

Sidney Blumenthal, Clinton, Inc. and the rape of Libya

Bill Van Auken
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“We came, we saw, he died,” then-US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton boasted to CBS News in October 2011 after Muammar Gaddafi was captured, savagely tortured, and murdered by Islamist militants acting as a US proxy force in the war for regime change in Libya.

While Clinton laughed giddily at what she apparently thought was a terribly clever joke, if she had been candid she would have added, “And now my cronies are going to make a killing.”

This is the significance of revelations concerning a series of memos on Libya provided to Clinton by Sidney Blumenthal, a former White House aide under President Bill Clinton and currently a paid advisor to both the Clinton Foundation and a pair of “super-PACs” formed to pave the way to Hillary Clinton’s campaign for the 2016 Democratic presidential nomination.

As the *New York Times* reported Tuesday, Clinton passed on these memos—written during the US-NATO war and its aftermath—to top State Department officials and to the US ambassadors to Libya, effectively giving them her seal of approval. Her subordinates were told that the source was an “anonymous” contact of the Secretary of State.

“Much of the Libya intelligence that Mr. Blumenthal passed on to Mrs. Clinton appears to have come from a group of business associates he was advising as they sought to win contracts from the Libyan transitional government,” the *Times* reported. “The venture, which was ultimately unsuccessful, involved other Clinton friends, a private military contractor and one former CIA spy seeking to get in on the ground floor of the new Libyan economy.”

The House Select Committee on Benghazi, the Republican-organized panel investigating the deadly September 2012 attack on a secret CIA station and a

US consulate in the eastern Libyan city, revealed Tuesday that it sent US Marshals to formally serve Blumenthal with a subpoena compelling his testimony.

A number of Blumenthal’s memos, which were distributed within the State Department as back-channel intelligence cables, touched directly on profit-making ventures that the Clinton family aide and his partners were promoting, ranging from provision of private military contractors to train Libyan “rebels” to touting a Libyan businessman, Najib Obeida, as becoming one of the “most influential” economic advisors to the US-installed transitional government. Obeida, it seems was being sought as a Libyan partner for the US contractors represented by Blumenthal.

Other proposed ventures included the building of hospitals, schools and other infrastructure after the decimation of the country during seven months of NATO bombing.

In the end, Blumenthal and his business partners did not make a fortune off the US-NATO rape of Libya, but not for lack of trying or, for that matter, Hillary Clinton’s assistance. Their proposed projects—like virtually all business activity, including plans for privatization and exploitation of the country’s massive oil reserves—proved unfeasible under conditions in which rival factions of Islamist militias have turned against each other, plunging the North African country into a protracted civil war that has only intensified its devastation.

In her first interaction with the media in nearly a month, Hillary Clinton responded in Iowa to a question about the Blumenthal memos:

“I always think that it’s important when you get into politics to have friends you had before you got into politics, to understand what’s on their minds. He’s been a friend of mine for a long time ... When you’re in

the public eye, when you're in an official position, I think you do have to work to ensure that you're not caught in a bubble."

The pretense that Sidney Blumenthal is someone outside Washington's—or more narrowly the Clinton machine's—"bubble" is preposterous. He has been a paid hatchet man of the Clintons since serving Bill Clinton in the White House as a speechwriter and advisor. He is widely credited with coining the phrase "vast right-wing conspiracy," a fairly accurate description of the forces mobilized in the attempt to impeach Bill Clinton over the Monica Lewinsky affair.

More recently, he served as a chief figure in Hillary Clinton's unsuccessful 2008 bid for the Democratic presidential nomination. During this contest, he turned to the very elements of the "conspiracy" that he denounced a decade earlier as a source of conspiracy theories and manufactured dirt about Clinton's principal rival, Barack Obama, which he then passed on. As a result, when Obama tapped Clinton as Secretary of State, Blumenthal was specifically barred from holding any post in the State Department.

As the *Times* noted, the Blumenthal-Clinton memos "circumvented the elaborate procedures established by the federal government to ensure that high-level officials are provided with vetted assessments of available intelligence." They did so, it should be added, for the purpose of furthering the profit interests of a close associate of Hillary Clinton, the Secretary of State.

The war on Libya was packaged by the Obama administration as a struggle for human rights, a war to save the Libyan people from a threat of a massacre at the hands of the Gaddafi regime, though today it is widely acknowledged that there was no evidence of mass killing before the US and NATO intervened. Figures like Clinton, Blumenthal, Samantha Power and others promoted this war, aided by a coterie of middle class pseudo-left organizations and accomplices in academia, who hailed it as a humanitarian crusade and even cast the advances of the Islamist militias under the cover of NATO bombs as a "democratic revolution."

What the Blumenthal-Clinton memos offer is a glimpse of the real motives driving these people, which were in no essential way different than those that drove Bush, Cheney and Co. a decade earlier. In both cases, war policy was set by a collection of political gangsters

working in the interests of finance capital, the oil industry and their own personal enrichment. In both countries, they were prepared to decimate entire societies, killing, maiming and forcing from their homes millions of innocent civilians, in order to create more favorable conditions for plundering their natural resources.

Just as with Cheney's Halliburton and KBR, the machinations of Blumenthal and Clinton make clear that the profit interests of America's ruling oligarchy driving US wars of aggression are not some abstraction. They involve real people thrusting their noses about like pigs at the trough.

In the same brief interaction with the press in Iowa, Clinton was asked about how she could claim to represent the interests of average Americans when she and her husband had raked in some \$30 million in the last 16 months, most of it from paid speeches to corporate audiences.

"Well, obviously, Bill and I have been blessed and we're very grateful for the opportunities that we've had," the Democratic candidate replied.

Divine favor had nothing to do with it. The money poured in as a result of the Clintons' shameless selling of political influence and their servility to the interests of Wall Street and big business. In the grasping for wealth that characterizes the social layer of which they are a part, no crime is too great, including wars of aggression and mass murder.



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