

Trump Falls in Line with Interventionism

By Robert Parry,
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Exclusive: President Trump's U.N. speech showed that despite his America First rhetoric, his policies are virtually the same as the neocon strategies of George W. Bush and liberal interventionism of Barack Obama, says Robert Parry.

In discussing President Trump, there is always the soft prejudice of low expectations – people praise him for reading from a Teleprompter even if his words make little sense – but there is no getting around the reality that his maiden address to the United Nations General Assembly must rank as one of the most embarrassing moments in America's relations with the global community.

Trump offered a crude patchwork of propaganda and bluster, partly delivered as a campaign speech praising his own leadership – boasting about the relatively strong U.S. economy that he mostly inherited from President Obama – and partly reflecting his continued subservience to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

However, perhaps most importantly, Trump's speech may have extinguished any flickering hope that his presidency might achieve some valuable course corrections in how the United States deals with the world, i.e., shifting away from the disastrous war/interventionist policies of his two predecessors.

Before the speech, there was at least some thinking that his visceral disdain for the neoconservatives, who mostly opposed his nomination and election, might lead him to a realization that their policies toward Iran, Iraq, Syria and elsewhere were at the core of America's repeated and costly failures in recent decades.

Instead, apparently after a bracing lecture from Netanyahu on Monday, Trump bared himself in a kind of neocon Full Monte:

– He repeated the Israeli/neocon tripe about Iran destabilizing the Middle East when Shiite-ruled Iran actually has helped stabilize Iraq and Syria against Sunni terrorist groups and other militants supported by Saudi Arabia and – to a degree – Israel;

– He again denounced the Iranian nuclear agreement whose main flaw in the eyes of the Israelis and the neocons is that it disrupted their plans to bomb-bomb-bomb Iran, and he called for “regime change” in Iran, a long beloved dream of the Israelis and the neocons;

– He repeated the Israeli/neocon propaganda about Hezbollah as a terrorist organization when Hezbollah's real crime was driving the Israeli military out of southern Lebanon in 2000, ending an Israeli occupation that began with Israel's 1982 invasion;

– He praised his rush-to-judgment decision to bomb Syria last April, in line with Israeli/neocon propaganda against President Bashar al-Assad and partly out of a desire to please the same Washington establishment that is still scheming how to impeach him;

– He spoke with the crass hypocrisy that the neocons and many Israeli leaders have perfected, particularly his demand that “all nations ... respect ... the rights of every other sovereign nation” — when he made clear that he, like his White House predecessors, is ready to violate the sovereignty of other nations that get in Official Washington’s way.

A Litany of Wars

Just this century, the United States has invaded multiple nations without U.N. authorization, based on various “coalitions of the willing” and other subterfuges for wars of aggression, which the Nuremberg Tribunals deemed the “supreme international crime” and which the U.N. was specifically created to prevent.

Not only did President George W. Bush invade both Afghanistan and Iraq – while also sponsoring “anti-terror” operations in many other countries – but President Barack Obama acknowledged ordering military attacks in seven countries, including against the will of sovereign states, such as Libya and Syria. Obama also supported [a violent coup](#) against the elected government of Ukraine.

For his part, Trump already has shown disdain for international law by authorizing military strikes inside Yemen and Syria. In other words, if not for the fear of provoking American anger, many of the world’s diplomats might have responded with a barrage of catcalls toward Trump for his blatant hypocrisy. Without doubt, the United States is the preeminent violator of sovereignty and international law in the world today, yet Trump wagged his finger at others, including Russia (over Ukraine) and China (over the South China Sea).

He declared: “We must reject threats to sovereignty, from the Ukraine to the South China Sea. We must uphold respect for law, respect for borders, and respect for culture, and the peaceful engagement these allow.”

Then, with a seeming blindness to how much of the world sees the United States as a law unto itself, Trump added: “The scourge of our planet today is a small group of rogue regimes that violate every principle on which the United Nations is based.”

Of course, in the U.S. mainstream media’s commentary that followed, Trump’s hypocrisy went undetected. That’s because across the American political/media establishment, the U.S. right to act violently around the world is simply accepted as the way things are supposed to be. International law is for the other guy; not for the “indispensable nation,” not for the “sole remaining superpower.”

On Bibi’s Leash

Despite some of his “America First” rhetoric – tossed in as red meat to his “base” – Trump revealed a global outlook that differed from the Bush-Obama

neoconservative/liberal-interventionist approach in words only. In substance, Trump appears to be just the latest American poodle on Bibi Netanyahu's leash.

For instance, Trump bragged about attacking Syria over [a dubious chemical-weapons claim](#) while ignoring the role of the [Saudi/Israeli tandem in assisting Al Qaeda and its Syrian affiliate](#); Trump threatened the international nuclear agreement with Iran while calling for regime change in Tehran, two of Netanyahu's top priorities; and Trump warned that he would "totally destroy North Korea" over its nuclear and missile programs while making no mention of Israel's rogue nuclear arsenal and sophisticated delivery capabilities.

Ignoring [Saudi Arabia's ties to terrorism](#), Trump touted his ludicrous summit in Riyadh in which he danced with swords and let King Salman and other corrupt Persian Gulf monarchs, who have long winked and nodded at ideological and logistical support going to Al Qaeda and other Islamic terror groups, pretend their governments were joining an anti-terror coalition.

Exploding the myth that he is at least a street-smart operator who can't be easily conned, Trump added, "In Saudi Arabia early last year, I was greatly honored to address the leaders of more than 50 Arab and Muslim nations. We agreed that all responsible nations must work together to confront terrorists and the Islamist extremism that inspires them."

No wonder Netanyahu seemed so pleased with Trump's speech. The Israeli prime minister could have written it himself while allowing Trump to add a few crude flourishes, like calling North Korean leader Kim Jong Un "Rocket Man ... on a suicide mission"; referring to "the loser terrorists"; and declaring that many parts of the world are "going to hell."

Trump also tossed in a plug for his "new strategy for victory" in Afghanistan and threw in some interventionist talk regarding the Western Hemisphere with more threats to Cuba and Venezuela about escalating sanctions and other activities to achieve more "regime change" solutions.

So, what Trump made clear in his U.N. address is that his "America First" and "pro-sovereignty" rhetoric is simply cover for a set of policies that are indistinguishable from those pushed by the neocons of the Bush administration or the liberal interventionists of the Obama administration. The rationalizations may change but the endless wars and "regime change" machinations continue.