

An Analysis of Bernie Sanders' Moral Superiority

By Gregory Robert Grant. Published January 13, 2016. Feel free to redistribute or re-publish.

Let's get right to it. I believe Bernie Sanders would be as dangerous a president as any candidate running, Democrat or Republican. And in one very real and scary sense, he could be the worst of them all. If this sounds unlikely to you, I posit that it is because of how deeply indoctrinated we are in this country. Please allow me to explain. First off, by "danger" I do not mean the danger of people working more hours for lower wages, instead I am referring to the cold blooded murder of civilians, women and children, for profit. I am talking about waging wars of conquest for the (real and perceived) interests of the U.S. business community.

First, some background. True, Sanders was against the Iraq war. And, as such, he has gained a reputation as the anti-war candidate in the current campaign. Popular conception is that, if he is not a full-fledged pacifist, then he is just short of one. We always bless one candidate as representing the so-called "left" and to endow him or her with the anti-war position. Obama for example received the (significant) anti-war vote in 2008, from a war weary population, even though he was a vociferous proponent of war in his campaign (more on this later). Confusion revealed itself when Anderson Cooper asked Sanders during the first democratic debate how he could lead the military given he applied to be a conscientious objector during the Vietnam War. To this Sanders proudly reminded Cooper that he is "not a pacifist" and that he supported the war against Afghanistan in 2002 and he supported the war against Serbia in 1999 and he assured us that he would gladly do it again. He doesn't want to present himself as anti-war; he wants to presents himself as the rational warrior, the smart warrior, the good warrior.

So what could possibly be wrong with his position? What's wrong with it is that the Iraq and Afghanistan and Serbia wars are not as different as people like to think. This controversial statement requires significant evidence to back it up, so if you want to know the truth you'll have to give me some time here to explain. I'll try to be as concise because I know your time is valuable. But strong claims require strong arguments and there is no way to do that in soundbites. If you are too busy for something that does not immediately put food on your table, I cannot blame you, life is hard. But for those who do have the time and energy for this topic, please bear with me.

Mr. Sanders says he was against the Iraq war because it was based on an incorrect assessment about weapons of mass destruction. Many people believe that the incorrect assessment was not a mistake at all, rather it was an intentional lie concocted to mobilize the population to support an otherwise unjustifiable war. After all, Iraq had nothing to do with Al Qaida or the 9/11 attacks, nobody claims otherwise and it is well known that Saddam Hussein hated Al Qaida as much as anybody. But some influences from on high wanted to overthrow Saddam Hussein. This isn't a controversial statement; both parties had been extremely antagonistic to Saddam Hussein since 1991 and both sides of the aisle supported his overthrow. Where they disagreed was exactly on how to do it. You didn't hear anybody including Sanders argue for leaving Iraq alone. In 1998 Sanders voted "yes" on Bill Clinton's measure called "The Iraq Liberation Act" where he warned of the perils if the U.S. "failed to act" and Hussein managed to achieve "release of the sanctions."¹ The measure passed the House 360-38 and unanimously in the Senate and was cited in 2002 to argue for the use of military force in Iraq. Hundreds of thousands died of starvation and lack of medicine because of the actions of the Democratic Party leadership. Then in 2003 he voted in support of the Iraq war² commending the president for "his firm

¹ H.Con.Res.4655 1998 (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/105th-congress/house-bill/4655>)

² H.Con.Res.104 2003 (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/108th-congress/house-concurrent-resolution/104>), see also <http://edition.cnn.com/2003/ALLPOLITICS/03/20/sprj.irq.congress.reax>

leadership and decisive action in the conduct of military operations in Iraq as part of the ongoing global war on terrorism." Furthermore Sanders co-sponsored the bill responsible for the U.S. involvement in the war in Libya, which utterly and completely destroyed that country³.

So although he hopes nobody will remember Sanders is fully culpable in the behavior of the U.S. that built up to the situation we have now and it is hard to believe Sanders would not have voted for direct military conflict in 2002 had it been under Democratic leadership. Looking at his complete record it becomes clear that his vote against the war in 2002 was an anomaly. And his vote to support and continue the war in 2003 shows it was a short-lived anomaly. If he had the common sense that people like to attribute to him he would have opposed the antagonism that was pushing the situation in the direction of conflict to begin with. In retrospect, would the situation in Iraq be worse right now had we had just completely left them alone? We'll never know, but it doesn't seem likely that Al Qaida and ISIS would be marauding around Iraq like they are now, if Hussein was still in charge. So it seems this was a mistake in foreign policy that made by a vast majority of senators and congressmen, with catastrophic consequences. To his credit Bernie Sanders did vote against the use of military force in Iraq in 2003. By now few holdouts disagree the war was a mistake so Sanders is getting huge political mileage out of that vote.

But getting back to tactics, the pre-9/11 the Democrat strategy to destabilize the Iraqi government was to starve the Iraqi people to death. When asked if it was worth starving some 500,000 children to death through the 90's Madeline Albright replied "we think the price is worth it." Meanwhile the republicans preferred the violent solution, to bomb them back to the Stone Age. But both sides agreed that it was the responsibility of the United States to overthrow this country's government, one way or another. And that includes Bernie Sanders. That all changed after 9/11 when half of the democrats moved to the other side and got on board with the violent solution, leading ultimately to the invasion in 2003, which passed with a vote of 77-23 in the Senate and 297-133 in the House.

Bernie Sanders voted no, but make no mistake, he is clearly willing to destabilize other countries, by starvation and by force. He declared in the second Democrat debate in 2015 that the U.S. needs to lead a coalition of military resistance to ISIS. This is clearly not a person who is going to work for peace. Just like Obama, he will simply fight different wars and call them the "good" wars. The danger then is that we will have almost the entire population being pro-war. Obama already did an amazing job in getting the left on board with a state of continuous war. Sanders will take it to even a higher level. That is definitely not the direction we should be moving. At least under Bush the population opposed the wars and saw them as the evil they were. In a sense a large percent of the country moved to the left under Bush, and then moved far back to the right under Obama. As a democrat, all Obama had to do was to rebrand some wars as "the good wars" and the population got in line.

Now Hussein was indeed a dictator who took power through assassinations and not elections. Yet Iraq was still among the better places to live in the Middle East in terms of health, education, welfare, women's rights, and culture in general. Yes he may have made some of his neighbors nervous. But was he really so dangerous that total war causing the death of upwards of a million people was the only reasonable solution? Searching for an excuse to invade, we could have opposed Hussein on human rights grounds. The fodder was certainly there, the Kurds in the north of Iraq were severely oppressed by Hussein, so we could have tried to use their oppression to justify invasion, just like we used the Kosovars in Yugoslavia. But we evidently preferred not to make this about the Kurds, probably because Turkey, one of our important allies in the region, also hates the Kurds passionately and we support them in that effort. With 9/11 still relatively fresh, our leaders realized that justifying an invasion by calling Iraq a threat to *global* peace was a no-brainer. And it worked.

³ <https://www.congress.gov/bill/112th-congress/senate-resolution/85/cosponsors>

So rather than base the motivation for war on something domestic within Iraq, as was done with Yugoslavia and the claims of active genocide in Kosovo, they chose to base it on a potential threat to global peace. It would require stretching the evidence, but lying our way into wars was nothing new. They surely never expected to be called out on such lies after the fact, especially with the momentum of 9/11 on their side. And had they won the war handily and managed to domesticate the Iraqi population as quickly as they expected, they almost certainly would have been given a pass on the WMD issue, just like Bush Sr. was given a pass on all of his wars after the fact (more on this later).

If you believe the media would naturally call out a president on such lies, I will get to that, please read on. In retrospect our leaders apparently were not as sure as they claimed they were that there were weapons of mass destruction that posed any credible threat to the stability of the region. What they did not know was that they would be held (at least partially) accountable by the media for telling those lies. But we should cut them some slack on that miscalculation, because no leaders had ever been held accountable in the past for lying our way into war the way Bush Jr. was, at least not while he was still president. Bush Sr. waged an unjustified war in 1989 in Panama which was probably the most weakly justified war in American history. It was a time when we weren't nearly so used to war as we are now, and Bush was taken to task by at least some part of the media, right up until he waged the war and won handily, at which point the population lauded him. After the decisive victory in Iraq in 1991 he enjoyed a 95% approval rating and right or wrong (almost certainly wrong, but we don't need to go into that debate here) nobody ever questioned the motivations again, or asked any questions after the wars were over. And this did not go unnoticed by future leaders. It seemed the Vietnam syndrome was finally over. Those were the history lessons that motivated the second generation of Bushes. They expected that any lies would be ignored if the victory was quick and decisive. And for sure they never imagined the Iraqis would fight back like they did. So in all fairness, it wasn't hard for them to expect a different and more positive outcome.

In the dark ages before the internet, the blowback from the revelations that there really were no weapons of mass destruction and that we may have started a war on false pretenses, may well have never gained any traction. But given the Vietnam-like dragging on of the war it wasn't surprising that eventually there would be music to face. Americans are happy to wage immoral and illegal wars as long as they are quick and (at least appear to) end decisively in our favor. So they rightfully never expected the media to make an issue about the weapons of mass destruction tall tales. And they certainly never expected the Iraqi people to resist the overwhelming military superiority of the all-powerful United States of America. Those poor assessments of history and the Iraqi people formed the foundation of their miscalculation.

Why didn't this happen with the first Iraq war in 1991? In 1991 we didn't topple the Iraqi government and replace it with chaos. Bush Sr. was heavily criticized for not going all the way to Baghdad and toppling Hussein, but in retrospect I suspect he now breathes a sigh of relief knowing the mess he could have found himself in had he attempted to do so.

We can't know what Bush Sr. thinks since he never told us. But the evidence exists to perform a retrospective case-control study of another sort. And the outcome of that study bodes very poorly for Mr. Sanders and his claims of moral superiority. The exercise is to compare two wars: The war against Serbia in 1999 and the war against Iraq in 2003. The first war Sanders claims is morally justified (and he proudly declares he would gladly do it again), and the other war he claims was not justified.

One obvious difference we can identify between these two wars is that one was executed by a Democrat (Clinton) and the other by a Republican (Bush Jr). But with regards to the motivations that led us to war, were they really so different?

Clinton claims he waged the war in Yugoslavia to stop a dictator from carrying out genocide on his own people, while Bush claims he waged the war in Iraq to stop a dictator from taking over the region with weapons of mass destruction.

Neither of these countries had declared war on us. We were the ones declaring war, claiming to be undertaking a humanitarian intervention in both cases.

The stated reason for waging the Serbia war was to stop an ongoing genocide while the stated reason for waging the Iraq war was pre-emptive - to stop crimes against humanity in the future.

One could argue that an active situation provides better justification for war, given the stories about genocide were true.

On the other hand, the events in Yugoslavia were internal to Yugoslavia - it was a situation entirely contained within one sovereign country - it was, at most, a civil war in which we were taking sides. Intervening militarily in the internal conflicts of a sovereign country is expressly prohibited by the UN and international law – of which we are signatories. Therefore, if a politician violates these laws, then they have violated U.S. law. We do not tolerate any other country intervening in a civil conflict, especially ones half way across the planet from themselves. But Iraq, it was claimed, was developing chemical and nuclear weapons and was threatening regional and world peace. So one could also argue the Iraq situation offered a better justification, given the stories about weapons of mass destruction were true.

But putting these differences aside for a moment, on the face of it these two wars had similar justifications - to stop an evil dictator from evil doing. Sanders and his followers claim one of these acts was wholly justified and undertaken in the pursuit of good, while the other was wholly unjustified, for reasons believed by most Democrat voters as being somewhere between stupid and evil.

But were these motivations really as different as Sanders claims? This is where we run into a bit of a difficulty with common perceptions. The mainstream media has made a big issue out of the fact that there were no weapons of mass destruction found in Iraq. Bush was taken to task over this. Yet the mainstream media gave far less attention (practically none) to the aftermath of the Serbia conflict and the fact that no evidence of the genocide was uncovered in Kosovo. There were deaths of innocents, but in the context of civil wars it turns out Yugoslavia was nothing unusual. There were massacres and mass graves of civilians killed by the U.S. during invasion of Panama in 1989 that were found and well documented after the U.S. invasion of that country. Those graves contained women and children and there's solid photographic and video evidence. Yet there was never any reckoning over those massacres of women and children because it was taken as granted that such things happen during war. We wrote that off as the collateral damage. Our massacres are wholly ignored, while any acts committed by official enemies get blown up into full scale genocide. You may have noticed that the (so-called) trial of Milosevic, which was supposed to be the trial of the century, got virtually no press. That was because it didn't demonstrate what it was supposed to. The trial completely fell apart, many prosecution witnesses turned out to be more beneficial for the defense than the prosecution and once the truth started to be undeniable the entire trial was then completely ignored by the media. However, anybody who went out of their way to follow it could not help but notice that the evidence for genocide in general, and Milosevic's actions as perpetrator of genocide in particular, turned out to evaporate, and for the most part the entire trial was just a sequence of embarrassments for the prosecution.

This is described in meticulous detail in "Travesty" by John Laughland, as well as "To Destroy a Nation" by Michael Parenti and "Fools' Crusade: Yugoslavia, NATO, and Western Delusions" by Diana Johnstone. In short, it was clear that the goal of this so-called court, which was set up by the U.S. and NATO for the sole purpose of trying official enemies of the U.S. and NATO in the Balkans, was simply to justify the war after the fact - to rewrite history, as the victors always get to do. It takes considerable time and space to dispel all of the propaganda and lies that went into the attempted prosecution of Milosevic, which was the longest trial in history, lasting years, while Milosevic was denied all kinds of basic rights, such as the right to defend himself and the right to appropriate medical care. Eventually he was denied health care to the point where it cost him his life. In the end a convenient out for the prosecution which was struggling to argue their case, even though they had free reign of the Kosovo to investigate and they

called hundreds of witnesses. What we learned from the Milosevic trial is that it can be hard to prove something tremendously false, even if you have the benefit of your own kangaroo court.

So by 2003 Clinton should have been facing the music about his own lies told to mobilize us to war, yet there was no reckoning. Because by then nobody could even remember there was such a war. We have to believe had the Iraq war ended in three months decisively in our favor that Bush would have not been taken to task either.

If we are able to study up on the issue and educate ourselves (as opposed to indoctrinating ourselves by the mainstream media) then we can arrive at the truth. But the fact is that no matter how smart we think we are or how skeptical we might be, some amount of the propagandistic messages of the mainstream media inevitably get through and infect our judgement. Even Noam Chomsky had it wrong in 1999, when he bought into the whole Milosevic is an evil dictator mantra. He didn't deny the atrocities, instead he would deny the claims that the U.S. was intervening for humanitarian purposes. So at some level even Chomsky overestimated the atrocities. He may well have chosen to err on the side of caution, after the beating he took for his writings on Pol Pot and Cambodia. He (rightfully) compared Cambodia to East Timor and to this day is severely criticized as a denier of the Pol Pot holocaust. So now maybe he is once bitten twice shy? And Chomsky would probably vote for Sanders via a lesser than two evils rationalization. But what it appears Chomsky does not factor into his analysis is that he is giving Bernie Sanders everything he needs to be the most effective justifier of the future U.S. imperialist wars of conquest. He'll be far more effective than Bush, Clinton, or even Obama. Now you might think "what on Earth is he talking about, Obama is the Nobel Peace Prize winner, he is the anti-war president." All will be clarified, but as I said above, it takes time to back up controversial statements. So please read on. Sanders need only point out that even Chomsky believes Milosevic was a genocidal maniac, so obviously we have to do something. Chomsky's *intended* message will be lost in the noise. Chomsky is unlikely to admit to any miscalculation here, but ego aside, what matters is to recognize the truth now, no matter how much we have to come clean now about our susceptibility to manipulation. Pride is simply not worth being that wrong.

In reality, Milosevic was not an evil dictator, nor a genocidal maniac; he was no different from most leaders including those of the U.S. His crime was simply not getting in line with the so-called new world order, after the end of the cold war.

No country is allowed to set any kind of example of independence from what the U.S. business community collectively deems beneficial for their interests. The third world is such a tremendous source of exploited wealth that our economy would suffer massively, in terms of summary measures. Wealth is so disproportionately shared that sharing fairly among the third world and among citizens of the U.S. could still raise the standard of living of average the middle class citizen. But the rich would pay dearly if their grip on third world resources was threatened. And they are always threatened. The threat is real and the rich are rightfully always terrified. The threat is the indigenous people who happen to live where those resources exist. Those pesky peoples always want a slice of the pie. They see the basic human rights we have and they hear our rhetoric and they want that too. Take Guatemala for example. There has been a 60 year civil war going on in that country, ever since the CIA overthrew their government in 1954. The country has been subject to puppet military dictatorships ever since, with extreme repressive methods leading to the murder of hundreds of thousands of civilians. Over 180,000 civilians just disappeared in the 1980's alone. This is incredibly well documented; see Jennifer Harbury's "Bridge of Courage" for example. But that was not news and still isn't to this day. El Salvador just next door was no different. In that country terrorists trained by the U.S. at the infamous Fort Benning in Georgia ran amok murdering anybody with any ideas about labor organization, there were no labor laws in Guatemala or El Salvador like we enjoy here, or basic human rights of any form. Yet we stood firmly on the side of the military death squad dictatorships. That's from Ronald Reagan all the way to Jimmy Carter. Carter supported many puppet dictators in Central America and the Caribbean, no

matter how evil. When Somoza was toppled in Nicaragua, Carter was in a panic, but he didn't have much time to do anything about it, that job would fall to Reagan. Nicaragua posed no threat to us whatsoever, yet Reagan waged a war against them that was so heinous that 60,000 civilians were murdered in cold blood. This was declared an illegal "aggression" by the UN International Court of Justice and the U.S. was fined some \$60 million dollars. The U.S. responded by refusing to pay the fine and by refusing to pay its UN dues. None of this was news and I doubt one person in a hundred knows about it. Instead Reagan, one of the coldest cold blood killers of our times, is lauded as perhaps the greatest U.S. president of recent memory. There will be no reckoning.

Okay so Reagan was evil, many will accept that, he was after all a Republican. Yet Carter himself happily partook in genocide - in East Timor for example. And that fact is uncontroversial, it is 100% well known history, there's even video of the Indonesian army mowing down women and children by the hundreds with machine guns, paid for in part by your tax dollars, and supported by almost all senators and congressmen from both sides of the aisle - but that's never been news in the U.S. Because there's a very good reason we do so much of our manufacturing in Indonesia, it's because it has some of the worst labor laws you can find anywhere. And since U.S. business desires such places in order to have virtual slave labor, we do our best to help create them. That's why we overthrew the Indonesian government in 1964 and rounded up some two million civilians, intellectuals, labor leaders and anybody else who might resist our taking over, and had them all executed. I'd give references for this, but it's so easy to find the truth about this, all one needs to do is look with an open mind. No country has proven more ruthless than Indonesia. That's why it's one of our best friends. But Jimmy's genocide doesn't make viable news in our system; instead the news here is that Jimmy was the "human rights" president. If the so-called "human rights" president commits genocide and then wins a Nobel Peace Prize, then we're really in trouble, aren't we? Well yes, we are really in trouble. We must conclude that stopping genocide and supporting human rights and democracy is not a goal of ours in the world - in fact quite the opposite, we are one of the major obstacles to peace in many places. If stopping genocide were a goal of ours, then we'd have put a stop to the ones we have been actively engaged in ourselves. That's a no-brainer.

In short, no country is allowed to set any kind of example of independence from what the U.S. business community collectively deems beneficial for their interests. Any country trying to go its own way and resist U.S. business exploitation must be destroyed and made an example of. And to do so they break out the full spectrum of textbook methods to demonize people and to mobilize the U.S. population to support aggression. In fact, Saddam Hussein *was* a brutal dictator who *did indeed* use poison gas on his own people - although we had no problem with him at the time and called him a moderate even while he was gassing civilians. Meanwhile Milosevic was *elected* and never did anything as heinous as gassing civilians.

Sanders brags proudly of the war he and his fellow thugs waged against Serbia, yet in fact, the war accomplished nothing. The final agreement when bombing ended gave NATO no more than they would have had to begin with. Their initial demands of having total free reign over Serbia never materialized. In fact, the real atrocity in Serbia in 1999 was the NATO bombing itself. It was horrific. Civilians, housing communities, bridges, water, hospitals, basic infrastructure were targeted. This violates all kinds of international law and rules of war, and in a real court there's no chance Clinton would escape conviction for war crimes. Even if one found justification to start the war, one would still have to justify committing a full spectrum of war crimes in its execution. None of this seems to mean anything to Sanders. He has apparently justified trumping up a bunch of lies in order to start a war, and then carrying out the war using dirty amoral and illegal tactics. And he says he'll gladly do it all over again. The Republican candidates are arguably less hypocritical than Sanders when it comes to this issue.

This is the oldest trick in the book and really the only trick in the book, because it pretty much always works. They bang the war drums about an evil dictator violating human rights and world peace and we

get in line. The propaganda of the Serbia war was so effective that now most people, left, right and center, believe that Milosevic was a genocidal maniac and at best the U.S. intervened in a real crisis for cynical reasons. Why a similar wall of propaganda didn't line up to protect Bush the way it protected Clinton, we can argue about. But the facts remain the same; the media destroyed Bush (rightfully) and completely protected Clinton (wrongfully). Both of these men belong in prison. Clinton even failed to get his war past congress. He called for a specific vote to wage the war and a specific separate vote to fund the war. The first failed, while the second passed. So there were senators who voted to fund the war but not to execute the war. How hypocritical is that? Clinton, very angry at losing the first vote, went ahead and waged the war anyway - illegally, but he was given the money to do it anyway. Every Democrat who sat by and did nothing to hold him to the law is guilty. Bush, on the other hand, did get his war through congress.

Bernie is claiming these two wars represent opposite ends of the moral spectrum. He claims to have voted for the good war and against the bad war. But in reality, there was no good war, they were both equally reprehensible. Sanders was simply voting for the Democrat war and against the Republican war. And just like Bush, Sanders would gladly drop bombs on a bunch of innocent civilians based on a bunch of trumped up lies.

But why would I claim he may be the most dangerous candidate of them all? Let's go back to 2008. At the time there was an intense anti-war sentiment. The economy had not been worse in most people's memory and the so-called left half of the population was unbelievably sick of all the wars and the war spending while at home we had crumbling infrastructure and economic collapse with an unprecedented epidemic of working class families being evicted from their homes and people literally moving into tent cities by the thousands. Most people voting democrat saw it as a battle between pro-war Republicans and anti-war Democrats. Few recall that Obama's campaign was not to end the wars but to simply reorganize them, to move resources out of Iraq so he could escalate the war in Afghanistan. He made no bones about that. But that's not what people wanted to hear so it's not what they heard.

Then Obama won the election. What happened next was profound. War spending remained pretty much the same and Obama did as promised: he escalated the war in Afghanistan and started a few more wars. He turned out to be every bit as pro-war as Bush. But what happened to the general population and their attitude towards war? Starting in 2009 those same people who were adamantly anti-war in 2008 picked up the mantra of the "good war" versus the "bad war". Now suddenly those same people who protested the war were learning to parrot all the rationalizations for war and more war. Suddenly war became okay; it became cool, even hip, as long as the cool hip black dude was doing it.

Indeed just as Obama promised adamantly in the debates leading up to the 2008 election that he would continue to fight the wars as adamantly as his predecessor, just in different locations, in the second presidential debate we are now hearing similar ruminations from Sanders. He said the U.S. must lead a coalition to fight terrorism. Amusingly, Hillary Clinton blamed ISIS on Assad, while Sanders blamed it on global warming. Both claims are 0% accurate.

Now project this out to a Sander's presidency. Here we have a guy who has been branded just shy of a pacifist. If he wages war then for sure it has to be for good reasons, right? Obama made war cool, now Sanders will make it downright saintly. In my opinion, that is definitely not the direction we should be moving in. You may think I am throwing out the baby with the bathwater, but I am aware of that argument. I would rather see Donald Trump as president with half the population in the streets protesting, than experience 1999 again when we were engaging in a horrific evil war against a defenseless population and nobody cared. I went to three protests at the white house during the aggression against Serbia; each was attended by maybe 50 people at best, and half of them Republicans who just hated anything Clinton regardless.

When Democrats asked me to join their protests in 2003 it was truly upsetting. I would always ask them where were they in 1999? And they usually responded, "1999? What was happening in 1999? Serbia? What are you talking about? That wasn't a war? You have no idea what you are talking about, that was just a few bombs dropped over a week or two." This is one of the big delusions of our times, because it is believed by so many people, left, right and center. And in my humble opinion Noam Chomsky by parroting the mantra that Milosevic is an evil dictator and by encouraging the lesser of two evils philosophy is just making the situation that much worse. And that is terribly disappointing, because there's no segment of the far right that feeds the left like some segments of the left feed the right.

So what would a Sanders presidency look like on other fronts besides his foreign policy which we can be pretty sure of? We have the Obama presidency to compare to. The new democrat talks big about war, but they also talk big about domestic policy. But they know they can do all the talking they want, none of it will get through congress so they have the very comfortable position of being able to blame everything they didn't do on somebody else. Obama can pretend he tried and make it look credible enough for those who need to believe in him to convince themselves they are right. Similarly Sanders will be able to pretend he tried. After a year or two we'll be used to the mantra and we'll write it off as those pesky Republicans. So we'll end up with a president extremely weak on any kind of progressive domestic legacy and extremely strong on funding defense.

Speaking of defense, let me finish by saying that the biggest lie of them all is that we need the defense budget to remain a strong country. Every single one of our problems can be solved if we simply invoke the so-called peace dividend we were promised in 1992. No debate on our budget woes is anything but pure propaganda if this issue is not mentioned – and it so rarely is mentioned. This may sound like an absurd claim but that's simply because few people have any real concept of what \$1 trillion dollars per year means. That money is shared largely by the rich. Defense spending is the number one conduit for corporate welfare. If shared fairly with the rest of us, that's like \$3000 per person in the entire country. But most of us see none of that money. Most of us actually pay into the defense budget but do not see any of that money back, except possibly in the most meager trickle down sense. Most of that money is sucked up by profits – the defense industry is one of the most profitable around. It's what they call a gravy train. And a gravy train that produces that kind of fabulous wealth is going to be defended to the last breath by the beneficiaries. The rich would probably consider dropping atomic bombs on the American people themselves before giving up that gravy train. Almost all senators and congressmen are in the pockets of the military industrial complex, exactly as Eisenhower predicted.

But there was a time not so long ago when this was understood better. Clinton campaigned strongly on the peace dividend which was to cut defense upwards of 80% now that the cold war was over. Polls at the time showed this policy was supported by some 90% of the population. Clinton did cut defense some 5% and then told congress in his first state of the union address that he would not cut defense further. He said it adamantly with fist pumps and got an extended standing ovation from both sides of the aisle. He then turned his attention to getting George Bush's NAFTA policy passed. Bush could not do it, it was too right wing, it took a Democrat to do it. Again the democrats prove more dangerous than the Republicans by measure of what they can get away with - just like they turn the bad wars into the "good" wars. Circa 1994 the phrase "peace dividend" was eliminated from our vocabulary, never to be heard from again. And we the people just let this happen, we never held anybody accountable to that greatest of all reneges. Sanders the so-called socialist progressive has voted for all kinds of exorbitant defense spending measures that send money to his state. As president he'll be happy to spend that money for all 50 states. The fact that he has not mentioned cutting defense significantly means he is fiscally as regressive as anybody else. Nobody can call themselves a progressive or a socialist and support a trillion dollar defense budget that steals from the poor and gives to the rich. The only person, in fact, who has mentioned this issue, is Rand Paul. Yet he is a Libertarian, the most right wing of all

parties, so when all issues are considered together, we can be sure a Rand Paul presidency would not be anything better.

So there you have it. With a Bernie Sanders presidency we will have sanctified war and we will bless the most regressive imaginable budget as socialist. I'd rather see Donald Trump as president with everybody paying attention. Just like the population moved further to the left under Bush Jr than any other president in recent memory, becoming adamantly anti-war and pro-domestic spending to fix our problems, and the population moved further to the right under Obama than any other president in recent memory, becoming pro-war across the board and acting like the health care policy wet dream of the biggest insurance companies guaranteeing windfall profits for the foreseeable future is somehow socialized medicine. Half of us hate the socialized medicine and half of us like it, however where are the people who recognize that we do not have socialized medicine or anything even remotely close to it? These are the questions we need to be asking.

Let me end with a question. Are you one of those people who believe the Iraq invasion had more to do with oil than human rights? If so, please do a thought experiment for me. What if the president at the time had been Bill Clinton or Barrack Obama, and what if they had done exactly the same thing Bush did, with presenting evidence of weapons of mass destruction and then marching us off to war? Ask yourself if you would still believe in your heart of hearts that this was all about oil, or would you be telling yourself that Clinton or Obama really did just make a tragic mistake? If so, then I would posit that you are caught up in the whole good versus evil dichotomy. Your instinct tells you that there has to be a bad guy and there has to be a good guy. It can't possibly be that everybody is bad. Well, everybody is not bad; in fact most of us are good. That's why when they march us off to war they can't tell us it's to steal and pillage and plunder, they have to tell us it's to help people. That tells us that we the common people are more strongly motivated by doing good deeds than bad. So there is a good versus bad. The problem is virtually all elected politicians fall on the bad side. That seems to be a pre-requisite for being electable. Somehow the evil powers of greed and avarice have seized control of the system whereby they cannot lose no matter who wins. This is because you need a *lot* of money to win an election. And where does that money usually come from? Either the candidate is already part of the rich class, or they make the deal with the devil to tap into the resources of the rich class. There seems to be no other way to get elected in this country. And that's why we have what we have.

Now you may be asking yourself why, if what I am saying is true, the media do not tell us about this. Why is analysis of this type not to be found anywhere in the mainstream media? We are led to believe that the media are on the left. That they challenge power and that's a beautiful thing about the United States – freedom of press. Indeed we do have freedom of press and that's practically unique in the world. Europeans have no idea what free press and free speech mean, from our perspective they live in the dark ages. That is true, they do. Could a site like counterpunch.com exist anywhere in Europe? Doubtful, the government can just shut such a thing down with no questions asked. But let's not forget what the *mainstream* media is here in the U.S. They are *major* corporations whose business model is to sell audiences to other corporations. Nowhere in that business model is there a necessary commitment to challenge power and convey hard truths written. If outright lying and serving a propaganda function maximizes their profit that is what they will do. To maintain some credibility them media are allowed to rock the boat a little. They can challenge power in a partisan way. But media outlets who run articles that seriously challenge corporate power lose advertising dollars fast and if that causes even ¼ point drop in the stock price of the corporation the board of directors will quickly start pressuring management to get back in line. Politicians need not be involved in the process at all. The media has evolved in this way to be self-policing. They know what to say and what not to say. That is how we can have every single piece of news on Nicaragua in the 1980's discussing how to overthrow the government of Nicaragua and not one single piece arguing for *not* overthrowing them. Such an issue

has to be controversial. There *has* to be two sides of the issue. But if you turn on even what is considered the most left of the media, things like NPR's "All Things Considered" or the McNeil Leher News hour, the debates were "Let's bomb them back to the stone age" from the right and "Let's starve them to death" from the Left. That gives the appearance of debate while planting firmly in the viewers mind the fundamental message: That we must overthrow their government as a no-brainer. So how did the media get the reputation of being left wing?

First off, if you serve a propaganda function on the right, then nothing would be better than getting a reputation as being on the left. That makes for even more effective propaganda. So in the end the media love this reputation. They will say yes, we do rock the boat, but it's necessary for a functioning democracy.

Secondly, to understand better we have to realize that issues divide into two categories. There are cultural issues that do not affect the bottom line of corporations, like gay rights, women's rights, the death penalty, marijuana legalization, abortion rights, religion, etc. Then there are issues that do affect corporations, like health care, economic and foreign policy, etc. On the former type of issue both the media and the Democratic Party do appear to lean to the left. On the latter type of issue the media leans to the right and there is much more agreement between the parties. So when we hear evidence that the media lean left, it's always issues that do not affect corporations or that only ostensibly affect them but do not actually affect them. For example Obamacare which is a healthcare system the big insurance companies absolutely love. We'll still hear the Republicans cry that it's socialized medicine – even though it is a system modeled after the one implemented by Mitt Romney in Massachusetts. That's how far down the rabbit hole we have gone. A Republican health care system taken to heart by the Democrats is now labeled socialized medicine. Nothing could be further from the truth and the mainstream media have done zilch to clarify this. Because this is an issue where they know their job is to serve the propaganda function. If you want to be an honest journalist, you're going to have to focus on issues that corporations ignore. Stick to abortion rights, take the left position, and you'll be able to do your job and look yourself in the mirror. Tackle any kind of economic issue however, and look out, you're either going to have to give up all of your principles, or you're going to be kept down and kept down hard.