

Watching Obama Morph Into Dick Cheney

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America has lost her soul, and so has her president.

A despairing country elected a president who promised change. Americans arrived from every state to witness in bitter cold Obama's swearing in ceremony. The mall was packed in a way that it has never been for any other president.

The people's good will toward Obama and the expectations they had for him were sufficient for Obama to end the gratuitous wars and enact major reforms. But Obama has deserted the people for the interests. He is relying on his non-threatening demeanor and rhetoric to convince the people that change is underway.

The change that we are witnessing is in Obama, not in policies. Obama is morphing into Dick Cheney.

Obama has not been in office four months and already a book could be written about his broken promises.

Obama said he would close the torture prison, Guantanamo, and abolish the kangaroo courts known as military tribunals. But now he says he is going to reform the tribunals and continue the process, but without confessions obtained with torture. Getting behind Obama's validation of the Bush/Cheney policy, House Democrats pulled the budget funding that was to be used for closing Guantanamo.

The policy of kidnapping people (usually on the basis of disinformation supplied by their enemies) and whisking them off to third world prisons to be interrogated is to be continued. Again, Obama has substituted a **"reform"** for his promise to abolish an illegal policy. Rendition, Obama says, has also been reformed and will no longer involve torture. How would anyone know? Is Obama going to assign a US government agent to watch over the treatment given to disappeared people by third world thugs? Given the proclivity of American police to brutalize US citizens, nothing can save the victims of rendition from torture.

Obama has defended the Bush/Cheney warrantless wiretapping program run by the National Security Agency and broadened the government's legal argument that **"sovereign immunity"** protects government officials from prosecution and civil suits when they violate US law and constitutional protections of citizens. Obama's Justice Department has [taken up the defense of Donald Rumsfeld](#) against a case brought by detainees whose rights Rumsfeld violated.

In a signing statement this month, Obama [abandoned his promise](#) to protect whistle-blowers

who give information of executive branch illegality to Congress.

Obama is making even more expansive claims of executive power than Bush. As Bruce Fine [puts it](#): **“In principle, President Obama is maintaining that victims of constitutional wrongdoing by the U.S. government should be denied a remedy in order to prevent the American people and the world at large from learning of the lawlessness perpetrated in the name of national security and exacting political and legal accountability.”**

Obama, in other words, is committed to covering up the Bush regime’s crimes and to ensuring that his own regime can continue to operate in the same illegal and unconstitutional ways.

Obama is fighting the release of the latest batch of horrific torture photos that have come to light. Obama claims that release of the photos would anger insurgents and cause them to kill our troops. That, of course, is nonsense. Those resisting occupation of their land by US troops and NATO mercenaries are already dedicated to killing our troops, and they know that Americans torture whomever they capture. Obama is fighting the release of the photos, because he knows the barbaric image that the photos present of the US military will undermine the public’s support for the wars that enrich the military/security complex, appease the Israel Lobby, and repay the campaign contributions that elect the US government.

As for bringing the troops home from Iraq, this promise, too, has been reformed. To the consternation of his supporters, Obama is leaving 50,000 US soldiers in Iraq. The others are being sent to Afghanistan and to Pakistan, where on Obama’s watch war has broken out big time with already one million refugees from the indiscriminate bombing of civilians.

Meanwhile, war with Iran remains a possibility, and at Washington’s insistence, NATO is conducting war games on former Soviet territory, thus laying the groundwork for future enrichment of the US military/security complex. The steeply rising US unemployment rate will provide the needed troops for Obama’s expanding wars.

Obama can give a great speech without mangling the language. He can smile and make people believe his rhetoric. The world, or much of it, seems to be content with the soft words, which now drape Dick Cheney’s policies in pursuit of executive supremacy and US hegemony

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