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## Obama turns super-hawk

**Stealing George W Bush's playbook, Obama has decided to repackage himself as a tough guy in the war against terror.**

Danny Schechter

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Back in the last Century, when Bill Clinton was running for re-election in the "permanent campaign" he, with the advice of the smarmy Dick Morris chose to co-opt Republican positions to pre-empt their using them against him. It was called "triangulation" but also disguised a clear strategic shift to the right that has now surfaced in the Obama campaign. It appears that Team Obama does not take the concerns or values of its liberal support base seriously. They think they can be mesmerised by selective symbolic stands and they have nowhere else to go.

The Black Community has pledged itself to his re-election despite criticisms by black leaders who privately feel abandoned by him.

Robert Scheer, who edits *Truthdig*, says liberals will have to embrace Obama by "default". "The Republicans are a sick joke and their narrow ideological stupidity has left rational voters no choice in the coming presidential election but Barack Obama," he writes.

He also recognises that Obama has now "backed Republican initiatives", calling the president the "moderate" choice in the coming election, "defending centrist programmes that Republicans in the past helped originate".

### **'Hokey to mokey'**

Van Jones, who Obama appointed to a job advocating green energy solutions until attacks by the right led to his dumping him, calls his former boss a "post-hope" candidate. He said in an interview on MSNBC:

*We went from 'hokey' to mokey... I saw the misfires: how the White House didn't really understand the grassroots movement; the grassroots movement certainly didn't understand the grassroots movement...and there was this 'hope' bubble that collapsed. (with) both sides not understanding each other.*

For years now, the president, in what some analysts say is a deeply engrained fear/reaction to a total assault by Fox News, has sought to keep the messengers of patriotically correct banalities off guard with a slew of hawkish/hardline foreign policy initiatives.

He escalated the two big wars he inherited with "surges" in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as drone offensive associated with continuing collateral damage, i.e, civilian deaths. He turned General Petraus from his counter-insurgency specialist into a hero spymaster and gave him more and more power, perhaps to prevent his running against him. He turned the covert-action Seals units into a Presidential-sanctioned assassination squad and, then, practically went steady with the Pentagon. The flag pin he avoided as a candidate is now a staple of his "uniform".

You can understand why: he can't really run on domestic issues. His economic policies have failed to create jobs or a recovery because he banked on the banks. Despite all the Republican banter about his alleged socialism, he's given the capitalists just about everything they want,

including the new JOBS bill that will erode financial reform rules and open the door to more fraud. His Justice Department has not waged a jihad to put financial criminals in jail. They've settled complaints with major mortgage fraudsters paying fines instead being locked up.

### **Promises abandoned**

His "so-called" Obamacare is a law embraced by the healthcare industry which will profit from it. Advocates of Medicare for All were stabbed in the back early on in the process.

So, now the president, who aroused so many hopes for a more just America, has abandoned most of his promises from shutting down Guantanamo to prosecuting Bradley Manning.

He has decided to be born again as a hawk in sheep's clothing.

Stealing George W Bush's playbook, he has decided to repackage himself as a tough guy in the war against terror after signing the new NDAA law in the middle of the night. His criticisms of Israel's rhetoric about bombing Iran is to caution them against being too hasty, promising that he has their "back" and that the US would act. Many of the harsh sanctions he imposed on that country can be considered acts of war, (like many sanctions, they hurt the people, not just their government!)

All of a sudden, war talk is surfacing to take our minds off the economic collapse, and Obama will soon show us the electorate how tough he is by going after Iran even as the right and the Israelis portray him as a softee on the Ayatollahs.

He claims to support negotiations, but his conditions demanding Iran shut down its nuclear enrichment facility first is an inflexible demand that they know the Iranians will consider an ultimatum, and have to reject, setting up a scenario for a war of aggression. "That negotiating position will be the **opening** move (emphasis mine) in what **President Obama** has called Iran's "last chance" to resolve its nuclear confrontation with the United Nations and the West diplomatically," reports the *New York Times*.

"The hard-line approach would require the country's military leadership to give up the Fordo enrichment plant outside the holy city of Qum, and with it a huge investment in the one facility that is most hardened against air-strikes."

## **Global drone warfare**

He's also stepped up the use of *global* drone warfare with one report suggesting drones may soon go nuclear. More telling now that what's been covert is becoming more overt, as the *New York Times* reports with the headline, "Obama Embraces National Security as Campaign Issue":

*With a Republican opponent all but chosen and the general election campaign about to start, **President Obama** is preparing to emphasise an issue that few Democratic candidates have embraced in the past: national security, long the domain of the **Republican Party**.*

*At the same time, the Obama campaign is seeking to portray **Mitt Romney**, the likely Republican nominee, as a national security neophyte whose best ideas are simply retreads of what the president is already doing, and whose worst instincts would take the country back to the days of President George W Bush: cowboy diplomacy, the Iraq war and America's lowest standing on the international stage.*

*In the coming weeks, Obama advisers plan to release a list of national security "surrogates" - high-profile Democrats like former Secretary of State Madeleine K Albright and Wesley K Clark, a retired general - who will write newspaper op-ed articles, give speeches and take Mr Romney to task every time he opens his mouth about foreign policy, Obama advisers said.*

*The plan is to draw a contrast between Mr Obama - who, his advisers say, kept his word on ending the Iraq war, going aggressively after al-Qaeda and restoring alliances around the world - and Mr Romney, who will be portrayed as playing both sides of numerous issues.*

*"He was for and against the removal of Gaddafi, for and against setting a timetable to withdraw our troops from Afghanistan, for and against enforcing trade laws against China, and while he once said he would not move heaven and earth to get Osama bin Laden, he later claimed that*

*any president would have authorised the mission to do so," said Ben LaBolt, press secretary for the Obama campaign.*

### **Playing the war card**

He's planning to do to Romney what McCain's marauders tried to do to him by playing the war card. And the media keeps carrying stories urging him to be even tougher.

Two examples:

AP - The brother of a US soldier who was among three central Ohioans killed in an Afghan suicide bombing says Americans shouldn't forget "we are a nation at **war**".

Fox News is running the latest sermon on the mount by convicted Iran contra conspirator Colonel North who writes, "According to Matthew's Gospel, Judas Iscariot sold out Jesus of Nazareth for 30 pieces of silver. What is Barack Obama's fee for selling out Christians and Israelis?"

All of this sniping is unlikely to lead the president to pick a fight with the right even if a recent poll showed 69 per cent of all Americans want the US out of Afghanistan. The criticisms are just likely to encourage him to move further right to show his mettle and a posture that says he's ready to fight as a commander and chief who won't back down.

Haven't we heard all this before?