



Scahill & Greenwald: What If All Victims of War Received the Media Attention of Manchester Victims?

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AMY GOODMAN: We're broadcasting from the SkyDome, where the Toronto Blue Jays play, in Toronto, Canada. We were here for a journalism conference, along with our guests, Jeremy Scahill and Glenn Greenwald. Juan?

JUAN GONZÁLEZ: Well, in Britain, police are expanding their investigation into Monday's suicide bombing in Manchester that killed 22 and left dozens injured. Many of those killed were young girls. While the Manchester story has dominated international headlines, far less attention has been paid to other stories this week involving the deaths of civilians. In Syria and Iraq, U.S.-led or U.S.-backed airstrikes have killed dozens of civilians in the last week alone. The journalistic monitoring group [Airwars] says airstrikes on Sunday and Monday reportedly killed up to 44 civilians in Mosul. One local journalist said, quote, "the bombing caused the deaths of more than 20 civilians who were burned in their homes, mostly women and children," unquote. In Syria, Airwars says the U.S.-led coalition airstrikes near Raqqa reportedly killed up to 15 civilians, including two children, on Sunday. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights says U.S.-led airstrikes have killed 225 civilians over the past month, including 44 children.

AMY GOODMAN: Meanwhile, in Yemen, the human rights group Reprieve says U.S. Navy SEALs killed five civilians during a raid Tuesday night on a village in Ma'rib governorate. The killings reportedly began after a 70-year-old civilian named Nasser al-Adhal came out of his home to find out what was going on and was gunned down by the SEALs. The Pentagon says the raid targeted al-Qaeda and that seven militants were killed.

To talk more about how the media covers civilian casualties, we're joined by the co-founders of *The Intercept*, Jeremy Scahill and Glenn Greenwald.

AMY GOODMAN: Glenn, should the Manchester model be used for other victims of war? The model of—well, I mean, we know about the 22 victims, the horrific attack, the suicide attack in Manchester, as these tweens, these mainly little girls, 10, 12, 11, 13, attended the Ariana Grande concert. We've learned the kids' names, a number of them, their parents. Parents had come to pick up their children. And our hearts grieve because we know who they are. They could be our families. We don't know the names of the children in Yemen who died

in a Navy SEAL attack a few days after President Trump became president. A Navy SEAL died, but also at least 30 civilians died, among them, women and children.

GLENN GREENWALD: Yeah, we all do media criticism of various types, and I know, over the years, I've voiced all kinds of critiques of U.S. media coverage. But if I had the power to just, overnight, remedy one of them, this discrepancy is the one that I would choose, because think about how powerful it is, just the effect that it has on us as human beings. Even just randomly when it pops into our Twitter timeline or onto our Facebook page, you see the name and the story and the grieving relatives of someone who was killed at this concert in Manchester. No matter how rational you are, you feel anger, you feel empathy, you feel so emotionally moved by the horror of the violence that was perpetrated.

So, imagine if there was any kind of balance whatsoever, where we knew the names of any of the victims of the indiscriminate violence of our own government, let alone the comprehensive coverage of the victims that is devoted when we are the victims of violence, how much that would affect the perception that we have of the violence that our own government perpetrates. We keep it so abstract. We usually just hear 14 people died. The Pentagon claims that it's militants and terrorists. It's left at that. At best, we hear they finally acknowledge four civilians are killed, but it's kept very ethereal, very distant and abstract. We never learn their names, as you said. We never hear from their families. We never hear their life aspirations extinguished. And if there was just some attention paid to telling the stories of the victims of our own government's violence, I think there would be a radical shift in how we perceive of ourselves, the role we play in the world and who bears blame in this conflict.

JEREMY SCAHILL: Well, I mean, look at how many times we read or hear reports that the United States has bombed a wedding party or a funeral. And there is never a description of, well, who was the bride, who was the groom, you know, who were the people that were killed, and what were their dreams. It's unfathomable to me that if we had a wedding party in the United States that was somehow bombed in a terrorist incident, that we wouldn't know the names of every single person who was killed. We would have heard about where the people were going to go on their honeymoon and, you know, the—what the bride looked like when she was preparing for it. We hear nothing about any of these people that are killed, with our tax dollars, in our name.

Trump just inked this deal with the Saudis for well over \$100 billion. It could be as much as \$400 billion when it's all said and done. Defense stocks go to record highs. What does that—what are those weapons going to be used for? Well, in the immediate future, they're going to be used for what they're being used for now, which is to utterly destroy Yemen, where the United States and Saudi Arabia are absolutely razing to the ground the poorest country in the Arab world and have caused a catastrophic health crisis in that country, which already was facing a total completion of their water supply. We don't think about victims of war in the same way that we talk about victims of school shootings in this country or victims of terrorism when it's—when ISIS claims responsibility for it. It's a problem.

JUAN GONZÁLEZ: Well, I wanted to ask you, in the broader context, the refugee crisis now that is engulfing Europe—in the headlines, 6 million people waiting to be able to emigrate into Europe. We don't, in the press, cover what is the basis of this refugee crisis, what the reality is that, when it comes to Iraq, it's been 20 years of warfare in Iraq. In Syria, Libya, Afghanistan, you have this—in Democratic and Republican administrations. So, basically, it's been the interventions and the military actions of the West that have created the

refugee crisis, destabilized these countries, made it impossible for the people to stay. I'm surprised that more people haven't left Afghanistan than have already tried to flee to Europe.

JEREMY SCAHILL: Well, it's much more difficult to get out of Afghanistan. But you're totally right: The U.S. wars did this.

GLENN GREENWALD: Yeah, you know, what's so strange about it is, in our own personal lives, if we have friends or family members who compulsively blame other people and look for fault on other people and never accept responsibility for their own actions and the way that it contributes to problems, we say, "This is a real pathology. You need to start thinking about how it is that your own actions contribute to problems." And yet, the number one rule of U.S. media discourse is that whenever there's violence or attacks, the one thing we don't want to do is think about the role we played in provoking it.

And what's particularly ironic about it is that when it comes to other countries, we're really good at doing that. For example, if ISIS shoots down a Russian plane or someone inspired by ISIS kills a Russian ambassador in Turkey, instantly, overnight, every pundit, every media outlet blames Russian foreign policy. They say, "The reason this happened is because the Russians are bombing in Syria or because the Russians have provoked ISIS around the world." We make that causal connection when it comes to our enemies.

But to make that causal connection when it comes to ourselves—you know, there were warnings that if Iraq—that if the U.K. invaded Iraq or if the U.K. began bombing in Syria, they would have exactly the kind of terrorist attacks that just happened in Manchester. But to talk about the causal connection there becomes instantly taboo. And what that means is that we just don't examine the policies that are invoked in the name of stopping terrorism that are actually doing more to fuel and provoke terrorism than any other single factor.

JEREMY SCAHILL: Can I just add one small part of this? You know, he's—I can't shake this guy from my existence, but Erik Prince, the founder of Blackwater, who has been serving as a shadow adviser to the Trump administration, he was on Fox News last week in prime time on Tucker Carlson's show. Tucker, of course, took over from Bill O'Reilly. And the two big points that Erik Prince was pushing, one was we need to put mercenaries in charge of the war in Afghanistan. And he likened it to the British campaign in India, which was a murderous campaign, where Churchill boasted about the use of chemical weapons. So it's an interesting analog that Prince is using for his proposal on private companies taking over the war in Afghanistan.

But the second point that he made is, the left is completely nuts in the United States because they loved the Soviet Union when it was a left-wing repressive government, and now they're demonizing Putin just because he's not part of the Soviet Union, but he's the same kind of an authoritarian. And isn't it great that Trump has brought these two countries together? What's interesting about that is that Prince himself is at the tip of the spear of a move to try to monetize the refugee crisis right now. His solution is to get countries and thugs in countries like Libya to get into business with the European Union to actually prevent people from leaving North Africa or parts of the Middle East to come into Europe. And he wants to do it with a privatized maritime force, accompanied by Western military advisers, working with local militias. This whole administration, in a way, is up for sale. And when you have people like Erik Prince who are masterful mercenaries running around the scene, and they're your biggest advocate in the U.S. media when it comes to the Russia issue, it raises a lot of questions.

I do think the Democrats have lost their minds with not seeing some value to having peaceful relations between Russia and the United States. The problem is, I'm not sure that that's what Trump is actually doing. But there's a lot up for sale right now. And I think Democrats are blowing a lot of opportunities by just focusing on a narrow aspect of Trump's buffoonery, because there's a lot of high-stakes stuff going on.