

## **US Provides Military Assistance to 73 Percent of World's Dictatorships**

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### **And we wonder where our tax dollars are going**

For decades, the American people have been repeatedly told by their government and corporate-run media that acts of war ordered by their president have been largely motivated by the need to counter acts of aggression or oppression by “evil dictators.” We were told we had to invade Iraq because Saddam Hussein was an evil dictator. We had to bomb Libya because Muammar Gaddafi was an evil dictator, bent on unleashing a “bloodbath” on his own people. Today, of course, we are told that we should support insurgents in Syria because Bashar al-Assad is an evil dictator, and we must repeatedly rattle our sabers at North Korea’s Kim Jong-un and Russia’s Vladimir Putin because they, too, are evil dictators.

This is part of the larger, usually unquestioned mainstream corporate media narrative that the US leads the “Western democracies” in a global struggle to combat terrorism and totalitarianism and promote democracy.

I set out to answer a simple question: Is it true? Does the US government actually oppose dictatorships and champion democracy around the world, as we are repeatedly told?

The truth is not easy to find, but federal sources do provide an answer: No. According to Freedom House’s rating system of political rights around the world, there were 49 nations in the world, as of 2015, that can be fairly categorized as “dictatorships.” As of fiscal year 2015, the last year for which we have publicly available data, the federal government of the United States had been providing military assistance to 36 of them, courtesy of your tax dollars. The United States currently supports over 73 percent of the world’s dictatorships!

Most politically aware people know of some of the more highly publicized instances of this, such as the tens of billions of dollars’ worth of US military assistance provided to the beheading capital of the world, the misogynistic monarchy of Saudi Arabia, and the repressive military dictatorship now in power in Egypt. But apologists for our nation’s imperialistic foreign policy may try to rationalize such support, arguing that Saudi Arabia and Egypt are exceptions to the rule. They may argue that our broader national interests in the Middle East require temporarily overlooking the oppressive nature of those particular states, in order to serve a broader, pro-democratic endgame.

Such hogwash could be critiqued on many counts, of course, beginning with its class-biased presumptions about what constitutes US “national interests.” But my survey of US support for dictatorships around the world demonstrates that our government’s support for Saudi Arabia and Egypt are not exceptions to the rule at all. They are the rule.

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