Washington's "human rights" imperialism exposed

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The Obama administration announced Tuesday that it is resuming arms shipments to the military dictatorship in Egypt, beginning with the transfer of 12 F-16 fighter jets, missiles and the components required to build 125 tanks. In a personal call to Egypt's ruler, General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, Obama also pledged to resume the annual transfer of $1.3 billion in military aid.

The White House made no effort to claim that Egypt had made "credible progress toward an inclusive, democratically elected civilian government"—the statutory condition for ending the suspension of military aid imposed in October 2013. Instead, it invoked an exemption passed by Congress late last year to override this requirement.

Resuming military aid to Egypt, the second largest recipient of such assistance from the US, after Israel, is "in the interest of US national security," a White House statement declared. Obama told al-Sisi it was necessary for Egypt and the US to "refine our military assistance relationship so that it is better positioned to address the shared challenges to US and Egyptian interests…"

The administration could not even make a pretense that Egypt had made a turn toward democracy. The blood-soaked al-Sisi regime has not slackened its murderous repression one iota. Since coming to power, it has brutally repressed protests. Political opponents have been beaten, killed and arrested en masse. According to one count, more than 41,000 people have been locked up since the ouster of Muslim Brotherhood President Mohamed Mursi in 2013. More than 1,000 political opponents have been sentenced to death.

The decision to resume arms shipments to Egypt came only two days after the announcement by Ukraine's interior minister, Arsen Avakov, that US military forces will begin direct training of right-wing National Guard militias organized by the Kiev regime, including the fascist Azov Battalion. This outfit, founded and led by neo-Nazis, has been on the front lines of the war in eastern Ukraine against pro-Russian separatists.

These are only two of the most damning exposures of the "human rights" pretenses of American foreign policy. With increasing brazenness, the United States functions as the spearhead of militarism and reaction all over the world. It is driven to support the most brutal regimes in pursuit of its program of global domination through military force.

The immediate spur for the resumption of arms shipments to Egypt is the air war against Yemen, led by Saudi Arabia and backed by the Obama administration. Egypt and Saudi Arabia have announced plans for a possible ground invasion alongside the escalating bombing campaign, with the goal of ousting Houthi forces backed by Iran. The additional military equipment Washington is sending to Egypt would undoubtedly be deployed in such a ground assault.

The two US allies leading this campaign sum up the character of the enterprise. The brutality of the Egyptian regime is matched by that of the Saudi monarchy, which rules with an iron fist, carries out beheadings with gruesome regularity, and has funneled money to Al Qaeda and other Islamic fundamentalist groups as part of the US regime-change operation in Syria.

As for Ukraine, support for openly fascistic forces has been a hallmark of the US-led operation that began last February with the ousting of the elected pro-Russian president. That putsch was spearheaded by the neo-Nazi Svoboda Party and Right Sector. Throughout Eastern Europe, the US is relying on right-wing, nationalist, racist and anti-Semitic movements and governments as part of its military-economic-

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diplomatic drive to isolate, undermine and, ultimately, dismember Russia.

On the other side of the world is Honduras, where death squads linked to the US-backed government of Juan Orlando Hernández have been carrying out a reign of terror against students protesting against education cuts, including the abduction, torture and murder of at least four young people. Hernández is the successor to President Porfirio Lobo, who came to power following a US-backed coup in 2009.

The US provides tens of millions of dollars annually to the Honduran police and military, headed by a regime that *Foreign Policy* recently described as "a cesspool of corruption and organized crime in which the topmost levels of government are enmeshed." Hernández and Lobo have overseen the establishment of police militias with close ties to drug gangs and pushed for the direct involvement of the military in domestic repression.

The coming together of the police and military with right-wing death squads and drug gangs—funded with US money—is repeated in other countries in Latin America, most notably Mexico. The entire Mexican state is complicit in the massacre of 43 students last year, and the UN special envoy on torture declared earlier this month that the use of torture had become "generalized" in the country. None of this has had any impact on the full support the Obama administration accords the government of Mexican President Peña Nieto, which is pushing through economic "reforms" aimed at opening up the energy sector to foreign capital.

One could cite dozens of examples along these lines. The American financial aristocracy exports the blood, filth and criminality embedded in its social being wherever it seeks to dominate and control—and there is no part of the world that is exempt from this drive.

From the beginning of the rise of American imperialism, the ruling class has sought to couch its predatory ambitions in the language of "freedom," "human rights" and "American values." As Trotsky noted in 1924, "America is always liberating somebody. That is her profession." At no other time, however, have the ideological justifications for aggression been so threadbare.

One final point. The ever more naked exposure of the criminality of American imperialism coincides with the further shift to the right of the organizations of the privileged middle class—the liberal and pseudo-left backers of the Obama administration.

Those who once presented themselves as "anti-war" have taken the opportunity of Obama's election to line up directly behind US imperialism, backing US-led operations in Libya, Egypt, Syria, Ukraine and Iraq, among others. They have jumped onto the bandwagon of "human rights imperialism" precisely at the point where it is being decisively exposed before the people of the United States and the entire world.

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