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Richard Greeman

Obama, the new Carter ? Pax Americana

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When Mr. Obama said he 'didn't deserve' the Nobel Peace Prize, he wasn't lying. Not because he hasn't yet proven himself, but because he has. Barely a week after his tearful Inauguration, he escalated the Afghani war and sent predator drones to bomb civilians in Pakistan, the most unstable country in the region, with nuclear weapons.

This is not the first time that the Nobel Committee has crowned with its laurels the head of the American Empire, whether Nero or Caligula. First Teddy Roosevelt, who spent years massacring Philipinos who thought they were being liberated from Spain in 1898 and were demanding independence. Then Woodrow Wilson, who ran as a peace candidate ('He kept us out of war'), plunged the US into the First World War and then spoiled the peace at Versailles in 1919, thus preparing the Second World War ; But my personal favorite is Henry Kissinger, an authentic war criminal, but the hypocritical Jimmy Carter, who invented 'humanitarian' war is not far behind. Here's the lowdown on Carter.

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Ex-President Jimmy Carter deserves the Nobel Peace Prize for 2002 for at least one reason : his name isn't George W. Bush. And because he finally expressed his tactical hesitations about the latter's mad march toward war in Iraq. But let's look behind the mask of this champion of humanitarianism who has been criss-crossing the globe for the last twenty years that he's been out of work. If we examine the essence, his record as President in office, what do we find ? An efficient and unscrupulous defender of the interests of the American Empire.

Carter's Background

As a career officer in the U.S. Navy, Carter served the Empire as the Commander of nuclear submarines armed with atomic missiles – the weapon of terror *par excellence*. They give the U.S. the capability of launching a surprise 'preventive' nuclear attack from the enemy's coastline. A few minutes later and their cities and military sites are incinerated. Nuclear subs, which can survive under the oceans during a victorious enemy attack, also provide Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) as a deterrent. After the Navy, Carter went into politics and got himself elected Governor of the State of Georgia, where the wages were among the lowest in the South, thanks to racism and union-busting.

Carter the Internationalist

But Jimmy Carter was not a Neanderthal. He learned all about how the world runs while patrolling it as an officer of the Imperial American Navy, famous for its 'gunboat diplomacy' and its Marines – always at the ready when it comes to overthrowing foreign governments disloyal to U.S. banks and corporations. The peanut farmer became an internationalist. He participated in seminars at the Trilateral Commission, a semi-secret elite society presided by Nelson Rockefeller, the billionaire Governor of New York. Rockefeller had made several tries at running for President and always come a cropper. He made Carter his *protégé*. This humble son of Dixie, with his peanut farm, could actually get elected to the White House, whereas the great representative of finance capital never could himself, for all his billions. Once elected, Carter proclaimed 'human rights' as the motto of his Presidency. But he remained faithful to his Wall Street patrons and defended their global interests around the world. Some examples :

Carter Organizes the *Contras*

In 1979, the Nicaraguans succeeded in overthrowing the bloody dictatorship of the Somoza family, in power since 1934. The Marines under President Roosevelt had imposed the rule of Anastasio Somoza, the Chief of the infamous National Guards and murderer of the agrarian rebel, Sandino, after whom the rebels of 1979 named their revolution. At last democracy triumphed after forty years of ferocious repression. The rebels were young, democratic, liberation Catholics, home-grown *Sandinistas*. None of them were even Communists. What did Carter do ? He demanded that the bloody National Guard retain their power to maintain imperialist "order." Then the CIA, under Carter's orders, regrouped exiled National Guards into a terrorist army and sent them back to Nicaragua to destroy the new government, which contemplated sharing out the lands of Somoza émigrés. They call this terrorist gang the *Contras*.

I saw them at work in Occotán and León [Nicaragua, in 1984]. They were systematically torturing and murdering nurses, agronomists, volunteer alphabetization teachers and cooperative leader. One day, a copy of an actual CIA manual teaching this method of "targeted assassinations" was found on the body of a fallen *Contra*. (It was also known that the CIA had brought in former Argentinean torturers as their instructors). The CIA manual was explicitly designed to particularly target humanitarian workers so as to kill the idealism of the Nicaraguan people, nullify their progress in health, literacy, agriculture, and undermine their democratic revolution. That was humanitarianism à la Carter.

Carter Supports the Salvadoran Death Squads

In El Salvador, Carter supported the government based on right-wing death-squads *escuadros de la muerte*. He proclaims this government 'democratic' after a show-election held at bayonet-point. In 1980, this government massacred 10,000 peasants, trade unionists and resisters thanks to millions in military aid, munitions and advisors sent by Carter. Carter was unshaken by the murder of Oscar Romero, the Archbishop of San Salvador, in his Cathedral or the machine-gunning in the Cathedral Square of hundreds of his followers at his funeral. Only when four U.S. nuns were raped and murdered by Salvadoran soldiers was military aid suspended and replaced by 'humanitarian' aid to the government of assassins. More humanitarianism à la Carter.

Carter's Humanitarianism in Asia

In South Korea in the Spring of 1980, workers and students organized huge demonstrations against the military dictatorship of Chun Doo Hwan. Carter's Ambassador advised the South Korean generals to crack down on them. A thousand demonstrators were massacred on May 17 at Kwangju. Similarly, let us recall the *Khmer rouge* mass murderers in Cambodia with their pyramids of skulls. After they were defeated by the North Vietnamese, Carter intervened to offer them 'humanitarian' support (poor things !) to get them back on their feet and ready to fight. Carter also sent military aid to Indonesia, whose bloody military dictatorship had just brutally annexed East Timor, the newly independent former Dutch colony. They slaughter thousands while Carter's Ambassador organized a cover-up.

Carter in Afghanistan and Africa

And guess what U.S. President began the secret CIA operations in Afghanistan ? Guess who first supported the fundamentalist *mujahedeen* against the pro-Soviet government and built the networks that eventually included Osama bin Laden ? I admit that the Communist Afghani government, which educated women to be doctors, teachers, and technicians didn't support 'human rights' *à la Carter*. So Carter was forced to impose a regime of raping, plundering, opium-trading, fundamentalist warlords over the Afghani women. And it was Carter again who, before Reagan and Bush, boycotted the UN Special Conferences organized in 1978 and 1980 to redress North-South inequalities and confront racism, thus sabotaging the hopes of a whole period of decolonialization. So it was in the name of the humanitarian neo-liberalism promoted by Carter that they began to dismantle social services and public infrastructure in Africa, ushering in the period of famines and epidemics he now runs around trying to cure through charitable works.

Carter and the Shah

In 1979, a popular revolution overthrew the dictatorship of the Shah of Iran and his terrible secret police, *Savak*. Remember that during its first year, this revolution remained in the hands of democratic moderates. It was a revolution of unionized oil workers, Air Force non-coms and technicians, Marxist students and young feminists as well as that of *bazaar* merchants and Ayatollahs organized behind Khomeini. Democracy was possible, a new edition of Prime Minister Mossadegh's democracy, overthrown by the CIA in 1953 to place the Shah and his torture regime back in power.

What did Carter do ? First, he offered his Presidential protection to the Shah "the Rockefeller's close friend" in the name of 'humanitarianism.' Then he rebuffed the overtures of the government of moderates, thus opening the doors to the fundamentalist dictatorship of Khomeini. But Carter also knew how to divide and rule. He sent arms to Saddam Hussein, dictator of Iraq and former CIA 'property,' who felt his own power threatened by the contagion of the Iranian revolution. Thanks to U.S. support, Saddam was able to continue the war against Iran for eight years, with a total of about three million slaughtered.

The End of Carter's Presidency

But Carter's Iranian adventure destroyed his Presidency when Iranian *mujahedeen* made hostages of the personnel of the U.S. Embassy. For it was presidential candidate Ronald Reagan who, more wily than Carter, made a secret deal with the Ayatollah to prolong the crisis until the 1980 election, which Reagan won easily. This tricky maneuver has gone down in history as Reagan's October Surprise. So if, today, Carter is laudably expressing his reservations about Bush Jr.'s plan to make war on his poor ex-agent Saddam, it is for purely tactical reasons. U.S. troops run the

risk of getting bogged down in Iraq, while terrorism spreads out of it. Moreover, a war could destabilize the shaky world economy to the detriment of Wall Street interests. So by criticizing the policy of the Texan adventurist Sheriff George W. Bush Commander Carter, Rockefeller's *gendarme*, remains faithful at his post.

Glory to Wall Street's humanitarian mercenary ! Like his predecessor, the U.S. war criminal Kissinger, Carter well deserves the Nobel Prize for Imperial American Peace !

A Bit of Political History :

American society has always been torn between its progressive, libertarian, democratic traditions on the one hand, and its decadent, violent, reactionary slave culture on the other – an idea we develop below in "Religion and Repression in the U.S." In terms of electoral politics, the majorities of the progressive Democratic Party of Wilson and Roosevelt were based upon a tacit alliance between immigrant workers and the educated middle class in the Northern cities, and the "Dixiecrats" of the apartheid Southern states where only Whites could vote and the Democrats ruled as the only political party on the local level. But in 1968 this coalition was shaken apart by Black rebellion and Democratic President Lyndon Johnson's support of civil rights and racial equality. In reaction, the Dixiecrats deserted to the conservative Republican Party, thus tipping the Southern vote to the reactionary presidency of Richard Nixon (Nixon's famous 'Southern strategy'). This New Right now dominates the American political scene. Nixon, then Reagan, waged a cultural war against the gains of the 1960's (the right to abortion, sexual freedom, anti-racism), a crusade in which Bush II is the new Christian knight-in-shining-armor. But the two Democratic presidents, Carter and Clinton, (both former governors of Southern states) remained within this neo-liberal and warmongering framework, despite a lot of fancy words about "human rights."

As we have seen, Carter of Georgia turned a blind eye to the right-wing death-squad murder of the Archbishop of El Salvador, and it was Clinton of Arkansas who first bombed Afghanistan and the Sudan and set forth the new doctrine of American military unilateralism which Bush of Texas picked up to justify his war on Iraq. My French readers may not be aware that Carter's Georgia is in the running with Trent Lott's Mississippi, George W. Bush's Texas, and Bill Clinton's Arkansas for the Poverty Prize, the Ignorance Prize and the White Supremacist Prize. The reactionary powers of 'Dixie' – the geographically small region made up of former secessionist slave states – more or less dominates U.S. politics. Senators from Dixie still dominate the Federal Congress through control of the committee system, and more than half of U.S. Presidents, among them Johnson, Carter, Clinton, and Bush hail from Dixie. So do the majority of ranking officers in the U.S. military. Two other modern Presidents, Nixon and Reagan, came from Southern California (settled by white Southerners) and won office by appealing to the formerly Democratic South. Dixie still harbors powerful racist and Christian Right organizations, not to mention more or less fascist militias.