Twitter Thread by Sarah Leah Whitson



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1) MORE on #Saudi #UAE arms freeze: As we shift to reassuring Gulf dictators that we will continue to "defend" them and sell them "defensive" weapons, notwithstanding arms freeze and pending JCPOA, keep in mind that this is exactly what "propping up" abusive dictators means.

2) These dictators do not represent the people of their country, they're not legitimately elected, and they've repeatedly shown that they see the freedom of their citizens as an existential threat. It's a fallacy to confuse "defending" them with defending their "country".

3) It's also a fallacy to assume that their "security concerns" are national security concerns. They're first and foremost personal concerns for survival and preservation. This is why they fear democracy and democratic Islamist including the Muslim Brotherhood most of all.

4) The US should have no interest in defending, protecting, and yes propping up abusive self appointed government leaders in the UAE Saudi Egypt. Or apartheid leaders in Israel, where the ruled Palestinians have no say, so also dictatorial.

5) The distinction that "defensive" weapons sold to them might be ok so long as @JoeBiden ends "offensive" weapons used in Yemen is a false one. The wrong is equal. The principle is the same & quite simple: the US should not aid abet support abusive, tyrannical government leaders

6) Any argument that the US "needs" these dictators or has security interests tied to their survival is shameful. It makes US a harmful actor that prioritizes the suffering and abuse of millions for (dubious of course, and typically mercantile) "interests". That cant be US policy

7) Mountains of book & articles forcefully argue that US "security interests" in these countries (justifying oppression of millions) are limited &narrow. You can offer them up til you're blue in the face. They have limited resonance cuz security claims are themselves superficial

8) The real driving force that keeps US tethered to providing offensive or defensive military sales & gifts to these abusive dictators are their personal lobbyists & defense industry lobbyists who are part of our govt's corruption. This isn't about ourcountry's national interests

9) So please: don’t justify “defensive” weapons as ok so long as “offensive” ones are banned; recognize we harm the people of the region with any arms to tyrants; and don’t let lobbyists trump the real interests of America.