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## Needed Now: a Peace Movement Against the Clinton Wars to Come

By Andrew Levine  
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Barack Obama won the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize –for not being George W. Bush. This seemed unseemly at the time, but not outrageous. Seven years later, it seems grotesque.

As the steward-in-chief of the American empire, Obama continued Bush's Afghanistan and Iraq Wars, and extended his "War on Terror" into Libya, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, Pakistan, and elsewhere in Africa and the Middle East.

He also became a terrorist himself and a serial killer, weaponized drones and special ops assassins being his weapons of choice.

Much of this has taken place under a veil of secrecy. A great deal of effort has gone into keeping news of the murder and mayhem Obama let loose upon the world out of public view; so far out that, to this day, Obama, is still widely thought of as a man of peace.

He kept that illusion intact the way that Bill Clinton kept a similar illusion alive in the nineties—by keeping war talk to a minimum and by keeping American combatants out of harm's way.

Along with his Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, Clinton saw to it that sanctions would kill hundreds of thousands of Iraqis. And when sanctions weren't enough to complete the dismemberment of Yugoslavia, he unleashed death and destruction from the skies.

With his drones, Obama has surpassed Clinton in that one respect; if they gave a Nobel Prize for killing from afar, he'd win hands down.

Sometimes, though, there is no avoiding "boots on the ground." When this is the case, the Clinton-Obama way is to rely as much as possible on proxy armies or militias to do the fighting, using the empire's own troops only as a last resort.

Also, like Clinton, Obama relies on "humanitarian" interveners to make his depredations seem kosher. Nobody can sell killing and maiming to a gullible public as well as they.

Now that old horn dog must be smarting inside – because he showed the way, and Obama got the prize.

The sad part is that, compared to several other Nobel laureates — Henry Kissinger and Menachem Begin come immediately to mind –Obama's prize doesn't even seem particularly absurd.

And credit where credit is due: an important accomplishment of Obama's has been to restrain the more bellicose underlings he empowered. Hillary Clinton, his first Secretary of State and inevitable successor, for example.

This is why, when Obama goes off to do whatever he will do with the rest of his life, he will actually be missed.

It must be said, though, that the more noxious laureates at least did *something* to earn the honor bestowed upon them. What they did was often of dubious value, but it was something nevertheless.

For example, the late Shimon Peres also got a lot of people killed and maimed; and, remarkably, he too is widely thought to be a man of peace. But he won his Nobel Prize, along with Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin, for his role in negotiating the now defunct – and always doomed — Oslo accords. The Nobel Committee could at least justify giving the prize to him on that account.

Obama won his with no peace-making accomplishments at all, dubious or otherwise, to his credit. What he had going for him was just that “hope and change thing,” as Sarah Palin aptly called it.

This was before those words came to stick in the craws of progressives throughout the United States. Obamamania was already on the wane in America by the time Obama won his Nobel; evidently, it took a while for the news to reach Norway.

With Hillary it will be different. Candidate Obama was a magnet for illusions; Hillary is anything but. She is not about to get peace prizes just for being there.

Even the people who give out Nobels know better than that. She regards the (unindicted) war criminal Kissinger as a mentor, and, when she abases herself before AIPAC, she might as well be channeling Peres or even Begin, but it makes no difference to them. Her fondness for all things military is too well known.

Needless to say, while running for President, she would as soon not call attention to her bellicose and imperialist side. She and her handlers would rather people think that a vote for her is a vote against Donald Trump – period, full stop.

In a sense, it is; it is also a vote against Gary Johnson, the Libertarian candidate, and Jill Stein of the Greens.

Trump will get more votes than either of them, but his chances of being elected President are not much better than theirs.

This is why, despite all the anti-Trump hysteria mongering, what a vote for Clinton really is is a vote for war — for intensifying the wars Obama inherited or initiated, for starting others, and for provoking Russia, and its vilified leader enough to advance the Doomsday Clock by a significant amount.

And since, time and again, Hillary has proven herself too inept to properly execute her ill-conceived initiatives – the assault on Libya is only the most egregious example – the risk of nuclear war, once momentum for it gets going, will be a lot harder to contain than it has been under other Presidents.

Most Americans understand how dangerous it would be were Trump in charge of America’s nuclear arsenal – not so much because of his views, which, to the extent that they can be determined, seem generally saner than Hillary’s, at least in this respect, but because of his temperament. If he had a decent chance of winning, the idea that he might become the Commander-in-Chief would be worrisome indeed.

But his chances of winning are negligible. Hillary's, on the other hand, are excellent, notwithstanding the fact that she is as charismatic as a turnip, and is widely despised for both good reasons and bad.

This makes her the one to worry about. Hillary's impulse control is better than the Donald's and she is a lot less inclined to act out, but she is, by sympathy and conviction, an ardent proponent of military "solutions," even for problems that don't exist.

Lesser evil voting is problematic in its own right; among other things, for fostering a race to the bottom. But, in this case, lesser evil considerations are, or ought to be, moot, because Trump, the evil lesser evilists want to avoid, is on track for suffering a major defeat. Lesser evilists who might prefer a turnip to Hillary or who realize how great an evil *she* is are therefore wasting their votes.

Nevertheless, Hillary is slouching towards victory, and nothing except an act of God can stop her.

Now is therefore the time to start planning for life after November 8.

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The first order of business is to build a peace movement, large enough and militant enough to impose political costs on Hillary's war making.

To be sure, a large, militant and global peace movement failed to keep George Bush and Dick Cheney from invading Iraq and going on to break much of the rest of the Middle East. But, after a decade and a half of their wars and Obama's, conditions are different.

Bush and Cheney were determined to go forward with their schemes, no matter what. They were not about to be dissuaded by pesky demonstrators.

Also, their (continuing) war against Afghanistan was already on; they had gotten away with that. And, thanks to the relentless media campaign that continued unabated long after the 9/11 terror attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, public opinion was primed for war.

Decades ago, opposition to the Vietnam War was even more extensive and intense, and, thanks to conscription, the country was coming apart at the seams. Nevertheless, the War Party was able to hold its ground.

It was not until the futility of the war became glaringly evident throughout the entire American power structure, and the social and military costs became too great for the country to bear, that Kissinger and Nixon decided that it was time to bring the troops home.

There is a lesson in this: that there is a limit to how much even very large and very militant peace movements can achieve.

They are necessary, though – and because winning over hearts and minds is essential, every little bit helps. But, in the face of determined opposition from secure political elites, peace movements can never be more than part of the story.

What will be unusual when Hillary assumes office is that much of the work that peace movements must do to win over hearts and minds doesn't need to be done. On matters of war and peace, the hearts and minds of many, maybe most, Americans, including some that Hillary deems "deplorable," are already in a good place.

Public opinion has largely turned against the wars of the past decade and a half. Indeed, at some less than fully conscious level, people now realize that the War on Terror has been counter-productive, and that it has changed America for the worse. The spirit of revenge is also largely played out.

The task therefore is a lot easier now than it was in the early days of the Vietnam War, or as it was fifteen years ago when the Bush-Obama War on Terror was getting underway.

There is much less need to counter mistaken ideas or, as after 9/11, primitive and unfocused calls for vengeance. The burden now is overcoming the acquiescence of a disempowered population.

This too may not be as hard as it sometimes seems. Obama was good at keeping America's wars out of Americans' minds. In this, as in nearly everything else, Hillary will be less adept.

She should also be more amenable to changing course than Bush and Cheney were in 2003.

When an idea found its way into George W. Bush's head, it tended to stay there. Bush didn't have it in him to deal with complexity or to react flexibly to changing circumstances.

The Clintons, on the other hand, will turn on a dime, if they think there is a percentage in it for them.

Other things being equal, they will do what their donors want them to do; and, because it is good for their bottom lines, many of those donors do like military spending. But with Hillary it isn't just a matter of Bush-Obama style perpetual war. There is also the specter of nuclear war.

This is why the money interests behind Hillary are not likely to impede efforts to force her off the warpath – especially if the warpath takes a turn towards Russia or China. Even billionaires can't take it with them.

Therefore, if there is a will to hold Hillary back, there is a way. That wasn't the case with Bush and Cheney in 2003, but it is the case now.

And now is the time to start working on it. Now is emphatically not the time to subordinate everything to stopping Trump. He should be left to stop himself.

Nearly all liberals and distressingly many leftists disagree. Lately, they have been making their views known – self-righteously, condescendingly, but nevertheless effectively. The Sanders excuse for caving in to everything he ostensibly opposed is now the general line.

But the general line is wrong-headed.

Because voters aren't always irredeemably stupid, and because demography is destiny, Trump is, and always has been, already effectively stopped.

Liberals should therefore get over it: Hillary is the problem; the Donald is just a buffoon, who will end up losing big time, and, let's hope, destroying his brand in the process. His decline and fall will be wonderful to watch, but fixating on it is a waste of effort and time; time and effort that would be better spent laying foundations for the anti-Hillary struggles ahead.