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**Obama's America: "A Peaceful Country" -
Expanding the Farce
Represent Our Resistance
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BlackCommentator.com Editorial Board**

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War. Conflict. It's all business. One murder makes a villain. Millions a hero.
Numbers sanctify.

-*Monsieur Verdoux* (Charlie Chaplin)

The history which bears and determines us has the form of a war rather than
that of a language: relations of power, not relations of meanings.

-Michel Foucault

Yesterday, I said I thought he's lost in the bush!

-Eduardo Galeano

"I know how are it is for you to put food on your family."

"Rarely is the question asked: 'Is our children learning?'"

"I've been in the Bible every day since I've been the president."

Okay. We no longer have to listen to a U.S. President and wince. We no longer
anticipate hearing the explicit farce of a U.S. President who somehow managed to
speak of gynecologists who "aren't able to practice their love for women all across the
U.S." He was a good front man: entertaining, but no less devious than his sidekick and
the company of men (and women) behind them. In the end, many believe the farce has
ended.

We are now in an era of "transparency" with a U.S. president who has a command of
the English language. Suddenly, people who once chuckled or winced with the world,
listen to the eloquence of words flowing through the airwaves. The U.S. is still fighting
"terrorists" but we call them "extremists" now.

America, a peaceful country, is fighting a just cause but with a fresh, new approach!

On June 4, 2009, President Barack Obama spoke about this fresh, new approach. Speaking at Cairo University, he immediately defined or *re-defined* the discussion. There's "tension" between the U.S. and the "Muslim World," but this "tension" is "rooted in historical forces that go beyond any current policy debate."

Are you *not* speaking about "tension" but instead, the concrete dead? Are you not speaking about confinement, walls and laws, restrictions, occupation, invasion, destruction, and torture? And these "historical forces" are what? Are you *not* speaking about the Holocaust and the extermination of 6 million Jews, including German sympathizers, North Africans, and gays? Are you *not* speaking about the handshakes between Chamberlain and Hitler while, in this country, the American Jewish community pleaded with anyone in the government who would listen that atrocities were being committed at Bergen-Belsen, Auschwitz, Buchenwald and other camps in Germany? Are you *not* speaking about the Nakba and the subsequent consequences of Western policies for the state of Israel? The catastrophe, the Nakba, *forced* over 700,000 Palestinians from their *homeland*! They are not in search of a homeland - they have been expelled, their homeland has been devastated, and their rights taken from them! Bush II had an excuse for having no interest in history.

But, then, this is the past. It's not necessary to bring up a history that is "beyond any current policy debate." Eloquence is necessary now. So silence on those "historical" and current forces that fuel this - tension!

We are talking, right now, today, about "violent extremists" (outside the Judeo-Christian tradition) who have exploited these "tensions." These extremists "engage in violence against civilians" and their behavior has led people in the U.S. "to view Islam as inevitably hostile not only to America and Western countries, but also to human rights. This has bred more fear and mistrust." Did someone mention 1953 and the CIA and UK removal of the *democratically*-elected Iranian President Mohammed Mosaddeq? Did anyone mention the huge amount of taxpayer money that winds its way over the homes, schools, hospitals, and mosques in Palestinian in the shape of bombs and missiles? Did anyone mention that the U.S. once supported the Taliban with money and weapons to expel the Soviet Union. But the Americans stayed in the country. Were these Taliban extremist before or after the Soviet Union removed its last troops and tanks from the scene?

Did anyone mention how the U.S. and Western corporate media in general contributed images and narratives of Muslim "terrorists" and Muslim "extremists" intended to lead Americans and the world to see Islam, the religion and its practitioners as hostile to Americans and Westerners? Did anyone mention that is practice of dehumanizing the victims of power is violence in itself?

The speaker is a Christian, keep in mind. "Hussein" is his middle name and most in the room nod in acknowledgement of a possible cultural and religious identification... But I am a Christian! In comparison to Islamic history, Christian history is... well, let's get back to the text!

"Palestinians must abandon violence." I think I've heard something like this before. Black Americans must abandon violence - you are criminals, you are not a responsible people! "Palestinians must abandon violence." And is there a difference between the violence of a people stripped of their land and occupied generation after generation fighting back and the violence of a well-armed occupier Israel and the U.S. annual funding of Israel? Are there "victims" and "perpetrators"? Is the violence equal? Now,

this is language that the new president prefers to dismiss. It is divisive, he claims. It divides people others say. It makes some people angry - as if the "victims," hearing someone speaking on their behalf, become angry only then. And this anger is always divisive and never instructive, even to the perpetrators.

Is the resistance of a victim of violence the same as a perpetrator's violence?

Palestinians must abandon violence. Sounds like Bush II. Repetition of the phrase confirms the continuity of U.S. policies toward Palestine and signals the U.S. media machine that nothing has changed. Crafting language that casts Palestinians as "evil-doers" who need to restrain themselves, presents to the world another episode in the long-running farce that justifies the destruction of Gaza. Violence against the Palestinians represents the "natural" obligatory punishment for villains. In turn, President Obama is portrayed as *the* righteous U.S. leader who "extends a hand to the Muslim world" (*Bismarck Tribune*) or who is engaged in "repairing relations with Muslims" (*ABC Online*) - who, in turn, have been downright *hostile* villains to Americans - in a "peaceful" America!

Consequently, Palestinians wait in refugee camps in Gaza, the West Bank and in other neighboring lands "for a life of peace and security that they have never been able to lead." *Never?* But, bottom line, *they* insist on playing the villain! "They endure the daily humiliations - large and small - that come with occupation...the situation for the Palestinian people is intolerable. America will not turn our backs on the legitimate Palestinian aspiration for dignity, opportunity, and a state of their own" - ironically, if they stop playing the villain!

It is too tragic for laughter! How did the Palestinians come to be in "refugee camps" and how did they come to be "occupied"? The speaker is an intelligent, educated man, isn't he? The Palestinians had a state of their own!

If this isn't the same old farce we have seen before, what it is?

The U.S. has never turned toward the Palestinian people; it is too busy profiting from the sale of weaponry to Israel that maintains the "intolerable": conditions in Gaza and the West Bank. While Americans, including Jewish Americans, condemn the violence against Palestinians by a U.S.-backed Israeli military machine, the U.S. government maintains its Israel-Palestinian policy - and that means it supports the violence against Palestine.

(See, there isn't any bumbling non-sense about "food on your family." This is dead serious imperialism in your face! The "side kick" is now the lead man).

"Palestinians must abandon violence. Resistance through violence and killing is wrong and does not succeed" - except in the case of the *American Revolution*, I think! But the speaker will teach, will remind us of the "history" to prove his point:

"For centuries, black people in America suffered the lash of the whip as slaves and the humiliation of segregation. But it was not violence that won full and equal rights. It was a peaceful and determined insistence upon the ideals at the center of America's founding. This same story can be told by people from South Africa to South Asia; from Eastern Europe to Indonesia. It's a story with a simple truth: that violence is a dead end. It is a sign of neither courage nor power to shoot rockets at sleeping children, or to blow up old women on a bus. That is not how moral authority is claimed; that is how it is surrendered."

If history is taught in the U.S., it will teach Americans that the Civil Rights Movement and the resistance in Black South Africa and others were neither "peaceful" nor non-violent!

Count your blessings. Most Americans *know* what they are told from corporate media and others refuse to remember and if they do, they remember as selectively as the speaker. Black children were set ablaze in a church; they were left without fathers and mothers. They had dogs set upon them. This government didn't call for a "War on Terror" then! Whites and Blacks were killed on buses, dynamite set homes on fire while families slept. Blacks, particularly in the South, had to take up arms to defend their homes and businesses. Non-violent resistance did not mean Blacks in the U.S. or in South Africa surrendered their rights to defend themselves against vigilantes and government-supported laws and police forces.

The violence against the fight for human rights didn't begin and certainly hasn't ended with the "Civil Rights Movement" or the *assassination* of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. Despite the speaker's dismissal of the COINTELPRO program targeting the Black Panthers - then and now (San Francisco 8) - and the FBI targeting of the American Indian Movement or any person who threatened to organize the poor, working class, women's groups, and war vets, violence is exerted in the labeling of people or activists "extremists," "militants," "terrorists." Why is Mumia Abu Jamal incarcerated on death row or Leonard Peltier behind bars when there's evidence proving their innocence? Where is the "moral authority" of the U.S. in these and in other cases of wrongful convictions? Do places called Bagram, Abu Ghraib, and Guantanamo (a tropical and pleasant place according to former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld) represent the U.S.'s surrender to "moral authority"?

Will a show of Palestine's "moral authority" among the rubble that is Gaza really turn U.S. Israel-Palestinian policy around? Could the Palestinians' evidence of "moral authority" include roll after roll of dead Palestinian children? Did the speaker see for himself the bodies of these children? Did he visit the construction of new Israeli homes in the West Bank while some 100,000 Gazans are homeless? Surely the speaker knows that Gaza's sewage system is in ruins, and its fishermen and farmers are being attacked by Israeli battle ships now! The Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Palestine reports that since June 2007, Israel refuses to allow cement and other building materials to enter Gaza. Will a visual display of inequality be enough to speak of "moral authority" on the side of the Palestinians?

What will it take to alter U.S. Israel-Palestinian policy? The speaker can't say, but AIPAC won't stand for change in the U.S. Israel-Palestinian policy. He can't say he made a promise to AIPAC when he was candidate Obama. As President Obama, he will be called to present himself to AIPAC if he should think about changing the policy. He, the speaker, can't dare to imagine that scene.

So back to "American history" again!

"America is not the crude stereotype of a self-interested empire." No, of course it's not. America is the crude reality of a self-interested empire! "The United States has been one of the greatest sources of progress that the world has ever known. We were born out of revolution against an empire." I thought the American revolutionaries had a few guns, rifles, and some canon powder, but maybe I'm wrong. I know I'm not supposed to know these things! Since the U.S. fought (*non-violently*, I guess) against a the British Empire, *it* can't possibly be an empire just as Israel can't possibly cause many thousands of Palestinian deaths or hundreds of children to starve from lack of water and food. But never mind that! "America is one of the greatest sources of progress that the

world has ever seen" because the other, unseen sources of "progress" - for American progress, still - has been the massive pillaging and killings of millions of Black, Brown, Red, and Yellow people "that the world has ever" *not seen* on the television or read about in the history books written in the U.S.

Americans are great and all powerful because we really know how to "give meaning" to words within and without our borders! Yes, Glory! War to end all wars! Democracy so let's fight the enemy! "We are shaped by every culture, drawn from every end of the Earth, and dedicated to a simple concept: E pluribus unum: "Out of many, one."

I am sure it's not hard to purchase an Obama T-shirt or poster in China; they are probably made there on the cheap. Mexico knows all about American guns, and McDonald's hamburgers are weaning Africans from their traditional, more nutritional foods.

But isn't it the right of each individual to be recognized and respected as a member of the human race? People want the recognition and respect of their history, culture, ethnicity, and religion. Few want to become "one" - wearing an Obama T-shirt, eating McDonalds for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, working for chump change, dying for lack of medical care, and buried in a mass grave, for the U.S. to enforce its "free" market ideology in their country. Few want to identify with the "powerful," the "righteous," the "arrogant" who selectively remember mottos of conquest but who fails to speak of its direct and indirect responsibility in creating and supporting aggressive tyrannical regimes. Few have the right to self-determination when the U.S. holds this motto of "Out of many, one" over their heads!

The history of U.S. aggression has paid off. It is, indeed, "shaped by every culture," because it has attempted to absorb or repress every culture, thus, benefiting, if they receive cooperation or don't receive it, from global sweatshops, regime changes, wars, proxy conflicts, detention camps, prisons, torture, and rendition. (Rendition - did I mention this speech was delivered in Cairo - *Egypt* - where the U.S. sent Muslim detainees to be tortured since the Clinton era and continuing in the Obama new and fresh era! Is this another example of the motto - "out of many, one"?)

You know it has to come to this. All the economic devastation, physical and mental torture of the peoples of Palestine, must come to this: the policy of the US towards Palestine leads to that future when the Western powers control Gaza's natural oil reserves! Palestinians must restrain from resisting what Michel Chossudovsky calls "the war of conquest" in *War and Natural Gas: The Israeli Invasion and Gaza's Offshore Gas Fields.*"

U.S. and Western nations' profitability is dependent on it's "dedication to a simple concept, 'Out of many, one.'"

Is this the "motto" underlying the policy in Iraq, too? While Bush II clowned for his audience, his sidekick and company of farce pursued plans to invade Iraq. "Saddam" and "9-11." "Iraq" and "Osama Bin Laden." "Caves" and "Mushrooms clouds."

"Let me also address the issue of Iraq." Iraq was "a war of choice," says the speaker. But the Iraqis are better off without the "tyranny of Saddam Hussein." Bush II couldn't have said it better, but he said something to this effect often!

What happened to the 3 million dead Iraqis? Are they happy that the tyrant is gone? It was a mistake to invade the country, but we are moving forward. (You can just hear the cheers from Bush II and his sidekick). The U.S. will employ "diplomacy and build

international consensus to resolve our problems" from now on. *Our problems?* Where will this resolving of "our problems" take place - in the world's largest embassy - that U.S. Embassy in Baghdad? Will this diplomacy take place at the U.S. air force bases in Iraq while this "international consensus" is developed in the media?

Indeed, we can recall the words of Thomas Jefferson, who said: "I hope that our wisdom will grow with our power, and teach us that the less we use our power the greater it will be.

"We" who? He's quoted the Koran already early enough in the speech. Now, "[w]e recall the words of Thomas Jefferson. The speaker doesn't recall the words an Iraqi historian or statesman or an Iraqi philosopher or novelists - but he recalls the words of a *slaveholder*, a *slaveholder*, Thomas Jefferson: "I hope that our wisdom will grow with our power, and teach us that the less we use our power the greater it will be."

"Our power" stated twice! The "less we use our power"? But this has been a speech dedicated to expressions of U.S. power, guided by American interest!

It is the same power that crushed Black and Indian American resistance movements for the interests of white Americans, particularly the corporate minded among them. It is the same power and set of "crude" interests that promises to crush resistance to the idea of "American democracy" and "progress" - corporate progress - that promises fresh and new opportunities for the few - and fewer!

"Today, America has a dual responsibility" - declared by the U.S. government as a result of an illegal war. The dual responsibility is "to help Iraq forge a better future - and to leave Iraq to Iraqis."

"I have made it clear to the Iraqi people that we pursue no bases, and no claim on their territory or resources. Iraq's sovereignty is its own. That is why I ordered the removal of our combat brigades by next August."

America's responsibility is to maintain "occupation in Iraq," according to Jeremy Scahill on *Democracy Now!* "This is turning out to be a war of occupation" with U.S. tax dollars going to "for-profit corporations." The government policy is to "make it profitable for companies to participate in [its] wars."

As for *Combat brigades*? Scahill reports that in Afghanistan, there are 130 thousand private contractors. In other words, there are more contractors than combat brigades!

President Obama's speech represents an expansion of the farce. You won't chuckle; you'll be too mesmerized by the expression of U.S. power, and the role of President Obama is to design an even wider web of omissions and contradictions and downright lies - with such eloquence and polish, of course, to catch a *non-partisan* American audience and a previously anti-American audience beyond U.S. borders.

I would think it a bubbling misrepresentation of world history or at best the display of a young man who knows a little of this and a little of that but who, in the end, has allowed his arrogance and ambition to get in the way of knowing just one thing: as long as the convictions and interests of the powerful corporations are central to your own agenda, you are a slave to them!

The question is: Will Americans willingly participate in this farce?

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