

Reflections on Norway, Libya and Hatred of 'the Other'

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I wonder whether out of this Norwegian tragedy there cannot be much water found to pour on the war fires around the world.

I have watched keenly this war unfold in Libya, as I have followed previous wars.

One of the servants of the Libyan war's continuation is public opinion in the West. Sadly, we have elected representative governments that do not represent the true wishes and feelings of the majority. I say that for two reasons relative to the Libyan war. The mainstream Western media (include not just Fox News, but the New York Times, the BBC, CNN and others) are propoganda servants to the war agenda. Service to the oligarchic social order is the the other reason (I shall return to that).

One way to gain public support is to publish outright lies. Another, is that one journalist in a big name newspaper runs a line, and others simply quote the original falsehood. All of this has happened in the coverage of the Libyan war. I noted the size of the pro-Gadaffi demonstrations and also noted the spin given by the BBC and others to diminish its implications. Millions marching in the street was not to be deemed as support by the majority of the Libyans for their leader.

But, the point I am driving at is a link between the recent tragedy in Norway and the bombing of Libya.

I read years ago where Leonardo Da Vinci had designed flying machines, but shelved them when he weighed the great damage to humans that such devices would do if ever made operative. He had some humanity; our modern humanity, by contrast, has been desensitised, but not totally. We do note that in the Western mainstream media's reporting there are no Libyan human interest stories. Of course not – the Libyan mother who loses a child in a US/NATO bombing is not a human loss and tragedy to be counted. By contrast, in Norway, the Western media will be full of stories of the human loss and tragedy to the Noweigian mother, the Norwegian father, the Norwegian family. There will simply not be a majority of broad-brush politically motivated journalistic commentaries against 'the enemy'. The Norwegians can safely be projected to the reading Western public as humans – the Libyans cannot, except to state that there is an on-going "humanitarian bombing mission" to save the Libyans from a leader that the majority want. Pro-war sentiments have to be nutured; anti-war sentiments have to be suppressed.

How do we en mass bring all of us, human beings, back into contact with our common humanity? Do we juxtapose an image of the tears of a Norweigan mother against the tears of a Libyan mother; an Iraqi mother? That would be a very effective front page picture on one of the mainstream mass circulation Western papers. The similarity and commonality of human suffering, grief and loss is a very human story that many of us would love to hear. And, wordsmiths and an able journalist could write the prize-winning story that helped to bring us back to our senses. But, it is not going to happen – the Libyan mother is the enemy as is the Iraqi mother. "They" are not "us" – so we must distance, differentiate and ultimately minimise the other's humanity. That is how we in the West assist the war cause. But, with Norwegians we can safely portray true human grief – "we" are them – "they" are "us" – fellow human beings.

I am suggesting that there is an actual political and psychological management of the global war agenda. What do I mean?

George Kennan, the US architect of the cold war made these observations:-

"It may be true, and I suspect it is, that the mass of people everywhere are normally peace-loving and would accept many restraints and sacrifices in preference to the monstrous calamities of war."

And

"We should cease to talk about vague and unreal objectives such as human rights, the raising of the living standards, and democratization. The day is not far off when we are going to have to deal in straight power concepts. The less we are then hampered by idealistic slogans, the better."

And

"Were the Soviet Union to sink tomorrow under the waters of the ocean, the American military establishment would have to go on, substantially unchanged, until some other adversary could be invented. Anything else would be an unacceptable shock to the American economy."

The adversary has to be created in Al-Quaida – in the Muslims – in the Islamists – in "them" versus "us" – so we must first be nurtured, taught and learn how to hate to find justification for the war.

Someone said this:-

"Without an enemy image you cannot have an oligarchic society" The video explains <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2tx5pbVnDXM>

(Methinks, like Winston, I am committing thought crimes).

If we stepped back and considered what we have done over the past decade -from Afghanistan to Libya – we find this. A single man hold up in a cave supposedly orchestrated and masterminded 9/11 – so that provided justification to have carpet bombed an already devastated Afghanistan that had recently concluded a war with the then Soviet Union. In Iraq – I guess the Americans are still in occupation because they can't leave before they find the WMDs. In Libya we have the perfect example of the Vietnam logic - "It became necessary to destroy the village in order to save it." – the justification for the My Lai massacre. Thus, the "humanitarian bombing mission" over Libya.

We from the West are making wars to save the people who are subjected to Western belligerence. We have a "war on terror" because, as George Kennan correctly observed, "Were the Soviet Union to sink tomorrow under the waters of the ocean, the American military establishment would have to go on..." and it and NATO's militaries have gone on...and on....and on....and.....

Peace! And, may we all be hampered by more idealistic slogans for the general good of humankind.

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