

“Godfather” Biden visits Turkey

Andre Damon
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On Wednesday, US Vice President Joseph Biden arrived in Turkey to announce, at a joint press conference with President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, that the United States military would directly support Turkey in its incursion into northern Syria.

“We strongly support what the Turkish military has done, we have been flying air cover for them,” Biden said, adding, “We believe very strongly that the Turkish border should be controlled by Turkey.”

The announcement represented an about-face for Washington. In July, Erdoğan survived a military coup, which is widely believed to have enjoyed US support. For the past six weeks, the US government, along with its media mouthpieces, has been denouncing Erdoğan for using the coup to launch a crackdown against dissident factions within the Turkish state seen to be closely linked to Washington.

Biden’s reversal was at the same time a double-cross of the Kurdish forces which the US had promoted as its proxies in the Syria conflict.

During the press conference, Biden apologized for the White House not having announced its support for Erdoğan at the beginning of the coup attempt. He declared, somewhat incoherently, “Let me say it for one last time: The American people stand with you. We (inaudible). Barack Obama was one of the first people you called. But I do apologize. I wish I could have been here earlier.”

Biden’s performance recalls a well-known scene in Francis Ford Coppola’s *The Godfather*, where a Mafia assassin sympathetically reassures his victim, “This is business, not personal.”

The Godfather is, indeed, an appropriate reference point for a discussion of the planning and execution of US foreign policy. Its global operations are directed by a cabal of intelligence agents, acting in the interests of the financial and corporate elite, whose operations have an essentially conspiratorial and criminal character. Outside of and beyond any democratically controlled decision-making, these forces overturn governments and start wars

to further the sordid commercial and geo-political aims of American imperialism.

The foreign policy of the American ruling class, in addition to the impoverishment of American society to fund the vast military apparatus, has had the most horrifying consequences for the peoples of the countries targeted. The war fomented by the United States in Syria has reduced the population of that country from 23 million to about 17 million, killed up to half a million people, and displaced over 13 million.

Thirteen years after the invasion of Iraq, which resulted in the deaths of at least a million people, some 4.4 million Iraqis are internally displaced, with over a quarter million forced to flee the country.

Questions of foreign policy are not decided, much less deliberated, within the framework of elections. Nowhere in the 2016 presidential race is there a serious debate, for instance, on the character of the US alliance with Turkey or the consequences of launching a de facto NATO invasion of Syria. Congress holds no hearings or votes. It neither seeks nor desires to play a serious role.

As for the people, they simply have no say.

The press plays a key role in the deception and disenfranchisement of the population. One tactic employed by the corporate-controlled media is simply to exclude “minor” developments such as a US-backed invasion of Syria from the so-called “news.” The most remarkable feature of the media coverage to date of the Turkish incursion is its virtual non-existence. It is a good bet, due to the media’s corrupt silence, that the percentage of the US population that is even aware of the invasion is in the single digits.

The blackout of actual reporting is accompanied by cynical “human rights” propaganda on TV about the suffering of Syrian children in Aleppo, which just happens to coincide with setbacks for the US-backed, Al Qaeda-linked “rebels” at the hands of Russian-backed Syrian government forces seeking to dislodge the Islamist militias and take full control of the strategic city.

There are dishonest columns in leading newspapers,

particularly the *New York Times*, agitating in the name of “human rights” for a more aggressive intervention by the US. Without mentioning Biden’s trip to Turkey or the incursion into Syria, *Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof penned an op-ed Thursday entitled “Anne Frank Today Is a Syrian Girl,” in which he sought to pull at the heartstrings of his readers in an effort to convince them that the bloodbath in Syria is not the result of the US-backed proxy war, but rather the outcome of America’s failure to pursue a more violent military intervention.

On the same day, another *Times* columnist, Roger Cohen, bemoaned “America’s Retreat and the Agony of Aleppo,” and complained that Obama’s decision not to launch a full-scale war in 2013 to destroy the government of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad was Obama’s “worst mistake.”

For a quarter-century, during which US governments, Democratic and Republican, have waged virtually non-stop war, such threadbare humanitarian pleas have been trotted out every time the ruling elite wanted to engage in a new bloody adventure.

These 25 years are only a foretaste of what is to come if Washington is allowed to continue on its present course. The launching of a NATO invasion of the Syrian war zone brings ever closer a direct clash with nuclear-armed Russia, which is militarily supporting the Damascus regime.

Nobody should believe that the criminal cabal that runs US foreign policy will proceed with any more deliberation or caution in launching a war whose body count will be in the hundreds of millions, if not billions, than it does in plotting wars in which “mere” millions of lives are squandered.

The wars must be stopped. A central aim of the presidential campaign of the Socialist Equality Party is to mobilize opposition among working people and youth to the criminal and reckless war policies of American imperialism.



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