

Obama as a Third World Strongman

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President Barack Obama entered office as a «hope and change» candidate who promised to be far different from his predecessor George W. Bush. However, in his fifth year in office, Obama has taken on the trappings of a «strongman», a leader found more often in Africa, the land of Obama's paternal lineage, and in Asia, from where his step-father hailed.

Obama has not only maintained unprecedented «unitary executive» powers amassed up by Bush and his vice president, Dick Cheney, but in the area of surveillance and press restrictions, Obama has gone far beyond the preceding administration...

Many Obama supporters believed that the first African-American president and a former constitutional law professor would ring to the presidency an appreciation for not only the rule of law and America's traditions of free speech, a free press, and a belief on privacy but also an understanding that the United States is but one of some two hundred nations, many in Africa and Asia, that Washington must learn to live with in peace.

But after five years in office, an ominous shadow has emerged over the United States. Obama has instituted an unprecedented system of surveillance of the phone calls, e-mails, and Internet transactions of Americans, including eavesdropping operations directed against journalists and their sources. Associated Press president Gary Pruitt recently told the National Press Club in Washington that the wire service's «longtime trusted sources» have stopped speaking to AP reporters as a result of the Obama administration's wiretapping of journalists and their sources, as well as unprecedented criminal charges pursuant to the 1917 Espionage Act being brought to bear on government whistleblowers.

Obama's dalliance with fascism is part and parcel of a troubling trend among first generation American politicians who have a parent or parents that came to America from nations lacking a strong tradition and history of democratic rule. This appears particularly true among first generation Hispanics, individuals like Florida's Republican Senator Marco Rubio and Texas Republican Senator Ted Cruz, whose parents come from nations like Cuba, Mexico, Honduras, and other nations that have suffered from military junta after junta and who adhere to the right-wing line of bolstering U.S. national security at all costs, the Bill of Rights be damned. These Latino and Latina leaders also support with U.S. aid and military advice right-wing regimes in Honduras, Colombia, Paraguay, and Guatemala, and right-wing opposition groups in Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Ecuador, and other countries. Moreover, the goals of America's political «caudillo class» in Latin America and elsewhere are supported wholeheartedly by Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry. Moreover, Bush-era Justice Department officials like John Yoo and Viet Dinh, champions of the Patriot Act, hail from South Korea and South Vietnam, respectively. These nations have hardly had strong democratic traditions and values.

Obama, who is a biological native son of Kenya and an adoptive native son of Indonesia, serves as a stark example of someone who has no appreciation for America's democratic ideals and traditions. As a boy, Obama saw himself as becoming a potential future prime minister of Indonesia. This was at a time when the brutal and genocidal CIA-installed dictator, General Suharto, ruled Indonesia with an iron fist. Obama's desire to serve as prime minister of a nation ruled by a dictatorial regime is all the more troubling when one examines the Kenya of Obama's father. Kenya's first president Jomo Kenyatta immediately, after independence, created a unitary executive by abolishing the post of prime minister and merging the only substantial opposition party into Kenyatta's rubber stamp cult of personality political party, the Kenya African National Union (KANU). In short order Kenyatta turned Kenya into a brutal dictatorship, a totalitarian state that continued long after his death.

Obama promised the «most transparent» administration in American history. As with any strongman, Obama's rhetoric is not matched by the facts. Obama, in instituting a virtual «Stasi network» of snitches and informants within government ranks, a program known as the «Insider Threat Program», has introduced to America the type of personal surveillance network instituted by other strongmen, for example, Francois and Jean-Claude Duvalier in Haiti and their «Tonton Macoute» secret police thugs, Idi Amin's feared Public Safety Unit and State Research Center, and Grenada Prime Minister Eric Gairy's infamous «Mongoose Gang». Today, Obama has instituted a network of informants that not only spot potential leakers in the military and intelligence communities but also in the US Peace Corps, the Social Security Administration, the Food and Drug Administration, and the Department of Education.

Obama's massive intelligence infrastructure is trying to create yet another intelligence agency, the 'Conflict Records Research Center (CRRC),” which sounds ominously like Amin's dreaded State Research Center. If Congress passes and Obama signs the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of 2014, the CRRC, which will be part of the Defense Department and likely under either NSA or its affiliated U.S. Cyber Command, will maintain a “digital research database” that can “translate” and examine “records captured from countries, organizations and individuals, now or once hostile to the United States.” Records are defined as documents, audio files, video files, or «other materials».

With Obama extending military combat operations to the United States with the NDAA of 2012 and granting the military the right, under «dangerous detention» provisions, to detain and indefinitely imprison people, including Americans, captured anywhere in the world, including the United States, it is matter of time before the possession of files regarding Yugoslavia, Cuba, the USSR, China, North Korea, Germany, Japan, Italy, Spain, Britain, Iran, Iraq, North Vietnam, and the Confederate State of America, or, in fact, the African National Congress, Palestine Liberation Organization, the Apache Nation, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons), Mao Zedong, Kim Il Sung, Joseph Stalin, Ho Chi Minh, Emperor Hirohito, Saddam Hussein, Fidel Castro, or Adolf Hitler, i.e., «countries, organizations and individuals, now or once hostile to the United States», could be deemed a crime against the state.

Obama was recently met with protesters in Berlin during his speech to mark the 50th anniversary of President John F. Kennedy's famous «Ich bin ein Berliner» speech. But, unlike the beloved JFK, Obama could only muster a few thousand pre-selected German and American sycophants at Berlin's Brandenburg Gate, which was complete with a wall built for security purposes. Yes, an 8-inch thick American provided plexiglass security wall at the site

of the former Berlin Wall. Obama is definitely no Kennedy. Only a president who emulates Erich Honecker and Augusto Pinochet would be met by protesting Germans carrying placards reading «Yes We Scan» and «Privacy Ends Here – PRISM / NSA».

To look over Obama's America is to view a nation governed by a Third World-like strongman. Unlike the caudillos, «El Jefes», tin pot dictators, generalissimos, «presidents for life», and despotic and patronizing «bwanas» of the Third World, Obama has at his disposal the largest and fiercest surveillance structure of all time. Obama's America is not known for «life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness» but of systems like the voice capturing NUCLEON database, meta-data computer systems called PRISM, MAINWAY, MARINA, PINWALE, OILSTOCK, and ANCHORY, a Skype surveillance system known as Project CHESS. Utah is now home to a massive computer center, the size of 17 football fields, containing the most intimate details of the lives of American and non-Americans alike. NSA Utah is complemented by a network of computer mega-surveillance nodes around the nation: NSA Headquarters in Maryland, NSA Georgia, NSA Hawaii, NSA Texas, the Aerospace Data Facility in Colorado, the Multi-program Research Facility in Tennessee, and overseas listening stations from Menwith Hill, England to Misawa, Japan and Ayios Nikolaos, Cyprus to Waihopai, New Zealand.

Meanwhile, Obama has attempted to come across as an affable basketball-playing, high-fiving, and congenial «man of the people». However, this strongman has become the face the «Big Brother», even though he would laugh off such charge and be more comfortable with his being known to the kids and die-hard Obama loyalists of America as merely «Big Bro».

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