

Pompeo vows that the CIA will become a “much more vicious agency”

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On Thursday, CIA Director Mike Pompeo told a conference that the CIA will become a “much more vicious agency” in fighting against its enemies.

Pompeo made this announcement as part of an interview with the neoconservative think-tank Foundation for Defense of Democracies’ Center on Sanctions and Illicit Finance chairman Juan Zarate. The interview, which started with Zarate proclaiming his excitement over speaking to Pompeo, provided a platform for the CIA director to proclaim his support for the Trump administration’s aggressive militaristic policies around the world.

Echoing Trump’s recent denunciation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the multilateral agreement that lifted sanctions against Iran in exchange for the severe limiting and monitoring of Iran’s nuclear facilities, Pompeo claimed the JCPOA failed to “curtail Iranian adventurism” and “malignant behavior.” He also claimed Iran was destabilizing the region by arming Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Houthis in Yemen, while adding the nonsensical allegation that these movements have “worked alongside Al Qaeda.”

The sheer hypocrisy of Pompeo’s claims is breathtaking. Over the past 50 years the US has played an unparalleled role in destabilizing the Middle East, including through the CIA’s role in creating Al Qaeda in the 1980s as part of the fight to overthrow the Soviet-backed government in Afghanistan, the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the arming of Islamist extremist forces in Libya to overthrow Gaddafi and its continued support for these same forces in the ongoing conflict in Syria.

His claim that Iran and its allies are collaborating with Al Qaeda is particularly nonsensical as the regime in Tehran is Shia, and in conflict with Al Qaeda’s extreme Sunni sectarianism.

Pompeo, however, does not start from the facts, but instead from the policy objectives of US imperialism and the supposed need to increase the resources allocated to the CIA. As a result, he has concocted a bizarre right-wing narrative in which Iran and North Korea are collaborating with each other and terrorist groups out of a shared hatred of “the West.”

He claimed that the two countries engage in “technology exchange...for the betterment of each of their weaponization programs,” and pose a danger to America and its allies. And, furthermore, that the US “ought to behave as if we are on the cusp of” North Korea gaining a nuclear arsenal.

Such claims have also been made by Trump, who has gone so far as to threaten “total destruction” of the impoverished East Asian nation. There have also been open discussions about using “decapitation squads” to execute North Korean leader Kim Jung Un and other top government officials. Only a day prior to Pompeo’s interview, Trump tweeted that prospects for a military conflict on the Korean Peninsula “are greater than they have been in several decades.”

In a surprisingly candid statement by Pompeo, he admitted that Kim’s “end-state” beyond developing nuclear capabilities and other weapons was simply his “continued capacity to go to sleep in a really nice bed in Pyongyang every night.”

The clear implications that the CIA director did not draw out is that Pyongyang rightly sees the US as an aggressor and is attempting to ward off an invasion through the development of a nuclear capability.

Pompeo also made several aggressive statements about the need to combat “non-state actors” and covert “Russian info-ops,” in which information shared by organizations like WikiLeaks had to be “taken down.”

Joining in on the neo-McCarthyite scam of

unsubstantiated claims that Russian-sponsored social media accounts and WikiLeaks influenced the 2016 election, he added that the threat that future elections will be hacked would continue “until there is a new leader in Russia” and the primary task of the CIA is to “deliver that understanding to the president of the United States.”

Pompeo’s statements reflect the sentiments of a large section of the political establishment and intelligence communities that increasingly see the need to further build up the US intelligence agencies as part of the preparation for war.

Only seven days before his interview at the FDD, Pompeo made similar remarks at the University of Texas at Austin National Security Forum, where he hailed Trump for proving the CIA with the “funding, authorities, or policy guidance” and allowing the agency to become “faster and more aggressive.”

The agency, he stated, “must be aggressive, vicious, unforgiving, relentless,” adding that “unceasing risk-taking is foundational” to the CIA’s activities. He added that the Trump administration was casting off restraints imposed by “the previous administration.”

The clear implication is that in addition to continuing the global drone assassination program carried out under the Obama administration, the CIA is steadily reconstructing the apparatus of rendition, black sites and torture that made it infamous around the world, while sending its agents and contractors into secret wars behind the backs of the American people.



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