

# The BLACK C o M M e n t a t o r

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## **(R)evolution of Capitalism: No End to Terrorism! Represent Our Resistance By Dr. Lenore J. Daniels, PhD BC Editorial Board**

Revolutions leave traces. Memories - personal journals, public 'Would you rather be illusioned or disillusioned? Disillusioned is not such a bad thing. When you walk around with illusions, you don't see how things are. The more disillusioned you get, the more clearly you get to see the world. The more we invest ourselves in something that is external, the more...the more we identify with what's not us, the more we set ourselves up to be victimized emotionally if not spiritually.'

-Dr. Gabor Mate, Speech, First Congressional Church of Berkeley, September 2012

Revolutions leave traces. Memories - personal journals, public manifestos linger. Historians mark the date of uprisings and write accounts of courage, sacrifice, strategies. Government documents record the numbers of its forces, the arrests, the convictions and sentencing, the exiles, the deaths, and the "victory" over violence. A victory for law and order! Of the revolutions in the modern era - for example, the French, the Russian, the German, the Cuban - only the "American Revolution," we are told, exemplifies a "good" revolution. In *The American Road to Capitalism*," Charles Post argues that the American Revolution, along with the Civil War, were bourgeois revolutions that helped to establish and consolidate "state-institutions that helped secure the political and judicial conditions for the development of capitalism in the U.S."

In the wake of a revolution, more than the trace of fear lingers. Social relations are altered in either the new or reformed society. As we have come to evaluate "outcome" of worker-led revolutions, even the oppressed in either the new or the reformed adopts fear as a way of being and only a few come to understand that struggle is the permanent way of being. The potential for change lingers in their memories of empowerment, however brief or muffled.

It is no wonder that governments, alert to the possibility of future uprisings, co-opt *change*, mask it to appear something beneficial to all when it comes rolling down from the top, wrapped in slogans with a price tag as an appendage. The poor and the workers hunker down. It is the "bourgeois revolution" of the Right or the Left, suits and more bureaucracy, and even fewer civil liberties, more prison cells and high-tech surveillance, and stiffer laws to maintain the *peace* - and *change*, of course.

By all accounts, according to Daniel Klaidman, special correspondent for *Newsweek*, the al-Qaeda organization has been weakened since the beginning of the "war on terror." Osama bin Laden is dead, so are major leaders, dead or captured. A young wannabe suicide bomber, Hafiz Hanif, left Pakistan in late 2011 in search of a jihadis camp, only to find that high-profile lists, the CIA, Admiral William H. Mc Raven's Joint Special Operations Command, (JSOC), drones and Hellfire missiles, capture and indefinite detention, had reduced his cell from fifteen to four fighters, "hunkered down in a mud-brick house, scrounging for food, with no resources and no ability to carry out operations." Hanif was ordered home. His services were no longer needed "unless he wanted to be killed by an American drone strike" (*Kill or Capture: The War on Terror and the Soul of the Obama Presidency*, 2012).

But Guantanamo is still open for business. Habeas Corpus has not been restored and Americans could be detained indefinitely and killed. On streets in the "free" world, specifically the U.S., protesters are confronted with a high-tech military-style police force. In addition to military-style tanks and police armed to resemble an army of Darth Vadars, the *Homeland Security Wire* is proud to announce that the New York Police department has received four AW 119 helicopters. The NYPD already has permission and funding from the government-corporate partnership to extend its surveillance operation to foreign countries.

This is, indeed, *change*! Gone is the primitive use of water hoses and dogs! The U.S. is high-tech, Smart, and Progressive! Tasers and rubber bullets now!

Long Range Acoustic Device, a “sonic cannon,” writes Paul Street, *The Independent*, May 17, 2012, “developed by ‘defense’ corporations in league with the military and local law enforcement” are the newest symbol of *change* in the U.S. And there are drones too. *It could be worse - a Republican could authorize their use - on the home front in the U.S.’s war on terror.* But as Street reports, earlier this year, “President Barack Obama signed into law an FAA funding bill that will significantly expand the use of drones in the United States.” Citing an article in *Fosters’ Daily Democrat*, Street continues, drones will open the skies with “likely thousands - of unmanned aircraft piloted by companies and public agencies.” “Militarized dissent-cleansing” has been conducted on protesters in the Occupy Movement throughout the nation, particularly in New York, where Mayor Bloomberg called for a “9/11 level lockdown” and martial law was put into effect.

*Bloomberg, like so many politicians and corporate CEOs, is the kind of idealist who looks ahead to the future!*

As Street observes:

(t)he lines are crossed by a giant and growing private-‘security’ and surveillance sector and new state- and corporate-developed technologies that connect the theory and practice of repressive population control across national, global, and local lines.

*The government tells us that terrorists are everywhere!*

I will assume we have something called the Left here in the U.S. and ask - do we even know what is it that we want? What kind of government we want? Do we want laws that are already stacked in favor of corporations now known as “persons” apparently with special privileges? Do we want a leadership that extends warfare globally, and at home? Do we want to live in a world of fear in which we back-peddle until there is no trace - no history, no record - that an opposition ever existed?

With al-Qaeda weakened, this could be the watershed moment when revolution, a people’s revolution, is in danger of never becoming a reality.

I was reluctant to read Daniel Klaidman's *Kill or Capture*, but I did, and while reading, I could not refrain from shaking my head. Why all the brain-power, sheer mental and physical energy, commitment, and dedication from government officials, including the president and his appointees to continue a "war on terror" on behalf of something these humans call "American values?" Millions are without basic necessities and politicians and the corporations make huge profits, and kill along the way, all in the name of "American values."

From the president on down to aides, those Klaidman interviewed repeated the phrase "American values." Agonizing decisions and late night strategizing were done in the name of "American values." What are those "American values" for the American people and for those "war on terror" strategizers? Are those "American values" connected to the "bring it on" philosophy or are they to be found in the philosophy of "change you can believe in"?

In Klaidman's account he recalls from key Washington sources the White House's strategies to try Khalid Sheikh Mohammed in civilian courts, to relocate former detainees from Guantanamo, including the Uighurs, (found not to be terrorists but terrorists nonetheless to Americans,) to escalate the use of drones, and to planning to kill, rather than to capture, bin Laden. *Kill or Capture* does not portray the players as "evil doers," bent on ruling the world with an iron heel. These are human beings, Democrats, Republicans, military strategists, lawyers, political specialists, who share a belief in "American values." As I turned the pages, I read account after account on the necessity to defend "American values" - in secrecy. Secrecy from the American people! Secrecy among certain cabinet members! Secrecy from Congress! I suppose it is difficult for the profoundly transparent to operate on the "dark side."

"Obama had been elected as a change maker," writes Klaidman. Obama "would close the Guantanamo Bay detention facility, end preventive detention, and bring terrorist to justice in civilian courts, among other sweeping changes." Once Obama took office, writes Klaidman, he "struggled with national security dilemmas, sometimes to the point of Hamlet-like indecision, trying to balance security and liberty...He believed America's strength was rooted in its ideals."

The idealist, the upholder of American values, is briefed on drone technology. Vice Admiral Mike McConnell and the newly-elected president "met in a tiny room - a sensitive compartmentalized

information facility, or SCIF - in the Kluczynski Building" where the admiral divulged to Obama "the intelligence community's deepest secrets" - "the inner workings of the CIA's covert drone program." Obama is fascinated with the idea of "precision technology," "mechanized deaths from miles away." Drones are the "crown jewels of American spying in the region, and they were now Obama's."

*There are no "evil doers" but deliberately or reluctantly - collectively - people can create something as diabolical as that created by the "enemy" labeled "terrorist."*

What a gift, then, for an extremist on the right or, in this case, a centrist liberal to wield such power in order to defend "American values"! The liberal centrist has outdone the rightist before him because, in the U.S., citizens, no evil doers themselves, want to see a president "smoke 'em out and hunt them down. "You need to target the metastasizing disease without destroying the surrounding tissue," John Brennan, Deputy National Security Advisor for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, and Assistant to the President, informs Obama. That analogy offered the idealist an image, I surmise, in keeping with "American values." (It should be noted that Brennan also served as CEO of the Analysis Corporation after 2005, *Wikipedia*).

In the past eight years, reports Leon Watson, (*Daily Mail*, September 28, 2012), some 345 strikes have hit the Pakistani tribal area "near the border with Afghanistan" alone. An "entire region is being terrorized by the constant threat of death from the skies," he writes.

*Obama agonizes over the intelligence.*

As a candidate for president of the U.S., the world's Superpower, Obama wondered how the people in the regions under attack from U.S. feel: "do they feel hope" when they look up and see U.S. helicopters? (*Kill or Capture*). In a pre-election speech, he is on the record for wondering aloud: "The America I know is the last, best hope for that child looking up at a helicopter." (*Because helicopters are coming and drones are scheduled to target "terrorists" and the American public will feel safe and secure in the knowledge that their values are being upheld!*). Three years later, the children in Waziristan or Kunar do look up, but the "buzzing of an expectant drone" seems to drown out the U.S.'s rhetoric of hope. Klaidman argues that it is more likely these children and young people find

themselves "drawn to radicalism not only by a religious fervor but also by a persistent sense of futility in their lives."

*But the U.S. agonizes over its decisions - no matter how difficult but ultimately necessary.*

Klaidman writes that in December of last year, a reporter asked the *Democrat* in the White House to respond to *Republican* criticism of his handling of foreign policy. Obama's foreign policy, according to the *Republicans*, is "weak." *Obama's foreign policy* "amounts to 'appeasement.'" Obama one-ups the previous commander-in-chief with a display of "bravado": "Ask Osama bin Laden and the twenty-two out of thirty top al-Qaeda leaders who've been taken off the field whether I engage in appeasement."

*Similarly to the Republicans, the current - and changed - regime in use of U.S. corporate-produced weaponry, did not discuss with children also killed or severely injured or terrorized by U.S.'s warfare how non-appeasement differs from an anti-Bush or, for that matter, an anti-totalitarian foreign policy.*

But there are agonizing moments in the White House, where men and women, upholding American values, struggle into the late night and manage to politick the next day with Lindsey Graham or some key financier, and dine in the evenings among the chic, golf on the weekends when not vacationing at Martha's Vineyard. And talk a little basketball, always time for a little basketball talk.

And the drones still fly toward their target and Gitmo is still open.

Anwar Awlaki business took weeks of secret discussions and an agonizing expenditure of intelligence. Awlaki was no angel. According to Klaidman, one of Obama's national security advisers described Awlaki as a man that "had things on the stove ready to boil over" while Zawahari Ayman, "was still looking for ingredients in the cupboard." Awlaki was the man to kill rather than capture. (Republican Senator Lindsey Graham, a frequent visitor to the Obama Oval Office, once asked Admiral Mc Raven, testifying before "the Senate Armed Services Committee as Obama's nominee to lead the US Special Operations Command," "If you caught someone tomorrow in Yemen, Somalia, you name the theatre, outside of Afghanistan, where would you detain that person?"). "I want Awlaki," Obama told Brennan and General James "Hoss" Cartwright. The latter briefed

Bush II and acknowledged he now heard "rhetoric" that sounded a bit like Bush. "Do you have whatever you need to get this guy?"

U.S. intelligence did just that - tracking Awlaki in the Al-Jawf province in Yemen, according to Klaidman. Usually Awlaki "surrounded himself with children, and the standing orders from Obama had always been to avoid collateral damage at almost all cost." (*Almost all cost?*). Obama wanted Awlaki! (*Awlaki on the idealist's resume would look good, exemplary of American values!*). Children were lucky, this time. The U.S. target was on the move - and Obama was "never forced to confront that awful dilemma," one aide reported. "In this one instance," the aide stressed, "the president considered relaxing some of his collateral requirements." (*No children. women, and innocent civilians, this time!*).

Did I mention that Anwar Awlaki was an *American-born* terrorist?

He was killed - not captured.

The U.S. has the highest incarceration rate in the world and the current regime in Washington D.C. has, once again, outdone the previous Republican regime, by detaining and deporting more immigrants. Dissenters, too, are arrested daily in various cities where the Occupy Movement continues.

Obama, Klaidman reports, was "persuaded that he could neither release nor prosecute the 'Guantanamo 48' without doing grievous harm to national security." Obama was forced to balance "security and American values." *So the prison at Guantanamo Bay is open, possibly for further business?* Obama, Klaidman writes, enshrined into law "a system he had once derided as a 'legal black hole.'"

*What does the Left want if it is confronted by such idealism in the White House?*

The properly credentialed-Obama-nominees, now official cabinet members, lawyers, and military personnel, when presenting Obama with another gift, the liberty to expand the use of "signature strikes," spoke of killing more in each strike. One target at a time was not enough! *Carpet sweeping could eliminate more terrorists at once! Wouldn't that be a good idea in keeping with American values?* According to Klaidman, the idealist Obama rejected this idea in the first weeks of his presidency.

But “mechanized” killing is so less bloody. And idealists change, given certain circumstances. *Change* is good for the government and corporate partnership. Signature strikes are still *in*, and Americans, too, can become targets of investigation, arrest, indefinite detention - but this, was another agonizing decision from *within* the U.S.

In Hawaii on New Year’s Eve, writes, Klaidman, Obama had one last piece of legislative business before he could relax with his family: he had to sign the defense bill.” He was “outraged” because he considered the bill to be an example of “extreme and dangerous provisions.” Obama’s lawyers came up with a “signing statement”:

“I have signed this bill despite having serious reservations with certain provisions. My administration will not authorize the indefinite military detention without trial of American citizens. I believe that doing so would break with our most important traditions and values as a nation.”

In late February, lawyers for Obama found a “way to gut the congressional restrictions - for a time.”

There it is again, writes Klaidman: “the president as law professor and would-be protector of America’s defining principles.”

*Yeah!*

A second American Revolution in the making! A consolidation of a government and corporate partnership, and a primary component of all those totalitarian regimes!

Is there any trace of the Left in the U.S.?

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