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www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

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by JEFFREY ST. CLAIR

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Yemen, Where No One Hears You Scream

Now we know what it takes to briefly flip the script on Saudi Arabia. A journalist has to be murdered in an embassy on the orders of the Crown Prince, his body dismembered with a bone saw and then the butchered remains dissolved in a vat of acid. But not just any journalist. The Saudis have killed and imprisoned many journalists before. But Jamal Khashoggi was journalist working for the Washington Post, a paper owned by the world's richest man. Usually, the Saudis just buy off their critics. But in Jeff Bezos they may have encountered a man too rich to be bought.

Still there was no anguished outcry, from the Washington Post or the New York Times, three months earlier, after a Saudi Arabian fighter jet launched an airstrike on a school bus in Yemeni village of Dahyan. The bus had stopped in Dahyan for refreshments, after a picnic, and was heading back to the school when it was struck by a laser-guided MK 82 bomb manufactured by Lockheed and sold to the Saudis by the Pentagon. Fifty people were killed in the bombing, all of them civilians, 30 of them children, most of them 10 years old and younger. Another 48 people were wounded.

One of the school's teachers, Yahya Hussein, was driving behind the bus in a car. She arrived in Dahyan a few minutes after airstrike and encountered a scene of unspeakable horror. "There was body parts and blood everywhere," she told Al Jazeera.

The Saudis didn't bother cleaning up the blood or hiding the severed limbs. Instead the Crown Prince declared the school-bus bombing a "legitimate military attack." A few days later, the Saudis bombed a funeral for one of the victims, killing and maiming another dozen people. The Saudis said the victims were being used as human shields by the Houthi

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militias. “I’ll be talking about a lot of things with the Saudis,” Trump quipped to Axios recently. “But certainly I wouldn’t be having people that don’t know how to use the weapons shooting at buses with children.”

One might have hoped for at least a little introspection from the Pentagon in the wake of this gruesome child slaughter.

Instead we were treated to some appalling nonsense from the liberals’ favorite general, James Mattis, who said that the US’s role in the war was helping to prevent civilian casualties. “There aren’t news reports when Saudi coalition pilots exercise restraint,” Mattis declared. Which begs the question: who is being killed when the Saudis show restraint with their American weapons and the press isn’t around to examine the body parts?

After all, the Dahyan bombing was far from first the massacre of civilians perpetrated by the Saudis using American-made “smart bombs.” In March 2016, 97 civilians were killed when the Saudis bombed the Kames Market in Mastaba. According to Human Rights Watch, 25 children died in that attack. Seven months later, the Saudis targeted another laser-guided missile at a funeral hall in Sanaa, killing 195 civilians. In between, those atrocities the Saudis bombed hospitals, schools, power plants and water treatment facilities, all in violation of international law.

In all, more US-backed Saudi airstrikes have killed more than 5,000 people, 60 percent of them civilians. This lethal lawlessness eventually proved too much even for the drone king himself. After the Sanaa bombing, Obama ordered a halt new weapons sales to the Saudis. Of course by this time, his administration had already sold the Saudis more than \$115 billion in weapons, the most of any administration in the 70-year history of the US/Saudi relationship. The ban was swiftly lifted under Trump, who wasted little time in brokering his own \$110 billion arms deal with the House of Saud.

The war in Yemen, started under Obama and accelerated under Trump, can legitimately be called a war on children. The famine sweeping the country largely as a result of the crushing embargo against the nation may be the worst on the planet in more than a century, according to the United Nations. More than 1.8 million children are the brink of starvation, with at least 130 dying each day.

Despite the rising death toll, Yemen remains a place few Americans have heard of or could place on map. Yet it is where Barack Obama ordered the assassination by drone of an American citizen, Anwar al-Awlaki, and two weeks later called up another hit that

killed his 16-year-old son, Abdulrahman, also an American citizen. Neither were afforded any kind of due process by the peace prize president.

Yemen is also where Donald Trump committed his first war crime, authorizing a commando raid eight days after his inauguration on a village that killed 15 civilians, including, al-Awlaki's 8-year-old daughter, Nora. Why is the US killing children in Yemen? Who authorized it? What is the goal? When will it end? No one is saying. Few in congress or the press even bother to ask.

It's not a secret war, the way Afghanistan was under Jimmy Carter. It's something worse: a war no one cares enough about to mention, assess or debate. Yemen is the place where no one hears you scream, even as you shout in horror at the sight of the dismembered bodies of the 10-year-olds who were once your students.

John Coltrane Dead and Some of You Have Yet to Hear Him Play

Booked Up

What I'm reading this week...

[Fat Cat: the Steve Mnuchin Story](#) by Rebecca Burns and David Dayen (Strong Arm Press)

[Paradise Rot: a Novel](#) by Jenny Hval (Verso)

[The Savage Frontier: the Pyrenees in History and the Imagination](#) by Matthew Carr (The New Press)

Sound Grammar

What I'm listening to this week...

[Presence](#) by Orrin Evans (Smoke Sessions)

[The Groove Hunter](#) by McLenty Hunter Jr. (Strikezone)

[Science Fair](#) by Allison Miller and Carmen Staaf (Sunnyside Records)

Freedom is the Whole Life of Everyone

Vasily Grossman: "I used to think freedom was freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of conscience. But freedom is the whole life of everyone. Here is what it amounts to: you have to have the right to sow what you wish to, to make shoes or coats, to bake into bread the flour ground from the grain you have sown, and to sell it or not sell it as you wish; for the lathe operator, the steelworker, and the artist it's a matter of being able to live as you wish and work as you wish and not as they order you to. And in our country there is no freedom – not for those who write books nor for those who sow grain nor for those who make shoes."