

Barack Obama on Syria in St Petersburg: “Selling War” to the “International Community”

Hitting all the right notes for all the wrong people

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Somewhere in Washington, a conversation may have taken place along these lines: How are we going to sell this one to a public that is sick of war and sick of being lied to?

The response is given: Don't worry, we can bank on people's ignorance, play to their emotions and just keep on lying – about the whole policy of attacking Syria being open to debate, about Assad having used chemical weapons (CWs) and about how this whole conflict resulted from a mass uprising by the Syrian people themselves. The script was thus set.

In an attempt to play the global audience for fools, while attending the G20 meeting in St Petersburg Barack Obama stood in front of the TV cameras and read from the script. He told the world how Uncle Sam should stand up and act against Assad for using CWs and killing 1,400 people, of whom 400 were children. He tried to appear adamant, however, that debate and consultation should take precedence before military action against Assad prevails.

Referring to paralysis over Syria in the UN Security Council, Obama went on to say that when the US can work internationally it should, but sometimes people look to the US and ask when are 'you' going to act. The US is a big country and people expect us to act, according to Obama; so a limited strike should be the responsibility of the US.

Based on this reasoning, the US government has the right to bypass the UN as and when it deems necessary.

Obama was asked despite the majority of the US public not wanting US military involvement in Syria (over and above what the US has already been doing there, which most remain blissfully ignorant of), how could he sanction it? He batted away such concerns by saying that his job is to convince the 'American people' that it's the right thing to do; ultimately, however, 'America's interests' will determine policy and will determine his decision.

Based on this reasoning, the US government has the right to ignore public opinion as and when it deems necessary.

Those of us already paying attention will already know just where those interests lie. 'America's interests' (aka corporate-financial interests) do not coincide with the interests of the vast bulk of the 'American people'.

But this is the type of word play, emotional blackmail and double speak you get on these occasions. Wrap things up in patriotism, use some bogus notion of 'America', nationhood

and the 'national interest' and, as any adperson worth their salt may tell you, you can get those poor saps out there to buy into almost anything. That's what military-industrial America has always relied on. And that's the game it seeks to play now over Syria.

Whether it was justifying brutality, murder and mayhem in Vietnam, Guatemala or elsewhere with reference to the communist bogeyman, or doing the same now in Libya, Syria or Afghanistan with reference to 'fighting terrorism' or 'humanitarianism', selling the lie has always worked well to a greater or lesser extent.

Even if it fails to work this time around, a debate may be granted, but the outcome will be the same. Obama virtually admitted it in Russia:

"You listen to your constituents and then you act in terms of what you consider to be in America's interests."

The world's self-appointed policeman

In an attempt to justify attacking Syria, ignoring public opinion and bypassing the UN, Obama stated that 'the world' is always telling the US to act against wrong doers. But, apart from imploring the US to hold Israel's crimes to account, is this really true?

Are China, Iran, Cuba, Venezuela, Russia and India always asking the US to take action against the US's concocted, delusional ever-changing list of 'wrong doers'? Over 40 percent of the global population live in those countries. Factor in many other countries and people residing in the West who did not want the US to act as far as Iraq, Libya or Afghanistan were concerned, and the numbers (and thus the logic) begin to look pretty shaky for Obama.

But who needs numbers or global opinion on your side when simple fear mongering will do? Obama says that not to act will lead the 'international community' towards a slippery slope of inaction and mayhem to be inflicted by will on us by failed states and rogue regimes. Therefore, a limited military response should take place, which would serve as a message, a strong deterrent, for the Assads of the world never to carry out atrocities again.

Of course, since 9/11, a slippery slope has already been in motion for quite a while – and it is the US that is on it, with its militarism, destabilisations and bypassing of the UN and international law.

According to Obama, the 'American people' – presumably the overwhelming majority who disagree with military action – do not properly understand that hitting Assad would keep all of us safe, including the people of Jordan, Israel and Lebanon as well as other countries in the immediate vicinity of Syria.

Obama stated:

"I cannot honestly claim his (Assad's) use poses an immediate, direct threat..."

So, to try to make things a little clearer for the 'American people', Obama said that in Libya – with troops rolling towards Benghazi – immediate action was required. Using that lie to try to justify another, he stated that this time, there is more room for debate before the US acts. What he really meant was room for the illusion of debate because many, not least

Russia, are not falling for the same pretext this time around.

Obama gave the impression of deferring to the US public's concerns, while implying the said concerns will be treated with the contempt he and his backers think they deserve.

Obama was questioned about mission creep and reports about him wanting to have an expanded list of targets in Syria. Answer: don't worry, untrue; hey, after all, we are having a debate; it's good for our democracy to have this debate.

Invading the moral high ground

Obama took so much of the moral high ground that he was in danger of falling from it. But that was not going to happen because none of the mainstream 'journalists' in the room were ever going to be allowed to challenge his inane bleatings about morality. No one was going to question his country's use of depleted uranium or napalm or phosphorus in Iraq, its sales of CWs to foreign governments, its illegal invasions and occupations and its drone murders throughout the world. And that's because perhaps it's only those journos who ascribe to the official line that all of the above is for the 'greater good' or there is really not much wrong with doing any of the above in the first place are invited to actively participate these stage managed events.

Nor were they ever going to ask about the role of the US and its allies in funding and arming its proxy armies in Syria and thus creating a bloodbath, a refugee crisis and destabilising the entire region. No, that was not up for debate. The president was instead left to preach about his warped visions and versions of right and wrong, good and evil.

This is all part of 'the debate', though; the stage managed debate for public consumption that supposedly proves there is democracy. A debate that may well be ignored anyhow in the final instance on the basis of 'American interests'; interests that hijacked the US decades ago and whose current policies were devised years ago behind closed doors in the corporate-financier funded/led think tanks, board rooms, secretive meetings and committees, from which the public is strictly barred (1). That's the true nature of democracy that Obama fronts.

In St Petersburg, Obama's finale was to pull a blood soaked rabbit from the hat. Saying that he did not wish to draw an analogy with World War II, he went on to draw one. By doing nothing about things that seem distant to ordinary people's concerns at home, where would the world be if the US had not stepped in and helped the British against the Nazis?

Drawing on the good old Hollywood propaganda that has been rammed down the throats of millions for decades, he said it was 'the right thing to do'. After all, in the land of the brave and the free, it's all about doing 'the right thing', or so the fairytale goes.

Try tell that to the ten million or so who have perished at the hands of Uncle Sam since 1945 (2), as the US set out to do 'the right thing' by subverting democratically elected governments, dropping bombs on countries, letting loose its death squads, destabilising countries or assassinating leaders (3).

In one of his answers, Obama referred to Assad using CWs and killing children. And with breathtaking arrogance, he then stated that the US certainly doesn't do that. Really? Recall Madeline Albright saying that the deaths of 500,000 children in Iraq as a result of US sanctions were a price worth paying to further US interests. Recall that civilians, including

babies and children, are paying an enormous price due to the impact of the US's use of depleted uranium in Iraq. Recall too that kids in Vietnam are still paying the price of Agent Orange.

And in one last ditch attempt to go one step further in justifying attacking Assad, Obama inadvertently took quite a few steps backwards. He sated that the US has an intelligence agency and gathers information not available to the public; the US is bigger and has greater capabilities. Therefore, according to Obama, we should trust the 'intelligence' that he has about Assad having used CWs and about him being a threat to the region and ultimately the US.

Yes, these are the same intelligence agencies that illegally snoop into our personal information online, the same agencies that have been caught spying on allies and enemies alike, the same agencies that infiltrate democratically legitimate protest groups at home and set out to subvert them, and the same agencies that lied about Iraq, lie about the reasons about the ongoing 'war on terrorism', support illegal torture and rendition and have fuelled terror from Kosovo, Latin America and Syria to Libya and beyond.

Obama's utterances were part of a dominant narrative that seeks to mislead and to mask the real essence of power and the true nature of intent behind notions of patriotism, nationalism, bowing down to the flag, militarism and that 'we', 'the nation' should be united in cause and belief.

Attacking Syria is in hardly anyone's interest, not least that of the Syrian people. Who could ever think otherwise? For the answer to that, we need look no further than the likes of the corporate-financial interests that control the US and its puppet president, their Zionist allies in Israel and other regional players who will benefit from Syria's downfall and any subsequent attack on Iran.

As abysmal and depressing as it was for the prospects of peace and the world in general, Obama's speech hit all the right notes for all the wrong people.

Notes

- 1) <http://www.globalresearch.ca/how-to-change-our-world-tipping-the-balance-of-power/5305744>
- 2) <http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-cias-hollywood-release-zero-dark-thirty-or-how-people-lose-their-humanity/5318368>
- 3) http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Blum/US_Interventions_WBlumZ.html

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