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**President Obama's Magic Show: "Soft-Shoe" Diplomacy?
Represent Our Resistance
By Dr. Lenore J. Daniels, PhD
BlackCommentator.com Editorial Board**

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I shall feel myself discharging the duty of a true patriot; for he is a lover of his country who rebukes and does not excuse its sins.

-Frederick Douglass

Speeches like theirs
Puzzle me.
JUSTICE don't jibe
With a lynching tree.

-Langston Hughes, "Song after Lynching"

...the use of a particular common language, in this case English, by an educated middle class...to conduct a self-serving class narrative that alienates it from the people...The ambitious colonial scheme of reconstructing an African whose historical, physical, and metaphysical geography begins with European memory was almost realized with the production of such a narrative class dismembered from its social memory.

-Ngugi wa Thiong'o, [*Something Torn and New: An African Renaissance*](#)

President Barack Obama takes his magic show on the road. The Bush cards featuring predominantly Islamic "terrorist" figures are gone. But Obama *has* a deck of cards; he *has* a newly crafted magical wand!

In Turkey, April 6, 2009, President Obama acknowledges "hard feelings over Iraq." But it's a new day, new beginning in the United States of America. "So let me say this as clearly as I can: The United States is not and never will be at war with Islam." The old deck of cards is out and the new Obama cards are in. It may not be war with Islam, but there is an ideology, military dominance, oil rich nations in the Middle East, an agenda, and war!

"I say this as the president of a country that not too long ago made it hard for someone who looks like me to vote. But it is precisely that capacity to change that enriches our countries." See the newly crafted wand in action?

It's all a matter of skin pigmentation! Don't look over there, where the economic disparity between white and Black is at its worse and Black Americans are nearly invisible. *Look at me:* I am here representing the United States as its head of state!

Listen to me: You, Turkey, are an ally state. Religion is not the issue. Remember my Kenyan father and his religion. I'm a friend! I am one of you: European, African, Christian, and Islamic. I am family!

Before a 100 college students at the Tophane Cultural Center in Istanbul the next day, April 7, 2009, President Obama stands waving his wand: There's a "false message" out there about the U.S. "Sometimes it suggests that America has become selfish or crass and doesn't care about the world beyond its borders...I'm here to tell you that's not the America I know."

What America does Obama know?

Here it comes...

"We are still a place where anyone who tries can still make it." He did! *Look! Listen!* If you should see or hear from Black Americans and they are complaining about the "selfish," "crass" ways of white power in Washington and on Wall Street - ignore them! They are a people who never tried! *Look at me!*

"It's a different style, but I think it's effective," a senior at Istanbul Technical University told the *Christian Science Monitor Istanbul*.

Ironic!

Mesmerized by President Obama's use of doubletalk - *done well* - white liberals and progressives, his base, find themselves unable to take their eyes off the magic show even while they are aware of U.S. corporate rulers scrambling to develop a more "effective" mechanism for control and dominance of the Middle East. This class of liberals and progressives want to believe in the America *Obama* knows, that Obama believes in, that he wants the world to know. They have linked their identity to Obama and his cursory knowledge of America's historical origins and Dionysian rivalry in violence, on the one hand, and to his adoption of the Black American liberation narrative as a means of controlling and dominating its appearance and disappearance at his convenience, on the other hand.

And everyone loves an "entertaining" African or Black American!

BBC's North American editor calls Obama the "seducer-in-chief." The country's last "seducer-in-chief" was Bill Clinton, an almost "Black" president, (who did *so much* for poor Black American families, Mexico, Haiti, Rwanda, etc)! After the idiocy of the rough and tough cowboy, wannabe-King Bush, the corporate world is putting its windfall bailout money on Obama, who is proving to be an effective magician or, if you will, seducer-in-chief - without the Monica Lewinsky scandal.

The white liberals and progressives have no idea how to be *critical* of Obama, for that would require them to be critical of themselves and their role, particularly in the last forty years, in America's repressive practices. In the end, Obama is an ideal hero to them, as he is to corporate class, for liberation (requiring the end of capitalism) of the global oppressed peoples is not an option!

Obama's doing a lot of juggling here! How else is it possible to be complicit with President Obama's doublethink and, at the same time, denounce the U.S.'s corporate-driven agenda against oppressed people in this country and elsewhere, to be mesmerized at the State's feet, while others are beneath those feet?

In the meantime, for the corporate rulers, the solution is not to end this economic system that has expanded poverty across the global, expanded the practice of slavery in the marketplace, expanded the number of uninsured, unemployed, uneducated, expanded the number of nation-states engaging in human rights violations, and expanded the global climate crisis. The corporatists are expanding capitalism through NATO.

The United States, said Noam Chomsky, Professor Emeritus at MIT on *Democracy Now!*, has "a long standing imperialist mentality which says we have to control and dominate, and particularly, we have to dominant energy sources. That goes way back."

What did Obama say: "Sometimes it suggests that America has become selfish or crass and doesn't care about the world beyond its borders...I'm here to tell you that's not the America I know."

"Afghanistan," Chomsky explained, "is right in the middle of this system." What system? The same "system." It's the one teacher, philosopher, and activist Paulo Freire called a "fatalistic ideology" which convinces "submissive economies," as it does oppressed people within them, "that there is nothing to be done about it except to follow the natural order of the facts. It passes of this ideology as natural or almost natural."

It's America: We're friendly now.

It's a market-driven system, a one-track-mind system, eyeing Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India (TAPI) and the pipeline at the end of the road. "There have been longstanding plans for a pipeline from Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India," Chomsky said.

Oil isn't in Afghanistan, but the country, particularly its Taliban and its Head of State, former Unocal consultant, Hamid Karzai, are troubling. Never mind their brutal regime and their repression of women. Karzai and the Taliban are *obstacles* on the road to the pipeline.

Last week, Obama toured European countries starting with the G-20 in London and later arriving in France and Germany where he suggested - with a wink - that they get aboard this new American roadster, headed for even greater prosperity for all. France joins NATO after a 50 year absence. And then it's on to Turkey.

After the U.S. and Europeans collapsed the Soviet Union, NATO should have closed shop, Chomsky said. But the 28 nations of NATO (www.mapsofworld.com/nato-members-map.htm) under the leadership of the U.S. and Great Britain have supplied military support for a number of atrocities (Turkish atrocities against the Kurds, the illegal bombing of Serbia, massacres in Indonesia). NATO should have been dissolved but just as failed CEOs, military contractors, corporatist lobbyists, and Clinton cabinet and foreign service diplomats always secure employment *in* the government, NATO has been given a new life and a new task! Obama is charming European and Islamic souls for the further expansion of NATO.

Between the magical disappearance of "race" and "religious" differences and the magical appearance of a new American history is Obama, wedding the Wall Street gurus to European governments, a whitened and Christian reality that is "friendly" to cooperative nation-states with different races and ethnicities and religions. Surrounding Obama's promise of a *new* form of capitalism is the necessity to solidify U.S., European, and Islamic military might against uncooperative nation-states, particularly in the Middle East. *Imagine those pipelines and all that oil - all those profits, allies and partner states!* At the end of this last and grand, break-the-bank venture for the U.S. Empire and its satellite ally states is oil! Oil!

The road to the pipeline is *in* NATO - a smoother, passenger-friendly vehicle - for white supremacy!

In the style of the Roman Emperors, the commander-in-chief appears in Iraq to visit the troops. Fine. He tells them they'll be home soon. "It's time to transition to the Iraqis." And the troops cheer him. To the Iraqis, he says, you "have to take responsibility" for your "own sovereignty." Of course, Obama doesn't say this *among* the Iraqis who have been invaded and occupied or to the many exiled in refugee camps and other Arab nations. But unlike Black Americans when they have heard Obama deliver this coded imperialist message about "responsibility," the Iraqis answered back with protest and a dose of reality: 55,000 U.S. troops to remain in Iraq and the world's largest embassy. The Iraqis are not so admiring of Obama's magic show!

And back home, Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner, White House Economic Advisor Larry Summers, and Federal Reserve Chair Ben Bernanke are stuffing the fragmented carcass of capitalism into new faces on Wall Street.

It'll work. They hope!

Just remember the Obama administration can hear you by phone or read your email if you do start to grumble. Black Americans can tell you how that practice of "wiretapping" and "eavesdropping" feels.

Freire tells us that the road to creating a "new rebellion" is built on the "ethics of human solidarity," an ethic that "feels itself betrayed and neglected by the hypocritical perversion of an elitist purity, an ethic affronted by racial, sexual, and class

discrimination." Such an ethics "demands" that "change be not simply rhetorical," Freire states, but change "that makes a difference" in the lives of people.

Where is the "new rebellion" built on the "ethics of human solidarity" in President Obama's agenda?

Obama hasn't felt betrayed or neglected by the hypocritical perversion of an elitist purity, an ethic affronted by racism, sexual, and class discrimination." America has been very, very good to him because his narrative *disappears* its sins! That's the America *he knows*! He's not been the "darker one" sent to eat in the "kitchen when company comes." He's not been the one who said "I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired." He's not been the one to say we must "dare everything" for change or there'll be "the fire next time." He has forgotten, if he ever heard, the Martin Luther King who pointed to a cruel practice of racial and economic injustice at home and who charged America with being the greatest purveyor of violence around the globe. In short, white supremacy has never betrayed or neglected President Obama or his admirers!

Americans, conservatives and liberals, love the dream - the origins of all that magic!

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The BlackCommentator Readers' Corner Blog

BlackCommentator.com Editorial Board member, Lenore Jean Daniels, PhD, has been a writer, for over thirty years of commentary, resistance criticism and cultural theory, and short stories with a Marxist sensibility to the impact of cultural narrative violence and its antithesis, resistance narratives. With entrenched dedication to justice and equality, she has served as a coordinator of student and community resistance projects that encourage the Black Feminist idea of an equalitarian community and facilitator of student-teacher communities behind the walls of academia for the last twenty years. Dr. Daniels holds a PhD in Modern American Literatures, with a specialty in Cultural Theory (race, gender, class narratives) from Loyola University, Chicago. Click [here](#) to contact Dr. Daniels.

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