

Decline of America's Empire

Global Depression and Regional Wars - Reviewing James Petras' New Book: Part II

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Theme: [Global Economy](#), [US NATO War](#)
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Part II continues Petras' analysis of the global depression, regional wars, and the decline of America's empire.

Obama's Latin American Policy

At all times under all administrations, policy, not rhetoric, defines priorities, and it's no different for Obama. With regards to Latin America and its people, he's been hostile and dismissive by:

- allocating half a billion dollars "in military and related aid" to aid the right wing Calderon regime and militarizing the US - Mexican border;

- on the pretext of fighting drugs trafficking and regional security, funding to Mexico and Colombia goes for military purposes; Colombia gets the most - billions under Plan Colombia; economic aid is ignored;

- beyond the timeline of Petras' book, Hugo Chavez and other regional leaders voiced concern over Washington's intention to supply Colombia with new weapons and technology, continued billions for the hardline "Uribe doctrine," and of greatest concern the plan to access seven new military bases - three airfields, two naval installations, and two army bases besides nine others currently stationing US forces all supplemented by the reactivated Fourth Fleet in April 2008;

- continuing US trade policies that have been devastating to regional farmers and peasants; likely new protectionist measures will hurt them more;

- practicing the same Bush anti-Latino immigrant policies with talk now about new legislation to harden them and establish a new bracero policy;

- targeting regional left of center regimes, including Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Nicaragua and Cuba; the latter's long-standing embargo remains in place despite some relaxed travel and other restrictions; and

- maintaining a three-fold regional strategy:

- (1) supporting hard right Colombian, Mexican and Peruvian regimes;

- (2) aiming for more influence over centrist governments in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and Paraguay; and

(3) “isolating and weakening leftists and populist governments” in Cuba, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia and Nicaragua.

Overall, Obama is continuing the same Bush policies. Latin America remains a low priority, but military aid and an imperial agenda define it along with supporting the region’s most hard right, repressive regimes. He also “talk(s) free markets while practicing protectionism,” very typical of how America operates – one-way to benefit its corporate interests at the expense of its trading partners.

The current economic crisis added a new wrinkle. Obama is “absorbing most of the hemisphere’s credit (for his) financial bailout,” so regional exporters are hard-pressed to finance their operations. Capital repatriated to America’s domestic market compounds the problem by extending and deepening Latin America’s recession. “All the major countries in the region are headed toward negative growth (exacerbated by) double-digit unemployment, rising levels of poverty, and mass protests.” They’re vulnerable because of the “production and development strategies (they) adopted” with emphasis on “privatization of all key productive sectors.”

Now in the face of their deepening crisis, center-left regimes (like in Brazil and Argentina) have made no or few provisions for unemployed workers, peasants, public employees and small business. Instead, (in pursuit of new markets and investors) “bankers, export elites and multi-national corporations” are favored as in America.

However, Venezuela’s center-left regime pursued an alternate strategy, including nationalizing key sectors, protecting vital social ones like food, and expanding agrarian reform to increase production. Chavez vows to maintain social services and is practicing Keynesian policies to do it – large-scale public investments combined with subsidizing the most needy. Still, Venezuela’s dependence on oil revenues makes it vulnerable to declining prices, something very much in play today that threatens social stability along with high inflation and “mal-distribution of income, property and power.”

Overall throughout the continent, “Mass protests, general strikes, and other forms of social unrest are beginning to manifest themselves.” America will try to capitalize on them to maintain dominance over its “back yard.”

Addressing Economic Needs Via Electoral Processes: The Case of Venezuela

Democratic political processes require:

- “Free and equal competition for political office;
- access to the means of communication; and
- competing ideas and freedom to speak and act without physical or psychological coercion.”

In contrast, authoritarian and faux democratic regimes:

- control the mass media, access to it, and one-sidedly support free-market dominance to the exclusion of alternative systems;
- let monied interests control the process through unrestricted spending for favored

candidates to the detriment of others, especially independent ones that are entirely shut out;

- exert state repression and vote-rigging to deny opposition candidates an equal chance;
- accept foreign financing for regime favorites, and
- allow other hard line tactics and embedded systems to make democratic governance impossible.

The mass media play a crucial role. Their power influences public opinion, supports favored candidates, and it's no different in Venezuela than elsewhere. Yet Hugo Chavez and his party won impressive victories in every presidential, congressional and municipal election since 1998 by promising and delivering social changes – real ones for essential needs that lifted millions of out of poverty by using the nation's resources to help them.

In recent years, other Latin American electoral systems have also been democratized as neoliberal practices receded, popular mass movements arose, and “oligarchic uprisings” for authoritarian rule were defeated. Venezuela represents the most impressive example.

Prior to Chavez' election, the country had oligarchic rule for 40 years under two parties competing (like Republicans and Democrats) “to represent the petrol-rentier oligarchy, powerful importers, and the real estate-financial speculative elite.” Both parties “pillaged the public treasury” until Chavez won office in December 1998 and reformed the system. He survived the Washington-backed April 2002 coup, the later in the year-early 2003 oil management lockout, the August 2004 recall election, and remains the most popular political figure in the country.

It's prospered under his leadership, and Venezuelans have benefitted by policies delivering beneficial social change. Chavez deepened the nation's democracy through:

- elected community councils;
- encouraging, promoting and financing “a vast array of neighborhood cooperatives, peasant organizations and trade unions;
- “weakening....linkages between the oligarchic political and economic elites” and reducing authoritarian power over civil society;
- establishing publicly financed television and community radio stations to challenge the corporate media's control of information;
- supporting free expression, including by his fiercest opponents; and
- conducting free, fair, and open democratic elections that shame America's rigged ones favoring a corrupted two-party oligarchy.

Today, the pro-Chavez United Socialist Party of Venezuela ((PSUV) enjoys overwhelming support as evidenced in the November 2008 election when it won 72% of state governorships and 58% of the popular vote.

In February 2009, Venezuelans passed a constitutional amendment permitting an

incumbent president and government officials to run for office without term limits. In other words, to let people vote their officials in or out, not party bosses in back rooms. Over the past decade, it shows in Venezuela:

- media choices are more diverse;
- more social classes than ever exist at state and local levels;
- the electoral process is free, fair and open as judged by independent observers;
- campaigns and procedures are less corrupt, violent and unable to be manipulated by the powerful;
- citizen participation is widespread and impressive; and
- governance under Chavez has lessened inequalities and encouraged the citizenry to participate in their democracy.

Obstacles nonetheless remain, principally “in the continuation of vast concentrations of oligarchic wealth and ownership of strategic banking, mass media, real estate, agricultural lands, distribution networks and the manufacturing sectors.” As a result, “vast social inequalities” exist, though less extreme than before 1999.

Chavez’s most pressing task is to “formulate a comprehensive socio-economic strategic plan to confront the global collapse of capitalism,” especially in light of lower oil prices and demand. Advancing his social agenda depends on it.

Masters of Defeat: Retreating Empire and Bellicose Bluster

Despite America’s imperial and diplomatic defeats, militarism under Obama continues to serve the usual constituencies that benefit, while at the same time unmet human needs are ignored and disdained. As the economic crisis deepens, reckless national resource amounts are diverted to powerful corporate interests and to maintaining America’s imperial footprint globally in spite of clear failures with Iraq as Exhibit A.

Over six years of war and occupation left “enormous military casualties and over a half a trillion in economic losses, without securing any political, military or natural resource gains.”

Iran is Exhibit B. Despite Israeli-Washington efforts to isolate the country, in October 2008, Shell Oil and the Austrian energy company OMV sponsored a Teheran conference promoting “gas export opportunities and potentials of the Islamic Republic of Iran.” After losing out on tens of billions in potential oil revenues, Big Oil may have decided that “economic-centered empire building” is preferable to the military kind. Shell’s move perhaps is an overture for what’s to come if the Obama- Netanyahu axis doesn’t intervene militarily to stop it.

Afghanistan and Pakistan are Exhibits C and D with US forces targeting them both in a futile effort to secure control and extend America’s South Asia influence. After nearly eight years of conflict and occupation, Taliban forces are now resurgent, and stepped up efforts to defeat them will likely prove as unsuccessful as previous campaigns. Yet vast sums are wasted trying while vital domestic needs go begging.

America’s one-sided Israeli support is equally futile and “has led to a sharp decline (of) US

influence in the region” as well as enormous Arab street opposition that promises one day to explode. It’s also been bad for business. “Zionist-Israeli usurpation of US Middle East policy has led to strategic losses of investments, markets, profits and partnerships for the entire multi-national oil and gas industry” as well as other global economic losses.

Washington is also losing out in Latin America where its influence is waning. For business, it amounts to hundreds of billions in lost trade and investments as global competitors like China have profited at America’s expense. Washington’s belligerency has a price, and its fallout is also felt at home.

Besides its declining competitiveness, America’s economic strength has weakened. Conditions at home are in disarray, and “the financial system is disconnected from the real economy and on the verge of collapse....” It’s only a matter of time before it rubs off on Obama and he’s blamed for it, as well he should be, given the destructiveness of his economic policies.

In lieu of progressive alternatives, administration extremists seek confrontation with Russia, China and Iran as well as Latin American states like Venezuela. These nations and others show more resistance, and most states prefer cooperative economic growth over futile military conflict – a lesson Washington and Israel have yet to learn, and they’re paying for it.

The Obama Regime, The Zionist Power Configuration and Regional Wars

Obama’s Israel-Firster officials and 51 influential Zionists organizations define America’s counterproductive Middle East belligerency – an agenda destined to fail, yet it persists despite urgent domestic needs left unaddressed. Edward Said once said that in a matter of hours, the Israeli Lobby could marshal the entire Senate to come together for Israel on virtually anything – even policies counterproductive to America’s best interests.

In addition, outliers in both Houses of Congress are purged, appointments with dubious Israeli loyalties are blocked, and regional belligerency is the preferred option over diplomacy because Israel expects it with regards to Iraq under Saddam, Iran, Syria, Hezbollah in Lebanon and Gazans under Hamas – targeted by slow-motion genocide that continue with Washington’s approval but couldn’t persist without it, or Israel’s illegal West Bank settlements either.

For decades, and especially since 9/11, Muslims and Arabs have been ferociously targeted by vicious propaganda and military aggression. Obama is following the same agenda, in Afghanistan with stepped up efforts.

America’s pro-Israeli media as well as influential business, academic and other figures support open-ended militarism and all policies benefitting Israel regardless of their destructiveness. As a result, the US is in terminal decline with nothing in evidence to stop it.

Israeli Middle East Supremacy from Gaza to Tehran: Imperial Overstretch?

Iran poses no regional threat nor has it for the past 200 years. Yet Israel targets it for removal as its sole remaining rival, so perhaps Operation Cast Lead was preparatory target practice. Washington appears supportive, given Obama saying at the July G 8 meeting that “we’re not going to just wait indefinitely and allow (Iran to develop a) nuclear weapon.” European and Arab states may not object. Israeli influence demands it. The major media is

in tow, and extremist US elements want regime change at any cost, even a devastating holocaust if nuclear weapons are used against underground Iranian sites.

For decades, Israel has been a serial aggressor and threat to the region. It's used "repeated threats and aerial and ground assaults on neighboring countries....to assert (unchallenged) regional supremacy." Washington's support under Republicans and Democrats permits it in spite of huge risks of uncontrollable fallout.

"The election of the ultra-militarist Binyamin Netanyahu promises (stepped up) Israeli plans for a massive assault on Iran," regardless of its foolhardiness. The Israeli prime minister calls the Islamic Republic the "terrorist mother base (and) that Israel cannot accept an Iranian terror base (Gaza) next to its major cities." So far, belligerency is on hold, but perhaps preparations are underway, given Obama's G 8 remark and Joe Biden's earlier one about America not intervening to stop a "preemptive" attack. The New York Times quoted him saying:

"Look, we cannot dictate to another sovereign nation what they can and cannot do when they make a determination - if they make a determination - that they're existentially threatened and their survival is threatened by another country."

Iran plans no conflict and poses no threat to Israel or the region. An Israeli and/or American attack will openly defy international law that permits defensive measures only until the Security Council acts. Yet naked aggression is possible with the Obama administration "openly threaten(ing) war if Iran does not accept unilateral disarmament with intrusive inspection of its strategic (nuclear) installations, allowing Israel and the US a unique opportunity for pinpointing vital targets for their first wave of attack" if one comes.

Retaliation is Iran's only deterrent, including against America in Iraq. Yet "Israel's military success in Gaza (against a defenseless civilian population) has created an irrational triumphalist war fever among all of its leaders and their" American Zionist supporters. If it comes, "major military and political retaliatory action (will respond) throughout the Middle East" inflicting enormous economic losses," including disruption of regional oil operations.

Opposition efforts, however, are building to stop it, including Israeli war crimes investigations, the global Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement, and growing number of Jews worldwide no longer willing to tolerate a destructive Zionist ideology that violates Judaism's basic tenets. Unfortunately, Israel may have to be shocked militarily before the lesson is learned. If so, Arabs and Jews alike may pay dearly as a result.

The Politics of An Israeli Extermination Campaign: Backers, Apologists and Arms Suppliers

Well before Operation Cast Lead, Israeli historian Ilan Pappé explained that Israel has conducted state-sponsored genocide against Palestinians for decades and intensively in Gaza. In March 1998, international law expert Francis Boyle proposed that "the Provisional Government of (Palestine) and its President institute legal proceedings against Israel before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the Hague for violating the" Genocide Convention - an "undeniable fact to the entire world," according to Boyle.

Petras explained that "Israel's totalitarian vision is driven by the vision and practice of a permanent (Zionist-driven) purge of Arab Palestine....an ethno-racist ideology....enforced and pursued by its organized backers in the United States." Operation Cast Lead was the

latest example – a pre-planned mass-murder/scorched earth campaign to turn Gaza to rubble and its population to the edge of despair, deepening further from the horrors of a medieval siege that's starving people to death. Washington lets Israel:

- “commit what leading United Nations and international human rights experts (call) ‘crimes against humanity’ with total impunity;”
- get “an unlimited supply of the most technologically advanced and destructive weapons (and license to) use them without limit on a civilian population” in violation of international and US laws; and
- avoid UN sanctions and condemnations because America vetoes them in the Security Council.

Israel's chokehold on policy is key – from grassroots America to the major media, business, academia, the clergy, key professions, both Houses of Congress and every administration, Republican or Democrat. Influential figures voicing opposition assures they're targeted, intimidated, blackmailed, smeared, pressured and removed from positions of authority.

The major media support and trumpet the most outrageous Israeli crimes. Presidents of the 51 Major American Jewish Organizations (PMAJO) back them with “the Big Lie” and disseminate it through their Daily Alert propaganda organ, a tactic “reminiscent of totalitarian regimes.”

Major Jewish religious organizations are also involved, spewing hate instead of core Judaic principles. On January 3, 2009, the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism defended Israel's Gaza reign of terror saying:

“Every congregation should issue a statement supporting Israel. Solicit statements from elected officials at the city, state or provincial, or federal levels. Solicit statements from local religious, ethnic and other prominent personalities....”

It added “talking points,” propaganda, and support for the most egregious crimes of war and against humanity – justifying mass murder of civilian men, women, children and infants,

Enough is enough. Global Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions are essential until Israel complies with international law and the universal principles of human rights. Nothing less is tolerable in the interest of justice, a sovereign Palestinian state, and enforceable peace. Israel must be condemned, isolated, and held accountable for its grievous crimes. All support should be withheld. A battle of ideas must be waged to counter vicious dominant media lies. Israel must be denounced as a serial aggressor, a rogue state, a scourge to the region and humanity, and a violator of core Judaic dogma. America's complicity must also be outed.

Iranian Elections: The “Stolen Elections” Hoax

On June 12, Iran held presidential elections. Four candidates participated, but only two contended seriously. Final results showed incumbent Mahmoud Ahmadinejad with a 62.63% majority with second place finisher Mir Hossein Mousavi a distant 33.75%. At once street protests erupted with claims of electoral fraud. Yet a May 11 – 20 independent poll sponsored by two US organizations (the Center for Public Opinion and the American Strategy Program at the New America Foundation) showed Ahmadinejad way ahead enough to win

overwhelmingly. Washington and the major media cried foul.

All elections “in which the White House has a significant stake, where” pro-US candidates are defeated, are “denounced as illegitimate by the entire political and mass media elite” with no evidence offered as proof. PMAJO demanded harsher sanctions and further isolation of the Islamic Republic.

“Western leaders rejected the results because they ‘knew’ that their reformist candidate could not lose.” They portrayed Mousavi as a “voice of moderation” despite his hardline record as prime minister in the 1980s, and his support from Iran’s ruling elite, urban middle class, as well as youths and students favoring better relations with America. In contrast, Ahmadinejad has widespread support among the urban and rural poor for providing vital social services that Mousavi disdains.

Western propaganda predicted a landslide Mousavi victory in spite of convincing evidence of Ahmadinejad’s popularity. Is it surprising that he won? A Mousavi victory was clearly unexpected, especially as an independent candidate who became politically active again after a 20 year hiatus and only campaigned in Iran’s major cities. Ahmadinejad, in contrast, made over 60 nationwide trips in less than three months. It paid off.

Post-election, the Los Angeles Times published a photo of a huge pro-Ahmadinejad crowd cheering the re-elected president – a far larger assemblage than any demonstration opposing him. It’s not hard imagining why. Most Iranians are low income workers who rely on essential social services. It’s no surprise that they fear losing them under a leader saying he’ll cut them.

“The scale of the opposition’s electoral deficit should tell us how out of touch it is with its own people’s vital concerns:” real needs like food subsidies, housing, security, jobs, and more. Ahmadinejad promised to keep addressing them. Mousavi wants closer ties to the West and the usual free-market “reforms” that include lower wages, fewer benefits, privatized state enterprises, and less attentiveness to public needs in the interest of greater corporate profits.

What’s ahead now is “open to debate.” On June 26, USA Today reported that:

“The Obama administration is moving forward to fund groups that support Iranian dissidents, records and interviews show, continuing a program” begun under George Bush.

Brent Scowcroft told Al Jazeera television that “of course” Washington “has agents working inside Iran,” and it’s well-known that Congress, for years, has directed millions of dollars for regime change, thus far without success.

Extremists in the Obama administration cite a stolen election and want “preemptive war (because) no negotiations are possible with an ‘illegitimate’ government....” While abhorring violence and supporting the “aspirations of the Iranian people to be achieved through peaceful means” and free expression, “no EU leader (except France’s Sarkozy) has questioned the outcome of the voting.”

Along with US hard-liners, Netanyahu is “the wild card,” and it’s up for grabs whether his bellicose stance signals conflict. If it comes, it’ll be Washington’s war as well, a disastrous one for the region and beyond, and further proof of America’s terminal decline. Perhaps Israel’s as well. Whether cooler heads can prevent it remains to be seen.

The New Agro-Industrial Neo-Colonialism: Two, Three, Many Mass Revolts

“Colonial style empire building is making a huge comeback, and most of the colonialists are latecomers” to the game – “newly emerging neo-colonial economic powers (ENEP)....seizing control of vast tracts of fertile lands from poor” African, Asian and Latin American countries.

Landless peasants and rural workers are being exploited, “repressed, assassinated or jailed (and forced) into disease-ridden urban slums.” Agribusiness imperialism is to blame:

- over half of Madagascar’s arable land has been leased to South Korea’s Daewoo Logistics for 70 – 90 years to grow maize and palm oil for export;

- millions of fertile Cambodian hectares are being taken; and

- other seizures are happening elsewhere.

“Three blocs” are behind them:

- rich Arab oil states

- “newly-emerging imperial countries of Asia and Israel;” and

- US and European interests, including Wall Street speculators.

Key nations involved include Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, China, Korea, Japan, Israel, America, and various European countries. Their modus operandi include “political and financial mechanisms,” coup d’etats, destabilization, bribes and more to ally with neoliberal collaborators in an imperial land grab. Once in place, extreme exploitation occurs, including repression, impoverishment, and displacement to produce crops for export. Peasants become serfs for \$1 – 2 dollars a day. Agribusiness reaps huge profits and get footholds for new investments.

The World Bank is heavily involved directing \$1.4 billion for takeovers of “underutilized lands.” Deep polarization is the result – between wealthy investors and speculators on one side v. “hundreds of millions of starving, landless, dispossessed peasants” in numerous countries around the world.

The process is in its early stages with what’s coming to include takeovers of “transport systems, infrastructure and credit systems....” An elite few outside the country will profit hugely. Internal collaborators will get rich. Local middle class elements are shrinking, and the vast majority of poor and dispossessed workers and peasants will lose the most as they always do. Today’s global economic crisis hits them hardest. Their only recourse is mass uprisings, but military crackdowns will likely follow.

Yet Petras believes new agribusiness empires “may be short-lived” – replaced by “a new wave of rural-based national liberation movements and ferocious competition between new and old imperial states fighting over increasingly scarce financial and economic resources.” And it may happen “with or without change in the US or Europe.”

Regional Wars and Western Progressive Opinion: Commiserate with the Victims; Condemn Those Who Resist!

In spite of signs of public restiveness over imperial wars and entrenched Israeli interests, a new American president was elected promising war, not peace, continued occupation of Iraq, threats against Iran, full support for Israeli aggression, and stepped up militarism against Afghanistan and perhaps elsewhere – besides his unconscionable amount of damage at home after seven months in office.

Nonetheless, prominent US and European progressive intellectuals (PPIs) support Obama based on rhetoric alone, not policies, given that he's not George Bush. Yet they "refuse to apply the 'lesser evil' (standard) in support of (the democratically-elected) Hamas" government or Hezbollah in Lebanon. They support them "as victims but condemn them as fighters who challenge their executioners" by acting in their own self-defense.

They support self-determination in principle, but reject mass popular movements struggling against imperial Israel and America for freedom. The "lesser evil Democrats and European Social Democrats and Center-Left politicians have a far worse record than the Taliban, Hezbollah, Hamas and Sadrist forces." They're also mindless about how better off Iraqis, Afghans, Lebanese and others were before US-EU imperial marauders subjugated them to wars and repressive occupations.

The historical record is clear. For over 300 years, Western imperialism "destroyed and undermined far more lives and livelihoods in far more countries over a greater time span than even the worst of the post colonial regimes." Choosing Obama as a "lesser evil," amounts to calling the worst of past sins acceptable.

Obama's Animal Farm: Bigger, Bloodier Wars Equal Peace and Justice

Afghanistan is bloodier than ever with General Stanley McChrystal in charge, a man Petras calls a "notorious psychopath" and with good reason. He's a hired gun, an assassin, a man known for committing war crime atrocities as head of the Pentagon's infamous Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) – established in 1980 and comprised of the Army's Delta Force and Navy Seals, de facto death squads assigned to commit "extrajudicial assassinations, systematic torture, bombing of civilian communities and search and destroy missions."

McChrystal represents the worst of them. "He is the very embodiment of the brutality and gore that accompanies military-driven empire building." His contempt for human life shows in not distinguishing between "civilian and military oppositions, between activists and their sympathizers, and the armed resistance."

Under Bush-Cheney, he was directly involved in torturing political prisoners and suspects as well as reigning terror over areas under his command. Obama gave him carte blanche to expand the Afghan war with more troops, funding, stepped up counterinsurgency, targeted killings, and frequent drone and other attacks against Afghan and neighboring Pakistan targets. He's charged with wiping out local social networks and community leaders, comprising support for armed resisters.

Obama's Afghan campaign is part of his military-driven empire building campaign that includes permanent occupation of Iraq, subversion and perhaps conflict with Iran, full support for Israeli belligerency, and continuing the worst of the Bush administration's torture practices.

With McChrystal his South Asian point man, military terrorism and wars without end define

his strategy. Many thousands more civilians will die and be displaced as US onslaughts uproots entire communities and destroy everything in their path. Orwell might have called Obama's agenda: "Bigger and bloodier wars equal peace and justice," the more carnage the better.

Obama's Foreign Policy Failures

In order of importance, they are:

- no G-20 agreement for a joint economic stimulus - one based on "reconstituting the power of finance capital" at the expense of creating new jobs and restoring economic health;

- NATO countries refusing more troops for expanded war in Afghanistan and adjacent Pakistan heading America toward the same fate as Soviet forces in the 1980s, 19th century British ones, and other imperial nations failing to understand Afghans' determination to be free; today, Obama doesn't realize that NATO countries want no part of that caldron, nor will they alienate their people trying and jeopardize their own power in the process; further, in times of crisis, scarce resources are vitally needed at home, a lesson America has yet to learn, but it will;

- Latin American countries' unwillingness to have closer political and diplomatic ties to America because of "the continued exclusion of Cuba and isolation of Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador;" also the harmful effects of repatriating financial resources from the region; Obama's finance-centered agenda offers nothing so Latin American leaders reject it; the US's financial collapse has had major regional repercussions that assure long-term consequences affecting future relations; in addition, Obama's "commitment to military-centered empire building" further alienates regional states that are urgently seeking new markets, credits and investments to heal their sick economies; it's bringing Asian and Latin states closer to the detriment of America, seen as a less reliable trading partner and a very unfair one;

- continuing futile and counterproductive efforts to isolate and pressure Iran to end its legal commercial nuclear program through tightened economic sanctions; disingenuous rhetoric about "turn(ing) a new page" belies hardline tactics to destabilize its leadership for regime change, by whatever means it takes and regardless of the consequences; European and other states take strong exception resulting in America losing out economically;

- applying similar pressure to North Korea, a nation seeking rapprochement for years, only to have sitting US administrations rebuff them, choosing confrontation over stability on the peninsula and risking war, potentially with nuclear weapons much like with Iran;

- sacrificing Palestinian sovereignty in support of imperial Israel as evidenced by his Israel-First-riden administration and willingness to bow to most every Israeli demand; Obama's subservience and impotence aren't "lost on the entire world, especially the Arab" one that's heard and seen it all before and expects nothing but empty rhetoric from Washington;

- Pakistan's unwillingness to undertake greater military aggression against its autonomous Northwest provinces and territories adjacent to Afghanistan; military attacks have displaced over two million people and hugely destabilized Pakistani cities and towns; the nation's commanders may have had enough because they fear a revolt in their ranks; and

— “securing a stable pro-US regime in Iraq” and pacifying the country under American control have so far been unsuccessful.

In less than seven months in office, failures have produced fiascos and disasters while economic conditions continue to decay. Sooner or later there are consequences. Pursuing imperial aggression “in a time of economic depression is self-destructive, self-isolating and doomed to failure.” Using vitally needed resources for conquests and occupations, slaughtering hundreds of thousands doing it, forcing millions into permanent displacement, and ignoring essential homeland needs removes any possible doubt about America’s moral credibility. It also begs the question of how much longer people will tolerate it and what next when they won’t.

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