

# Barack Obama: A Pacifist turned Hawk, Threatens the Use of Nuclear Weapons

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*When Barack Obama was surprisingly elected as the U.S. President in the 2008 elections, the world came to believe that a new phase of relationship and interaction between the United States and the international community would begin soon. That is why more than 150 world leaders rushed to send congratulatory messages to him, praising him as someone who can usher in a new era of constructive and peaceful cooperation after 8 erosive years of confrontation, militarism, despotism and bullying by President George W. Bush and his like-minded cabinet.*

At that time, people across the world had come to the understanding that Barack Obama, the nation's first African-American president, can be a reminiscent of Abraham Lincoln's peaceful reign and extricate the United States from the scaffoldings that George Bush had created: the scaffolding of quarrel and conflict with the whole world with the ruthless ideology of "either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists."

Obama's election as the U.S. President, especially given his promise for "change", which the American people and the whole world alike were awaiting for a long time, left the Norwegian Nobel Committee with no option but to award the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize to Barack Obama, even though he had not practically taken any significant steps or made remarkable decisions during the first year of his presidency which could qualify him as a prominent peace advocate worthy of being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, which according to the late Alfred Nobel's will, should be granted to someone who has made very outstanding achievements for the promotion of world peace in the previous year.

However, as many commentators and observers noted at that time, Obama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize simply because he was not another George W. Bush!

Obama's coming to power had revived hopes that the tarnished image of the United States as an aggressive, bullying and warmongering superpower would be repaired in the eyes of the subjugated nations of the Middle East, Africa and Latin America and that instead of war threats, it would be the message of hope that will be transmitted by the United States. The new President's electoral promises, including the closure of the Guantanamo bay detention facility, the withdrawal of military forces from Iraq, drawing a conclusion to the Afghanistan war, helping the Palestinian people regain their stolen rights, taking up diplomacy and rapprochement with the Islamic Republic of Iran and refraining from going into war with the other nations on baseless grounds had made the American people and the world citizens optimistic that something is happening in the United States. However, the optimism and hope did not last for long, and President Obama gradually began revealing his true face,

which unfortunately, was the face of another hawkish politician who simply uttered his words with a more moderate and lenient tone and was virtually deceiving everybody with his softened rhetoric; a rhetoric which was never translated into concrete action.

Although President Obama won another landslide victory in his 2012 presidential battle with the Republican Mitt Romney, his reelection was not seen as an auspicious and promising event that could leave a remarkable impact on the world like his surprise victory in 2008 against the hardliner Senator John McCain.

Barack Obama made many mistakes during his first term as the U.S. President, and astoundingly continued to repeat the same mistakes in the second term, and this was what made him yet another unpopular Western politician, as confirmed by several polls and surveys conducted in the United States and outside.

For example, the Christian Science Monitor reported in December 2013 that President Obama's approval rating has hit an all-time low and the lowest they've been for any president at this point in their term since Richard Nixon. According to the report, Obama's approval rate as measured by "Real Clear Politics" is something about 42 percent while the disapproval rate revolves around 54 percent. Moreover, according to the Rasmussen Report's daily Presidential Tracking Poll for Friday, March 7, 2014, only 24% of the Americans strongly approve of the U.S. President Barack Obama's performance, while 41% of the citizens strongly disapprove of the way Obama is performing as the president.

So what is clear is that to the Americans, Obama could not be the charmingly idyllic and spotless president whom they had visualized.

But to the Iranian people, Obama's hypocrisy was disclosed when he first signed into law the renewal of the U.S. government's annual sanctions against Iran in March 2009. This decision was in sharp contrast to his promise for taking the path of diplomacy with Iran. It was not an obligation for him to renew the sanctions as the U.S. President. He could postpone them or wait for the new round of talks with Iran to come. But he didn't hesitate to renew the sanctions, while a few weeks later, he sent a Persian New Year appeal message to the leaders and people of Iran, and this was something which really went beyond the pale in portraying the U.S. President's duplicity and dishonesty.

It was since then that President Obama continued striding on the path of adopting a policy of stick and carrot on Iran. He threatened Iran on every occasion, warning that the United States will push the EU and other countries to impose stricter sanctions against Iran if Iran fails to abandon its nuclear program. At the same time, he would use the opportunity of Persian New Year celebrations, Nowruz, every year to send greeting messages to the Iranian people, calling himself an advocate of détente and diplomacy with Iran!

In April 2010, he even warned that the United States will be considering the option of a nuclear strike against Iran if diplomacy and talks fail.

According to Al-Jazeera, the U.S. President said on April 6 that the U.S. would use atomic weapons only in "extreme circumstances" and would not attack non-nuclear states, but singled out "outliers" Iran and North Korea as exceptions.

Obama continued sending mixed signals to Iran and demonstrated his lack of diplomatic finesse. Calling for diplomacy and negotiations from one hand and issuing war threats and

intensifying the economic sanctions from the other hand were indicative of two facts: first, Obama was too inexperienced or indecisive to deal with Iran in a consistent manner, and second, he was under the immense pressure of Israeli lobby to adopt a tough stance on Iran and show that he is not going to make concessions to Iran so that this predatory lobby which dominates the U.S. mass media, multinational corporations and even the two houses of the Congress would be appeased.

The sending of mixed signals and the adoption of a dual-track, inconsistent and bizarre policy toward Iran continued until recently following the election of Hassan Rouhani as Iran's president. The new Iranian chief executive had promised during the election campaign season that he would restart talks with the six world powers if he is elected. He delivered his promise and the new round of talks between Iran and the P5+1 (Britain, China, France, Russia, the United States and Germany) started at the ministerial level in New York on September 26, 2013 on the sidelines of the 68<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly. The foreign ministers of Iran and the P5+1 agreed that the first round of talks under Iran's new administration would start in Geneva, and after several rounds of talks in the Swiss capital, the two sides hammered out a landmark agreement known as the Joint Plan of Action on November 24, 2013 that brought to an end more than 10 years of controversy over Iran's civilian nuclear program.

Since the agreement was concluded between the seven nations, of which the United States was a part, the U.S. officials, and above all President Barack Obama, have been repeatedly making threatening and unconventional remarks against Iran, questioning the contents of the agreement, the future of talks with Iran for striking a comprehensive, final deal and the commitments of the EU3+3 under the Geneva interim accord.

For example, in a session with the Jewish pundit Haim Saban at the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Saban Forum in Washington D.C. on December 6, President Obama made his most controversial remarks and presented a falsified interpretation of the Geneva deal, saying that it would be ideal for Iran to dismantle every element and facility of its nuclear program!

"I want to be very clear there's nothing in this [Geneva] agreement or document that grants Iran a right to enrich. We've been very clear that given its past behavior, and given existing U.N. resolutions and previous violations by Iran of its international obligations, that we don't recognize such a right, and if, by the way, negotiations break down, there will be no additional international recognition that's been obtained. So this deal goes away and we're back to where we were before the Geneva agreement, subject — and Iran will continue to be subject to all the sanctions that we put in place in the past and we may seek additional ones," he maintained.

One of the important stipulations of the Geneva accord was that the European Union and the United States will gradually begin to remove some of the sanctions against Iran including the gold and precious metals sanctions, sanctions on the petrochemical products, sanctions on the automobile industry and also release some of Iran's frozen assets in the foreign banks. They should also lay the groundwork for the Iranian students studying abroad to receive financial assistance and refrain from restricting Iran's oil exports.

However, the U.S. President stated several times that the architecture of the sanctions remain intact following the Geneva deal, that Iran should dismantle its nuclear program altogether so that all sanctions can be removed, that the partial removal of the sanctions

are reversible and that all options, including the military option, are still on the table with regards to Iran's nuclear activities.

Obama's claims that all options are still on the table caused widespread consternation in Iran, and Iranians ridiculed Obama's statements in their massive demonstrations on the Bahman 22 (February 11) marking the anniversary of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, responding that it's logic, dignity and steadfastness that are the options on the Iranian nation's table.

Barack Obama, by bowing down to the demands of the Israeli lobby and trying to appease his Zionist cronies, destroyed the promising image that had been depicted of him following his election as the first black President of the United States 6 years ago. He could leave an unforgettable and eternal legacy by melting the ice of diplomatic relations with Iran, sticking to his promise of taking the course of reconciliation with Iran and respecting the rights of the Iranian people.

However, by resorting to a derogatory literature and threatening the Iranian people again and again, Barack Obama undermined his own position as a pacifist politician and demonstrated that he is another hawk whose decisions in invading Libya, waging a lethal, destructive proxy war in Syria, continued drone attacks on Pakistan, Afghanistan, Somalia and Yemen and eventually his thuggish attitude toward Iran leave no doubts that he doesn't deserve to be called a pacifist.

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