

Obama's UK-Fest : Vision of a War Without End

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Part One

*"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power, and all the beauty that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike the inevitable hour, the paths of glory lead but to the grave." -Thomas Gray
(1716-1771)*

It was quite a week for America's Nobel Peace Laureate President. After a speech to AIPAC, there was the major, pre-UK arrival "interview" with the BBC's political commentator, Andrew Marr. Less an interview, in fact, than a breathlessly adoring audience.

Marr began by referring to "...that extraordinary moment when you knew you had got bin Laden", and that "there was something personal about it." No mention that of course there was also something very illegal about it.

Obama responded with his nation's "extraordinary trauma" after the tragedy of 9/11, without reflection, of course, of the "extraordinary trauma" the U.S., has inflicted on other nations (starting with its own First Nation) since its inception. If taking the official 11th September story at face value, cause and effect might have entered a Capitol Hill mind - and that of an interviewer, but no, naval gazing ruled.

That the SEALs were "...able to perform" the murders "without casualties, was extraordinary." What happened to that crashed helicopter and, as yet, unconfirmed claims of body parts scattered around? Marr didn't ask.

Obama went in to Hollywood mode. It was "in the pitch of night, on a moonless night." The assassins did not know: "whether somebody had a bomb strapped to them." No query from the BBC's intrepid interviewer as to why people living quietly for six years (we are told) their children playing with pet rabbits, would retire for the night wrapped in an explosive device instead of a nightshirt.

After "marvelling" at an act of astonishing violence (and seemingly illegal entry in to Pakistan air space and country) the President was treated to possibly one of the most partisan comments in the history of broadcasting:

"Because it would presumably have been very difficult for America to take this man and put him on trial with all the hullabaloo of attorneys and PR characters and the interrogation and so forth. It would have been a difficult thing to do."

“That wasn’t out number one consideration”, responded the former law Professor, chillingly illuminatingly. Marr made no queries as to legalities and no comment.

“We’ve killed more terrorists on Pakistan soil than any where else... but there’s more to do, said the Lord High Executioner. Looking around U.S., global slaughters, that must be quite a record. Close down the law schools, save money on legal training – redundant. Pity about the “collateral damage”, the farmers scratching subsistence living, the children, the mothers, deemed “terrorists” by drone operating, computer-wired youth, six thousand miles away.

“I had (said) when I was running for Presidency, that if I had a clear shot at bin Laden...”

“You’d take it,” enthused Marr.

“That we’d take it,” confirmed President Nobel.

The: “If I had a clear shot ...”, has a certain irony from the man who arrived in Britain two days later with 1,500 bodyguards, agents, aides, medics, armour plated Cadillac One flown in, twenty four vehicles to shield his convoy – and £10 million spent for a barbecue and a three day visit. So fearful was the wishful sharp shooter, it seems, that it was demanded that the glass in the Obama’s suite in the heavily fortified Buckingham Palace be removed and replaced to their specification.

As the U.S., and British body bags returned from Afghanistan continue to mount, the BBC’s audience learned that troop levels had been: “plussed up” and that: “the Taliban is now back on its heels.” The occasional minor glitch of entire prisons inmates escaping, U.S., bases under attack, supply convoys routinely incinerated in industrial numbers (he didn’t put it quite like that) had been because the U.S., had been: “distracted by the war in Iraq.”

Surely a moment to comment that this was a “distraction” which was both illegal, had comprehensively ruined a civil society, largely destroyed a land of eye watering beauty and ancientest of histories – and of course, those figures again: up to one a half million dead, one million widows nearly five million orphans and nearly five million displaced. An apocalyptic “distraction.” Marr’s lack of address to this enormity was deafening.

Reconcilliation in Afghanistan, said the President, might be possible “on terms that are consistent with our values.” It was of course not put to the President that, as with much of the world, values, culture, beliefs, history, priorities in Afghanistan, are a planet away from those of the United States.

Much has been made of Barack Obama’s reference in his AIPAC speech the same day, of a Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders. In fact there was so many caveats, ducks and dives, that it was a fact barely worth mentioing. Marr added more obstacles: “the rockets fired by Hamas.” No mention of the weapons of mass destruction sold by the U.S., to Israel, used to devastating effect, for decade, after decade. Jerusalem and the Palestinian right to return to their own land, was “a problem.” Hamas “must renounce violence.” And Israel? Marr did not ask.

Turning to the upheavels in the Middle East (don’t mention North Africa and Libya – it wasn’t), Marr asked grovellingly, “As the most powerful man in the world, what’s your

message to those people?"

The "message" was, to say the least, bordering on delusion: "...power and the moral force of non-violence has proven itself in the United States... The United States stands on the side of those who (seek change) through non-violent means... But as long as people adhere to the principle that violence, typically, is not going to bring about the sort of changes they seek, then the United States is going to be strongly supportive."

The entire jungle in the room, elephants included, were the United States bombs and missiles raining down on Libya - and a stated aim that if the country's leader became another assassination victim in the bombings, so what, too bad.

He concluded with: "Most of my day-to-day work is consumed by how we can deliver on the promise of the American dream to ordinary people. And so we are very proud of what we did with bin Laden."

Andrew Marr missed the tsunami of contradictions and they moved on to the impending state visit - why bother asking if there was any truth in former Presidential Advisor, Jack Caravelli's claim, that the U.S., had "drawn up plans to take over Pakistan if the country moves towards 'fanatical Islam'." (read: continues to be mightily fed up with the way it is being treated by its U.S., "ally" and decided it has had enough.)

But after all, this was the man who trilled of Tony Blair, at the time of the illegal invasion of Iraq that "tonight he stands as a larger man and a stronger Prime Minister as a result." Adding that his judgement had been vindicated and that Baghdad had been taken "without a bloodbath."

The great London PR-fest follows.

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