

“The President Who Became an Actor”: And This Year’s Oscar Goes To... Barack Obama

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If Ronald Reagan was known as the actor who became a president, then perhaps Barack Obama should become known as the president who became an actor.

For every facial movement evinced, every gesture of the hand, every word enunciated by the 44th president turns out to be a complete charade.

This is the guy who ran for the presidency presenting himself before the US nation, hand on heart, as the candidate who would end the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; end the killing of civilians in those countries; and the brutalizing of young American men. Two years on, Obama has donned the costume of US commander-in-chief with ever-frightening zeal. Far from ending the wars, Obama has not only ramped up America’s foreign wars of aggression, he has expanded them into new territories, including Pakistan, Libya and East Africa, adding countless more innocent lives to Washington’s global death toll.

This is the guy who promised to close the American gulag of Guantanamo Bay where hundreds of men have been rendered by kidnapping from various parts of the world, tortured and held without trial, not one of them convicted. Two years on, promise broken. US rendition and torture is still standard practice, a fact to which American soldier Bradley Manning can testify simply because he showed the moral courage to tell the truth about such US crimes against humanity.

This is the guy who promised with unctuous sincerity to make a new beginning in US foreign policy, to respect universal human rights. “Universal human rights begin in the lives of each and every individual,” he intoned with his by-now clichéd solemn voice and face. Two years on, US foreign policy has even less regard for human rights both abroad and at home. In Gaza, the world’s largest outdoor concentration camp besieged by the US-fuelled Israeli war machine, Obama’s rhetoric on respecting the rights of human beings stands as a grotesque mockery. Elsewhere in the Muslim world, this guy is seen as the genial peacemaker who let his mask slip to reveal an ugly warmongering face like all his other predecessors.

This is the guy who pretends to offer the best deal to the US public over the budget deficit by gallantly fending off Republican axemen. “I won’t slash you by \$6 trillion, I’ll only slash you by \$4 trillion,” to paraphrase his fake logic. As if this is a benign alternative that the American people just can’t refuse. So the guy who once upon a time supposedly broke his heart over Chicago’s inner-city poor will now unleash massive austerity on many more of America’s poor and ground-down working class, by slashing \$4 trillion worth of Medicaid and Medicare, public education, social welfare and jobs. Nowhere does our supposed chivalrous and cerebral hero Obama appear to be able or willing to think outside the box in which the

corporate aristocracy has entombed their political vampires on Capitol Hill. How about ending the trillion-dollar wars he was supposed to end? Or re-appropriating the trillions of dollars that he lavished on the banksters? Or reversing tax breaks for the already obscenely wealthy. These alternatives would make a lot more economic sense, justice and peace than Obama's attack on the very people who voted him in to make a change.

Above all, this is the guy who has shown that he can lie with a pious face, smile sweetly when he refers to murdering innocent people with aerial drones, and can almost bring a tear to the eye when he talks about "not being able to ignore humanitarian values in Libya" [while then proceeding to oversee the bombing of civilians in that country and in the same breath not giving a pause to murder of civilians by a US ally in Bahrain].

So at the next Oscar ceremony, a special category should be opened for Barack Obama, the acting president of the USA. He can then hang that along with his Nobel peace prize - which, come to think of it, could also be nominated for "funniest screenplay ever".

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Finian Cunningham has written extensively on international affairs, with articles published in several languages. Many of his recent articles appear on the renowned Canadian-based news website Globalresearch.ca. He is a Master's graduate in Agricultural Chemistry and worked as a scientific editor for the Royal Society of Chemistry, Cambridge, England, before pursuing a career in journalism. He specialises in Middle East and East Africa issues and has also given several American radio interviews as well as TV interviews on Press TV and Russia Today. Previously, he was based in Bahrain and witnessed the political upheavals in the Persian Gulf kingdom during 2011 as well as the subsequent Saudi-led brutal

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