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## Gaza, Ukraine and the fraud of “human rights” imperialism

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Wednesday saw back-to-back atrocities in Gaza that made it clear to anyone with eyes to see that Israel is carrying out a war of terror against civilians. Its aim is to break the will of the Palestinian people through the murder of children, the destruction of homes, and the driving of an entire population back to Stone Age conditions.

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) struck first at a UN-run school in the Jabaliya refugee camp, where some 3,000 people driven from their homes had sought shelter, killing at least 16 and wounding over 125 more. Then, in the middle of an IDF-announced cease-fire, shells were rained down on a crowded market place in Shejaiya, killing 17 and wounding over 200.

As the horrific images of these massacres emerged from Gaza, newspapers carried the report that the Obama administration had agreed with the European Union to impose sweeping sanctions—not against Israel, but against Russia.

The punitive actions by the US and the EU are being carried out in the context of a provocative global propaganda campaign blaming Moscow and President Vladimir Putin personally for the crash of Malaysian Airlines Flight MH17 in eastern Ukraine and the deaths of its 298 passengers and crew.

While indicting Putin and the anti-Kiev militias in eastern Ukraine as mass murderers, Washington and its allies have kept a stony silence on the killing of over 1,000 civilians in the region, as the Ukrainian regime they installed through a fascist-led coup last February continues to unleash artillery and rocket fire on residential neighborhoods.

Despite the Western sanctions and denunciations, Washington has presented not one shred of evidence that Flight MH17 was brought down by a missile either fired by the anti-Kiev forces or supplied by Moscow. Instead, it has pointed to videos and audio recordings posted on YouTube by the Ukrainian intelligence agency, which is notorious for fabricating false charges against Russia. The vast US intelligence apparatus has produced no satellite photos, communications intercepts or anything else to back the allegations against the Putin government.

The Russian military, on the other hand, has released radar and other intelligence data raising significant questions about the Western narrative. They show that the pro-Kiev forces had at least three anti-aircraft batteries in the area on the day of the crash, and that a Ukrainian warplane armed with air-to-air missiles had flown to within striking distance of the Malaysian airliner shortly before the crash. This hard evidence—and Russia’s call for an impartial investigation—have gone largely unreported in the Western press or dismissed as “propaganda” and “conspiracy theories.”

While the precise circumstances of the Boeing 777’s crash have yet to be proven, two things are clear. First, the area over which it flew was turned into a war zone thanks to the intervention of the US and Germany to bring down Ukraine’s elected government. And second, while neither Moscow nor the so-called separatists had anything to gain from this tragedy, it has provided the means for Washington and its puppets in Kiev to rally the previously reluctant Western European powers to the provocative and highly dangerous campaign against Russia.

Whatever doubts there are about the events in eastern Ukraine, there exist none as to the responsibility for the carnage in Gaza, where the number of dead children alone has surpassed that of all the victims of MH17. Israel’s Zionist leadership, having failed to suppress the heroic Palestinian resistance, has reacted with demoralized rage, demolishing entire neighborhoods, bombing schools and hospitals, and killing some 1,400 people, 90 percent of them civilians.

Yet in this case, the Obama administration insists that no one can be held responsible, save the Palestinians for refusing to capitulate. While Obama cynically laments the deaths in Gaza, Washington is moving rapidly to approve hundreds of millions of dollars more in emergency arms aid to Israel to ensure that the killing can continue without interruption.

It is significant that one of the key architects of this criminally duplicitous policy is Samantha Power, the US ambassador to the United Nations. She oversaw the casting by Washington of the sole vote opposing the formation of a UN commission to investigate Israeli actions in Gaza. She has worked tirelessly to block the Security Council’s passage of any binding resolution imposing a ceasefire. And she has warned other council members that even in non-binding statements on Gaza, any attribution of blame on Israel is a “red line” for Washington.

Ms. Power, it should be recalled, is the same individual who became the leading advocate within the Obama administration of the so-called policy of R2P (responsibility to protect civilians) as the foundation for “humanitarian” interventions. Waving the flag of “human rights,” the most hypocritical of all justifications for imperialist war, Power was a leading advocate of the US-NATO war for regime-change in Libya, which toppled and murdered Muammar Gaddafi, leaving the country awash in violence and chaos three years later.

She has likewise been a key promoter of the US proxy war for regime-change in Syria, helping to foment a sectarian civil war that has killed over 100,000 people, and then using this catastrophe created by imperialism as justification for more direct intervention. Last February, she invoked images of “dead and dying children” in Syria to support her demand that the Security Council pass a resolution with “meaningful consequences on the ground,” i.e., one that provided a pseudo-legal fig leaf for direct US aggression.

Images of “dead and dying children” in Gaza, however, evoke no such response, proving once again that all morality is class morality, and that the tear ducts of imperialist operatives like Samantha Power are activated only to justify aggression and plunder and advance the interests of the US financial oligarchy.

Given its track record, today’s human rights imperialism makes the old “white man’s burden” of colonialism’s heyday seem like a noble cause by comparison. Nothing has been more rapidly discredited. When Washington tries to peddle it, people all over the world recognize it for the garbage that it is.

However, this has not stopped an entire pseudo-left layer from jumping on the blood-soaked R2P bandwagon. There is less than one degree of separation between elements like Power and groups like the International Socialist Organization or academics like University of Michigan’s Professor Juan Cole, who have helped sell US aggression as a defense of “human rights” and portrayed civil wars waged by CIA-backed Islamists in Libya and Syria as well as the fascist-spearheaded coup in Ukraine as “revolutions.”

The struggle against war, which the events in both Gaza and Ukraine pose with ever greater urgency, can be waged only in a struggle for the political independence of the working class against the influence of these forces, whose politics reflect an upper-middle class layer whose privileges are bound up with the interests of imperialism.