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## Hypocrites, Left and Right

Posted By [Justin Raimondo](#) On April 17, 2011 @ 11:00 pm In [Uncategorized](#) | [18 Comments](#)

I love hate to say I [told you so](#), but not that much. Human Rights Watch [reports](#) that forces loyal to Moammar Gadhafi are *not* systematically slaughtering civilians, but are targeting the rebels. Civilians caught in the crossfire account for noncombatant deaths, and the numbers are rising: but [this isn't genocide](#). Furthermore, as I maintained from the beginning, there was never any credible evidence that Gadhafi was planning any such wholesale slaughter. Indeed, the NATO alliance has recently [felt moved](#) to warn the rebels not to target civilians.

The news that we have been [lied into war](#) yet [again](#) should hardly come as a shock. After all, our [two-party system](#) means that the different parties take turns doing the same thing. Yes, but how could the American public [fall for it](#) so soon after the Iraq [debacle](#)? Easy: you only have to fool some of the people most of the time, and with the Democrats in office, it's their turn to put one over on a different audience, their "progressive" base.

They've done a good job of it, so far: Kevin Drum, blogger-in-chief over at *Mother Jones*, has [announced](#) he's giving up making his own judgments, because he trusts the Dear Leader to make them for him, and [Ed What's-his-name](#) of MSNBC's *The Ed Show* is hard-selling the Kool-Aid to his fellow Obama cultists, bellowing and waving his arms about in a frenzy of war-cries. This is Obama's first overseas intervention that wasn't inherited from his predecessor, and if any significant portion of the progressive coalition that elected him is opposed, then they are keeping it under wraps, at least for now.

As for the Republicans, there is *some* [grumbling](#) in the ranks, led by Senator Rand Paul (R-Kentucky). The libertarian Republican's resolution reminding the President of his previous opposition to military adventures not authorized by Congress attracted a baker's dozen of Republicans – and not a single Democratic vote. (For shame, [Barbara Boxer](#).)

In any case, it's not necessary to pull the wool over the eyes of the Republican leadership, and much of their base: duped by [George W. Bush](#) and [the neocon coterie](#) that [lied us](#) into the Iraq war, they have stayed duped. The only criticism of the Libyan adventure coming from [those quarters](#) are complaints we didn't intervene soon enough, and that we're pulling our punches.

The President knows he can get away with anything as long as he protects the real economic interests of his coalition. The other day, he was [caught unawares](#) honestly describing his methodology to a group of big-time donors:

*"I had the emir of Qatar come by the Oval Office today. Pretty influential guy. He is a big booster, big promoter of democracy all throughout the Middle East. Reform, reform, reform. ... Now he himself is not reforming significantly. There's no big move toward democracy in Qatar. But you know part of the reason is that the per capita income of Qatar is \$145,000 a year. That will dampen a lot of conflict.*

*"I make this point only because if there is opportunity, if people feel their lives can get better, then a lot of these problems get solved."*

Aside from the breathtaking cynicism of such a remark, at a time when the US is [feigning support](#) for the "Arab Spring," the shorter version of this presidential anecdote is that everyone has a price. If he can buy off the labor aristocracy that is the Democratic [party base](#), and successfully defend their perks and privileges in an era of austerity, then President Obama can get away with following in George W. Bush's [footsteps](#) in the foreign policy realm.

This is the Faustian bargain the Kevin Drums of this world have made, without having the courage to admit it. After all, it's only a bunch of foreigners who will bear the consequences if Drum's child-like trust in Father Obama's judgment turns out to be a wrong call. Libya is far away, and Washington D.C. is quite near: indeed, for these people, everything and everyone outside of Washington is expendable if the lords of the Beltway so ordain.

Of course, such craven hypocrisy and moral bankruptcy is not confined to the "left" side of the

political spectrum: the right, and specifically the libertarian right, is similarly afflicted. How else could John Stossel and David Boaz, both self-proclaimed libertarians – the former a quasi-famous television personality and the latter the Vice President of the Cato Institute, Washington’s premier libertarian think tank – both agree that killing innocents is justified? In [a presentation](#) given before an audience made up of young libertarians, Stossel answered a question from a student about whether it’s ever justified to kill innocents in wartime with an unequivocal yes: “We had to do it in order to end World War II.” Boaz, less emphatically, basically said killing innocents is unfortunate but often necessary.

I won’t even bother to go into the historical evidence that proves the incineration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was [unnecessary](#), and a [monstrous war crime](#) – I’ll just note that here are people who want to get government out of *their* lives – but if that same government ends the life of some innocent foreigner, well then, that’s okay as long as Stossel and Boaz reap some imagined benefit.

These, you’ll recall, are the same people who were recently [moaning](#) and [groaning](#) about the security measures put in place at airports: according to them, it’s horrible and a basic violation of our rights as Americans to be felt up by the TSA’s [Epsilon-Minus Semi-Morons](#) every time we have to get on a plane, but it’s fine with them if the US goes around the world taking innocent lives – and not a thought that the families and loved ones of these sacrificial victims [might](#) some day come gunning for them, for *us*.

America is an empire in decline: the level of [spending](#) required to maintain our imperial prerogatives is simply not sustainable. Perhaps we can get John Stossel to agree to that. Yet without a moral sense that imperialism is *wrong*, that we have *no right* to go around ordering the world and bombing into submission those who oppose us, the Stossels of this world will continue to wander in a moral limbo, advocating “less government” at home and more mass murder abroad.

On the “progressive” left and the “libertarian” right, there’s more than enough hypocrisy to go around. Maybe it’s not the politics but the culture itself that’s at fault. On days like this, I tend to think the cultural rot that is the hallmark of empires throughout history has, in our case, gone too far, and is now beyond any hope of a cure. As usual, the rot is carried to the vital organs of the body politic by the elites, and if even the libertarians and the so-called liberals among them are so hopelessly infected, then where is hope? Where is “change”?

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