

Letters on Obama's Nobel Prize speech

15 December 2009

On "Accepting peace prize, Obama makes case for unending war"

Obama's acceptance of the Nobel "Peace" Prize will go down in history as one of the most bizarre and outrageous moments in recent history. The man that is overseeing the continuity of two criminal, neo-colonial wars and ruthlessly expanding them is given a prestigious world prize for his contributions to "peace."

I can only say that this kind of seemingly incomprehensible event can only happen under capitalism; the political and economic system under which war criminals are converted into heroes and the wealth of multimillionaire thieves is protected at the expense of millions.

But all this will one day go away. The day will come when mankind will be free from exploitation and imperialist wars. And that day people will understand the true meaning of Obama's speech just like Mr. Walsh has commented upon.

That is why I support your movement.

Eduardo M

12 December 2009

This article really is speaking for the majority of the world's people on the subject of this sickening spectacle! The reference to Orwell was apt, although Orwell would have found some new material for his novel had he been able to watch Obama's speech!

I thought the following was particularly significant: "The candidate of 'change' is revealing himself not only as the continuator, in every important aspect, of the Bush-Cheney policies, but as a deeply reactionary, foul figure in his own right." Obama's ability to lie is more finely tuned than Bush's—he can do it without the give-away smirk, and he uses his abilities to the full in the interests of US imperialism. But regimes based on lies of this magnitude soon earn the scorn that they deserve. Thank you for hastening this process with your insightful article.

TJ

11 December 2009

Yes, David, Orwell must be spinning in his grave: "War as an instrument of peace".... Just like in Vietnam, we've got to destroy the village to save it. The only thing that appears unworthy of killing for these folks would be their absurd and unending tropes to justify their constant horrors....

To use a Southern locution, Obambam has not missed a lick in learning to dance with the folks what brung him.

Rob M

Alabama, USA

11 December 2009

You would have thought that Obama would have turned down the prize,

but he accepted it knowing full well that he would continue fighting two wars. It seems that Obama and his government have no concept of shame.

David G

11 December 2009

You write, "The European ruling elites, whose interests find expression in the decisions of the Nobel committee, were glad to oblige Obama with a stage from which he could defend these wars and paint imperialist aggression as an act of humanitarianism. They hope that Obama, unlike Bush and Cheney, will offer Europe a role in enforcing 'global security' (and sharing in the spoils) in 'unstable regions for years to come.' "

This is a very important point that you made, Mr. Walsh. I think that it is becoming more obvious every day that Obama is their guy *par excellence*. Germany as you know now has the largest military contingent in Afghanistan. It has undertaken new missions off the coast of Somalia as well as the Mediterranean coast of Lebanon. It has one of the largest nuclear fuel reprocessing industries in the world, as does France, with the ability to mass-produce nuclear weapons in a very short time frame.

France, as you may know, has built a new military base in one of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, to provide nuclear forces to this region. This is facilitated through the patrols of its nuclear-armed subs in the Persian Gulf, the so-called "Force de Frappe".

Without a doubt, the elites of these EU/NATO nations are chomping at the bit to fill any power vacuum in the world that may be vacated by the world's principal imperialist power. The so-called "indispensable" world imperialist power needed to hold the whole sordid scheme of things together is in big trouble, and these men of yesterday now assume that their hour of power may be at hand.

Charles K

11 December 2009

On "The Nation and the Obama Doctrine"

Your comments on Obama's Nobel "Peace" Prize speech seem entirely appropriate to me. I'm reminded of the story that, when the satirical songwriter Tom Lehrer was asked why he stopped writing, he said that, when Henry Kissinger won the Nobel Peace Prize, satire was dead. I'd just like to add that Obama's statement, "We will not eradicate violent conflict in our lifetimes," seems a precise echo of Dick Cheney's bald assertion, not long after 9/11, that the "war on terror" would not end in our lifetimes. Both statements are shamelessly obvious admissions of Washington's true intent: The "West" aims to continue fighting conveniently arranged wars as a permanent policy.

George M

Scotland

11 December 2009

Great job on this story. Great job. The *Nation's* Heuvel predicts that she's going to see "peace in our time."

PK
12 December 2009

It is worth quoting a section from George Orwell's essay "Politics and the English Language":

"In our time, political speech and writing are largely the defense of the indefensible. Things like the continuance of British rule in India, the Russian purges and deportations, the dropping of the atom bombs on Japan, can indeed be defended, but only by arguments which are too brutal for most people to face, and which do not square with the professed aims of the political parties. Thus political language has to consist largely of euphemism, question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness. Defenseless villages are bombarded from the air, the inhabitants driven out into the countryside, the cattle machine-gunned, the huts set on fire with incendiary bullets: this is called pacification. Millions of peasants are robbed of their farms and sent trudging along the roads with no more than they can carry: this is called transfer of population or rectification of frontiers. People are imprisoned for years without trial, or shot in the back of the neck or sent to die of scurvy in Arctic lumber camps: this is called elimination of unreliable elements. Such phraseology is needed if one wants to name things without calling up mental pictures of them. Consider for instance some comfortable English professor defending Russian totalitarianism. He cannot say outright, 'I believe in killing off your opponents when you can get good results by doing so.' Probably, therefore, he will say something like this:

"While freely conceding that the Soviet regime exhibits certain features which the humanitarian may be inclined to deplore, we must, I think, agree that a certain curtailment of the right to political opposition is an unavoidable concomitant of transitional periods, and that the rigors which the Russian people have been called upon to undergo have been amply justified in the sphere of concrete achievement."

Carolyn
California, USA
12 December 2009

Dear Editor:

Well, I've had the bittersweet pleasure of reading two penetrating critiques of the chilling presentation given by President Obama upon receiving the Nobel Peace Prize. Both David Walsh ["Accepting peace prize, Obama makes case for unending war" 11 Dec] and Joseph Kishore ["The Nation and the Obama Doctrine" 12 Dec] held back no punches, and did so in a climate of unanimous praise for the President. Mr. Kishore speaks correctly when warning how this administration and military will respond if the "purring" of the conforming majority turns to anger. Yes, Obama has claws and is now revealing them overtly. As both writers observed, he is now "unmasked."

In 2008, I said McCain will put you in a military uniform and Obama will chain you to a slave ship. Obama was precisely handpicked to achieve this perpetuation of the right-wing agenda, and does so through the cover and techniques of mass delusion that continue unchallenged and undetected. This phenomena is from more than Joe Goebbels's propaganda machine modeling, for it is pure mind-control, mesmerism and, dare I say, "mentalism," on a sweeping and totalitarian scale. It is very potent and very dangerous. David Walsh described Obama's

spoken ~~stare~~ ~~audacity~~ and insolence ~~and~~ ~~inappropriately~~: "foul"! So foul, you either see it or you don't. So foul, you either sense it or you don't. So foul, you are under its control or you are free.

For those of us who saw clearly in 2007-2008, it was a waiting game of observing President Obama unfold stage by stage, and a very lonely waiting game I might add. Of watching too the stupor of "Obamania" proceed into one of mindless sleep. The present stage, achieved in record time that even his co-masters at the Republican party are awed, is far beyond the red-line, is buoyed only by sheer arrogance, conceit and pride, and in utter defiance of the bare facts of America's present decline and disintegration. When his work is finished, by 2012 but probably before, the groundwork will be laid for the coming regime, fascism (there! I said it). But it can only be orchestrated with a populace under anesthesia.

Pain will awake the sleepers. Pain from unemployment, from poverty, from hunger and from persecution. Hopefully, they then will not fall prey to being misled again or be led to blame the wrong enemy.

And if "the world" hears what WWSW and I hear, then I suppose "the world" better think of how it can unify against a common threat. And if "The People" hear it, they too better unify. But in the absence of either, the sleep will continue, and so will America's amoral ambitions.

Michael B
Maine, USA
12 December 2009

The Obama family seems to enjoy invoking the names of assassinated pacifists. National Public Radio reported the state visit to the White House by the Prime Minister of India, Manmohan Singh last November. During the festivities, Michelle Obama praised Mahatma Gandhi (who led the struggle against the imperialist control by Great Britain and for the independence of India) and revealed that "[Barack Obama] kept a picture of India's famed political and spiritual leader...in his office when he was a senator." Why? Because, she said, "Gandhi inspired so many people in India and around the world with his example of dignity and tolerance and peace." I waited. "Dignity," "Tolerance," "Peace." One word that could not pass her lips was the sin qua non that defined Gandhi's public persona—nonviolence. This, just weeks before her husband unleashed the Dogs of War in Afghanistan.

Randy R
Arizona, USA
14 December 2009



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