

# The Elections and the Responsibility of the Intellectual to Speak Truth to Power

Twelve Reasons to Reject Obama and Support Nader/McKinney

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The presidential elections in the US, once again, provide an acid test of the integrity and consequential conduct of US intellectuals. If it is the duty and responsibility of the public intellectual to speak truth to power, the recent statements of most of our well-known and prestigious public pundits have failed miserably. Instead of highlighting, exposing and denouncing the reactionary foreign and domestic policies of Democratic Party candidate Senator Barack Obama, they have chosen to support him, 'critically, offering as excuses that even 'limited differences' can result in positive outcomes, and that 'Obama is the lesser evil' and 'creates an opportunity for a possibility of change.'

What makes these arguments untenable is the fact that Obama's public pronouncements, his top policy advisers, and the likely policymakers in his government have openly defined a most bellicose foreign policy and a profoundly reactionary domestic economic policy totally in line with Paulson-Bush-Wall Street. On the major issues of war, peace, the economic crisis and the savaging of the US wage and salaried class, Obama promises to extend and deepen the policies which the majority of Americans reject and repudiate.

## Twelve Reasons to Reject Obama

1. Obama publicly and repeatedly promises to escalate the US military intervention in Afghanistan, increasing the number of US troops, expanding their operations and engaging in systematic cross-border attacks. In other words, Obama is a greater warmonger than Bush.
2. Obama publicly has declared that his regime will extend the 'war against terrorism' by systematic, large-scale ground and air attacks on Pakistan, thus escalating the war to include villages, towns and cities deemed sympathetic to the Afghan resistance.
3. Obama opposes the withdrawal of US troops in Iraq in favor of redeployment; the relocation of US troops from combat zones to training and logistical positions, contingent on the military capability of the Iraqi Army to defeat the resistance. Obama opposes a clearly defined deadline to withdraw US forces from Iraq because US troops in Iraq are essential to pursuing his overall policies in the Middle East, which include military confrontations with Iran, Syria and Southern Lebanon.
4. Obama has declared his unconditional support for the position of the pro-Israel Lobby and the colonial expansionist and bellicose policies of the Jewish state. He has promised to back Israeli military attacks whatever the cost to the US. His abject servility to Israel was evident

in his speech at the annual AIPAC conference in Washington 2008. Top advisers who have long and notorious links to the top echelons of the principle Zionist propaganda mills and the Presidents of the Leading Jewish American Organizations wrote the speech and formulate his Middle East policy.

5. Obama has promised to attack Iran if it continues to process uranium for its nuclear programs. Twice, just weeks before the elections, Obama's running mate Joseph Biden spelled out a series of 'points of conflict' (including Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Russia and North Korea) emphasizing that Obama 'would respond forcefully'. Obama's senior Middle East advisers include leading Zionists like Dennis Ross, closely linked to the 'Bipartisan Policy Center', which published a report serving as a blueprint for war with Iran. Obama's proposed offer to negotiate with Iran is little more than a pretext for issuing an ultimatum to Iran to surrender its sovereignty or face massive military assault.

6. Obama unconditionally supports Israel's expulsion of Palestinians and the expansion of Jewish settlements in the West Bank, the leading cause of Middle East hostility, warfare and the discredit of US policy in the region. With three dozen Israel-Firsters among his leading campaign organizers, top policy advisers, speech writers and among the likely candidates for cabinet positions, there is virtually no hope of 'influencing from within' or 'applying popular pressure' to change Obama's slavish submission to the Zionist Power Configuration. By supporting Obama, the "progressive intellectuals" are, in effect, allies of his Zionist mentors.

7. On the domestic front, Obama's key economic advisers have impeccable Wall Street credentials. He gave unquestioning and immediate endorsement to Treasury Secretary Paulson's \$700 billion dollar taxpayer bailout of the richest investment banks in the US. Obama has failed to challenge Paulson or the banks over the use of Federal funds for buyouts and acquisitions instead of loans and credit to producers and homeowners. Obama's backing of Paulson and the Wall Street bailout is matched by his meager proposals to suspend mortgage foreclosures for a three-month period, pending re-negotiations of interest payments. Obama proposes to escalate transfers of government funds to mismanaged financial institutions and bankrupt capitalist corporations, in efforts to save failed capitalism rather than pursue any new large-scale, long-term public investment programs which will generate well-paid employment for workers.

8. Obama's economic team has openly declared their embrace and practice of 'free market' ideology and opposition to any effort to engage in large-scale injections of government funds in publicly-owned productive activity and social services in the face of wide-spread private sector failure, corruption and collapse.

9. Obama embraces failed private sector health plans, run and controlled by corporate insurance companies, conservative medical and hospital associations and Big Pharma. He publicly rejects a universal national health program modeled after the successful Federal Medicare program in favor of inefficient, state-subsidized private for profit plans that are costly and beyond the means of over one third of US families.

10. Obama is and continues to be an advocate for Big Agro and its highly subsidized and profitable ethanol program, which has increased food prices for millions in the US and for hundreds of millions in the world.

11. Obama advocates continuing the criminal embargo on Cuba, hostile confrontation with Venezuela's populist President Chavez and other Latin American reformers and the duplicitous policy of promoting protectionism at home and free market access to Latin America. His key policy advisers on Latin America propose cosmetic changes in style and diplomacy but unrelenting support for re-asserting US hegemony.

12. Obama has not proposed, nor do his free market advisers and billionaire financial backers envision, any comprehensive plan or strategy to get us out of the deepening recession. On the contrary, the course of piecemeal measures presented by Obama are internally inconsistent: Fiscal austerity is incompatible with job creation; bailing out Wall Street drains funds from productive investment; and pursuing new wars undermine domestic recovery.

## CONCLUSION

The intellectuals who, in the name of 'realism', support a politician who publicly and openly embraces new wars, billionaire bailouts and for profit, private sector-run health programs are repudiating their own claims as 'responsible critics'. They are what C. Wright Mills called 'crackpot realists', abdicating their responsibility as critical intellectuals. In purporting to support the 'lesser evil' they are promoting the 'greater evil': The continuation of four more years of deepening recession, colonial wars and popular alienation. Moreover, they are allies of the mass media, major parties and the legal system which has marginalized or outright excluded the alternative candidates, Ralph Nader and Cynthia McKinney, who do speak out and oppose the war, the pro-Wall Street bailouts and propose genuine large-scale public investment in the domestic economy, a universal single payer health program, sustainable and pro-environment economic policies and large-scale, long-term income redistributive policies.

What is crass and unacceptable is the argument of these intellectuals, (an insignificant pimple on the Democratic donkey's rear-end) that for a single moment believe that their 'critical support' of the Obama political machine will open space for radical ideas. The Zionists and civilian militarists totally control Obama's war policy in the Middle East: There will be no space for peace with Iran, Palestine, Pakistan, Afghanistan or Iraq. Wall Street controls the Obama's financial policy: There will be no space for some Cambridge progressive to sneak in a handout for families losing their homes.

If multi-million trade union treasuries have spent a hundred million dollars on each presidential campaign have failed to secure a single piece of progressive legislation in over 50 years, isn't it delusional for our progressive 'public intellectuals' to imagine that they, in their splendid organizational isolation, can 'pressure' President Obama to renounce his advisers, backers and public defense of military escalation, to see his way to peace with Iran and to promote social justice for our workers and unemployed?

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