that doesn't make them a threat. Syria, for example, is no threat to the U.S. Neither was Iraq, neither was Libya. U.S. invades one country after another, totally independent of whether they are threat or not. As long as they don't believe in the Empire, as long as they are helping enemies of the Empire. I mean, what threat was Libya to Washington? NATO invaded them without mercy, bombed them out of existence, they are a failed state now. What was their threat? There's no threat. If Russia doesn't announce Libya as a threat, it's not because Russia has a different foreign policy – it's because Russia is not so paranoid as the U.S., and Russia is not looking for world domination.

SS: Russia has been criticized many times for its decision to supply air defense missile systems to Iran. Now, why is America so worried about anti-air missile defense Iran may get from Russia? It's not like Washington got plans to bomb Iran, right?

WB: Of course they do, and so does Israel. You can't put aside those fears. Washington, as I mentioned before, has bombed more than 30 countries. Why would they stop now? Iran is a definite target of the U.S. and Israel, and it's very understandable that Iran would want to have advanced missile defense systems.

SS: But look: US is staying out of Yemen now, it's not willing to commit ground troops to Iraq or get involved in Syria. It sometimes looks like Washington is growing weary of foreign interventions, lately.

WB: They are still supporting the enemies of Syria, and they are making sure that Assad will not come back to power. They are bombing places all over Syria, which can be useful militarily to Syria. They have not forgotten about Syria at all. Iraq is ally at the moment, but tomorrow or yesterday it is something different. You can't just look at today and say "they're not fighting here and there" and think "Oh, Washington has finally found peace". No. Their basic goal is unchanged – today, tomorrow, or next year. I must say, again, for the tenth time, it is world domination.

SS: *Now, you've written in one of your books, the "Rogue State" that if you were President, you'd end all US foreign interventions at once. Can the US do that? Is it that simple? I mean, US left Iraq and look what happened.*

WB: If I were a President, yes, that's what I would do. And then I add, to the portion you've quoted, I add at the end of paragraph, on my fifth day in the office I would be assassinated. So, that's what happens to people who want to challenge the Empire's policies. But I would have great time for the first few days.

SS: *But can the US realistically do that? End all of their foreign interventions at once? Because, we see an example of Iraq, once they left, ISIS spread.*

WB: The US has created ISIS. Let me point this out – a short while ago, there were four major states in the Middle East and South Asia, which were secular. The US invaded Iraq, then invaded Libya and overthrew that secular government. Then it's been in the process now, for some years, attempting to overthrow the secular government in Syria. There's no wonder that Middle East and South Asia have been taken over by religious fanatics: all the possible enemies and barriers to that had been wiped out by Washington. Why will they stop now?

SS: *I see your point. While Iraq and Afghanistan cannot be exactly described as victories for American troops, I mean, the invasions have also resulted, for instance, in girls being able to go to school in Afghanistan, or Kurds finally having a state in Iraq, for instance.*

WB: I must tell you something and all your listeners. At one time, in 1980s, Afghanistan had a progressive government, where women had full rights; they even wore mini-skirts. And you know what happened to that government? The US overthrew it. So please, don't tell me about US policy helping the girls or the women of Afghanistan. We are the great enemy of females of Afghanistan.

SS: *You've also said that an end to US interventions would mean an end to terror attacks. What makes you think Islamic State and Al-Qaeda and other terror groups would cease to exist – and I'm talking about right now, I am not talking about "if America hadn't invaded them back then". Right now, if American interventions cease, what makes think that these terrorist groups would cease to exist as well?*

WB: It may be too late now. When I wrote that, it was correct. It may be too late now. After what we've done to all secular governments in the Middle East and in South Asia, after all that, I am not sure I would say the same thing again. We've unleashed ISIS, and they're not going to be stopped by any kind words or nice changes of policy by Washington. They have to be wiped out militarily. They are an amazing force of horror, and the U.S. is responsible for them, but the barn door may be closed, it may be too late now to simply change our policy.

SS: *So do you think US should use military force to eradicate these terrorist groups?*

WB: Well, I could say “yes”, except that the US will cheat. They will use the same force to attack other people, like in Syria, they will use the same force to help overthrow Assad, and they will use the same force to suppress any segment of Iraq or what have you, which are anti-America. They cannot be trusted, that’s the problem. When they start to use force, there’s no holding them back, and they don’t care about the civilians. The civilian death toll with any bombing of Syria and Iraq is unlimited. So, for those reasons, I cannot support US bombing of Iraq or Syria or anywhere else. The US bombing should cease everywhere in the world.

SS: *When I listen to you, it sounds like America overthrows all these governments and bombs all these countries, and makes revolutions – from people’s point of view, revolutions and overthrows are really impossible if they are not conducive to people’s moods on the ground. So you’re saying the foreign policy has greatly contributed to the rise of radical Islam in the Middle East, but I wonder – don’t locals have control over their own direction at all?*

WB: The locals had no say whatsoever on whether the US would bomb or not, they had no say whatsoever on whether the US would overthrow governments chosen by the people, often – they have no say in these things. Now, they may hate ISIS, or some of them might hate ISIS, but it’s too late. They can’t do anything about it. The world is in terrible position. The world had a chance, 30-40 years ago, to stop the US from all of these interventions. If NATO had been closed, the way the Warsaw Pact was closed, the Soviet Union closed the Warsaw Pact with the expectation that NATO will also go out of business – but the US did not do that, and it’s too late now. I don’t know what to say, what will save the world now.

SS: *You’ve mentioned Cuba and Venezuela in the beginning of the programme. Now, we witnessed several historic meetings recently, between President Obama and Cuba’s President Raul Castro, also Obama’s meeting with Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro – why is Obama now talking with states the US has long considered arch-enemies?*

WB: You must keep in mind, first of all, that nothing whatsoever has changed, as of this moment nothing has changed. We have to wait and see what happens, and I’m very sceptical. For example, with Cuba, the main issue is the US sanctions which have played havoc with Cuban economy and society. That has not changed, and I don’t think it is going to change even in my lifetime. So, you can’t apply some kind of changes taking place. Why Obama is saying these things he’s saying now may have to do with his so-called “legacy”. He knows his time is very limited, and he knows he has many enemies amongst progressives in the US and elsewhere. He may want to cater to them for some reason. I don’t know, neither do you know, no one knows exactly why he’s saying these things – but they don’t mean anything yet. Nothing has changed whatsoever.

SS: *So you’re saying there’s really no substance in those meetings... Now, looking back, what would you call Obama’s biggest achievements of his two terms – I mean, people say there’s been a reconciliation with Cuba, with Iran, there’s an earnest attempt to end US deployment in Iraq and in Afghanistan, he didn’t move troops into Syria. Would you disagree with all of that?*

WB: Yes, all of that. There’s no accomplishment whatsoever. He didn’t move troops into Syria because of Russia, and not because of him making any change. He was embarrassed

in that. John Kerry made a remark about “it would be nice if Syria would get rid of its chemical weapons – but that’s not going to happen” he said, and then foreign minister Lavrov of Russia jumped in and said “Oh really? We’ll arrange that” – and they arranged Syria to get rid of chemical weapons. That was, yes, a slip of the tongue by John Kerry, and he was embarrassed to challenge Lavrov. We can say the same thing about any of the things you’ve mentioned. There’s no substance involved in any of these policies. The US has not relented at all over Syria. As I’ve mentioned before, they are bombing Syria’s military assets, they are killing civilians every day. Syria is still a prime target of Washington, and they will never escape.

SS: Thank you very much for this interesting insight, we were talking to William Blum, historian and author of bestsellers “Rogue State” and “America’s Deadliest Export” discussing matters of the US foreign policy and what would happen if the US decides to end all of its foreign interventions at once. That’s it for this edition of Sophie&Co, I will see you next time.

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