

And the Nobel Peace Prize Goes To: A Warrior

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Theme: [History](#)

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Just two weeks before being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, President Barack Obama made a historic speech about the war in Afghanistan at West Point, the most prestigious military academy in the US.

In his speech to the military cadets, which was carefully written and professionally delivered, Mr. President used the word “war” 25 times, the word “kill” six times and “peace” only three times.

In his Nobel Prize speech in Oslo, not long after West Point, the same gravity of the language of “war” was seen again with the same professionalism: “war” 44 times, “kill” five times and “peace” 31 times.

The first one was delivered to military personnel while the latter was to highly distinguished guests from all over the world. The common point of these speeches was that the Obama administration intended that world opinion relay the same message: The US will not close the Gates of Janus, meaning that the hegemonic world power will keep the war in its main policy objectives instead of seeking immediate peace and stability on the global scene.

After carefully studying both speeches, we can make some assessments about President Obama’s immediate foreign policy priorities. Mr. Obama’s clear message is that the US is not going to war with peoples but against badly behaved rulers and administrations whose policies do not accommodate the US.

Ending his first year of presidency, Mr. Obama, whose personality and promises had once given hope to the world (or at least some thought so!), has surprised the world by rather directly using the language of “war.”

Mr. Obama’s vision for new foreign policy objectives of the US during his presidential campaign inspired some optimism around the world. But nowadays, with his direct speeches, he has even tried to convince world public opinion about a “just war.”

From now on we may expect that every step to be taken by the military will be justified by the magic phrase “just war.” But the difficulty lies in the simple logic of what a “just war” means to the people who have been and possibly will be affected by America’s mighty and destructive military power.

In executing a “just war,” Hannibal of Carthage may help Mr. Obama. But it will not be an easy task for the Obama administration to reassure the people whose rulers would be targeted by this hegemonic power.

History shows us the very real proof of how a war can be conducted: Use of force only claims lives regardless of whether the action is right. The international media covers, on a daily basis, the death of innocent civilians in Afghanistan. Nobody can provide any justification for a “just war,” and Mr. Obama is not exempt from the lessons of history. In the hall of fame, Mr. Obama, at least for the time being, deserves his place with former President Bush the younger. There is no doubt Obama’s policies will follow the same path Bush’s did. Therefore, there is little hope for global stability and security, and no hope for peace.

Looking for someone who dares to cross the Rubicon? (arabaslik)

Just before the presidential election in 2008, I participated in a roundtable meeting in Washington, D.C., where one of the topics was what could change in American foreign policies if Obama were to be elected president.

I voiced my suspicions then as to whether Mr. Obama would have enough courage and power to change what President Bush had done in Afghanistan and then Iraq (it is ironic that Mr. Obama’s election motto was “Change you can believe in”). “Is he the man who will dare to cross the Rubicon?” was the question I asked the American liberals. As you may well guess, even liberals and democrats were not entirely sure of Mr. Obama’s ability to change the foreign policy of the US in Afghanistan and Iraq “because the national interest of the country was determined so long ago and has been executed according to the United States institutions’ decisions.” At best “it would take at least one term of any president to adjust and adapt – no real change.”

In fact, for those who are familiar with US foreign policy and its execution, a shift toward promising policies hardly ever occurs in American politics, especially when its armed forces are already engaged in overseas military operations.

What the Obama administration promises is an ironic Pax Carthage. When Rome defeated and literally wiped out the civilization of Carthage, Roman Senator Cato’s repeated wish that “Carthage must perish” was realized. The ghosts of neo-cons from the Bush administration are still whispering in the corridors of the White House, the Pentagon and the State Department in Washington, D.C. It seems there are a lot of jobs they promised to do years ago. Anyone who may have hoped that Mr. Obama would move US foreign policy in a new direction was shattered by his two speeches.

The possible effects of Obama’s policies on the Middle East in general and specifically on Turkey are the subject of another article.

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