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## US Military Globalization

### *Interlocking Spheres of Influence*

by NORMAN POLLACK

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History, at the least, is process, interrelations, multilayered, marked by continuities of social structure, wealth distribution, all in all, embedded in a framework of causation even when serendipitous outcomes pop up, none of which is to suggest a rigid deterministic pattern, but only that in the case of Obama, one can readily credit America's protofascistic leanings over decades if not also centuries (war, intervention, racism, monopoly capital brought to a convergence), yet, despite prior historical trends, demand that he be held accountable for what occurs on his watch. Therefore, no free pass for overwhelming militarism, massive surveillance, policies favoring deregulation and wealth-concentration, contemptuous disregard for civil liberties and government transparency, and now, a foreign policy of exclusive global hegemony quite possibly surpassing that of his illustrious predecessors. What, in this context, is more criminal, the policies themselves, such as targeted assassination, regime change, a string of interventions—and the counterrevolutionary posture undergirding them, or, a nation and people, sharing complicity in their actuation and implementation, and more particularly, a morally bankrupt liberalism

actively promoting them, with presumed radicals standing by in silence? Americans are implicated in deceit and denial, purchasing their comforts and self-righteousness at the expense of the collective human privation their military and paramilitary forces, their CIA operatives and private contractors, their support of repressive regimes and death squads have brought to much of the world's population.

Obama is at it again, his Asian journey of cementing a Grand Alliance designed to encircle (this only a first approximation to a broader geopolitical strategy) and thereby contain, hem-in, perforce isolating and reducing the power of, China, intentionally builds political-ideological tensions of confrontation and perhaps ultimate war for a vast region, a result America welcomes if, by that, short of nuclear war, China and North Korea can be taught a lesson in good international citizenship according to US guidance, IMF instruction, free-market imperialism (aka liberal humanitarianism). Shockingly (at least to me) it appears that Herman Kahn and Rand Corporation war-games analysts—forerunner of today's Neo-Cons, some of whom actually came up through that arch-Cold War intellectual culture—have been reborn, their ideas now in vogue, because in fact Obama and his Shadow Cabinet of assorted war hawks/vultures regard Asia as a practical free-fire zone, come what may, for demonstrating the truth of American principles. “Better dead than red,” chanted and believed sixty-odd years ago, should be inscribed on a banner over the Situation Room, itself, right off of where the national-security advisers prepare the “hit lists” Obama studies as he personally authorizes assassination.

Asia and nuclear holocaust seem to go together in American policy-making circles (and have for a long time), without flinching at the potential outcome. In Japan, Obama's rapport with PM Abe marks a good start to activating the forces of extreme nationalism and militarism in the region, knocking heads together (Japan-South Korea) for the sake of a united front whose repercussions go beyond anti-Chinese maneuvering, encouraging political fragmentation with America conveniently filling the vacuum and creating a sphere of influence pointing outward to exerting pressures on India and Russia for accepting American leadership in all respects, a magnification of US power (with both Africa and Europe in the ultimate cross-hairs). The US no longer presents itself in the persona of a General LeMay, who would bomb the Commies and Ruskies “back to the Stone Age,” and instead, a more professionalized military, routinely on the think-tank and media circuits, nevertheless which more tactfully believes in, and awaits the opportunity for, the same thing. The theoretical separation between civilian and military control has all but vanished in terms of communication and community of interest, Obama descending Air Force One akin to Napoleon dismounting his spirited steed, all pomp and dashing display, a POTUS who would be king—or emperor, if given the chance.

New York Times reporters Mark Landler and Jodi Rudoren, in their article, “Obama Suffers Setbacks in Japan and the Mideast,” (Apr. 25), describe the first leg of Obama’s Asian trip as part of a unified effort of the administration to shore up American power in regions in which it appears to need strengthening. Actually, they focus on the wrong things, “setbacks to two of his most cherished foreign-policy projects” (for Japan, a trade deal opening “its markets in rice, beef, poultry and pork,” for Israel, continued peace negotiations, broken off by Netanyahu when the PLO and Hamas joined together). The wrong things, because the trade deal was always secondary to the re-militarization of Japan, and peace negotiations were never wanted by Israel or the US, except on terms deeply unjust to the Palestinians. In effect, Obama had come out way ahead, the Shinzo-Barack show playing well to Japanese militarists, who, we know from one account out of the Foreign Ministry that revealed American pressures to discard the provisions of the Japanese constitution dealing with disarmament, felt for some time immensely reassured of the US’s protective arm, now reinforced by Obama’s pledge on the disputed islands in the East China Sea, as when Abe said, “On this point, I fully trust President Obama.”

This from a strident Rightist of the first water. In Israel, the result was equally predictable. Kerry’s shuttle-diplomacy was already solidly inclined toward Israel, and with associates like Indyck and Ross, the pretext of finding Hamas’s presence a deal-breaker came right in time for an outcome certain from the start. Again, Obama a winner, the only losers being the dispossessed and the victims of force, a neat geostrategic package of mounting spheres of influence in different parts of the world, both heartlands for preventing the rise of alternative power-centers in what was already becoming a multipolar world system. That is hard for America to take; it cannot live with global democratization, allowing Iran, Cuba, Venezuela, to find their own way, not to say Brazil and India, coming increasingly into view, and, above all, the twin colossi, China and Russia, whose very existence is perceived as an ideological threat.

Counterterrorism throws a blanket over all policy matters disclosing global hegemony as America’s modus operandi in conserving monopoly capital for its own world supremacy, but also as a system to be preserved in its own right, free from the threats of socialism and even more decisive intracapitalist rivalries. Russia and China can no longer claim a predominant socialist foundation and value system, yet even as their political-economic transformations proceed, that would not be acceptable to an America whose power structure remains wedded to US capitalist interests and the military edifice supporting it. Capitalism as an authentic international system breaks down under the competitive drive for markets, investments, and raw materials. America’s variant of capitalism, more than any other, is characterized in its internal organization, currently,

by processes of financialization and militarization, a systemic “advancement” to a higher stage having a mixed blessing because thus intensifying already existing rivalries.

One corrective to the Times’s article, beyond mistaking Obama’s intentions with respect to Israel and his presumed diplomatic defeat on the peace process because of the introduction of Hamas, is that Israel does not, in the administration’s eyes, deserve equal billing with Japan, the Far East, and the Pacific-first strategy. Yes, the Middle East, which America is enabled to penetrate and establish a power-position by means of categorically supporting Israel, qualifies as an obviously significant sphere of influence, in light of the geopolitics of oil especially, but it must stand down now in relation to Ukraine, the reemergence of a European co-pivot to that of Asia—hence the military globalization—because perhaps for the first time the practical basis is laid for the simultaneous containment and isolation of both Russia and China, the achievement over each having reciprocal positive effect on achieving the other.

Obama did not come to Japan to eat high-priced sushi, to South Korea, to commiserate with the families over the ferry-boat tragedy, to Malaysia, the airplane tragedy, all of which were on his itinerary, but to talk military alliance, unification of forces, confrontation, a pep-rally, sweetened by the Trans-Pacific Partnership, to create, if I may, the Bamboo Curtain, in homage to its antecedent Iron Curtain in Europe, reinforced by army/marine bases, a Naval Armada, strategic bomber groups, joint maneuvers, so that no cracks in the bamboo occur. In South Korea, he found a ready roster not only for blasting the North, but for making clear—at South Korea’s request—that American forces would not “abandon” its ally, keeping beyond the 2015 date firm command over that country’s forces. At this writing, the Philippines await, no surprises there in the replenishment and expansion of the installation at Subic Bay.

Meanwhile, there is Russia to contend with, in the contingency war-planning throughout Obama’s first and now second term, viscerally, as a hangover from earlier days, attracting the national-security staff and military establishment, not to say Congress, in still greater crusading mode than is felt about China. Americans have been conditioned to hate Putin and Russia, allowing for greater latitude in taking military action on that front, than on Obama’s opening a Second Front in Asia. “Assets” are flowing to the Pacific, partly because Obama and his think-tank, intelligence-community apparatchiki see dominance of a great land mass, while accomplishing the decapitation of China and, via the backdoor, Russia, as our future glory and destiny, but that does not alter the constant pressure to be applied to Russia through EU and NATO support. Can anything good possibly come out of this, or only the miasmic fantasies of a decaying Superpower intent on bringing the world down with it?

My New York Times Comment on the Landler-Rudoren article, same date, follows (emphasis here on NYT itself for complicity in furthering Obama's war objectives):

NYT's hero-worship posture toward Obama is crass prostration before Authority, unworthy of journalistic integrity. E.g.: "The setbacks...speak to the common challenge Mr. Obama has had in translating his ideas and ambitions into enduring policies. He has watched outside forces unravel his best-laid plans, from resetting relations with Russia to managing the epochal political change in the Arab world." Enduring policies? Even drone assassination is carefully structured to bind subsequent administrations. As for resetting relations with Russia, the reverse—here not only the coup in Ukraine—is true, steady US efforts at isolating Russia, banking on generating hostility in order to gain popularity at home; and urging NATO forces to the Russian border.

Indeed any discussion of Russia must include China, Obama's attempt to prevent their cooperation in a Eurasian bloc. Global hegemony is the "enduring" policy, that which NYT is afraid to discuss and analyze. Why the Far East trip? Why embrace Abe? Trade is one aspect, as in the TransPacific Partnership, but it is ancillary to the MILITARY purpose, and NYT knows that full well—i.e., the isolation and containment of China.

Worthy of hero-worship? Only if one wants the progression toward confrontation and possible war. As for the Middle East, obvious tilting to Israel and prevention of peace process; also, this week more attack copters to Sissi and Egyptian military government. Obama loves coups—helps create them.