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Obama, Like Bush, Just Doesn't Get It

by Jacob G. Hornberger

June 4, 2009

President Obama is in Cairo to deliver a major address to the Muslim world, which no doubt will explain that the U.S. government loves the people of the Middle East and is doing all sorts of good things to them.

Alas, President Obama, like his predecessor, just doesn't get it. The reason that people in the Middle East are angry at the United States is because the U.S. government is over there. If the U.S. government wasn't involved in the Middle East, that would bring an end to the U.S. foreign-policy woes in that part of the world.

Or as Ron Paul put it so succinctly, "They attack us because we've been over there; we've been bombing Iraq for 10 years. We've been in the Middle East.... I'm suggesting that we listen to the people who attacked us and the reason they did it, and there are delighted that we're over there."

On the eve of Obama's visit to Egypt, which one of the U.S. government's authoritarian torture partners, Osama bin Laden released an audiotape warning of future terrorist attacks on the United States. In that tape, did bin Laden say that such attacks would be motivated by hatred for America's freedom and values? No. He said that such attacks would be motivated by the U.S. government's occupations and interventions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, which continue to kill, maim, and destroy.

Obama, like President Bush, thinks that it's all just a public-relations problem. We just have to get the message out that U.S. officials love Muslims. Once they get the message, the U.S. Empire will be able to impose its will throughout the Middle East.

And that's the core of the problem facing the American people. What business does the U.S. government have imposing its will on people who live thousands of miles away?

Indeed, what right did the U.S. government have to oust the democratically elected prime minister of Iran and replace him with an unelected dictator, the Shah of Iran?

What right did the U.S. government have to support Saddam Hussein and deliver weapons of mass destruction to him so that he could use them to kill Iranians?

What right did the U.S. government have to intervene in the Persian Gulf War, especially after signaling to Saddam Hussein that the United States had no interest in the border conflict between Iraq and Kuwait?

What right did the U.S. government have to impose brutal sanctions that took the lives of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi children?

What right did the U.S. government have to establish “no-fly zones” over Iraq, which killed even more Iraqis?

What right did the U.S. government have to invade and occupy Iraq, killing hundreds of thousands of more Iraqis, exiling millions more, and destroying the country?

This is what it's all about. This is what Americans are sacrificing their rights, their freedom, and their financial and economic well-being for — the “right” of the U.S. Empire to impose its will on people thousands of miles away.

That's also what the kidnapping, the torture and sex abuse, the renditions, the secret prison camps, the kangaroo prosecutions, and the torture-partners are all about.

How can Americans honestly believe that it's worth it? Is empire so important that everything that Americans hold dear must be sacrificed to maintain it?

If Americans want perpetual war, perpetual fear, perpetual loss of liberty, perpetual terrorism, and perpetual economic and financial chaos, then all they have to do is continue supporting a pro-empire, pro-interventionist foreign policy.

On the other hand, if Americans wish to restore freedom, prosperity, and harmony to our land, the solution is there: immediately withdraw all imperial troops from around the world, especially in the Middle East, bring them home and discharge them, and restore a limited-government constitutional republic to our land. And free the American people — i.e., the private sector — to trade and interact with the people of the world, including those in the Middle East.