

ISIS murders US journalist James Foley

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The barbaric murder of American journalist James Foley, who was abducted in Syria nearly two years ago, is being seized upon by Washington as a means of justifying its deepening military intervention in Iraq and its pursuit of the predatory interests of US imperialism throughout the region.

Foley's death was revealed to the world through the release by Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) of a repellent video entitled "Message to America" in which the journalist, dressed in an orange jump suit and kneeling in the desert, recites a prepared statement as a masked man clad in black stands over him holding a knife.

Before beheading Foley, the masked man, who speaks with a London accent, addresses US President Barack Obama directly, denouncing the recent wave of US bombings against ISIS in Iraq and warning that continued interference with the Islamist group's operations will "result in the bloodshed of your people."

At the end of the video, the ISIS killer appears with a second individual dressed in an orange jump suit, identified as Steven Sotloff, another American journalist who disappeared in Syria a year ago, threatening that his life depends upon Obama's "next decision."

Foley, 40, had worked as a freelance journalist covering the wars in both Libya and Syria for news outlets such as the web site GlobalPost and the AFP news agency. In remarks delivered to journalism students in Chicago in 2011, weeks after he had been held captive for 44 days in Libya, he described himself as "basically a war protester" who at age 35 decided to become a journalist to tell the stories of people affected by war.

Obama briefly interrupted his vacation in Martha's Vineyard Wednesday to deliver televised remarks on the brutal killing. Recounting his phoning of

condolences to Foley's family, the US president denounced ISIS for having "rampaged across cities and villages killing innocent, unarmed civilians in cowardly acts of violence," and insisted that such an organization "has no place in the 21st century."

Twice Obama invoked American "values," declaring them "the opposite of what we saw yesterday" in the ISIS beheading video. He vowed that Washington would be "vigilant and we will be relentless," and would "do what's necessary to see that justice is done."

Obama's remarks were saturated through and through with deceit and hypocrisy. For all the talk of "American values" standing as the opposite of ISIS, the reality is that the retrograde Islamist movement is in the final analysis a product of US imperialism's successive interventions in the region.

Horrific crimes like that committed against James Foley have been taking place for years, many of them proudly recorded and posted on YouTube by the ISIS propaganda department. Members of religious minorities and others have been beheaded, crucified, subjected to mass shootings and buried alive.

The Obama administration remained silent about these crimes because they were carried out in Syria by ISIS and other Sunni sectarian Islamists operating under the umbrella of the so-called rebels, whose operations have been backed by Washington in a war for "regime change" against the government of President Bashar al-Assad.

For the same reason, the kidnapping of James Foley, Steven Sotloff and at least three other American journalists received little attention in Washington, since their abductors were the US-backed "rebels," rather than the regime that the US is seeking to overthrow.

The same Islamist fighters that the Obama administration backed in Syria—and in the US-NATO war for regime change in Libya three years ago—as

champions of “freedom” and “democracy” suddenly became “terrorists” when they swept across the border into Iraq, linking up with Sunni insurgents and overwhelming the US-trained security forces.

In an attempt to confront the debacle created by its own policies, from the destruction of Iraqi society and the killing of upwards of a million Iraqis in a war based upon lies through to the backing of Islamist “rebels” in Libya and Syria, the Obama administration is now embarked on a third US war in Iraq, carrying out nearly 90 airstrikes in the past two weeks and deploying a growing number of US military “advisers.”

In his statement, Obama also insisted that the US and its “friends and allies around the world...share a common security and a common set of values.”

In reality, the main US allies in the Arab world are Saudi Arabia, where beheadings at the direction of the ruling monarchy are common practice, and Qatar. Both of these countries have been the principal sources of financing and ideological inspiration for the Islamists now fighting in both Syria and Iraq.

While Obama spelled out no new concrete actions that would be taken in response to the murder of Foley, the *Washington Post* reported that a US official, asked if Washington might consider suspending airstrikes to avoid the killing of other American hostages, responded that the “only question is if we do more.”

James Foley’s parents spoke to the media outside their home in New Hampshire Wednesday, tearfully expressing their love for and pride in their son and insisting that he “would not want us to hate or be bitter.” They appealed to the ISIS to spare the lives of the other captive journalists. “Like Jim, they are innocents,” said the slain journalist’s mother, Diane Foley. “They have no control over American government policy in Iraq, Syria or anywhere in the world.”

These sentiments stood in stark contrast to the jingoistic and militarist frothing of the corporate media. Emblematic was an editorial published Wednesday by the New York *Daily News*, headlined “There must be blood,” and concluding that Obama’s “limited objectives and rules of engagements” in Iraq “will no longer serve.” The clear implication is that Foley’s tragic death must be turned into the pretext for another full-scale US war of aggression in the Middle East.



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