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The Other Speech: Hillary the Hawk Spreads Her Wings

By Justin Raimondo
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While the media and the American people were avidly watching and commenting on Donald Trump's much-awaited immigration speech, another peroration by a presidential candidate somehow got overlooked: Hillary Clinton's appearance before the American Legion. Overshadowed by Trump's visit to Mexico, and his subsequent stem-winder, Hillary's performance was greeted with tepid applause by her military audience, and pointedly ignored by her media cheering section. The reason for the latter's silence is perhaps due to the fact that it underscores one of her biggest vulnerabilities: her militant interventionism in an age when the American people are sick and tired of foreign wars.

She didn't waste any time getting down to her basic theme. Once through the preliminaries, she said:

"Thanks for your service in our armed forces. You wore the uniform. You took an oath. You put your life on the line to protect the greatest country on Earth. There are some who may argue with that, but not around me."

Who is she talking about? I've never heard *anyone* dispute that our soldiers put their lives on the line: and while a few old-fashioned Marxists and so-called "social justice warriors" may disagree that this is the greatest country on earth, they're all supporting *her*, if I'm not mistaken, rather than Trump. So whom is she arguing with?

Incredibly, she is trying to characterize her opponent – someone who has adopted “America First” as his campaign slogan – as being somehow anti-American.

Now, Trump may have his demagogic qualities, but they have more to do with his tone rather than the content of what he has to say: with Hillary, it’s the opposite. She somehow manages to utter the most vicious lines in a carefully modulated monotone. Like one of those killers who, after doing the deed, goes off to the church social, she then segued into praise for Boys Nation, Girls Nation, and the various American Legion auxiliaries.

That’s her style: paragraphs of boilerplate and bromides, interspersed with flashes of demagoguery. And so we must wade through the swamps of regurgitated rhetoric – references to Lincoln’s “last best hope,” Reagan’s “shining city on a hill,” and something Robert Kennedy is supposed to have said – before we get to the theme of this philippic: “The United States is an exceptional nation,” itself a bromide borrowed from every political candidate in recent memory. Through sheer momentum, this soon morphs into an ode to global interventionism:

“And part of what makes America an exceptional nation, is that we are also an indispensable nation. In fact, we are the indispensable nation. People all over the world look to us and follow our lead. My friends, we are so lucky to be Americans. It is an extraordinary blessing. It’s why so many people, from so many places, want to be Americans too. But it’s also a serious responsibility. The decisions we make and the actions we take, even the actions we don’t take, affect millions even billions of lives.

“You know that; you’ve seen it.

“Now all of this may seem evident, especially to men and women who have worn the uniform. You may wonder how anyone could disagree.”

Where does this “indispensable nation” nonsense come from? She’s citing, without attribution, Madeleine Albright, who told interviewer Matt Lauer on “The Today Show”:

“If we have to use force, it is because we are America. We are the indispensable nation. We stand tall. We see further into the future.”

The irony of this is astounding if one remembers the context: the year was 1998. Bill Clinton had announced his intention to start bombing Iraq, which – we were told – had “weapons of mass destruction.” Economic sanctions were squeezing the life out of Iraq’s women, children, and elderly – a crime Madame Albright told Lesley Stahl was “worth it.” In short, this was the prelude to the invasion and occupation of Iraq, which was carried out by Clinton’s successor: the Clintons, however, laid the groundwork.

Albright and the Clinton administration didn’t stand tall enough to see as far into the future as was necessary to get a glimpse of the disaster that was the Iraq war – a war Mrs. Clinton voted for and avidly supported until political opportunism forced her to back down.

Hillary defines “American exceptionalism” in terms of an exceptional arrogance. It doesn’t mean patriotism, it doesn’t mean that our system is uniquely libertarian. Nor is she saying that the American Revolution was a signal event that held up the torch of human freedom so that all the world’s peoples might see it and marvel at its light. What she means is that we have not only the right but also the *moral responsibility* to intervene in every conflict, no matter how far from our shores or how removed from our actual interests.

This comes across when she attacks Trump for giving credit to Vladimir Putin’s critique of her brand of “exceptionalism”:

“But, in fact, my opponent in this race has said very clearly that he thinks American exceptionalism is insulting to the rest of the world. In fact, when Vladimir Putin, of all people, criticized American exceptionalism, my opponent agreed with him, saying, and I quote, ‘if you’re in Russia, you don’t want to hear that America is exceptional.’ Well maybe you don’t want to hear it, but that doesn’t mean it’s not true.

“My opponent misses something important. When we say America is exceptional, it doesn’t mean that people from other places don’t feel deep national pride, just like we do. It means that we recognize America’s unique and unparalleled ability to be a force for peace and progress, a champion for freedom and opportunity. Our power comes with a responsibility to lead, humbly, thoughtfully, and with a fierce commitment to our values.”

This nonsense about our “unparalleled ability to be a force for peace and progress” demonstrates either ignorance of history, or else contempt for it. The British Empire imagined itself playing an identical role – and where are they now? A spent force, reduced to playing the role of second or even third fiddle to the US, economically broken. Indeed, *every* empire has always thought of itself as “a force for peace and progress” whose abilities were “unparalleled” – so read countless inscriptions on crumbling Roman ruins. The Soviets claimed to represent the forces of “peace and progress,” and their ideology proclaimed their inevitable triumph. One of their favorite phrases has been taken up by President Obama and American “progressives,” who declare themselves to be “on the right side of history.” But history has no “right side” – only the relentless rule that hubris is always punished.

And so we are now being punished, with the horror in the Middle East and the threat of terrorism on the soil of the homeland. Yet according to Mrs. Clinton, we must be willing – even glad – to take on this punishment. We must grin and bear it as we pay the cost in lives, in dollars, in the exhaustion of our nation: “No matter how hard it gets, no matter how great the challenge, America must lead.”

This is crazy: there is no other word for it. Is she saying that we must pursue this ephemeral “leadership” no matter what the costs? Should we bankrupt the country, lest we abdicate our sacred duty to save the world from itself? This isn’t “leadership” – it’s recklessness.

Hillary is quite correct when she avers that “No other country in the world has alliances like ours” – although not in the way she intended. Yes, it’s true, our alliances – actually, client state relationships – span the globe, but their uniqueness lies in the fact that *we pay them* for the

privilege of protecting them. Billions of taxpayer dollars are shipped overseas in military and economic aid, and nothing comes back: e.g. of all the members of NATO, only little Estonia pays its agreed upon share of the costs of maintaining extensive forces in Europe. And those forces are there to “deter” an attack from Russia that is less likely than an alien invasion of flying saucers – that is, unless Hillary gets her way and we find ourselves in the middle of another cold war with Russia.

And part of the costs – the most substantial one – of our empire of “allies” is that there are countless tripwires all across the globe that could drag us into an overseas conflict at any moment. The territorial integrity of Lower Slobbovia, Upper Volta, and every little Balkans backwater is our responsibility to uphold and defend – with the lives of our soldiers, if need be. And what do we get for it in return? Politicians like Mrs. Clinton get to make speeches about how glorious it all is – but is it?

The American people don’t think so: every poll shows that they aren’t willing to pay any price, bear any burden – as John F. Kennedy stupidly averred when exhorting us to fight in Vietnam. They want to start putting America first – not Ukraine, not Syria, but *this country*. And if that be “isolationism,” then so be it.

Toward the end of her speech, Hillary really bares her fangs and gives us an indication of what life is going to be like under the Clinton Restoration. While claiming that she’ll only use military force as “a last resort” – the typical rhetoric of warmongers – she hints at what the future holds:

“You’ve seen reports. Russia’s hacked into a lot of things. China’s hacked into a lot of things. Russia even hacked into the Democratic National Committee, maybe even some state election systems. So, we’ve got to step up our game. Make sure we are well defended and able to take the fight to those who go after us.

“As President, I will make it clear, that the United States will treat cyber attacks just like any other attack. We will be ready with serious political, economic and military responses.”

If that isn’t a veiled threat to attack Russia in retaliation for their alleged “cyber-attacks” on the Democratic National Committee and the Clinton Foundation, then what is she trying to say?

This should scare the bejesus out of “liberals” and others on the left who have been scammed into jumping on the Clinton bandwagon in the name of stopping Trump. Are we really going to start World War III in order to avenge the honor of Debbie Wasserman Schultz? Given how problematic attribution is in the case of cyber-attacks, this threat of “military action” makes Dr. Strangelove look sane.

For all the yelping and screeching in the media about how Trump is “unstable,” and even crazy, this threat shows that Hillary is quite simply unhinged. Her major theme these days resembles something out of Joe McCarthy’s playbook: her campaign has come right out and said Trump is “Putin’s puppet.” And since she so clearly believes the Russians are actively disrupting her efforts to take the White House, it’s reasonable to assume her policy toward Russia will reflect this in a vindictive campaign of revenge.

And they tell us Trump is “scary”!

If Hillary Clinton doesn’t scare you, then you aren’t paying attention.

IMPORTANT NOTE: We’d like to wrap up our summer-fall fundraising drive, but there’s just one problem: we haven’t reached our goal. And that goal isn’t just some arbitrary number: it’s predicated on a precise budget that calculates, right down to the penny, the funds we’ll need to keep this site going. There’s not an ounce of waste: no big salaries, no perks, no expense accounts. It’s a bare bones budget designed to serve our readers with the best coverage of international affairs on these here internets.

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