

Obama's inauguration, Rhetoric versus Reality. "I The People Still Believe in War"

What does this new 'liberal vision' actually mean?

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Region: [USA](#)

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President Obama's second Inaugural Address, Jan. 21, Washington, D.C.

President Barack Obama's second Inaugural Address has been greeted by much of the corporate media and his supporters as a new "liberal vision," in the words of a New York Times headline.

But while much of the president's rhetoric was progressive-sounding and strongly delivered, there was little actual content, and most of that was decidedly unprogressive and/or dishonest.

"A decade of war is now ending," Obama stated. In fact, U.S. military attacks and interventions are continuing in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia and other countries. Every Tuesday, there is a gathering in the White House where the president signs-off on the assassination-by- drone-missile of targeted individuals—and anyone who has the misfortune of being near them at the time of the strike—in a number of countries, none of which is actually at war with the U.S. .

While declaring that "We, the people, still believe that enduring security and lasting peace do not require perpetual war," Obama boasted that "America will remain the anchor of strong alliances in every corner of the globe." The Pentagon continues to maintain 900+ bases on every continent. The U.S. military budget is larger than all other countries in the world combined! These are, in fact, the essential elements of perpetual war and empire.

In his speech, the president referenced "Seneca Falls and Selma and Stonewall," seeking to present himself as a continuator of the historic movements for women's, African American and LGBT equal rights. The advances of these movements have been the results of determined mass movements over decades and centuries.

Despite the reality that more immigrants have been deported during his administration than any other in history, Obama called for "bright young students and engineers" to be "enlisted in our workforce rather than expelled from our country."

Some passages of the speech seemed to come from a parallel universe. "We know that America thrives when every person can find independence and pride in their work, when the wages of honest labor will liberate families from the brink of hardship."

In the real world United States of 2013, more than 23 million people are unemployed or severely underemployed. More than 146 million—or 48 percent of the population—is classified as low-income or living in poverty, a record. Real wages have been relentlessly

driven down over the past three decades. When adjusted for inflation, the minimum wage now is worth 45 percent less than it was in 1968.

Yet, the word “poverty” was only mentioned twice in the speech, once in the past tense, “when twilight years were spent in poverty ...” as if millions of elderly people are not today among the poor.

The other reference to poverty: “We are true to our creed when a little girl born into the bleakest poverty knows that she has the same chance to succeed as anybody else because she is an American, she is free, and she is equal” That may sound noble, but why not put forward a plan to end the “bleakest poverty” in this, the richest country in history?

Consistent with his first term record, the president advanced no proposals for how to address growing impoverishment, hunger and homelessness. None.

A strikingly deceptive paragraph in the speech read: “We, the people, still believe that every citizen deserves a basic measure of security and dignity. We must make the hard choices to reduce the cost of health care and the size of our deficit.”

Translation: We believe everyone deserves security and dignity, so we will be cutting your health care benefits very soon to meet the demands of the big banks.

Barack Obama’s election to the presidency in 2008 was an historic occasion in the history of a country blighted by extreme racism. It broke a 220-year streak of only white, northern European-descended males, nearly all wealthy, being allowed to occupy the highest elective office.

But regardless of who is elected, the job of U.S. president comes with a job description: CEO of the imperialist empire and protector of Corporate America.

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