

The Neocons “Grand Plan” and Obama’s Blundering Foreign Policy: “An Actor Playing the Role of a President”?

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“I believe in American exceptionalism with every fiber of my being. But what makes us exceptional is not our ability to flout international norms and the rule of law; it is our willingness to affirm them through our actions.” President Barack Obama, May 29, 2014 commencement speech at West Point

“War is mankind’s most tragic and stupid folly; to seek or advise its deliberate provocation is a black crime against all men.”, President Dwight Eisenhower, 1947 commencement speech at West Point

“Politically speaking, tribal nationalism always insists that its own people is surrounded by “a world of enemies”, “one against all”, that a fundamental difference exists between this people and all others. It claims its people to be unique, individual, incompatible with all others, and denies theoretically the very possibility of a common mankind long before it is used to destroy the humanity of man.” Hannah Arendt (1906-1975), *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 1951

“...An empire is a despotism, and an emperor is a despot, bound by no law or limitation but his own will; it is a stretch of tyranny beyond absolute monarchy. For, although the will of an absolute monarch is law, yet his edicts must be registered by parliaments. Even this formality is not necessary in an empire.” John Adams (1735-1826), 2nd American President

Am I alone in having the uneasy feeling, while listening to Barack Obama’s speeches, that we are witnessing an actor playing the role of an American president and carefully reading the script he has been given? As time goes by, indeed, Barack Obama seems to be morphing more and more into a Democratic George W. Bush. Those who write his speeches seem to have the same warmongering mentality as those who wrote George W. Bush’s or Dick Cheney’s speeches, ten years ago.

That’s probably no accident since Neocons occupy key positions in Barack Obama’s administration as they did under George W. Bush when they pushed the United States into the war in Iraq, and as they have also tried to push the United States toward a military showdown with Iran and as they are now attempting to provoke Russia into a military conflict. How Neocons can infiltrate both Republican and Democratic administrations and be trouble-makers in both administrations is the daily wonder of American politics!

But we know the Neocons’ “Grand Plan”. They have published it. Indeed, this is a plan that has been outlined in many reports published by the (now defunct) Project for a New

American Century (PNAC), an organization created in 1997, and whose many founders became prominent members of the Bush-Cheney administration. They have rebranded themselves as the Foreign Policy Initiative and the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies and have now succeeded in becoming influential within the Obama-Biden administration, especially at the State Department as leftovers of former Secretary Hillary Clinton. They and their allies are the main force behind the disastrous and incoherent U.S. foreign policies being pursued by the United States government both in the Middle East and in Eastern Europe.

Basically, it is a plan that has little to do with the fundamental interests of ordinary Americans, and everything to do with those of some foreign and domestic entities, most prominently the state of Israel because of its influence in American domestic politics and the Sunni state of Saudi Arabia because of its crucial role in influencing the price of oil internationally. It is also a plan that fits in very well with the interests of the military-industrial complex, which needs a permanent war environment to justify huge defense budgets.

Such a plan is based on the old principle of “Divide and Conquer” (or in Latin, « Divide ut Regnes or “Divide et Impera”). This sometimes requires creating political chaos where stability prevails. And stirring the pot is what the Neocons want to do in order to attain their goals. In the Middle East, they do it by fanning the flames of the old sectarian conflict between Sunni Muslims and Shiite Muslims in order to overthrow unfriendly established governments and to disintegrate countries into smaller and more easily controlled parts, even though the human costs for the local populations are horrific.

For example, even though it may seem absurd for the Obama administration to arm and support fanatical Islamist rebels in Syria while fighting them in Iraq with drones and Marines, such a bizarre policy appears rational in the eyes of the Neocons if it results in Sunnis and Shiites killing each other and if the country of Iraq is broken down into parts.

In Europe, the Neocons have persuaded the clueless Obama administration that provoking a rekindling of the old Cold War and re-igniting tensions between Russia and the West were necessary steps to be taken in order to solidify the U.S.’s influence on the European Union (E.U.) and to establish a reframed and enlarged NATO as an American-controlled offensive military alliance that can sidestep the United Nations, justifying military interventionism abroad.

But, because the neocon plan is often in conflict with long term economic and political American interests at home and abroad, the neocon plan to launch a string of American-sponsored wars in the Middle East and in Eastern Europe may explain why Obama’s current foreign policy appears to be so incoherent and so inconsistent. Let us elaborate.

1- First, consider the chaotic situations in Syria, in Libya, and in Iraq, where well-armed Islamic militias are well positioned to destabilize these countries’ established governments through civil wars that could easily lead to their political disintegration and economic downfall.

However, while permanent chaos in that oil-rich part of the world may serve certain political interests, especially those of Israel whose geopolitical advantage is to weaken surrounding Islamic states and even break them up into smaller entities, and those of Sunni and oil-rich

Saudi Arabia whose advantage is to profit from higher oil prices and to weaken the Middle East Shiite states (Iran, Iraq and their ally Syria), such permanent military conflicts hardly serve the interests of American consumers and workers and may threaten the business interests of the large American oil companies operating in the region.

Indeed, higher oil prices are one of the causes behind the current relative economic stagnation in the United States and in Europe, while the possibility that Islamic militias can attack and take control of oil fields in those countries runs counter to the interests of American oil companies.

This partly explains why there are conflicting demands being made on the Obama administration by different political and economic interests, and it has become increasingly difficult to accommodate them all, notwithstanding how hard President Obama tries to do so. Thus, the apparent incoherence and inconsistency in that foreign policy.

Sometimes Barack Obama acts as if he accepts the neocon agenda of destabilizing most Middle East Muslim countries for the benefit of Israel and Saudi Arabia. Witness the U.S. government's financial and military support of terrorist organizations to provoke "regime change" in Syria as it has done in Libya. Remember that last September, Obama had acquiesced to his neocon advisers' recommendation to bomb the country of Syria, whose Assad government was deemed too close to Shiite Iran, before realizing that the entire cabal of justifications was a false flag operation.

Sometimes, however, the economic costs of such instability are considered too high and a timid Obama, to the chagrin of his neocon advisers, hesitates to implement fully the Machiavellian neocon plan. President Obama then becomes the target of the neocon media who picture him as weak, "out of touch", inexperienced and irresolute, thus contributing to his increasing unpopularity.

2- Secondly, consider the new Cold War that the Neocons have succeeded in rekindling in Europe, with their aggressive policy of encircling Russia with missiles and hostile neighboring countries and of engineering a "regime change" in Ukraine. Who profits from these renewed tensions? Certainly not ordinary Americans and ordinary Europeans. The profiteers are the empire builders and the arms traffickers, and all those who like to fish in troubled waters.

Conclusion

It is most unfortunate that President Barack Obama has not been able to establish a coherent and credible American foreign policy of his own, with clear principles and clear objectives, and has had to rely on discredited Neocons for advice. Therefore, he has placed himself and his government at the mercy of various and contradictory influences, sometimes jerking in one direction, sometimes in another direction. That's called a lack of vision and a lack of leadership.

It may not be too late for Barack Obama to be his own man in his second term and to stop emulating George W. Bush and Dick Cheney. For that, however, he would have to fire all the Neocons in positions of power and policy-making in his administration. If he does not have the guts to do that, he may turn out to be one of the worst American presidents ever, on a par with George W. Bush.

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