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<http://www.counterpunch.org/2016/05/11/thank-you-barack-obama-for-showing-us-that-peace-is-war/print/>

Thank You Barack Obama for Showing Us That Peace is War

By George Katsiaficas
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Decades ago George Orwell warned us that in 1984, war would be peace, truth would be lies, and love would be hate. Over the years, I've caught glimpses of what Orwell had in mind. But it is not until 2016 that I feel I can say his prognosis has come completely true. Thank you, Barack Obama, for that.

You have brought *savoir-faire* into the White House that none of your predecessors even came close to. Bill Clinton's "I did not have sex with that woman," Ronald Reagan's "I can't remember" funding the contras, and of course, nothing more needs to be said about both George Bushes, progeny of Hitler-affiliated and Congressionally-censored industrialists and financiers, whose presidencies made a mockery of democracy.

By contrast, Obama is continually compared to Martin Luther King Jr. In much of the world, especially among Africans, he is admired to the point of being worshipped. He was awarded the Nobel peace prize in his first year in office despite the fact that he had enlarged the war in Iraq and extended it in Afghanistan. Now he has brought total war to Syria, where at least a quarter million people have perished. He has orchestrated the subversion of Venezuela, a country that freely gave aid to many of Latin America's most impoverished people. He has encouraged neo-liberal politicians to overthrow Brazil's president, supervised a right-wing coup in Honduras, supported a neo-Nazi regime in Ukraine, helped to overthrow the government of Libya and created a failed state there, paid Kenya and Ethiopia to attack Somalia, supplied bombs to Saudi

Arabia to use on Yemenis, and built up offensive US weapons on Russia's borders. In Asia, his "pivot" has reasserted Japan's importance—a nation that has never apologized for its role in World War II (not least for its kidnapping of more than 100,000 women whom it turned into sex slaves for its military). He pressured South Korea to draw closer to Japan and threatens China with drive-by aircraft carriers and provocative fly-overs.

At home, his bailout of Wall Street and big banks ranks as one of the greatest government supports for big business in history.

Yet despite all this, the media bombard us with news of his treaty with Iran and enactment of "Obamacare." No one comments on the fact that the only "unfriendly" nations to escape his bombardment—North Korea and Iran—are precisely those which remain armed to the teeth, that Obamacare is a pale imitation of his promised quality healthcare for all.

In my lifetime, I have seen feminism turned into opposite: from a set of beliefs that promised women wouldn't rule -- *couldn't* rule -- with the violence and brutality of men into the notion that women should play the same combat roles as men, that women should be just as tough in the corporate boardroom and rule with more efficiency and less sentimentality in a system of worldwide immiseration and alienation.

With Barack Obama in the White House, the promise of peace that was essential to the African-American movement, of MLK's dream, which named the US the "main purveyor of violence in the world" and advocated a world without war, serves to legitimate this country's wars and unending violence. Obama explicitly said he targeted a children's birthday party for a drone attack in which several were massacred. Given the example set by the man at the top, is it any wonder that American cities are once again sites for daily police shootings of children—and of people murdering each other in record numbers?

Nonetheless, in this upside-down world, Obama is seen as a man of peace, while the Black Panthers are remembered as violent—even though they explicitly called for a world without standing armies, a world in which the United States would pay reparations to the rest of the world for centuries of genocidal wars and imperialist exploitation.

So thank you, Barack Obama, for showing us all that peace is war. Only you could have used Martin Luther King's mantle to cover the actions of a war criminal. Thank you for completing George Orwell's prediction.