

# Reviewing James Petras' The Politics of Empire: The US, Israel and the Middle East

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

It's Petras at his best. It's important reading. It covers vital topics. Petras tells readers what they need to know. His analysis is masterful. Below is an account of what he said.

Washington and Israel are longstanding imperial partners. Petras does some of the best analysis explaining it.

Overview: The State of the Empire

In the 1990s, imperial adventurism increased. Post-9/11, it accelerated. One war after another followed. They continue "unhampered by congressional or large-scale public opposition," said Petras.

At least so far. Popular opinion against Obama's Syria war postponed it. Resuming it could happen any time. Perhaps it's one major false flag attack away.

Other wars may follow. Iran's turn awaits. Ukraine's full-blown crisis and regime change aftermath happened largely beyond the timeline of Petras' book.

He's a valued contributor to a forthcoming Clarity Press (CP) account of Ukraine's crisis. It promises to be the definitive analysis of what happened, why it matters, and what may follow. Watch for CP's announced publishing date.

Zionists and militarists define their current imperial objectives as follows, says Petras:

"(1) destroying regimes and states (as well as their military, police and civil governing bureaucracies) which had opposed Israel's annexation of Palestine;

(2) deposing regimes which promoted independent nationalist policies, opposing or threatening the Gulf puppet monarchist regimes; and

(3) supporting anti-imperialist, secular or nationalist-Islamic movements around the world."

Resistance was greater than they thought. Washington's Afghan war is its longest in history. It shows no signs of ending.

Iraq and Libya remain cauldrons of violence. Obama's war on Syria enters its fourth year.

Israel's goal isn't creating "political vacuum(s)." It's devastating its enemies. What follows is someone else's problem.

Tel Aviv loves getting Washington to wage its wars. The one Israel most wants most is

destroying Iran. Whether America will oblige remains to be seen.

US economic conditions were different earlier than now. Overreach makes US leaders pause before undertaking what may cause more harm than good.

At the same time, public opinion is tired of wars. Enormous sums spent waging them harm their well-being.

A late 2013 Pew Research report confirms the gap between “elite and public opinion,” says Petras.

“By a vast margin (52% to 38%), the public agree that the US ‘should mind its own business internationally and let other countries get along the best they can on their own,’ ” he explained.

In 2002, a scant 30% opposed foreign entanglements. Times changed dramatically.

Over 80% of Americans oppose Washington’s Afghan war. Heading toward 14 years is too much.

Large majorities want domestic issues addressed. They want current jobs protected. They want new ones created. They want better ones. They want living wages. They want government serving their interests equitably.

They despise Wall Street. They reject new imperial wars. Whether they’ll stop is another matter entirely.

America is addicted to war. It’s the national pastime. Policymakers believe war is peace. Out-of-control imperialism reflects it.

At the same time, public antipathy to Obama’s wars weakened his ability to wage new ones. Whether 9/11 2.0 can change things perhaps remains to be seen.

In 2001, public appetite for war was keener than now. “Intervention fatigue,” says Petras, makes most Americans crave peace.

They’re tired of endless imperial adventurism. They’re suffering under the weight of pursuing it. According to Petras, they began to:

“(1) prioritize their choice of places of engagement;

(2) diversify their diplomatic, political and economic instruments of coercion; and

(3) limit large-scale, long-term military intervention to regions where US strategic interests are involved.”

Washington isn’t going soft by any means. A new page wasn’t turned. Making the world safe for war profiteers is still policy.

Fear is stoked. It’s used to manufacture consent. It’s much tougher than before. It doesn’t stop imperial rampagers from trying. Lots more effort is required.

Large-scale ground invasions are avoided. “Proliferation of special forces” substitutes. So do

an array of destabilizing policies.

Ukraine is Exhibit A. Around \$5 billion was spent replacing democratic governance with ultranationalist fascist extremists.

It's pocket change compared to trillions spent on Afghanistan and Iraq. It's changing Kiev on the cheap.

It doesn't always work. Wars remain a bottom line option. Libya is the optimal model. Shock and awe supplemented proxy ground forces.

✘ Plans perhaps intend similar tactics against Syria. Objectives remain the same. Petras identified "at least eleven major or minor conflicts today engaging US empire builders to a greater or lesser extent."

They include "Ukraine, Thailand, Honduras, China-Japan-South Korea, Iran-Gulf States/Israel, Syria, Venezuela, Palestine-Israel, Libya, Afghanistan and Egypt."

Obama is more selective in choosing new targets. He's only got so much money to spend.

Debt reduction curtails open checkbook warmaking. Special forces in over 120 countries do it on the cheap if needed. So do CIA elements operating virtually everywhere.

China and Russia comprise Washington's bottom line targets. It's hard imagining planned war on either of them.

Co-opting neighboring states substitutes. So does surrounding them with US military bases. Weakening and isolating them matters most.

Perhaps regime change by a thousand cuts is policy. Strategy is longterm. Overreach may defeat Washington's agenda.

Perhaps China and Russia intend letting America overspend until bankruptcy. They've got their own problems to resolve at the same time.

Unity between them with likeminded allies is their best defense. America makes more enemies than friends. It's influence is declining.

China's star is rising. Russia hopes to ascend at the same time. How it weathers things over Ukraine remains to be seen. Whether America prevails is unclear.

The battle for Ukraine's soul continues. It's longterm. Russia drew a red line. It's defending its vital issues responsibly. Putin isn't rolling over for Washington. Nor should he.

Obama has a tiger by the tail. He's in bed with fascist extremists. They've got a mind of their own. He may have bitten off more than he can chew.

Putin's patience may best him. Public Ukrainian anger may defeat him. It's unclear how things will go. Knowing either way won't happen soon. Nor in other parts of the world.

Even superpowers can't prevail everywhere, all the time. Eventually they learn. Some do the hard way.

Obama's wars made America weaker. New ones may be counterproductive. Nothing will be resolved any time soon. Major struggles are longterm.

Modern day Spartas may succumb like earlier ones. Living by the sword usually means perishing the same way. America may spend itself to death. Hegemons risk overreaching and failing.

Obama "relied on a wider variety of interventions than (his) predecessor," said Petras. He subcontracted more to European allies.

France took the lead in Africa. Washington wants Japan and South Korea bearing a greater Asian burden.

It's "part of the long-term US strategy to encircle and limit China's economic expansion," said Petras.

Middle East control and "undermining Iran" is prioritized. "The principal strategic weakness in US empire building policy lies in the absence of domestic support."

Zionist power remains the wild card. It's deeply embedded in Washington. Media support is overwhelming. So are powerful monied interests.

War is their national pastime. Aroused public opinion is the best defense against it. Revving it up now is needed more than ever.

The Obama Regime's Military Metaphysics Rejects Diplomatic Opportunities

Obama prioritizes belligerence over diplomacy. He never misses an opportunity to miss an opportunity to pursue peace.

Replacing independent governments with subservient pro-Western ones is prioritized. Adversaries are ravaged and destroyed. Hegemons operate this way.

Opportunities for peace are spurned. Bullying takes precedence. Obama sacrificed a "Grand Bargain" with Iran to serve Israel.

Israeli "land-grabbing" overrode Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

Destabilizing Venezuela is prioritized. Regime change matters more than normalized relations.

"Obama's Snowden caper revive(d) the Cold War," said Petras.

Obama's war on Syria rages. He's allied with perhaps uncontrollable death squad extremists.

Afghanistan is a bottomless pit of war. It could continue for another decade or two. Taliban fighters show no battle fatigue.

Containing China may end up a losing proposition. Lost US opportunities overall may not resurface. At least not in the short run.

"The world view of the Obama regime is one of mirror looking in an echo chamber," said

Petras. "(I)t cannot visualize and accommodate the interests of rivals, competitors or adversaries, no matter how absolutely central they are to any meaningful compromise."

"The give and take of real world politics is totally foreign to the world's Chosen People." They only know how to " 'seize power' and create military facts, even as they then spend a dozen years and billions of dollars and millions of lives in endless wars, bemoaning lost markets amidst serial diplomatic failures."

"The epitaph for the Obama regime will read:

They fought the Wars.

They lost.

They turned friends

into enemies.

Who became

Friends of our enemies.

They stood alone, in splendid isolation,

And said it was their only choice."

The Decline of the US (and everyone else...)

Post-9/11, America "suffered a series of military defeats, experienced economic decline, and now faces severe competition and the prospect of further military losses," said Petras.

Some analysts believe US decline began decades earlier. The greater it overreaches, the faster its political and economic advantage wane.

America makes more enemies than friends. It aims to isolate Russia, China and other independent states. It may end up shooting itself in the foot trying.

Latin American countries reject US aggressiveness. They overwhelmingly oppose efforts to oust Venezuela's government.

In late March, Organization of American States (OAS) members refused to hear fascist legislator Maria Corina Machado discuss ongoing Washington manipulated violence.

She opposes democratic governance. She backed the aborted April 2002 coup against Hugo Chavez.

She's involved in instigating ongoing violence. Venezuelan National Assembly members want her investigated.

They want her charged with treason and incitement to crime. She's provoking civil war, they said. She's a Washington favorite.

Washington lost Asian influence to China. At the same time, it forged closer military ties with

Japan, the Philippines and Australia.

The same holds in other areas. Empires don't fade easily. At the same time, they don't last forever.

In the end, they all die. America won't be an exception. None existed earlier.

Washington stands "totally alone" against Cuba, says Petras. OAS nations are "no longer a US haven."

At the same time, reports of US imperial decline are "overstated...(T)here is no alternative imperial or modern anti-imperial tendency on the immediate horizon," Petras explains.

Longer-term tells a different story. The 21st century began as America's. It may end as China's.

Cyber-Imperialism: The Logic Behind Mass Spying: Empire and Cyber Imperialism

Edward Snowden revelations about NSA spying connected important dots for millions. He's a gift that keeps on giving.

He explained what everyone needs to know. Doing so "provoked widespread protests and indignation and threatened ties between erstwhile imperial allies," said Petras.

Obama presides over a homeland police state apparatus. "One of (its) essential components (is) an all-pervasive spy apparatus operating independently of any legal or constitutional constraints," he explained.

Big Brother watches everyone. Claims otherwise don't wash. Electronic and telecommunications surveillance is sweeping.

It's pervasive. It targets everyone of potential interest. It operates globally. It's a power unto itself. It's unaccountable.

As technology advances, it promises worse ahead. No one can escape its spying eye. It monitors world leaders. It cracks encryption protections.

It listens to phone calls. It monitors emails and text messages. It accesses financial and medical records.

It conducts espionage to get a leg up on foreign competitors. It does so with electronic ease.

Huge stakes are involved. Empires need to do more to hold on to what they have. They want their power enhanced.

They want total unchallenged control. They want what's not easy to get.

The " 'Global War on Terror" (GWOT), became an open-ended formula for the civilian warlords, militarists and Zionists to expand the scope and duration of overt and covert warfare and espionage," said Petras.

It "provided the ideological framework for a police state based on the totalitarian conception that 'everybody and everything is connected to each other' in a 'global system' threatening

the state.”

“This ‘totalistic view’ informs the logic of the expanded NSA, linking enemies, adversaries, competitors and allies.”

A Big Brother world is no fit one to live in. It exists. It seeks omnipotence. It wants total control. Civil liberties and human rights are discarded in the process. They’re disappearing in plain sight.

Police State: The Domestic Foundation of Empire – Fabricating Terror Conspiracies

America’s only enemies are ones it creates. Its war on terror is fake. It’s waged to stoke fear.

Supportive propaganda rages. Mainstream media march in lockstep. They hype what demands denunciation.

They do it without supportive evidence. None exists. They regurgitate official lies. They repeat them ad nauseam.

Alleged global and domestic threats are fraudulent on their face. Warnings repeat anyway. Lies substitute for truth. They wore thin long ago.

Most people are fooled anyway. Many pay no attention either way.

“By evoking a phony ‘terrorist threat’ abroad and its detection by the NSA, Obama hopes to re-legitimize his discredited police state apparatus,” says Petras.

At the same time, he “seeks to cover-up (his) most disreputable policies, despicable ‘show trials’ and harsh imprisonment of government whistle blowers and political, diplomatic and military defeats and failures which have befallen the empire in the present period.”

Petras calls Obama “the Master of Deceit.” He’s polar opposite what supporters want. He wages multiple imperial direct and proxy wars. He plans new ones.

He wrecked the economy. He looted the nation’s wealth. He consigned millions to unemployment or underemployment.

Poverty, homelessness and hunger increased on his watch. He heads America toward full-blown tyranny.

Monied interests own him. He supports wealth, power and privilege. He let popular needs go begging.

He destroyed hard-won labor rights. He wants education commodified. He wants it made another business profit center.

He wages war on whistleblowers, dissenters, Muslims, Latino immigrants, and environmental and animal rights activists called terrorists.

He’s a con man. Petras nailed him before taking office. He called him “the perfect incarnation of Melville’s Confidence Man. He catches your eye while he picks your pocket. He gives thanks as he packs you off to war.”

He spurns human need. He ignores rule of law principles. He deplors democratic values. He tolerates none at home or abroad. He wages war on freedom.

### The Rise of the Police State and the Absence of Mass Opposition

Recent US history witnessed “the virtually unchallenged rise of the police state,” said Petras. Diktat power rules. No mass pro-democracy movement confronts it. It rages out-of-control.

Bipartisan complicity supports it. So do mainstream media. It reflects McCarthyism writ large. Anyone can be targeted for any reason or none at all.

Constitutional rights don’t matter. Arbitrary rule replaced them. Police state powers reflect it.

It’s “the dominant reality in US political life today,” says Petras. It’s largely unchallenged. Dismissiveness substitutes for mass outrage.

Obama gets away with murder and much more. Mainstream media hype state-sponsored fear-mongering. Fake threats persist. Dissent is increasingly criminalized. Wars substitute for peace.

Part II continues discussing Petras’ new book.

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*His new book is titled “Banker Occupation: Waging Financial War on Humanity.”*

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