

# Ilhan Omar Blames – Who Else? – The Americans

by Hugh Fitzgerald



**Who to blame for this and for that?** The Russians were always asking themselves that question: *Kto vinovat?* – Who is to blame? – was the title of a famous work by Alexander Herzen, a title subsequently recycled by many others, and not only in Russia.

Here in America, someone who enjoys finding non-Muslims to blame for the ills endured by the Muslim lands is Congressman Ilhan Omar, reliably hugging the shore of absurdity. She has yet again delivered her thoughts on Who Is To Blame for all the world's ills. Apparently, the culprit she has in the past always dragged into kangaroo court of her own untidy mind hasn't changed – it's still the United States.

Her version of reality is [here](#).

*“When you see a Somali refugee or an Iraqi refugee or a*

*Libyan refugee, we often are like 'this is my neighbor, they must have survived some struggle,' we don't ever pause to think 'what American policy made them come over here?'" she said at a Democracy Now! and Rising Majority event in Washington, D.C., receiving loud applause.*

What makes Somalis or Iraqis or Libyan refugees come to America? It is the wretched and dangerous condition of their own countries, and the assurance that in America they will be living in a secure state, with a government of laws, that respects basic human rights, including freedom of speech and freedom of religion, unlike any of the countries they come from or, indeed, unlike any Muslim-majority country. They know, too, that they will have benefits of many kinds lavished upon them, these economic migrants who convince our immigration officials that they are "asylum seekers" fleeing persecution. The benefits they receive include some or all of the following: free or subsidized housing, free medical care, free education, unemployment benefits, and family allowances. No one knows this better than Ilhan Omar, who is fully aware of just how well her fellow Somalis in Minneapolis have done by taking advantage of every possible benefit offered to them, even beyond the great and unmerited gift of being allowed to settle in America in the first place, among mostly unsuspecting Infidels whom those Muslim migrants have been taught since childhood to despise as "the most vile of created beings." Yet Omar feels not the tiniest twinge of gratitude to the United States; in her topsy-turvy moral world, it is American policy that is to blame for what makes Somalia such an unpleasant place to live.

But how is America to blame for conditions in Somalia? The Republic of Somalia was formed in 1960 by the federation of a former Italian colony and a British protectorate. Mohamed Siad Barre held dictatorial rule over the country from October 1969 until January 1991, when he was overthrown in a bloody civil war waged by clan-based guerrillas. The American government

was not responsible either for the long despotism of Siad Barre, nor for the civil war that deposed him. The war that followed among the various Somali clans had nothing to do with the American government. Nor did the appearance of the terrorist group Al-Shabab, which is a local branch of Al Qaeda. Fighting, insecurity, and lack of state protection, and recurring humanitarian crises have had a devastating impact on Somali civilians for years. The number of internally displaced people, many living unassisted and at risk of serious abuse, have now reached 3 million. The Islamist armed group Al-Shabab has subjected the people living under its control to harsh treatment, including forcibly recruiting them to its ranks. Somalis often suffer deadly attacks by Al-Shabab that deliberately target civilians. The Americans have "intervened" in Somalia in two ways. They have delivered humanitarian aid to civilians when such deliveries can be made without coming under fire, and they have attacked Al-Shabab which has terrorized and murdered so many Somali civilians. Surely Ilhan Omar knows this. Or does she not want to be bothered with mere facts, when malevolent falsehoods are so much more fun?

As for Libya, in what way was America responsible for the madman Qaddafi, who came to power in a coup that overthrew the pro-American King Idris in 1969 and also led to Libya closing down America's Wheelus Airbase? In his forty-two years as the absolute ruler of Libya, Qaddafi faced only implacable enmity from Washington. And that following Qaddafi's overthrow in 2011, among local militias based in Tripoli, Tobruk, Misrata, Benghazi, and other cities, again had nothing to do with America. As of right now, the Americans in theory "recognize" the government based in Tripoli under Fayed Al-Sarraj, but have done nothing to support it, and there are many in Washington who regard the pro-American General Khalifa Haftar, based in eastern Libya, as a better bet. Khalifa Haftar, after all, lived in America for 20 years, where he served as a consultant to the C.I. A., and even became an American citizen. But as with Somalia, there is little reason to blame

America for the endless wars that have been going on in Libya since the most violent lord of misrule, Muammar Qaddafi, was killed in 2011.

Finally, Ilhan Omar mentions Iraq. The United States government has twice engaged with Iraq. In 1990-1991 during the Gulf War pushed Saddam Hussein's troops out of Kuwait, which he had invaded and declared would now be the 19th province of Iraq. Does Ilhan Omar think that preventing the murderous regime of Saddam Hussein from swallowing Kuwait was a bad idea? Would she have preferred that Kuwait have disappeared, that Iraq have been enlarged, and that Saddam Hussein, further emboldened, might then have attacked the UAE or Jordan or even Saudi Arabia?

Then there was the American invasion of Iraq in 2003. The Americans sought to remove Saddam Hussein, and to bring Western-style democracy to Iraq. Were these aims illegitimate, in Ilhan Omar's view? Aren't Iraqis much better off today than they were when Saddam was in power, murdering his opponents at will? The only fault to be found with American policy in Iraq is that it was much too naïve and generous. Americans stayed, and spent two trillion dollars, in order to bring about peace, security, and a democratic government, in a country where the divisions, both sectarian (Sunni and Shia), and ethnic (Arabs and Kurds) could not be healed. In "democratic" Iraq, the Shi'a Arabs, who constitute 60% of the population, refuse to relinquish any of the power they now possess, and the Sunni Arabs whom Saddam Hussein had naturally favored, are as yet unwilling to acquiesce in their loss of power to the Shi'a. These conflicts have nothing to do with America.

Ilhan Omar seems to think that the Somalis, Libyans, and Iraqis now in the U.S. are "owed" their resettlement in this country because American actions in their countries caused them to flee in the first place. That's a travesty of history. Somalia, Libya, and Iraq have been suffering from decades of what the Italians call *Malgoverno* – Bad Government. Think of

the despots, all three pathologically evil, who ran these countries for many decades – Siad Barre, Muammar Qaddafi, and Saddam Hussein. Think of how , in Somalia, the clans have continued to fight each other long after Siad Barre was deposed, how the city-based militias in Libya have been fighting since Qaddafi was grotesquely impaled; how the Sunnis and Shi'a continue to battle over power, and over the money that power brings, in post-Saddam Iraq. Ilhan Omar doesn't have time to recognize that truth; she knows it's America's fault that people have felt the need to flee Somalia, Libya, and Iraq. Hers not to reason why.

*“When you see flooding happening in a country abroad and you are urgently raising money for these lives to be saved, you don't think about, ‘How have I contributed to the climate warming that has led to these floodings and these catastrophes that are taking place abroad?’” Omar said.*

Really? How does Ilhan Omar know what you or I think about flooding and its relation to global warming (the melting of glaciers and ice caps that lead to a rise in sea level), and our own contributions to that warming? We can hardly avoid thinking about it, as it is constantly being discussed on radio, on television, and online. There is even a movement to decrease air travel to an absolute minimum: not nations, but individuals, “take the pledge” for “the sake of the planet”). We are sufficiently aware of climate warming to think of our own contribution to it, however large or small. But America is not uniquely guilty, as Ilhan Omar believes; every industrialized nation has been contributing to global warming. Some less industrialized countries also contribute to climate change by starting fires to turn forest into ranchland, as Brazilian cattle ranchers have been known to do in the Amazon. It might surprise Omar to learn that the United States is no longer the main emitter of CO<sub>2</sub>; China now emits more than twice as much CO<sub>2</sub> as does the United States, and its emissions continue on a steep upward curve. India's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are

steadily rising as well. Omar might also be interested to learn that Saudi Arabia emits as much CO2 as do Great Britain and France together, while Iran emits as much as Canada, Germany, and South Korea.

Ilhan Omar probably does not know that the Arab oil states, and above all Saudi Arabia, have tried to block or water down international agreements on lowering carbon emissions. [An article in the Guardian](#) about the role of the Saudis in the 2015 negotiations leading to the Paris Climate Accord is devastating:

*Saudi Arabia has long played a high-profile presence at annual climate summits operating from the luxuriously appointed pavilions of the Gulf Co-operation Council – and over the years has regularly been accused of blocking action on climate change.*

*In the run-up to the Paris summit, however, the kingdom adopted a more amenable posture. Last month it delivered a plan to fight climate change, pledging a “significant deviation” in emissions, but was the last G20 country to submit its offer to the United Nations, and analysts described the targets as opaque...*

*Behind the closed doors of negotiating sessions, however, the Saudis have strenuously resisted efforts to enshrine ambitious goals into the text of a Paris agreement.*

***The Saudis objected even to the mention of 1.5C – a new more ambitious target for limiting warming now endorsed by more than 100 countries including vulnerable low-lying states and big polluters such as the European Union and US.***

*The kingdom balked at the goal of decarbonising the economy by 2050...*

*And although Saudi Arabia ranks as the world’s 15th largest economy, **it has resisted efforts to grow the Green Climate***

*Fund to help poorer countries cope with global warming – insisting only industrialised countries contribute.*

*Saudi negotiators have also demanded that if tiny islands like Kiribati be compensated for climate change, they should also be protected from loss of future oil income, and they have sought financial aid to acquire new green energy technology...*

*“We feel Saudi Arabia is playing a bully role in undermining the position of other Arab countries,” Hmaidan said. “It is unfortunate that the Arab group is the only group opposing 1.5C.”*

Ilhan, take a good look.

No further questions, your honor.

First published in