

# Obama's speech in Australia: A threat of war against China

James Cogan

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The remarks by Barack Obama at the University of Queensland on Saturday, delivered while he was in Australia for the G20 Leaders Summit, was a bellicose restatement that the US will use every means, including war, to prevent any challenge by China to American dominance over the Asia-Pacific.

Much of the speech was devoted to reviewing the military deployments and diplomatic intrigues against China that Washington has carried out since Obama announced the “pivot to Asia” before the Australian parliament in 2011. He boasted of how the US has strengthened its ties with Japan, South Korea and the Philippines, opened new bases in Australia and Singapore, encouraged India to play a greater regional military role and pursued closer relations with Vietnam, Malaysia and Burma.

China, by contrast, was discussed from the standpoint of US suspicions over “what kind of role it will play” in the region. Obama's platitudes that the US welcomed China's economic growth were swiftly followed by assertions that Beijing must “adhere to the same rules as other nations”—rules dictated by Washington—if conflict was to be avoided.

The pivot in Asia, Obama stressed, was inseparable from the US war in the Middle East, its interventions in Ukraine against Russia and escalating operations in Africa under the banner of stemming the Ebola virus. “In each of these international efforts, some of our strongest partners are our allies and friends in this region, including Australia,” the president declared. “Our rebalance is not only about the US doing more in Asia, it's also about the Asia Pacific region doing more with us around the world.”

The US, in other words, is grooming its allies in Asia—Australia and Japan in particular—as its partners in not only a potential nuclear war with China, but in intensified actions to assert its hegemony over the entire

Eurasian landmass and the planet as a whole. Washington is also preparing for the day when the simmering tensions with the major European imperialist powers such as Germany and France erupt openly to the surface.

Every word Obama spoke about the economic and political agenda of American imperialism was a lie. In his trademark disingenuous manner, he repeated the discredited ideological pretexts with which the American ruling class has justified its ruthless pursuit of global economic and geo-political dominance for over a century.

“We believe,” Obama asserted, “that an effective security order for Asia must be based—not on spheres of influence, or coercion, or intimidation where big nations bully the small—but on alliances of mutual security, international law and international norms that are held.”

This is from a representative of a government that conducts itself on the world arena with complete lawlessness. The American ruling class long ago renounced any adherence to international laws on national sovereignty, arrogating to itself the right to intervene anywhere it asserts that its “national interests” are threatened. Its entire foreign policy is based on coercion and intimidation.

America, Obama continued, stood for “open markets and trade that is fair and free.”

Since the 2008 financial meltdown, the US Federal Reserve has used its quantitative easing policy to manipulate currency values and interest rates, while the government and courts have protected banks and speculators from any accountability for the social crisis that their criminal operations inflicted on hundreds of millions of people. Washington is seeking to form discriminatory trade blocs such as the Trans Pacific Partnership that will exclude China and compel members to accept terms laid down by, and favourable to, American corporations.

Most absurdly, Obama declared, “We believe in

democracy—that the only source of legitimacy is the consent of the people, that every individual is born equal with fundamental rights, inalienable rights, and that it is the responsibility of governments to uphold these rights.”

This is from a president who serves an ultra-rich financial oligarchy that controls every aspect of American political life, has overseen the build-up of a massive intelligence apparatus to spy on the entire world and who asserts he has the right to assassinate American citizens without due process. The US is wracked by grotesque degrees of social inequality and staggering levels of injustice and state violence. It has assumed ever more the character of a police state.

Extending his lies, Obama declared: “As a Pacific power, the United States has invested our blood and treasure to advance this vision.... Generations of Americans have served and died in the Asia-Pacific so that the peoples of the region might live free. So no-one should ever question our resolve or our commitment to our allies.”

The real history of US imperialism in Asia is that of hostility to freedom, mass slaughter and historic war crimes. During World War II, it sought to destroy Japan as an imperialist rival and gain dominance over China. To compel Japan’s surrender—and to demonstrate its willingness to use extreme violence to ensure its global hegemonic position—entire cities were firebombed to ashes and Hiroshima and Nagasaki incinerated with atomic bombs.

The US spent vast resources, including the lives of thousands of young Americans, trying to crush the anti-colonial movements that erupted across the region, most significantly with the 1949 Chinese revolution. Millions died in the 1951-53 Korean War and millions more in Indo-China during the Vietnam War. Some half a million people were massacred in the US-backed 1965 Indonesian coup. US-sponsored police-states in South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, the Philippines, Singapore and Malaysia brutally repressed democratic and labour activists.

Areas of Asia only became the focus of investment by American and other transnational companies because US intrigues, combined with the political bankruptcy and betrayals of the leadership of the anti-colonial struggles, ensured its people suffered oppression and exploitation. Corporations later made China the main base of their operations after the Stalinist Chinese Communist Party restored capitalist relations and demonstrated with the Tiananmen Square massacre that it would use its military and police apparatus to crush opposition in the Chinese

working class.

Twenty-five years since Tiananmen, Obama’s cynical and fraudulent assertion of US support for democracy is an implicit appeal to layers of the Chinese wealthy and privileged middle class who resent the enduring limitations on their personal freedoms and lifestyles. Obama significantly declared that as in other countries in Asia, “people in Hong Kong are speaking out for their universal rights.” Alongside military preparations, Washington is seeking to cultivate a social base within China that could be used to develop movements aimed at destabilising the existing regime—modelled on the pro-imperialist “colour revolutions” carried out in various countries.

The Chinese Stalinist regime is incapable of making any credible response to the imperialist propaganda or appeal to the international working class to oppose the war preparations. It represents the corrupt and nepotistic capitalist elite who have amassed vast wealth through collaboration with imperialism and the ruthless suppression of the democratic and social aspirations of the Chinese working class and oppressed. The only answer from Beijing to Obama’s warmongering will be to expand its futile arms race with Washington in the hope it will bring about some type of compromise, but which in reality serves only to heighten the danger of war.

The international working class, led by the International Committee of the Fourth International, is the only force capable of leading the unified world-wide revolutionary struggle for socialism necessary to end capitalism and prevent the catastrophe it is preparing.



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