

# ICC Hypocrisy: Putin Indicted on 20th Anniversary of the Invasion of Iraq

by Harley Schlanger

March 24—The indictment of Russian President Vladimir Putin March 17 by the International Criminal Court (ICC) provides more evidence that the effort by western governments to use the war in Ukraine to destroy Russia, is a project run by arrogant elitists with no contact with the real world.

The announcement, made by ICC chief prosecutor Karim Khan, a British attorney, charges Putin, along with Russia's Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights, Maria Lvova-Belova, with illegally deporting Ukrainian children to Russia. Claims have been made that at least 15,000 children were kidnapped by Russian forces—with one claim by a Ukrainian "human rights ombudsman" of more than 215,000 children removed! The Russians admit that 1,400 children were moved from the areas of Ukraine annexed by Russia, mostly from orphanages and hospitals in war zones, for their protection.

The idea that it is a war crime to move displaced

children, whose parents died in the war or cannot be located, to a safe place, is being treated in Russia as unacceptable. Official comments range from Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov stating that Russia "does not recognize the court," to Deputy Chairman of the Security Council of Russia Dmitri Medvedev's less diplomatic suggestion that the indictment is toilet paper and not worthy of response.

Lvova-Belova, who adopted one of the orphans, quipped, "It's great that the international community has appreciated the work to help the children of our country," a reference to the fact that the children involved come from newly annexed areas of eastern Ukraine.

U.S. President Joe Biden called the charges "justified" and said it "makes a very strong point," while acknowledging that, like Russia, the United States does not recognize the ICC as a legitimate authority.

The timing of the indictment is replete with ironies,

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coming on the eve of Chinese President Xi Jinping's summit with Putin in Moscow, and while U.S. media are reporting that military and intelligence officials now believe that Ukraine cannot win, and the time has come for negotiations.

An even more profound irony, however, which probably escaped Biden's questionable powers of discernment, is that the indictments came two days before the 20th anniversary of the invasion of Iraq. The occasion was marked by multiple articles pointing to the failure to hold accountable any of the military or government officials responsible for that war. Neither the ICC nor any other legal body has prosecuted George W. Bush or Tony Blair for their launching of the war on false pretenses. Their actions are estimated (by the British medical journal *Lancet*) to have led to more than 601,000 deaths of Iraqis between March 19, 2003 and 2006, and countless more in the following years due to civil society breakdown, and the outbreak of terrorism and religious civil war resulting from the invasion.

The justification for the decision to attack Iraq came from the fabricated dossier claiming Iraq had weapons of mass destruction that threatened the West, and the charge that Saddam Hussein was allied with the al-Qaeda terrorists alleged to have been the perpetrators of the 9/11 terror attacks on America. The MI6 September Dossier had been delivered by the Blair government to U.S. officials, and was used by Bush's

Secretary of State Colin Powell in his address to the UN to advocate invading Iraq. Powell later admitted he knew the charge was false.

Blair used his speech of March 20, 2003, on the launch of the war, to reiterate these lies. "Today", he said then, we "face a new threat of disorder and chaos born either of brutal states like Iraq armed with weapons of mass destruction or of extreme terrorist groups.... My fear, deeply held, based in part on the intelligence that I see, is that these threats come together and deliver catastrophe to our country and our world."

Based on the fabricated intelligence he cited, Blair ordered military action in Iraq, with the mission to conduct regime change, "to remove Saddam Hussein from power and disarm Iraq of its [non-existent —ed.] weapons of mass destruction."

Tony Blair and George W. Bush and their teams of neocon war hawks are correctly seen by most of the world as war criminals, who have inexplicably not been brought to trial for their crimes. Meanwhile the ICC, founded in part through the initiative of George Soros' Open Society NGO, has indicted Putin for removing defenseless children from a war zone.

This helps to explain why the "Global South" has refused to join America and NATO in condemning President Putin and arming Ukraine to conduct regime change in Russia.