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BY NORMAN SOLOMON

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With Attack on Yemen, the U.S. is Shameless: “We Make the Rules, We Break the Rules”

Have you heard the one about the U.S. government wanting a “rules-based international order”?

It’s grimly laughable, but the nation’s media outlets routinely take such claims seriously and credulously. Overall, the default assumption is that top officials in Washington are reluctant to go to war, and do so only as a last resort.

The framing was typical when the New York Times printed this sentence at the top of the Friday front page: “The United States and a handful of its allies on Thursday carried out military strikes against more than a dozen targets in Yemen controlled by the Iranian-backed Houthi militia, U.S. officials said, in an expansion of the war in the Middle East that the Biden administration had sought to avoid for three months.”

So, from the outset, the coverage portrayed the U.S.-led attack as a reluctant action — taken after exploring all peaceful options had failed — rather than an aggressive act in violation of international law.

On Thursday, President Biden issued a statement that sounded righteous enough, saying “these strikes are in direct response to unprecedented Houthi attacks against international maritime vessels in the Red Sea.” He did not mention that the Houthi attacks have been in response to Israel’s murderous siege of Gaza. In the words of CNN, they “could be intended to inflict economic pain on Israel’s allies in the hope they will pressure it to cease its bombardment of the enclave.”

In fact, as Common Dreams reported, Houthi forces “began launching missiles and drones toward Israel and attacking shipping traffic in the Red Sea in response to Israel’s Gaza

onslaught.” And as Trita Parsi at the Quincy Institute pointed out, “the Houthis have declared that they will stop” attacking ships in the Red Sea “if Israel stops” its mass killing in Gaza.

But that would require genuine diplomacy — not the kind of solution that appeals to President Biden or Secretary of State Antony Blinken. The duo has been enmeshed for decades, with lofty rhetoric masking the tacit precept that might makes right. (The approach was implicit midway through 2002, when then-Senator Biden chaired the Senate Foreign Relations Committee’s hearings that promoted support for the U.S. to invade Iraq; at the time, Blinken was the committee’s chief of staff.)

Now, in charge of the State Department, Blinken is fond of touting the need for a “rules-based international order.” During a 2022 speech in Washington, he proclaimed the necessity “to manage relations between states, to prevent conflict, to uphold the rights of all people.” Two months ago, he declared that G7 nations were united for “a rules-based international order.”

But for more than three months, Blinken has provided a continuous stream of facile rhetoric to support the ongoing methodical killing of Palestinian civilians in Gaza. Days ago, behind a podium at the U.S. Embassy in Israel, he defended that country despite abundant evidence of genocidal warfare, claiming that “the charge of genocide is meritless.”

The Houthis are avowedly in solidarity with Palestinian people, while the U.S. government continues to massively arm the Israeli military that is massacring civilians and systematically destroying Gaza. Blinken is so immersed in Orwellian messaging that — several weeks into the slaughter — he tweeted that the United States and its G7 partners “stand united in our condemnation of Russia’s war in Ukraine, in support of Israel’s right to defend itself in accordance with international law, and in maintaining a rules-based international order.”

There’s nothing unusual about extreme doublethink being foisted on the public by the people running U.S. foreign policy. What they perpetrate is a good fit for the description of doublethink in George Orwell’s novel *1984*: “To know and not to know, to be conscious of complete truthfulness while telling carefully constructed lies, to hold simultaneously two opinions which cancelled out, knowing them to be contradictory and believing in both of them, to use logic against logic, to repudiate morality while laying claim to it . . .”

After news broke about the attack on Yemen, a number of Democrats and Republicans in the House quickly spoke up against Biden’s end-run around Congress, flagrantly violating the Constitution by going to war on his own say-so. Some of the comments were laudably clear, but perhaps none more so than a statement by candidate Joe Biden on Jan. 6, 2020: “A president should never take this nation to war without the informed consent of the American people.”

Like that disposable platitude, all the Orwellian nonsense coming from the top of the U.S. government about seeking a “rules-based international order” is nothing more than a brazen PR scam.

The vast quantity of official smoke-blowing now underway cannot hide the reality that the United States government is the most powerful and dangerous outlaw nation in the world.

*Norman Solomon is the national director of RootsAction.org and executive director of the Institute for Public Accuracy. His latest book, *War Made Invisible: How America Hides the Human Toll of Its Military Machine*, is published by *The New Press*.*

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