

Democratic convention: Obama piles on more lies

Barry Grey
28 July 2016

President Barack Obama topped off day three of the Democratic convention with a demagogic speech that presented a rose-colored picture of America so out of touch with reality as to make the eruption of popular anger and discontent in the 2016 election incomprehensible.

Obama's false and complacent speech began with a self-congratulatory listing of the supposedly progressive achievements of his nearly eight years in office, during which poverty has increased, social inequality has reached new heights and the country has been continuously at war—making his presidency the first ever that has presided over two complete terms of uninterrupted warfare.

Showing his contempt for the intelligence of the American people, he concluded by repeating the slogans of his 2008 election campaign, “Yes we can” and “the audacity of hope,” as though America in 2016 was the realization of the empty promises he made back then, and began to betray even before assuming office. Needless to say, words such as “drone assassination,” “Guantanamo,” “indefinite detention,” “NSA spying” and “Wall Street bailout” were not to be heard.

In its sheer cynicism and dishonesty, Obama's speech was entirely in line with the convention as a whole. It has been a nonstop exercise in deception, with the central lie being the pretense that the Democratic Party—a capitalist party of war and reaction, controlled from top to bottom by the corporate-financial elite in alliance with the military and the CIA—is somehow a vehicle of human progress devoted to the interests of the people.

With the official nominations of Hillary Clinton and her running mate, Virginia Senator Tim Kaine, out of the way, and the right-wing, pro-war Democratic ticket having been blessed by the bogus “socialist” Bernie

Sanders, the convention organizers stepped up their efforts to outflank the fascistic Republican candidate, Donald Trump, from the right. This is part of an electoral strategy aimed at consolidating support within the military and intelligence agencies and on Wall Street, and winning over disaffected Republicans and wealthy, conservative independents.

Obama did not pull his punches in making such an appeal in his speech, declaring, “What we heard in Cleveland last week wasn't particularly Republican, and it certainly wasn't conservative.”

A prime time speaking slot was given to multibillionaire media mogul and former Republican and independent mayor of New York Michael Bloomberg to make a pitch for Sanders' “billionaire class” to join the Vermont senator in backing Clinton over Trump. Bloomberg chastised “many Democrats” for “wrongly blaming the private sector for our problems,” but argued that as a pragmatic entrepreneur, he was convinced Clinton was the better investment.

Much was made of Trump's rhetorical call Wednesday morning for Russia to find and publish the 30,000 missing emails from Clinton's days as Obama's secretary of state.

This was used to fuel the unsubstantiated claims of the Clinton campaign and sections of the media, led by the *New York Times*, that Vladimir Putin organized the theft of Democratic National Committee emails leaked last Friday by WikiLeaks, showing the DNC's collusion with the Clinton campaign to torpedo the challenge from Sanders. This is being presented as proof that Trump is an ally of Putin and, as opposed to Clinton, cannot be trusted to prepare for war against Russia.

Obama made reference to this propaganda blitz in his speech, saying Trump “cozies up to Putin, praises

Saddam Hussein, tells our closest allies they have to pay up if we are to keep our commitments.”

The advanced war plans of the United States, including against nuclear powers Russia and China, were, as throughout the convention and the election campaign as a whole, not openly discussed. But the theme of Hillary Clinton as a tried and tested agent of the military/intelligence establishment was brought forward on Wednesday.

Retired Rear Adm. John Huston, a Republican, was brought onto the stage to denounce Trump as a security threat and call for a vote for Clinton. Leon Panetta, who served both as CIA director and defense secretary under Obama, denounced Trump for “taking Russia's side” and said voters could “not afford someone who believes the US should withdraw,” which drew chants of “USA! USA!” from the convention delegates.

Vice President Joe Biden, just back from a trip to Asia to stoke up US-led military provocations against China, and whip allies such as Australia and the Philippines into line behind the US war preparations, combined a fairy tale narrative of Hillary Clinton, the humanitarian and fighter for the downtrodden, with patriotic hokum. He concluded with the declaration: “The 21st Century is going to be the American Century. We are America, second to none, and we own the finish line. May God protect our troops.”

This appeal to chauvinism and militarism was combined with endless evocations of race, gender and sexual orientation, the political axis of the Democratic Party and the basis for lining up privileged middle-class layers behind American imperialism's savage wars of aggression, in return for the promise of a bigger share of the spoils from neocolonial plunder and the impoverishment of workers within the US.

A major theme was the “breaking of the glass ceiling,” represented by the nomination of a woman to head one of the major party's presidential tickets. The media on Wednesday universally proclaimed the Democrats' nomination of Clinton a historic milestone.

No one, however, has attempted to explain how or why the gender of a particular politician has any bearing on the policies he or she pursues. There is zero evidence in the annals of capitalist government that being a female increases the likelihood that a leader will pursue progressive policies.

What precedents are there to cite? Margaret Thatcher,

Indira Gandhi, Golda Meir, Dilma Rousseff, Angela Merkel? Nor, if one considers female leaders of a lower rank—Condoleezza Rice, Nancy Pelosi, Dianne Feinstein—does the list get any better.

Being a woman, or for that matter a gay or transgender person, does not alter the objective class role one plays as the chief executive of the American imperialist state, presiding over brutal wars abroad and grinding poverty and inequality at home.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact