

THE HUFFINGTON POST

Wannabe Global Dominatrix: Hillary Clinton Never Met A War She Didn't Want Other Americans To Fight

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September 26, 2016

Never before were the two leading presidential candidates so disliked. Both major parties have nominated candidates that most Americans desperately want to reject.

There many reasons to oppose Hillary Clinton: a history of scandal, reaching back to Bill Clinton's Arkansas governorship; greedy, grasping friendships with economic elites; and brutal partisan war against political opponents. She is smart, competent, and experienced, but so were Richard Nixon and Richard Cheney. Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that she would put her virtues to good use as president. She almost certainly would lead America into more foolish wars. About the only reason to hope for a Clinton victory is her flawed opponent, Donald Trump.

Yet despite his many failings, he remains superior to Clinton when it comes to foreign policy. No one knows what Trump would do in a given situation, which means there is a chance he would do the right thing. In contrast, Clinton's beliefs, behavior, and promises all suggest that she most likely would do the wrong thing, embracing a militaristic status quo which most Americans recognize has failed disastrously.

In fact, her proclivity for promiscuous war-making has attracted the support of leading Neoconservatives, including some architects of the disastrous Iraq war, which as Senator she voted to authorize. Some otherwise obscure Neocons even have appeared in her campaign ads. Her record of backing every recent U.S. military intervention is far more attractive than Trump's intermittently blustering rhetoric to war-happy Republican hawks.

As my Cato Institute colleague Christopher Preble pointed out, "Clinton supported every one of the last seven U.S. military interventions abroad, plus two others we ended up fighting." For instance, while First Lady she pushed for U.S. intervention in the Balkans—attacking the Bosnian Serbs and then Serbia. She was an enthusiastic war advocate, explaining: "I urged him [her husband] to bomb." Alas, Bosnia remains badly divided while Kosovo has turned into a gangster state which, according to the *New York Times*, is "a font of Islamic extremism and a pipeline for jihadists." Oops.

She apparently took the same position toward Iraq, backing bombing that became almost routine during her husband's administration. He also turned a humanitarian mission in Somalia into nation-building on the cheap, threatened a military invasion of Haiti to enforce regime change, launched a lengthy occupation of the faux state of Bosnia, and expanded NATO toward Russia.

None of them were in America's interest or turned out well, but Hillary Clinton apparently only objected to the Haiti misadventure. She was seen by aides as the most influential of the administration's many ivory tower warriors, always available to lobby Bill to do more bombing and killing abroad.

Sen. Hillary Clinton supported the overbroad Authorization for Use of Military Force after September 11, which 15 years later the Obama administration claims as warrant for its very different war against the Islamic State. She strongly backed the Iraq invasion. Only after it turned out badly and threatened to damage her political career did she acknowledge her mistake. Of course, that was too late to retrieve the thousands of American lives, hundreds of thousands of Iraqi lives, and trillions of dollars squandered. At the same time, she said she was sorry for opposing the 2007 "surge" of troops, despite what Iraq became. Worse, a former State department aide reported that Clinton later announced she would not feel "constrained" in the future by the failure in Iraq. She apparently sees no need to learn from one's mistakes.

Clinton supported the Obama administration's decision to double down, twice, on its expensive yet failed nation-building mission in Afghanistan. She pushed for even higher troop levels than did President Obama. Clinton once warned about the ill consequences of drone strikes in Pakistan, became a strong supporter as secretary of state. Then she backed the administration's drone wars in Pakistan and Yemen as well as Libya, Somalia, and Syria.

Clinton was more responsible than anyone else for America's Libyan misadventure, another attempt at regime change on the cheap, though with a humanitarian gloss. She reportedly warned President Obama against allowing America to "be left behind" by not joining the foolish war parade in North Africa in early 2011. She responded to Moammar Qaddafi's death with a joke, but the war left another failed state, host to Islamic State killers and convulsed by civil war.

Her insistence on the ouster of Syria's President Bashar al-Assad discouraged a negotiated settlement, but the administration provided his opponents with no practical means to oust him. Clinton advocated lethal aid to rebels, who displayed a dismaying tendency to surrender and turn weapons over to radical groups, including ISIS. She later urged direct U.S. military intervention in the form of a "no-fly" zone.

Clinton backed NATO expansion up to Russia's borders, a policy guaranteed to poison bilateral relations. She further advocated including both Ukraine and Georgia, which would turn their next confrontation with Moscow into a potential nuclear war involving America. After leaving office she made the overwrought comparison of Russia's annexation of Crimea with Nazi Germany and supported military aid to Ukraine, which would encourage Moscow to escalate accordingly.

Of her belligerent record Trump observed: "Sometimes it seemed like there wasn't a country in the Middle East that Hillary Clinton didn't want to invade, intervene in, or topple." Indeed, as he suggested, she is "trigger-happy and very unstable." This is one of the most important reasons Americans face a terrorist threat. While she previously contended that "We need a real plan for confronting terrorists," she apparently failed to recognize how bombing, invading, and occupying other nations, supporting murderous foreign rulers, intervening in other countries' conflicts, and killing foreign peoples all create enemies around the globe, some of whom retaliate against U.S. civilians.

Alas, her policies guarantee even more wars in the future. Every military action creates blowback, which is used to justify escalating involvement and new conflicts. Yet she believes that her mistakes entitle her to the presidency: “I’m proud to run on my record, because I think the choice before the American people in this election is clear.”

It is. A vote for Hillary Clinton is a vote for more meddling, intervention, and war, with more dead Americans and wasted dollars, and ultimately even more meddling, intervention, and war.

She cloaks her constant push for war with praise of “American exceptionalism” and America’s role as “the indispensable nation.” In her recent speech to the American Legion she cited Ronald Reagan’s belief in America as a “shining city on a hill,” even though he urged the U.S. to lead by example, not by becoming an international dominatrix. In fact, Reagan was a veritable peacenik in comparison to Clinton, embracing missile defense out of his horror at the prospect of war.

As justification for her belligerence Clinton affirmed “America’s unique and unparalleled ability to be a force for peace and progress, a champion for freedom and opportunity.” Like intervening in Iraq and Libya, one wonders? Supporting Saudi Arabia in its brutal war in Yemen? Backing authoritarian dictatorships across Central Asia? Too bad Clinton never took seriously her admission that America’s “power comes with a responsibility to lead, humbly, thoughtfully, and with a fierce commitment to our values.”

When the U.S. fails to lead, she argued, a power vacuum occurs. Actually, it is Washington’s insistence that it must “lead” which discourages America’s vaunted allies from filling any voids. For instance, she advocates confrontation with Russia over Ukraine even though the latter is not a member of NATO and its status is of far greater interest to the Europeans—who have a much larger collective economy and population than both Russia and America.

Clinton seemed almost giddy about America’s “network of allies” which “is part of what makes us exceptional.” Last June she attacked Trump’s alleged threat to “abandon our allies in NATO,” a bunch of well-heeled friends which typically spend less defending themselves than America spends protecting them. She also has pledged to increase subsidies to America’s Arab allies, even though Turkey, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the other Gulf States—which possess significant economic wealth, populations, and militaries—could act on their own.

Allies, she earlier claimed, are a “source of strength.” That’s a dangerous delusion, best illustrated by NATO. There’s nothing special about accumulating lots of helpless security dependents. Indeed, it’s almost as easy to collect foreign allies as Facebook friends. All the U.S. need do is offer to subsidize, protect, reassure, and coddle wealthy nations which prefer to spend their money on more enjoyable endeavors, such as domestic social benefits. She argued that America should “stand with our allies because generations of American troops fought and died to secure those bonds.” Actually, no. U.S. troops fought for them because America’s security would suffer if they were conquered and they were unable to protect themselves. That is no longer the case.

Washington’s allies “deliver,” she insisted, such as sharing intelligence. However, they would do so even if America did not promise to defend them. Similar is Japanese-South Korean cooperation with America over missile defense, which she has promoted. The Pentagon should

not be turned into a welfare agency; security commitments should not be treated as a form of international charity.

Clinton cited the “international coalition” against ISIS as if it was a success. In fact, Washington’s intervention relieved the states directly at risk, which had more than a million men under arms, of the need to confront the so-called Islamic State. The Gulf States quickly retreated, with Riyadh shifting to its senseless war against Yemen. For years Turkey accommodated ISIS, with high officials apparently profiting from the illicit oil trade. Even now Ankara does more to fight the Syrian Kurds, America’s most important allies *against the Islamic State*.

The U.S. should insist that its allies act like real allies by, for instance, defending themselves and otherwise contributing to America’s interests, rather than acting as security black holes. Trump understands enough to complain about allied free-riding on American taxpayers. He also recognizes the need for creative solutions, suggesting the possibility of Washington’s Asian allies developing nuclear weapons to deter North Korea. It’s a controversial idea, but would get the U.S. out from the middle of a no-win nuclear confrontation.

In her recent speech Clinton argued that the election “shouldn’t be about ideology,” but that is nonsense. The president’s ideology helps determine when he or she will go to war.

In an earlier speech Clinton imagined Trump “leading us into war just because somebody got under his very thin skin.” That’s an ironic charge coming from someone who has backed U.S. involvement in every unnecessary, foolish, expensive conflict over the last two decades.

Of course, she insisted, Americans “face real threats and real enemies that we need to confront and defeat.” But not nearly as many as she seems to think. And not in nearly as many circumstances as she obviously believes.

Still, Clinton appears to recognize that war-mongering is a vote loser. So she recently proclaimed: “we must only send our troops into harm’s way as a last resort, not a first choice. That must be our bedrock principle.”

Yet she never has followed that principle in deciding what positions to take. After all, how could she seriously argue that “we absolutely must” intervene in the Balkans, Iraq, Libya, and Syria and against the Islamic State? In none of these cases was there a compelling justification for U.S. combat intervention. In most there wasn’t even a bad argument for getting involved.

Yet we seem bound for a repeat. She promised not to send ground forces to fight the Islamic State: “We are not putting ground troops into Iraq ever again and we are not putting ground troops into Syria,” she declared in early September. Yet she almost immediately started dissembling. Now she says she only doesn’t want to place “big contingents” in either Iraq or Syria. One can imagine how she might define “big.”

Moreover, foreign policy aide Jeremy Bash promised a “full review” of Syria policy, which would take into account the ruling “murderous regime” with an objective of getting the Assad regime “out of there” at the same time as Islamic State’s defeat. She previously proposed to “close Iraq’s sectarian divide,” which America created when it blew that country apart. Who really believes the U.S. could put Humpty Dumpty back together, at least without another military occupation?

Of course, means also is important. Clinton denounced budget caps and sequester as applied to the military. They aren't a particularly smart way to make defense policy, but they are the only means to just slow military outlays which more than doubled in real terms since George W. Bush took office. Rather than complain about the process she should focus on substance—drop unnecessary defense commitments to wealthy allies and cut force structure accordingly.

There's also "the experience and the temperament" of the prospective military commander-in-chief. Trump most obviously appears to flunk this test. In an address back in June Clinton attacked Trump for his "bizarre rants, personal feuds, and outright lies." However, Clinton, while publicly less volatile, is neither more truthful nor of better character. Her willingness to go to war for less than compelling reasons is an even greater flaw. A cool head is of little value if it leads to calculated involvement in multiple needless wars. Such a person also is not qualified to be the military's commander-in-chief. If Clinton really believes that "we should be finding ways to bring our country together around national security, our role in the world, our values," she should repudiate her past promiscuous war-making.

In short, what makes Clinton dangerous is not the sort of incoherence reflected in Donald Trump's foreign policy approach but a coherent yet far more dangerous advocacy of military dominance around the globe. She genuinely believes that Washington should micro-manage the planet, lecturing, hectoring, subsidizing, sanctioning, bombing, invading, and occupying other nations as it sees fit. Alas, the rest of us would pay with our taxes and lives for her attempt to socially engineer the world.

The two major parties have done their best to nominate the worst candidates possible. On foreign policy the Democratic Party won this dubious contest. If you want more conflict and war, the obvious choice is Hillary Clinton.

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