

Barack Obama Administration Continues US Military Global Dominance

By Peter Phillips

The Barack Obama administration is continuing the neo-conservative agenda of US military domination of the world— albeit with perhaps a kinder-gentler face. While overt torture is now forbidden for the CIA and Pentagon, and symbolic gestures like the closing of the Guantanamo prison are in evidence, a unilateral military dominance policy, expanding military budget, and wars of occupation and aggression will likely continue unabated.

The military expansionists from within the Reagan, George H. W. Bush, Clinton, G. W. Bush administrations put into place solid support for increased military spending. Clinton's model of supporting the US military industrial complex held steady defense spending and increased foreign weapons sales from 16% of global orders to over 63% by the end of his administration.

The neo-conservatives, who dominated the most recent Bush administration, amplified this trend of increased military spending. The neo-cons laid out their agenda for military global dominance in the 2000 Project for a New American Century (PNAC) report *Rebuilding America's Defenses*. The report called for the protection of the American Homeland, the ability to wage simultaneous theater wars, to perform global constabulary roles, and to control space and cyberspace. The report claimed that in order to maintain a Pax Americana, potential rivals — such as China, Iran, Iraq, and North Korea — needed to be held in check. This military global dominance agenda required forward deployment of US forces worldwide and increasing defense/war spending well into the 21st century. The result was a doubling of the US military budget to over \$700 billion in the last eight years. The US now spends as much on war/defense as the rest of the world combined, making Americans the highest war-tax payers in the world.

Barack Obama's election brought a moment of hope for many. However, the Obama administration is not calling for decreased military spending, or a reversal of US military global dominance. Instead, Obama retained Robert Gates, thus making Obama the first president from an opposing party, in US history, to keep in place the outgoing administrations' Secretary of Defense/War. Additionally, Obama is calling for an expanded war in Afghanistan and only minimal long-range reductions in Iraq.

The US military industrial complex is deeply embedded inside the Washington beltway. According to the most recent reports from OpenSecrets.org, 151 members of Congress in 2006 had up to \$195.5 million of their personal assets invested in defense companies.

Major defense contractors were seriously involved in the 2008 elections. Lockheed Martin gave

\$2,612,219 in total political campaign donations, with 49% to Democrats (\$1,285,493) and 51% to Republicans (\$1,325,159). Boeing gave \$2,225,947 in 2008 with 58% going to Democrats, and General Dynamics provided \$1,682,595 to both parties. Northrop Grumman spent over \$20 million in 2008, hiring lobbyists to influence Congress, and Raytheon spent \$6 million on lobbyists in the same period. In a revolving door appointment, Obama nominated Raytheon's senior vice president for government operations and strategy, William Lynn, for the number two position in the Pentagon. Lynn was formally the Defense Department's comptroller during the Clinton administration.

The International Monetary Fund's prediction for global economic growth in 2009 is 0.5 percent—the worst since World War II. The United Nations' International Labor Organization estimates that some 50 million workers will lose their jobs worldwide this year. There are an estimated 62,000 U.S. companies expected to close in 2009, and while official unemployment is at 7 percent in the US, when you add people no longer looking for jobs and part-time workers, joblessness is closer to 14 percent. The military-industrial-political elite are worried about the potential of increasing global insecurity. The answer inside the Obama Administration is to continue high defense/war spending to insure military control of both domestic and foreign instabilities.

The military, industrial, congressional, and administrative elite profit from defense spending, both financially and ideologically. Insider profit taking from pentagon spending is widespread in Washington. But perhaps more important is the belief that this global military machine is seen as necessary for the protection of US corporate interests and the American upper classes in an increasingly destabilized world. Given that belief, the Obama administration is unlikely to change the defense spending policies of the previous US administrations without significant disruptive pressure from anti-war activists and global empire resisters.

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