

Japan's Embrace of a Phony War on Terror

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Japan may be “in the American Embrace,” as Gavan McCormack’s *Client State* cogently argues, but in whose embrace is America?

In Client State: Japan in the American Embrace, Gavan McCormack demonstrates how Japan’s apparent nationalist turn owes much to the need to conceal the country’s increasing subordination to American imperial designs. However, a closer examination of the driving forces behind the US Empire in the 21st century suggests that both countries may be serving a quite different agenda.

Rightly described as a “masterful” analysis by fellow Japan expert Chalmers Johnson, McCormack’s 2007 book expertly documents how Japan’s postwar “peace constitution” has been steadily attenuated to the point of meaninglessness, as Tokyo has consistently bowed to pressure from Washington to become more active in its support of US hegemony, culminating in a “merger” of their military forces in the wake of 9/11.

McCormack claims that this is “an agenda heavily in the American, rather than the Japanese national interest.” But in what sense could the extremely costly wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, now being expanded into Pakistan under the “antiwar” commander-in-chief Obama, be said to be in “the American interest”?

These illegal wars of aggression have been costly to America not only in terms of the trillions of dollars added to its ballooning national debt, but also in terms of the incalculable loss of credibility that it has suffered in the eyes of world opinion, appalled by the shameless lies about WMDs, the lurid scenes of torture in Abu Ghraib, and the massive casualties inflicted by high-tech weaponry on innocent civilians, whose lives are casually dismissed as “collateral damage” in the never-ending pursuit of the elusive Bin Laden.

The so-called War on Terror may be extremely profitable for weapons manufacturers, private military corporations, and the venal pro-war pundits they fund, but who else does it benefit?

Big Oil, says the antiwar left. But the “no blood for oil” adherents too may be misinformed, according to one leading analyst of the Iraq war. “Contrary to the view of most American progressives that oil, and specifically the interests of Big Oil, is the primary mover, there is no evidence that the major US oil corporations pressured Congress or promoted the war in Iraq or the current confrontation with Iran,” James Petras argues in *The Power of Israel in the United States*. “To the contrary: there is plenty of evidence that they are very uneasy about the losses that may result from an Israeli attack on Iran.”

And as for the American people, or at least those lucky enough to hold their jobs in the

coming Wall Street-induced depression, they will be paying dearly in greatly increased taxes for their government's folly for the foreseeable future.

Considering all this, it is difficult not to concur with the conclusion of a policy paper published by the Institute for Research: Middle Eastern Policy (IRmep) that the War on Terror has been "for the most part, extremely damaging to US interests."

The 2003 paper, "Clean Break or Dirty War?" by Irmep, a Washington-based nonprofit organization that studies US-Middle East policy formulation, shows how policies originally prepared for Benjamin Netanyahu in 1996 by a study group which included the likes of Richard Perle, Douglas Feith and David Wurmser under the title "A Clean Break: A Strategy for Securing the Realm" came to shape US foreign policy under the Bush administration.

"A Clean Break" (ACB) advocated getting rid of Saddam Hussein, and the destabilisation or overthrow of the governments of Iran, Lebanon, Syria and Saudi Arabia for Israel to be truly safe. Many of the same themes were repeated in the Project for the New American Century's 2000 document "Rebuilding America's Defences," which, after the "catastrophic and catalysing event" of 9/11, became the official US policy of "preemptive war" in the US National Security Strategy of 2002, authored by PNAC signatory Paul Wolfowitz.

As the IRmep paper explains, "...no set of policies ever come to fruition without an active and vocal distribution and implementation network." This small but influential neocon network," it is argued, "have achieved amazing success at seasoning and baking ACB policy agenda items into a tenuous mold as 'vital interests' of the United States itself."

The IRmep paper damningly concludes: "Many US actions are simply so inexplicable that consideration of their chief benefactor, Israel, is the only reasonable explanation. And as Americans dismiss Arab government charges that Israel is attacking them by proxy across the region, the evidence shows that the Arabs are correct. 'A Clean Break' is, at heart, an Israeli proclamation of 'Dirty War.'"

The spies who love the USA

Indeed, Americans recently got an inkling of just how corrupted their political system has been by Israeli interests, or at least they would have if the mainstream media had given the latest twist in the AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee) spy scandal the serious attention it deserved. For those who haven't been following the story on Antiwar.com, where Justin Raimondo, Grant F. Smith, Philip Giraldo and others have written extensively about it, here's what happened.

Jeff Stein, who writes for Congressional Quarterly, reported in April that two former national security officials had read transcripts of National Security Agency wiretaps in which Democrat Congresswoman Jane Harman was overheard talking to a "suspected Israeli agent" who wanted her to lobby the Justice Department on behalf of two former AIPAC officials under indictment for violating the 1917 Espionage Act. The two lobbyists, Steve Rosen and Keith Weissman, were charged with passing on classified information about Iran to the press and the Israeli embassy, which they had received from Colonel Lawrence Franklin, who had been a top Iran analyst in Douglas Feith's office at the Pentagon before Franklin pled guilty to espionage in 2005. In return for Harman's assistance, the Israeli operative promised to pressure House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to give Harman the chair of the House Intelligence Committee by threatening to withhold the political contributions of Haim

Saban if she didn't.

It was not a threat to be taken lightly, as Saban, the billionaire Israeli-American media mogul, had been the largest overall contributor to the Democratic National Committee during the 2001-2002 cycle, when, according to Matthew Yglesias, "the party leadership was backing the Iraq War."

In case there are some outraged Democrats who might protest that Saban's support for the party was probably not just about Iraq, that he more than likely also approved of the Democrats' liberal domestic policies, Saban's own words should disabuse them of that notion. On September 5, 2004 he told the New York Times, "I'm a one-issue guy and my issue is Israel."

Considering that this self-confessed monomaniac used to spend hours on the phone with Ariel Sharon, the so-called "man of peace" who in a saner world would have been hauled to the Hague for war crimes, Saban's influence over the Democrats should be cause for concern, to say the least.

Now that the Iraqi "threat" to Israel has been effectively neutralized by the American invasion and seemingly endless occupation (America's West Bank?), Saban's current paramount concern appears to be the "existential danger" that Iran's non-existent nuclear weapons now pose to Israel, a state which already has hundreds of nuclear weapons - the only one in the Middle East which does. Yet Israel is also the only one which is not under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and the only one which has not acceded to the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Despite these facts, Saban's recent acquisition of Univision, the largest Spanish-language broadcaster in the US, as part of a wider AIPAC outreach strategy to the growing Hispanic community, is probably intended to convince its 3.7 million viewers of the urgent need to spill more American blood, much of it Hispanic, in curbing the Iranian "threat."

Lest anyone dismiss Haim Saban as an isolated ideologue attempting to use his wealth - he's the 102nd richest person in America - to remake US foreign policy in the image of the Likud party, consider that close to 60 percent of Democratic Party funding (compared to 35 percent for the Republican Party) comes from mainly hardline pro-Israeli Jews, unrepresentative of American Jews in general, who tend to be antiwar unless Israel is directly involved.

Rosen, another PNAC signatory, even had the chutzpah to lead the witch-hunt that prevented Charles Freeman from becoming chairman of the National Intelligence Council, practically smearing the respected diplomat as an "anti-Semite" for his failure to confuse American interests with Israel's. In that key position, Freeman would have been responsible for supplying the President with sound intelligence about genuine threats facing America, as opposed to the fake intelligence that led to the Iraq war, some of which made its way to the White House from Ariel Sharon's office via Douglas Feith's Office of Special Plans in the Pentagon, as recounted in Julian Borger's 2003 Guardian article, "The Spies Who Pushed For War."

You'd think Rosen would have kept a lower profile at least until his own trial was over, which was ultimately quashed in early May, apparently due to White House pressure. But perhaps he was confident in the knowledge that in Washington Israel's security is "sacrosanct," as

Obama assured his AIPAC sponsors, whereas America's security seems to be for sale to the highest bidder, at least as long as most Americans are kept in the dark about the costs of their "special relationship" with Israel.

Dying for a lie

While US taxpayers had subsidised Israel to the tune of at least \$108 billion up to 2006 (currently \$3 billion a year) the Japanese too have paid dearly for their subordination to a US Empire prone to fight Israel's wars.

"The seriously ill Japanese economy takes every possible step to prop up the equally ailing US economy, pouring Japanese savings into the black hole of American illiquidity in order to subsidize the US global empire, fund its debt, and finance its over-consumption," writes McCormack. "Japan has become the sine qua non of Washington's global, superpower strategy and status."

Japan's commitment to the War on Terror has brought added costs. One estimate puts the cost of Japan's post-9/11 "rear support" at \$90 billion. Tokyo promised another \$5 billion for rebuilding an Iraq that had been destroyed by lies.

But Japan's treasure is no longer sufficient to satisfy Washington's demands of its "client state."

Richard Armitage, yet another PNAC signatory, once told an Australian audience that an "alliance" meant that "Australian sons and daughters...would be willing to die to help defend the United States. That's what an alliance means." As long as the Israel lobby maintains its stranglehold over US foreign policy, that also means being willing to die to defend Israel against its neighbours, who increasingly see its drive for regional hegemony as a real threat to their existence. And as long as Japan remains in the American embrace, it won't be long before Japanese parents will be expected to make a similar sacrifice.

Now if only there were a powerful Japan lobby in Washington - let's call it AJPAC - things might be a lot different.

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