

Trump's Ties to the Past and the Resurrection of the Left

'De Omnibus Dubitandum' Everything is to be Doubted

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Introduction

President Trump is deeply embedded in the politics of the deep state structure of American imperialism. Contrary to occasional references to non-intervention in overseas wars, Trump has followed in the footsteps of his predecessors.

While neoconservatives and liberals have raised a hue and cry about Trump's ties to Russia, his 'heresies' over NATO and his overtures to peace in the Middle East, in practice, he has discarded his market humanitarian' imperialism and engaged in the same bellicose policies of his Democratic Party presidential rival, Hillary Clinton.



Because he lacks the slick 'demagogy' of former-President Obama, and does not slather his actions with cheap appeals to 'identity' politics, Trump's crude, abrasive pronouncements drive young demonstrators into the streets in mass actions. These demonstrations are not-so-discretely supported by Trump's major opponents among the Wall Street bankers, speculators and mass media moguls. In other words, President Trump is an icon-embracer and follower, not a 'revolutionary' or even 'change agent'.

Prof James Petras (right)

We will proceed by discussing the historical trajectory, which gave birth to the Trump regime. We will identify ongoing policies and commitments determining the present and future direction of his administration.

We will conclude by identifying how current reaction can produce future transformations. We will challenge the current 'catastrophic' and apocalyptic delirium and offer reasons for

an optimistic perspective for the future. In brief: This essay will point out how current negatives can become realistic positives.

Historical Sequences

Over the past two decades US presidents have squandered the financial and military resources of the country in multiple unending, losing wars, as well as in trillion dollar trade debts and fiscal imbalances. US leaders have run amok provoking major global financial crises, bankrupting the largest banks, destroying small mortgage holders, devastating manufacturers and creating massive unemployment followed by low-paid unstable jobs leading to collapse in living standards for the working and lower middle classes.

Imperial wars, trillion dollar bail-outs for the billionaires and unopposed flight of multinational Ccorporations abroad, have vastly deepened class inequalities and given rise to trade agreements favoring China , Germany and Mexico . Within the US , the major beneficiaries of these crises have been the bankers, high-tech billionaires, commercial importers and agro-business exporters.

Faced with systemic crises, the ruling regimes have responded by deepening and expanding US Presidential powers in the form of presidential decrees. To cover-up the decades-long series of debacles, patriotic 'whistle-blowers' have been jailed and police-state style surveillance has infiltrated every sector of the citizenry.

Presidents Bush, Clinton and Obama defined the trajectory of imperial wars and Wall Street plunder. State police, military and financial institutions are firmly embedded in the matrix of power. Financial centers, like Goldman Sachs, have repeatedly set the agenda and controlled the US Department of Treasury and the agencies regulating trade and banking. The 'permanent institutions' of the state have remained, while Presidents, regardless of party, have been shuffled in and out of the 'Oval Office'.

The 'First Black' President Barack Obama pledged peace and pursued seven wars. His successor, Donald Trump was elected on promises of 'non-intervention' and promptly picked up Obama's 'bombing baton': tiny Yemen was attacked by US forces, Russia's allies in the Donbas Region of Ukraine were savaged by Washington's allies in Kiev and Trump's 'more realist' representative, Nikki Haley, put on a bellicose performance at the UN in the style of 'Madame Humanitarian Intervention' Samantha Power, braying invectives at Russia.

Where is the change? Trump followed Obama by increasing sanctions against Russia , while threatening North Korea with nuclear annihilation in the wake of Obama's major military build-up in the Korean peninsula. Obama launched a surrogate war against Syria and Trump escalated the air war over Raqqa. Obama encircled China with military bases, warships and warplanes and Trump goose-stepped right in with warmongering rhetoric. Obama expelled a record two million Mexican workers over eight years; Trump followed by promising to deport even more.

In other words, President Trump has dutifully picked up the march along his predecessors' trajectory, bombing the same targeted countries while plagiarizing their maniacal speeches at the United Nations.

Obama increased the annual tribute (aid) to Tel Aviv to a whooping \$3.8 billions while bleating a few pro-forma criticisms of expanding Israeli land-grabs in Palestine; Trump

proposed to move the US Embassy to Jerusalem while blubbing a few of his own mini-criticisms of illegal Jewish settlements on stolen Palestinian land.

What is overwhelmingly striking is the similarity of Obama and Trump's policies and strategies in foreign policy, their means and allies. What is different is their style and rhetoric. Both 'Change Agent' Presidents immediately break the same phony pre-election promises and function well within the boundaries of the permanent state institutions.

Whatever differences they have are a result of contrasting historic contexts. Obama took over the collapse of the financial system and sought to regulate banks in order to stabilize operations. Trump took over after Obama's trillion-dollar 'stabilization' and sought to eliminate regulations – in the footsteps of President Clinton! So 'much ado' about Trump's 'historic deregulation'!

The 'winter of discontent' in the form of mass protests against Trump's ban against immigrants and visitors from seven predominantly Muslim countries follows directly from Obama's 'seven deadly wars'. The immigrants and refugees are direct products of Obama's invasions and attacks on these countries leading to murder, injury, forced displacement and misery for millions of 'predominantly' (but not exclusively) Muslims. Obama's wars have created tens of thousands of 'rebels', insurgents and terrorists. The refugees, fleeing for their lives, have been largely excluded from the US under Obama and most have sought safe havens in the squalid camps and chaos of the EU.

As terrible and illegal as Trump's border closure to Muslims and as promising as the mass public protests seem, they are all the result of the near decade long policy of murder and mayhem under President Obama.

Following the policy trajectory – Obama shed the blood and Trump, in his vulgar racist style is left to 'clean up the mess'. While Obama has been made into a 'Nobel Peace Prize' peace maker, grumpy Trump is soundly attacked for picking up the bloody mop!

Trump has chosen to tread the path of obloquy and faces the wrath of purgatory. Meanwhile, Obama is off playing golf, wind surfing and flashing his 'devil may care' smile to his adoring scribblers in the mass media.

As Trump stomps down the path laid out by Obama, hundreds of thousands of demonstrators fill the streets to protest the 'fascist', with scores of major mass media networks, dozens of plutocrats and 'intellectuals' of all genders, races and creeds writhing in moral outrage! One is left confused at the deafening silence of these same activists and forces when Obama's aggressive wars and attacks led to the deaths and displacement of millions of civilians, mostly Muslim, and mostly women – as their homes, weddings, markets, schools and funerals were bombed.

So much for American muddle-headedness! One should try to understand the possibilities that arise from a massive sector finally breaking their silence as Obama's glib warmongering has been transformed into Trump's crude march to doomsday.

Optimistic Perspectives

There are many who despair but there are more who have become aware. We will identify the optimistic perspectives and realistic hopes rooted in current reality and trends. Realism means discussing contradictory, polarizing developments and therefore we accept no

'inevitable' outcomes. This means that outcomes are 'contested terrain' where subjective factors play a leading role. The interface of conflicting forces can result in an upward or downward spiral – toward more equality, sovereignty and liberation or greater concentration of wealth, power and privilege.

The most retrograde concentration of power and wealth is found in the oligarchic German-dominated European Union – a configuration which is under siege by popular forces. The United Kingdom voters chose to exit from the EU (Brexit). As a result, Britain faces a break-up with Scotland and Wales and an even greater separation from Ireland. Brexit will lead to a new polarization as London-based bankers depart to the EU and free market leaders confront workers, protectionists and the growing mass of the poor. Brexit fortifies nationalist-populists and leftist forces in France, Poland, Hungary and Serbia and shatters the neo-liberal hegemony in Italy, Spain, Greece, Portugal and elsewhere. The challenge to the EU oligarchs is that popular insurgency will intensify social polarization and can bring to the fore progressive class movements or authoritarian nationalist parties and movements.

Trump's ascent to power and his executive decrees have led to highly polarize electorates, increased politicization and direct action. The awakening of America deepens internal fissures between small 'd' democrats, progressive women, trade unionists, students and others against the big 'D' Democratic Party opportunists, speculators, life-long Democratic warmongers, bourgeois black 'D' Party hacks (the mis-leaders) and a small army of corporate-funded NGO's.

Trump's embrace of the Obama-Clinton military and Wall Street agenda will lead to a financial bubble, bloated military spending and more costly wars. These will divide the regime from its trade union and working class supporters now that Trump's cabinet is composed entirely of billionaires, ideologues, rabid zionists and militarists (as opposed to his promise to appoint 'hard-nosed' deal-making businessmen and realists). This could create a rich opportunity for movements to arise which reject the truly ugly face of Trump's reactionary regime.

Trump's animosity to NAFTA, and advocacy of protectionism and financial and resource exploitation will undermine the corrupt, murderous, narco-neoliberal regimes which have ruled Mexico for the past 30 years since the days of Salinas. Trump's anti-immigration policy will lead to Mexicans choosing to 'fight over flight' in confronting the social chaos created by the narco-gangs and gangster police. It will force the development of Mexico's domestic markets and industry. Mass domestic consumption and ownership will embrace national-popular movements. The drug cartel and their political sponsors will lose the US markets and face domestic opposition.

Trump's protectionism will limit the illegal flow of capital from Mexico, which amounted to \$48.3 billion in 2016 or 55% of Mexico's debt. Mexico's transition from dependency and neo-colonialism will deeply polarize the state and society; the outcome will be determined by class forces.

Trump's economic and military threats against Iran will strengthen nationalist, populist and collectivist forces over the neo-liberal 'reformist' and pro-Western politicians. Iran's anti-imperialist alliance with Yemen, Syria and Lebanon will solidify against the US-led quartet of Saudi Arabia, Israel, Britain and the US.

Trump's support for Israel's massive seizure of Palestinian land and its 'Jews-only' ban against Muslims and Christians will lead to the 'shaking off' of the multi-millionaire Palestinian Authority quislings and the rise of many more uprisings and intifadas.

The defeat of ISIS will strengthen independent governmental forces in Iraq , Syria and Lebanon , weaken US imperial leverage and open the door to popular democratic secular struggles.

China 's President Xi Jinping's large-scale, long-term anti-corruption campaign has led to the arrest and removal of over a quarter-million officials and businesspeople, including billionaires and top Party leaders. The arrests, prosecution and jailing has reduced the abuse of privilege, but more important, it has improves the prospects for a movement to challenge vast social inequalities. What began from 'above' can provoke movements from 'below'. The resurrection of a movement toward socialist values can have a major impact on US vassal states in Asia .

Russia 's support for democratic rights in Eastern Ukraine and the re-incorporation of Crimea via referendum can limit US puppet regimes on Russia 's southern flank and reduce US intervention. Russia can develop peaceful ties with independent European states with the break-up of the EU and the Trump electoral victory over the Obama-Clinton regime's threat of nuclear war.

The world-wide movement against imperialist globalism isolates the US-backed right-wing power grab in South America . Brazil , Argentina and Chile 's pursuit of neo-liberal trade pacts are on the defensive. Their economies, especially in Argentina and Brazil , have seen a three-fold increase in unemployment, four-fold rise in foreign debt, stagnant to negative growth and now face mass-supported general strikes. Neo-liberal 'toadyism' is provoking class struggle. This can overturn the post-Obama order in Latin America .

Conclusion

Across the world and within the most important countries, the ultra-neoliberal order of the past quarter century is disintegrating. There is a massive upsurge of movements from above and below, from democratic leftists to nationalists, from independent populists to the right-wing reactionary 'old guard': A new polarized, fragmented political universe has emerged. The beginning of the end of the current imperial-globalist order is creating opportunities for a new dynamic democratic collectivist order. The oligarchs and 'security' elites will not easily give way to popular demands or step down. Knives will be sharpened, executive decrees will issue forth, and electoral coups will be staged to attempt to seize power. The emerging popular democratic movements need to overcome identity fragmentation and establish unified, egalitarian leaders who can act decisively and independently away from the existing political leaders who make dramatic, but phony, progressive gestures while seeking a return to the stench and squalor of the recent past.

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