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Obama's Double Discourse: Talking Peace While Making War

By Prof. James Petras

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Introduction

Obama's rhetorical exercise in 'peace talk' at the United Nations General Assembly impressed few delegations and even fewer Americans: Far more eloquent are his five years of wars, military interventions, cyber-spying, drone murders, military coups and the merciless prosecution of patriotic truth tellers.

If his 'peace message' fell flat, the explicit affirmations of imperial prerogatives, threats of military interventions and over two dozen (25) references to Israel as a 'strategic ally', confirmed the suspicions and fears that Obama was preparing for even more deadly wars.

Playing the 'War Card' in the Face of Massive Opposition

Obama's UN speech took place at a time when his war policies have hit rock bottom both at home and abroad. After suffering at least two major diplomatic defeats and a string of negative polls, which revealed that a strong majority of Americans rejected his entire approach to foreign policy, Obama made an overture to Iran. Up to that point few delegates or citizens were

impressed or entertained by his 'new vision for US diplomacy'. According to many experts, it was vintage Obama, the con-man: talking peace while preparing new wars.

Nothing in the past six years warranted any hope that Obama would respond to new overtures for peace emanating from Iran , Syria or Palestine ; his habitual obedience to Israel would push for new wars on behalf of the Jewish State. At no point did Obama even acknowledge the sharp and outraged criticism by leading heads of state regarding his policy of cyber colonialism (massive spying) and his pursuit of imperial wars.

Obama's Double Discourse: Talking Peace While Making War

At his 2009 inauguration, Barak Obama proclaimed, "We are going to have to take a new approach with a new emphasis on respect and a new willingness to talk." And then he proceeded to launch more wars, armed interventions, clandestine operations and assassination campaigns in more countries than any US President in the last fifty years.

Obama's record over the past five years reads:

- (1) Continued war, slaughter and military bases in Iraq .
- (2) A 40,000 plus US "troop surge" in Afghanistan
- (3) An unprovoked assault against Libya , devastating the country, reducing oil production by 90%, throwing millions into chaos and poverty. and allowing a multitude of terrorist groups to divide the country and distribute its huge arsenal of weapons.
- (4) Over 400 un-manned aerial drone attacks, murdering over 4,000 civilians in Pakistan , Yemen , Afghanistan and Somalia .
- (5) Cross-border ground and air attacks in Pakistan and counter-insurgency warfare that forcing over 1.5 million refugees to flee the war zones.
- (6) The arming and financing of 'African Union' mercenaries to invade and occupy Somalia , sending hundreds of thousands of Somalis into refugee camps.
- (7) Unconditional support for Israel , including the 'sale' of advanced weapons and an annual \$3 billion dollars 'aid' package to a racist regime intent on more land grabs in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem , as well as the displacing, killing, arresting and torturing of thousands of Palestinians and Bedouins.
- (8) The sending of the US Naval armada to the Persian Gulf while imposing even more brutal economic sanctions drafted by Israeli-Firsters in order to strangle the Iranian economy and starve its over 70 million citizens into submission.
- (9) Maintaining the notorious Guantanamo torture camp where hundreds of prisoners languish without trial (despite early promises to close it).

(10) Arming and training Islamist terrorists and ‘pro-Western’ mercenaries to invade Syria , killing over 100,000 Syrians and driving over one million refugees from their homes. Obama’s plans to bomb Syria are on hold, as of October 2013, thanks to Russian President Putin’s peace initiative.

(11) Engaging in grotesque global cyber-spying and the massive theft of highly confidential military, economic and political communications within allied nations (from Germany to Brazil) at the highest levels.

(12) Unleashing a violent destabilization campaign in democratic Venezuela , following the defeat of the US candidate; Obama was the only leader in the world to refuse to recognize the election.

Altogether, Obama’s five years in office have been marked by his relentless pursuit of imperial power through arms and domination; This has come at enormous economic cost to the American people in the form of huge fiscal deficits and significant overseas and domestic political losses.

As a result, Obama’s rising tide of militarism has had the opposite effect of provoking a countercurrent of peace initiatives to challenge the assumptions and prerogatives of the war-mongers in the White House. The dynamics of this immense clash between the global war and peace forces will be played out in the next several months.

The Dynamics of Obama’s Foreign Policy

Obama’s future policy reflects the interplay between a highly militarized past and the tremendous current pressure for peace and diplomacy. The changes emerging from these powerful conflicting forces will have a decisive impact on the global configuration of power, as well as on the trajectory of the US economy for the foreseeable future.

We have proceeded by outlining in telegraphic form the principle events and policies defining Obama’s embrace of a militarist policy over the past five years. We will now proceed to highlight the current countervailing forces and events pressuring the White House to adopt a diplomatic and peaceful resolution of conflicts. We will identify the leading pro-war power configuration acting as an obstacle to peace. In the final section we will spell out the policy resulting from these conflicting forces.

The Dynamics of Peace against the Legacy of War

By the early fall 2013, powerful tendencies emerged which seemed to undermine or, at least, neutralize Washington ’s drive to new and more deadly wars. Eight major events constrained Washington ’s empire builders to temporarily rethink their immediate steps to war.

These include: (1) President Vladimir Putin’s proposal for Syria to destroy its chemical weapons, under UN supervision, denying the US its current pretext for bombing Damascus . The subsequent UN Security Council resolution, which was unanimously approved, did not contain

the ‘war clause’ (Chapter 7) – thereby removing Washington’s pretext to bomb Syria for ‘non-compliance’ to the tight time-table for disarming its chemical arsenal.

(2) Iran’s President Rohani’s calls for peace and reconciliation, his offer to start prompt and consequential negotiations regarding Iran’s nuclear program has isolated Israel and its Zionist agents in the international arena and forced Obama to reciprocate, resulting in a move toward US-Iranian negotiations.

(3) Brazil’s President Dilma Rousseff’s, powerful denunciation of US cyber spying against her government, economy and citizens before the General Assembly resonated with the vast majority of political leaders. Coming from the most powerful economy in Latin America, the sixth largest economy in the world and a leading member of the BRICs, Rousseff’s rejection of US cyber-colonialism and its IT and telecommunication corporations and her call for national development, control and ownership of these communication networks, set a clear anti-colonial tone to the proceedings. Washington’s response, its affirmation of its ‘right’ to spy on allies and their private citizens, as well as foes, has isolated Washington and found few supporters for such global cyber-imperial pretensions. To accommodate Brazil, Washington will be forced to enter into negotiations and acknowledge (if not comply with) Brazil’s demands.

(4) US domestic public opinion, in the run-up to Putin’s diplomatic solution of the Syrian crisis, was overwhelmingly opposed to Obama’s moves to bomb Syria. By a margin of two to one, the American electorate opposed any new war; and Congress was prepared to heed its constituents, as letters were running nine to one against war. In other words, Obama lacked domestic support for attacking Syria and was under strong pressure to accept Putin’s diplomatic solution. The mass involvement of American citizens, at least temporarily, pushed back the war-mongers among Israel’s wealthy and influential backers in Washington.

(5) Obama’s militarist foreign policy faces pressure from the Congressional deadlock over the budget and debt ceilings. Lacking a federal budget and with government offices closing, the White House has been forced to lay-off millions of military and civilian employees. Obama is not in a position to launch a costly new war, even if his Zionist patrons are “storming” Congress and clambering for one. The ‘fiscal crisis of the state’, which exploded in September 2013, is turning into a powerful political antidote to the policy of serial wars Obama undertook during his first five years in office. The debt-ceiling crisis and its aftermath further weaken the White House’s capacity and willingness to pursue an extended war agenda in the Middle East. Congress’s refusal to raise the debt ceiling, without budget reductions, could foreshadow a crisis in financial markets spreading to the world economy and leading to profound recession. The White House has its hands full trying to stabilize the domestic economy and placate Wall Street, thus weakening its willingness to engage in a new war.

One caveat: It is possible that, facing political divisions and an economic crisis, political adventurers and pro-Israel advisers might convince Obama to launch a war to ‘unify the country’ and ‘divert attention’ from his domestic debacle. A military distraction, of course, could backfire; it could be seen as a partisan ploy and deepen domestic divisions, especially if a US attack on Iran or Syria led to a wider war.

(6) The Snowden revelations of the National Security Agency's (NSA) global spying have weakened the White House's ties to its allies and heightened antagonism with its adversaries. Trust and co-operation, especially with regard to intelligence, have been weakened in Asia, Latin America and, to a lesser degree, in Europe . Several countries are discontinuing the use of US-IT companies which had collaborated with the NSA. By losing access to the communications of top officials in targeted countries, these revelations may have undermined Washington 's global reach. Obama and Kerry's outrageous justifications for spying on their allies and private citizens and their defense of intervention in cyber space have stirred up powerful political currents of anti-imperialism among major trade partners. At the UN General Assembly Bolivian President Evo Morales asserted, 'The US is mistaken if it thinks it is the owner of the world'. His attack on US military imperialism, "...terrorism is combatted through social policy not with military bases"... resonated among the vast majority of UN delegates. In stark contrast, Prime Minister Netanyahu's bellicose speech received a hostile reception among those heads of state who didn't simply walk out in disgust.

The Snowden disclosures of cyber-imperialism has seriously weakened the US capacity for war by exposing its intelligence operations and discrediting the war mongers associated with the NSA, making war planning more difficult.

The domestic and foreign forces, as well as world conditions for peace, would be overwhelming in any normal imperial system. But there is a 'special factor', a powerful 'undertow', which opposes the forces for peace, i.e. Israel and its US-based billionaire funded, 300,000 member-strong national and local Zionist Power Configuration (ZPC) deeply embedded in government and civil society.

Against the Winds of Peace: The Zionist Power Configuration

On September 29, 2013, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu landed in New York , as part of an Israeli campaign to undermine world-wide support for a peaceful resolution of the war against Syria and the US-Iranian conflict. On September 30, Netanyahu met with President Obama and addressed the United Nations General Assembly the next day. Israel and Netanyahu represent the biggest and most powerful obstacle to the growing "tide of peace". Given its status as a pariah state and the global community's negative view of Israel and its bullying Prime Minister, Netanyahu has to rely almost exclusively on the US to maintain its monopoly of nuclear weapons in the region, its vast stockpile of chemical weapons and its military supremacy in the Middle East. The White House and the US Congress are crucial institutions backing Israel 's ambition for uncontested hegemony in the Middle East . And the Zionist Power Configuration is decisive in setting US policy throughout the region.

The ZPC operates on several levels: (1) dozens of Zionist billionaires and millionaires fund Washington-based propaganda mills (so-called 'think tanks'), an army of pro-Israel Middle East 'experts' and Ivy League publicists, the 52 major American Zionist organizations and their 300,000 zealous militants. They pour tens of millions of dollars into electoral campaigns throughout the country, rewarding compliant politicians who support any legislation or resolution submitted by Zionist politicians and lobbyists (while brutally punishing any congressional 'dissenters').

(2) Dozens of Zionist zealots occupy key positions within the Administration, especially as appointees dealing with the Middle East and Treasury, ensuring that US policymakers impose economic sanctions on Israel's enemies and pursue wars in Israel's interests. They unconditionally back Israel in its attacks on its neighbors and block any sanctioning vote in the UN. They make sure that Israel receives the most advanced weapons and the US Treasury pays its annual \$3 billion-plus dollar tribute to the Jewish State.

(3) The Presidents of the 52 Major American Jewish Organizations and their militants ensure local and national support for Israel, even at the expense of domestic US interests and priorities. The zealots actively intervene to ban, censor or threaten the employment of any critic of Israel or the ZPC – extending to the most mundane local level of harassment. They successfully limit the content and participants in the mass media, world affairs forums and university programs with their threats and bullying.

The mass media are controlled by pro-Israel moguls, news reporters and commentators who mold public perception of Israel claiming it to be a 'bastion of democracy' while labelling Iran a "terrorist Islamist dictatorship". Media analyst Steve Lendman describes, in his article entitled, "Israel Launches Anti-Rohani Media Blitz", Netanyahu's repeated lies on questions pertaining to Iran's nuclear program and how the major US news media parrot Israel's bellicose propaganda. The New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal and Bloomberg back Netanyahu's demand for harsh economic sanctions and threats of aggression against Iran. The Daily Alert, mouthpiece of the 52 Presidents of the Major American Jewish Organization, reproduces and circulates scores of libelous polemical diatribes denigrating President Rohani, and slavishly praise each and every bellicose eruption out from the mouths of Israeli politicians and generals. For example, leading Zionist propagandist, Jeffrey Goldberg calls President Rohani a "dishonest war monger" dismissing his peace overtures because he is not "ready to shut down his country's nuclear program". Aaron David Miller, another one of Israel's Washington intellectuals, echoes Netanyahu's "concerns about wily Iranian mullahs bearing gifts" while demanding that the US government "take care of Israel's concerns". The Zionist demand that the US "secure Israel's concerns" is a no brainer because the Jewish state is determined to strip Iran of its sovereignty, surrender its entire medical and civilian nuclear program and submit to Israeli regional hegemony...

The US and British press reported that the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) has launched their own 'full-scale invasion' of the US Congress, sending over 300 full-time lobbyists to sabotage any form of rapprochement between the US and Iran. Just prior to the UN General Assembly meeting, AIPAC militants were writing legislation for the US Congress, which imposed new additional sanctions to further undermine Iranian oil exports; their efforts secured "bi-partisan" support of over 300 members of Congress. While President Obama faces a divided Congress, the Israel-Firsters from AIPAC easily secure a near unanimous vote to scupper any diplomatic dialog between Washington and Teheran. These new extremist sanctions were dictated by the Israeli Foreign Office and are designed to sabotage any White House negotiations.

While some mainstream newspapers, like the Financial Times, describe the "suspicions in Congress which raise the bar for a deal", they fail to mention the extraordinary intervention

and influence of AIPAC in sowing these “suspicions” – and authoring all anti-Iran legislation over the past two years! The mass media covers up the central role of the ZPC in opposing a US dialogue with Iran , and in subverting the push for peace favored by the vast majority of war-weary and economically-battered Americans. Even ‘progressive and leftist’ weeklies, monthlies and quarterlies are silent on the overwhelming role of the ZPC. Leading left journalists systematically skirt around any in- depth discussion of the AIPAC and the 52 pro-Israel Jewish organizations in manipulating the US Congress, the mass media and the Executive branch.

Any writer who attends US legislative committee hearings on the Middle East or observes Congressional debates, or interviews Congressional staff-members and lobbyists, or reads AIPAC reports, can compile ample public documentation of the major role that Israel, through it US Zionist organizations and agents, plays in dictating US-Iran relations. Nothing illustrates the extreme power the ZPC exercises over US policy toward Iran than the thundering silence of ‘progressives’ over the central ZPC role in policymaking. Is it simply cowardice or fear of being slandered as an ‘anti-Semite’? Or is it fear of being excluded or blacklisted by major media and publications? Or is it complicity: Being ‘critical of privileges and power’ while selectively excluding mention of Zionist access and influence?

So we have the situation in the US today where the Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu dictates the ‘negotiating terms’ to the Presidents of the 52 Major American Jewish Organizations. According to Netanyahu’s dictates, the Islamic Republic of Iran must stop all uranium enrichment – including that for medical, research and energy use, close the enrichment facilities at Qom , remove all enriched uranium and halt the production of plutonium. Having set these ridiculous, sovereignty-killing conditions on Iran and having the unconditional support of the entire ZPC, Netanyahu proceeds to sabotage the peaceful, diplomatic process via the lap-puppies in the US Congress. As one Washington pundit noted the Obama regime “is very conscious of the fact that Israeli views on Iran have a large influence (sic) on opinion in the US Congress”.

No country on any continent would or could accept the terms dictated by Israel and its Fifth Column in the US – terms that undermine national sovereignty. In fact, all countries with nuclear power facilities and advanced medical and research institutions engage in some or all of these activities. By setting these extremist terms, Netanyahu is in effect dooming the negotiations from the start and setting the stage for war, the so-called “military option” that both he and Obama agree would follow from a collapse in negotiations.

In a rational democratic world, most experts would argue that the new alignment of forces for peace, including the vast and growing domestic opposition to new wars and world public opinion in favor of President Rohani’s overtures for negotiations, the US could easily ignore Israel’s war mongering. But a more realistic and reflective analysis, however, would argue that the negotiations will only proceed with great difficulty, especially in the face of ZPC sabotage in adding new sanctions rather than a good-faith act of cutting or reducing the current sanctions.

The Israeli-ZPC 'war offensive' went into high gear precisely at the moment when world public opinion, the UN and even the White House enthusiastically welcomed the peace overtures from newly elected Iranian President Rohani.

The purpose was to sabotage any dialogue with Iran before they even began. The ZPC took the following measures:

1. AIPAC and its clients in the US Congress have circulated new harsh sanctions and rapidly signed up dozens of Congressional supporters. The entire Zionist apparatus, led by the '52 Presidents of the Major Jewish American Organizations', backed the latest and most severe sanctions against the Iranian oil industry. They followed Netanyahu's dictate to make the Iranian economy collapse. The purpose of the ZPC is to create the worst possible conditions for negotiations – undermining the 'goodwill' following Obama's gestures (the phone conversation with Rohani) and sure to provoke widespread opposition among the sanction-weary Iranian population against a US-Iran dialogue.
2. The notorious Israeli spy outfit, Mossad, was most probably involved in the brutal assassination of Iran's official in charge of cyber-defense, Mojtaba Ahmadi. Most experts agree that, since 2007, Israel's intelligence agency has been behind the horrific assassinations of five Iranian nuclear engineers and scientists, as well as the head of their ballistic missile program. The timing of the current Mossad outrage is designed to further poison the climate for US-Iranian negotiations, even though the victim this time is not directly linked to Iran's nuclear program.
3. Netanyahu's speech to the General Assembly was pure corrosive vitriol, character assassination and fabrication. He made constant reference to Iran's 'nuclear weapons program', although on-site reports from the International Atomic Energy Agency and sixteen US intelligence agencies have repeatedly shown that no such program exists. Nevertheless, thanks to the power and influence of the ZPC, Netanyahu's venomous message was relayed by all the major media and picked up and repeated by influential pro-Israel think tanks, academics and pundits. Netanyahu unleashed the Zionist pro-war propaganda machine to energize Jewish powerbrokers to 'put the squeeze' on the White House. The effect was immediate: Obama rushed out to parrot Netanyahu's lies that Iran had a nuclear weapons program. Secretary of State Kerry obediently pledged to keep 'the military option' for dealing with Iran 'on the table' – in other words, the threat of a unilateral attack. UN Ambassador Samantha Power demanded the newly elected President Rohani make immediate concessions in order to prove his "seriousness".

Conclusion: World Peace or Zionist War?

Recent political and diplomatic changes provide the world community with a measure of optimism regarding the prospects for peace. Under intense pressure from US public opinion, Obama temporarily went along with Russian President Putin's diplomatic approach over chemical weapons in Syria.

The UN General Assembly's favorable response to Iranian President Rohani's call for dialogue has compelled Obama to openly consider direct negotiations with Teheran over its nuclear program.

World public opinion, favorable interlocutors in Iran, bold diplomatic initiatives from Russia, and cooperative behavior from Damascus, all events pointing to a peaceful resolution of current Middle East conflicts, face a formidable enemy embedded in the very centers of power in the United States, the ZPC, which acts on behalf of the ultra-militarist Israeli state.

Over the years, the ZPC has successfully pushed for crippling sanctions and wars against a number of Israel's regional opponents. Leading Zionists in the Bush regime fabricated the myth of Saddam Hussein's 'weapons of mass destruction' leading the US to invade, occupy and destroy Iraq, despite massive opposition from the US public on the eve of the invasion. Zionists in US Treasury and in the White House slapped broad economic sanctions on Iraq, Iran and Syria – preventing the biggest US oil companies from investing and trading with these resource-rich nations, which cost 'Big Oil' close to \$500 billion in lost revenues. An empirical study of congressional committees, legislative debates, resolutions and voting behavior demonstrates that the ZPC co-authored the sanction legislation and administrators, linked to the ZPC, implemented the measures.

The popular notion that 'Big Oil' was responsible for these wars and sanctions, as part of some scheme to take over the oil production facilities of Iraq and Iran, lacks empirical basis. The ZPC defeated 'Big Oil': Exxon, Mobil and Chevron were no match for the ZPC when it came to penetrating Congress, authoring legislation, mobilizing billionaires to fund Congressional campaigns, organizing thousands of zealous militants or influencing the mass media – including the Wall Street Journal. The governments of billions of poor people in Africa, Asia and Latin America can only dream of the annual \$3 billion dollar tribute that the ZPC secures for Israel from the American tax-payers for the past 30-plus years.

The UN Security Council and its Human Rights Commission are powerless to sanction Israel for its war crimes because the ZPC guarantees a US veto of any resolution. Despite the opposition of the entire Muslim world, the ZPC ensures that Washington will continue to support Israel's colonial expansion and land grabs in the occupied Palestinian territory, and its bombing of Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Sudan. In other words, the ZPC has successfully undermined the interests of the biggest US multi-national corporations, the position of the UN Security Council and the needs of billions of poor in the Third World. The ZPC induces the US to start prolonged brutal wars costing the US economy over a trillion dollars and totally destroying six sovereign countries (Iraq, Libya, Syria, Afghanistan, Yemen and Somalia). Today Israel and the ZPC set the terms for US-Iran negotiations – dooming them to failure. The mass media echo Netanyahu's scurrilous (and infantile) characterization of President Rohani as 'untrustworthy', and a 'wolf in sheep's clothing'. And US Secretary of State John Kerry parrots Netanyahu's lies about Iran's nuclear arms program. Shortly after his talk with Rohani, US President Obama dutifully made his report of the entire conversation to Netanyahu – seeking Israel's approval. Obama then met with his Israeli 'handlers' and pledged fealty to the interests of Israel, bleating out that 'military option (to attack Iran) is still on the table'. For the one hundred and ninety-first time (over the past year) President Obama pledged the US' unconditional support to

defend Israel. Like a broken record (or broken political hack), Obama repeated that “Israel must (sic) reserve the right to take military action against Iran if it feels threatened by Iran”.

The Zionist propaganda apparatus has set the terms for the US government with regard to Iran. Tel Aviv orders and the ZPC demands that Obama ‘negotiate’ under Israeli terms. Iran, the ZPC insists, must provide detailed information on its military bases and defenses, end its legal enrichment of uranium for civilian use, turn over its existing stockpiles, end the production of plutonium at the Arak facility, dismantle the underground research facilities at Fordow and cease the conversion of first generation centrifuges to more efficient second generation ones.

President Obama might then permit the Iranians to enrich uranium to about 3.5 percent, operate a few primitive centrifuges and maintain a tiny stock of enriched uranium – for medical purposes.... These are conditions which Israel and the ZPC know that no free and independent country or national leader would ever accept. The Zionists seek to sabotage diplomacy in order to push the US into another Gulf war which they believe will establish Israel as the unchallenged regional hegemon.

It is essential for the peace camp in the United States to expose the role of the ZPC in dictating the US negotiating terms with Iran and publicly repudiate its control over the US Congress and the White House. Otherwise the majority of Americans who favor peace and diplomacy will have no influence in shaping US-Iran relations. The problem is that the majority of anti-war Americans and the international community cannot match the billionaire Jewish Zionists in buying and controlling the members of the US Congress. AIPAC has no rival among Christians, Muslims or even anti-Zionist Jews. The pro-peace Pope Francis from his pulpit in the Vatican cannot match the power of the Presidents of the 52 Major Jewish American Organizations whose militants can literally “storm Washington” and push the US into war!

Until the 99% of non-Zionist Americans (of all ethnicities and persuasions) organize as a coherent force to push back the tiny 1% – Israel’s Fifth Column – all the hopes for peace wakened by President Putin’s initiative on Syria and President Rohani’s diplomatic opening at the United Nations, will collapse. Worse, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu will again lead an American President, Obama, by the nose, from sabotaged diplomacy into another costly Gulf War, one in which thousands of US soldiers (not a single Zionist among them) and tens (if not hundreds) of thousands of Iranians will perish!