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Hillary Clinton – the ‘Liberal’ Puppet for War

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4/14/2015



Hillary Clinton this week launched her bid for the US presidential elections in 2016. Among the copious coverage in Western media was the small but highly significant detail: her presidential campaign will have a war chest of \$2.5 billion. The former US Senator and Secretary of State is said to have a personal net worth of between \$50-100 million. However, if she is selected by the Democratic party to make a run for the White House most of her presidential campaign will be bankrolled by corporations and super-wealthy backers like financier George Soros through his Democracy Alliance foundation. That alone tells where her political loyalties and priorities lie.

It is an indication of how warped US politics has become when Hillary Rodham Clinton is lambasted by Republicans as a «liberal».

Clinton voted for both the Afghanistan and Iraq wars in 2001 and 2003 under George W Bush

during her time in the Senate – wars that killed more than one million people and whose nefarious legacy persists for the Central Asia and Middle East regions.

Later as Secretary of State in the Obama administration, Clinton pushed for the US-NATO destabilisation of Syria through covert support of terrorist proxies – a dirty war that still rages on. And she earnestly advocated the US-NATO bombing of Libya, also in 2011, which resulted in the overthrow and murder of Muammar Gaddafi and turned that once stable prosperous country into an ongoing cesspit of internecine violence. Publicly, she gloated about the horrific video-lynching of Gaddafi with the sickening joke: «We came, we conquered, he died».

It was Clinton who also takes responsibility for ratcheting up the current US aggression towards Russia. Back in March 2009, she was photographed jokingly presenting Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov with a mock «reset button». That was supposed to herald a new era of partnership between Washington and Moscow. The reset button was quickly jettisoned by the US. Nearly three years later in December 2012, Clinton changed course sharply when she denounced the incipient Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan as «the re-Sovietisation» of the region.

Clinton said back in 2012 of the EEU: «There is a move to re-Sovietise the region. It won't be called that but make no mistake about it. We know what the goal is and we are trying to figure out effective ways to slow it or prevent it».

By the end of 2013, Washington had figured out a way to thwart Vladimir Putin pursuing neighbourly relations, by instigating an illegal coup in Ukraine to usher in a Neo-Nazi regime. That regime has waged a war of aggression on Russia's western border for the past year that has resulted in thousands of civilian deaths and more than one million refugees, invoking memories of the Ukrainian-assisted Nazi holocaust of the Second World War.

Therefore the only thing «liberal» about Clinton's political record is liberal use of naked American state violence and lawlessness in pursuit of policy objectives.

On launching her presidential credentials at the weekend, Clinton's Republican rivals or would-be rivals immediately fired the brickbats, accusing the 67-year-old former First Lady of being a «Washington insider» and the «embodiment of all that is wrong» in US politics. It's a charge that easily sticks. Clinton has become a household name ever since her husband, Bill, became president for two terms back in 1993. The couple may have been «dead broke» when they left the White House, but they have made up for it ever since through their corporate-funded Clinton Foundation, thus joining the wealthy elite that resides and operates in the Washington Beltway.

Among the donors to the Clinton Foundation, a supposedly humanitarian concern, are foreign governments, including the despotic royal rulers of Saudi Arabia and Qatar, who between them have donated over \$20 million even while she was working at the State Department between 2009-2012. Only the wilfully gullible could believe that such largesse did not influence Clinton's decision-making as Secretary of State, or in the future if she becomes president of the US.

The unintended irony of Clinton's Republican detractors, who include rabid rightwing Senators Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz, as well as the maverick Senator Rand Paul, is that every single one of them will have to spend similar amounts of cash in their anticipated presidential campaigns.

Indeed, any other contender for the race to the White House will likewise have to find billions of dollars to fund their campaign. That is a paramount necessity. All of them will have to court the favours of corporate donors and wealthy individuals. In that regard, all American presidential candidates are by definition «Washington insiders». They are all beholden to Wall Street banks, the mega corporations of the military-industrial complex, the oil companies, the Israeli and Saudi lobby and the financial aristocracy personified by Soros and others.

So, in substance, there is no difference between any of the American presidential candidates, whether they are Democrat or Republican. All are bought-and-paid-for by the top one per cent of super-rich in American society.

What will emerge is a contest over perception and image-making. Already Clinton's campaign-launch shows that she has invested in slick advertising techniques to sell her image. Her campaign video features a diverse collection of «ordinary Americans» who tell of their hopes for success in personal and work matters. Clinton appears in the two-minute video for only half the allotted time. She is seen standing outside a suburban home (rather than her own two palatial mansions) and she tells viewers: «Everyday Americans need a champion, and I want to be that champion».

Clinton's campaign over the next year is expected to focus on improving the economic benefits to working families and on the issue of income inequality, which has exploded in the US. How Clinton proposes to address those problems remains to be seen. She is said to be an advocate of increasing the minimum wage and for helping working mothers with childcare financial aid.

Such policy measures are tokenism given the scale of chronic wealth inequality that has been building over past decades across the US. It is reckoned that the top richest 400 individuals now possess wealth equivalent to the bottom half of the entire US population – or some 155 million Americans.

Nobel winning economist Joseph Stiglitz has called the US a «failed economy» in which inequality has become a structural condition.

But any politician in Washington who puts forward structural remedies for a structural problem will have no chance of entering the presidential campaign, never mind winning it. One such remedy to systematic inequality in the US is to introduce a thorough progressive tax system that comprehensively redistributes wealth from the financial oligarchy to the wider population. Decades of policy favouritism to the rich – under both Republicans and Democratic administrations alike – must be reversed.

However, such a campaign ticket would simply not happen. It is not so much that the wider American public would not rally to such a call. They most likely would. But in the anti-democratic, plutocratic system that is the US, it is simply the case that any potential contender

with a structural remedy would be excluded from even getting near the race starting line by the corporate funding machine.

The financial oligarchy that pays for all presidential candidates is not a turkey that votes for Christmas. It will make sure that all the candidates – who need to raise billions of dollars to have any chance of entering the contest – do not in anyway threaten the privileges of the one per cent.

Incumbent president, Barack Obama, is a case in point. He cynically used the emotional plea of «Yes, we can make a change» when he ran for election in 2008 as the first African-American. Since then Obama has emerged as a dutiful servant of Wall Street and big business, as well as the Pentagon corporations, «earning» in the process a personal net worth of \$ 5-10 million.

Clinton is likewise playing on the emotional appeal to Americans to vote for the «first female president». In other words, the «hope and change» nostrum is reprised all over again.

However, if American voters fall for that chimera, they will inevitably end up bitterly disappointed – again. America's social, political and economic collapse is structural. The disease is a symptom of the historical demise of capitalism into a parasitic speculative, moribund system. No one in Washington can offer an effective solution because of the ring-fencing through Big Money. Hillary Clinton and all her rivals from America's two main parties are hermetically sealed-in to ensure the one per cent are not in any way threatened with radical overhaul. That's why the system is in terminal collapse. It has no way of correcting itself.

Americans will see no change under a Hillary Clinton presidency except for further deterioration in their social conditions. The rest of the world, and Russia in particular, can be sure that Clinton will pursue more of the same militaristic aggression that characterised her four-year stint as Washington's top diplomat.

Whether described as «liberal», «conservative» or «hawk» – all American presidential candidates are the same in practice. Puppets for sale.