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The American Way: Indefinite Detention

By Norman Pollack
September 8, 2016

Recent reports state that President Obama upon leaving the White House will have a multimillion dollar mansion in Washington. I delight in his good fortune. It is only appropriate that one who has devoted his presidency to serving the wealthy (and the military, for such assistance is ideologically conjoined) should live closely to, and in the manner keeping with, his clientage. In that way, he can summon, or be summoned (less likely), on the spot.

Of course a nine-bedroom residence and presumably a private jet, his own or at his disposal, costs money. But all of us concerned for his welfare are relieved to know that household and other expenses will be at least partially met by the proposed signing agreement promised to be in the neighborhood of \$25M for three books (and his wife, Michelle, for her memoirs, an additional \$10M).

This is as it should be. Devotion to plutocracy and militarism, in a society which prioritizes them next to God in importance, and as revelatory of the Nation's spirit, has rightfully earned such rewards from a grateful public. Staring down Russia and China stiffens our people's spinal column, makes each and every person (absent illegals) proud of a heritage of anticommunism, keepers of the faith of international capitalism, on which we dwell and daily praise.

Obama, the quintessential warmonger (cum Nobel laureate), is an engrossing study in power, articulating perfectly the ethos of capitalist striving, so that the personal factor—his own—has a role in both modes of activity: a sure-footed entitlement to lead, according to one's lights, and an

equally certain entitlement to pecuniary success. To command, and receive worshipful gratitude in return (Leader of the Free World), is matched, as if making up for prior deprivation, by a positive lust for wealth, status, position—never enough, once tasted. Obama's solicitous regard for those enjoying wealth and power is come by honestly, the twin pursuit inscribed in his experience and personality.

Also come by honestly (though twisted out of shape) is his despisement of softness, weakness, which is to be equated with democracy, transparent government, civil liberties, all of which he violates at every opportunity to prove his Americanism and his own moral character. Among his testaments to worthiness as a national leader is his practice, through Executive action, of targeted drone assassination. Mindful of his solemn obligation to keeping the American people safe, he clearly values his title of Commander-in-Chief as much as he does POTUS. Together that gives him unquestioned license to expand Executive Authority, carrying into such areas as massive surveillance of the people, employment of the Espionage Act to ferret out dissent, and assemble a Cabinet fully subscribing to his geopolitical aims of disproportionate world influence in a framework of unilateral military-commercial-financial-ideological dominance.

One proud achievement, symbolizing the whole, is the retention of Guantanamo, validating the principle of indefinite detention. Again, solicitous of Americans' well-being, not wanting to harm moral sensibilities, Guantanamo, for him, is a shining example of conducting torture with impunity, out of the limelight so that no-one is disturbed at home. This is part of a larger grasp of what constitutes ethical policy making, embodied in humanitarian interventionism and regime change, which rescues victims of Left oppression and repression. Guantanamo, then, is code for the genius of American freedom: an outpost for instructing the heathen in the ways of true democracy (unadorned capitalism, without such frills as rule of law, equitable distribution of wealth and power, respect for human dignity in all its forms).

If I may be so bold, Mr. President, I respectfully urge you, before occupying your Washington mansion, to spend a year, upon leaving office, in a Guantanamo jail cell. The stay should prove exhilarating, a sojourn into the mental landscape of true Americanism, where after your noble service you have earned the right to view the fruits of your labors. Then, returning home to Washington, you will feel inspired to offer guidance on how best to keep the military and intelligence communities on their toes. Private instruction in the arts of waterboarding and electric-shock treatment will keep you up to speed on current events and the ability to carry on a proper discourse with colleagues in government, think tanks, and academia. A grateful nation is at your feet, profiting from your knowledge of and thirst for hegemony, and should the need be, a resort to nuclear war.