July 24, 2012

Obama Not Living Up To His Best Intentions

Four Years After Obama Outlined His Lofty Foreign Policy Vision In Berlin, The World Is Still Waiting For Real Solutions, Not More Rhetoric

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In Berlin, Obama Introduced Himself As "A Leader Who Could Summon Other Nations To Join The United States In Confronting The World's Next Challenges." "Senator Barack Obama stood before a sea of cheering admirers on Thursday and sought to inspire fresh cooperation among American allies to defeat terrorism and other threats, introducing himself as a leader who could summon other nations to join the United States in confronting the world's next challenges." (Jeff Zeleny And Nicholas Kulish, "Obama, In Berlin, Calls For Renewal Of Ties With Allies," *The New York Times*, 7/25/08)

OBAMA FAILED TO LEAD DURING THE ARAB SPRING

In Berlin, Obama Said He Would "Answer The Call For A New Dawn In The Middle East." OBAMA: "This is the moment we must help answer the call for a new dawn in the Middle East. My country must stand with yours and with Europe in sending a direct message to Iran that it must abandon its nuclear ambitions. We must support the Lebanese who have marched and bled for democracy, and the Israelis and Palestinians who seek a secure and lasting peace." (Senator Barack Obama, "A World That Stands As One," Berlin, Germany, 7/24/08)

Obama Promised To Form "A New And Global Partnership" To Counter Islamic Extremists And Empower Moderate Muslims. OBAMA: "This is the moment when we must defeat terror and dry up the well of extremism that supports it. This threat is real and we cannot shrink from our responsibility to combat it. If we could create NATO to face down the Soviet Union, we can join in a new and global partnership to dismantle the networks that have struck in Madrid and Amman; in London and Bali; in Washington and New York. If we could win a battle of ideas against the communists, we can stand with the vast majority of Muslims who reject the extremism that leads to hate instead of hope." (Senator Barack Obama, "A World That Stands As One," Berlin, Germany, 7/24/08)

Obama Answered The Call For A "New Dawn In The Middle East" With Silence

"The President Has Been Roundly Criticized For Lacking An Overall Strategy In The Region As Protests Have Spread, Governments Have Been Toppled And Violence Has Escalated." (Sam Youngman, "Obama Considering 'Targeted Sanctions,' Against Syria," *The Hill*, 4/25/11)

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- **During The Tunisian Protests, "The Only Official Statement From President Obama Came After Ben Ali Had Been Ousted."** "Meanwhile, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who was on a tour of Gulf countries, lectured Arab states about the need for democratic reforms but scrupulously refrained from mentioning the Tunisian protests. The only official statement from President Obama came after Ben Ali had been ousted." (Laila Lalani, "Tunisia Rising," *The Nation*, 1/20/11)

- **Obama Missed A "Historic Opportunity" In Egypt.** "Last week, for the second time in his presidency, Barack Obama heard those footsteps, jumped up to grasp a historic opportunity … and missed it completely." (Niall Ferguson, Op-Ed, "Wanted: A Grand Strategy For America," *Newsweek*, 2/14/11)

- ***The Washington Post:* "The Obama Administration Has Effectively Sided With The Regime Against The Protesters" In Syria.** (Editorial, "Shameful U.S. Inaction On Syria's Massacres," *The Washington Post*, 4/22/11)

- ***The Washington Post*: "The Obama Administration Has Been Slow To Find Its Voice" In Libya.** "Once Again, an Arab dictator is employing criminal violence in a desperate effort to remain in power - and once again, the Obama administration has been slow to find its voice. This time, the tyrant is one of the Middle East's most evil men - Moammar Gaddafi, whose regime has staged spectacular terrorist attacks against Americans in addition to brutalizing its own people." (Editorial, "Why Was President Obama Last To Speak Up On Libya?" *The Washington Post*, 2/23/11)

- **"Obama May Be Moving Toward Something Resembling A Doctrine. One Of His Advisers Described The President's Actions In Libya As 'Leading From Behind.'"** (Ryan Lizza, "The Consequentialist," *The New Yorker*, 5/2/11)

Obama Decided Not To Make Democracy Promotion His Priority

Early In His Presidency, Obama Decided Not To Make "The Promotion Of Democracy Abroad A Permanent Priority." "In his first year in the White House, he had not made the promotion of democracy abroad a permanent priority. During a high-profile speech in Cairo in June 2009, in which Obama tried to reset US relations with the Muslim world, he only gently urged democratic reforms in the region and declared that 'no system of government can or should be imposed upon one nation by any other' – a clear reference to President Bush's invasion of Iraq. The following week, when an apparently crooked election in Iran was followed by popular rebellion, Obama did not rush to back the uprising." (David Corn, *Showdown*, 2012, p.151)

- **Obama Missed The Opportunity To "Support Civil Society" In Egypt.** "The United States has built its relationship with Egypt around the Army, which it has supported with more than $39 billion in military aid over the last three decades. Egypt's year-old, pro-democracy revolution gave Washington a chance — and a reason — to alter that relationship to support civil society. The Obama administration made a serious error in choosing not to do so." (Editorial, "Enabling Egypt's Military Rulers," *The New York Times*, 3/26/12)

- **With The Death Toll Climbing In Syria, Obama's "Leading From Behind" Is "Heightening Suspicions That America Is Not Serious About Supporting The Protests."** "Washington has instead continued to pursue a strategy of 'leading from behind.' It does so in part out of a belief that a more gung-ho approach may in fact deflect from efforts by members of the opposition' and paint them as the West's stooges, as the government has claimed. But as the killings mount, this policy is merely heightening suspicions that America is not serious about supporting the protests and preparing for a post-Assad Syria." (Salman Shaikh, Op-Ed, "Preventing A Syrian Civil War," *The New York Times*, 10/12/11)

Obama Is Putting The Stability Of The Middle East At Risk By Abdicating To The U.N. In Order To

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"Avoid Conflict Before The Election." "The Administration's abdication to the U.N. reflects a desire to avoid conflict before the election as well as the worldview that the U.S. is a weakened power that needs the world's (which means Vladimir Putin's) approval to act. Syrians are now suffering the consequences, but the stability of the Middle East is also at risk." (Editorial, "The Syrian Civil War," *The Wall Street Journal*, 7/17/12)

OBAMA'S AFGHANISTAN STRATEGY BASED ON MANAGING FAILURE

In Berlin, Obama Promised To Rebuild Afghanistan And "Defeat The Taliban And Al Qaeda," Saying "We Have Too Much At Stake To Turn Back Now." OBAMA: **"**This is the moment when we must renew our resolve to rout the terrorists who threaten our security in Afghanistan, and the traffickers who sell drugs on your streets. No one welcomes war. I recognize the enormous difficulties in Afghanistan. But my country and yours have a stake in seeing that NATO's first mission beyond Europe's borders is a success. For the people of Afghanistan, and for our shared security, the work must be done. America cannot do this alone. The Afghan people need our troops and your troops; our support and your support to defeat the Taliban and al Qaeda, to develop their economy, and to help them rebuild their nation. We have too much at stake to turn back now." (Senator Barack Obama, "A World That Stands As One," Berlin, Germany, 7/24/08)

Obama Has Lowered His Goals In Afghanistan In Favor Of A Politically Popular Withdrawal

Obama In 2012: "The Afghan War As We Understand It Is Over." "President Barack Obama was every bit the garrulous host during the Sunday kickoff of the NATO summit in his hometown. But nothing he said mattered as much as these words: 'The Afghan war as we understand it is over' with the withdrawal of ground forces at the end of 2014, he told journalists. 'Combat will end at the stroke of midnight,' on Dec. 31, 2014, added retired Gen. Douglas Lute, Obama's deputy national security adviser — when a reporter asked whether the president had meant it. Obama — who is usually allergic to any pronouncement that could be remotely interpreted as 'Mission Accomplished' — has never said anything quite as strong as any war will be 'over.'" (Glenn Thrush, "Obama's Afghanistan Endgame," *Politico*, 5/20/12)

- **Obama Never Mentions The Need For Military Success In Afghanistan, Only His Plans For Withdrawal.** "When he is asked about Afghanistan, Mr. Obama repeats his commitment to steady U.S. withdrawals ahead of the 2014 handover to the Afghans, rather than to American military success. He seems trapped by one of his signature re-election campaign lines: 'The tide of war is receding.'" (Editorial, "Afghanistan's Bloody Spring," *The Wall Street Journal*, 4/16/12)

- ***The Washington Post:* "Mr. Obama's Follow-Up Comments On His Strategy In Afghanistan Were Troubling… He Made No Mention Of Defeating The Taliban Or Of Peace For The Afghans Themselves."** "Yet Mr. Obama's follow-up comments, on his strategy in Afghanistan, were troubling. While saying that he was 'confident that we can continue the work of meeting our objectives,' the president said his goal was to 'responsibly wind down this war' and 'bring our troops home.' He promised to 'continue the work of devastating al-Qaeda's leadership and denying them a safe haven,' but he made no mention of defeating the Taliban or of peace for the Afghans themselves." (Editorial, "Obama's Troubled Handling Of Afghanistan," *The Washington Post*, 3/13/12)

Many Rural Afghan Police Units Remain Unprepared To Control The Taliban Despite U.S. Training And Recruitment Efforts. "A U.S.-backed program to recruit police in rural Afghanistan has failed to significantly stem the insurgency, with some units becoming deeply entangled in criminal activity, including bribe-taking and extortion, according to a Pentagon-funded study." (David S. Cloud and Laura King, "Afghan Police Units Tangled In Criminal Activity," *Los Angeles Times*, 5/14/12)

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- **Afghan Forces Will Not Have The Weapons Or Equipment Needed To Take Control Of Security Operations After The U.S. Troops Withdraw.** "Less than a year before Afghan forces will take over security operations from U.S. forces and two years before Americans leave Afghanistan for good, local troops are will not have enough weapons or equipment they need to do the job. In three separate reports issued by the Pentagon's Inspector General this week, department officials chronicled the numerous shortfalls in the U.S. effort to outfit the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF)." (Carlo Munoz, "Pentagon: Afghans Not Getting Weapons, Equipment Needed To Take Over US Mission," *The Hill*'s "DEFCON Hill" Blog, 06/01/12)

OBAMA'S NUCLEAR AGENDA HAS PRODUCED LITTLE MORE THAN RHETORIC

In Berlin, Obama Said, "It Is Time To Secure All Loose Nuclear Materials; To Stop The Spread Of Nuclear Weapons; And To Reduce The Arsenals From Another Era." OBAMA: "This is the moment when we must renew the goal of a world without nuclear weapons. The two superpowers that faced each other across the wall of this city came too close too often to destroying all we have built and all that we love. With that wall gone, we need not stand idly by and watch the further spread of the deadly atom. It is time to secure all loose nuclear materials; to stop the spread of nuclear weapons; and to reduce the arsenals from another era. This is the moment to begin the work of seeking the peace of a world without nuclear weapons." (Senator Barack Obama, "A World That Stands As One," Berlin, Germany, 7/24/08)

Obama's Diplomacy Failed To Stop Nuclear Development In Rogue States

After Three Years In Office, "Momentum Has Slowed On Obama's Nuclear Agenda" As He Focuses On The Growing Nuclear Threats In Iran And North Korea And Cuts Funding "For Several Key Nuclear Security Programs." "At home, arms-control advocates who once extolled his ambitious plans are complaining about funding cuts for several key nuclear security programs, while critics on the right are leveling election-year accusations that his policies weaken America's strategic deterrence. At the same time, Obama's efforts to spur global cooperation to prevent nuclear terrorism, which he once called the 'single biggest threat' to U.S. security, have been overshadowed by the more urgent challenges of thwarting Iran's and North Korea's nuclear development. But momentum has slowed on Obama's nuclear agenda and, with the November 6 presidential election looming, chances for major new advances look doubtful." (Matt Spetalnick and Alister Bull, "Momentum Stalls On Obama Nuclear Agenda," *Reuters*, 3/20/12)

- **Obama's Efforts At Nuclear Disarmament Have Produced Nothing More Than Rhetoric From Nuclear States.** "'In spite of the world's revived interest in disarmament efforts, none of the nuclear weapon-possessing states shows more than a rhetorical willingness to give up their nuclear arsenals just yet,' SIPRI analyst Shannon Kile added in provided comments. 'While the overall number of nuclear warheads may be decreasing, the long-term modernization programs under way in these states suggest that nuclear weapons are still a currency of international status and power,' Kile said." ("Nuclear Arms Seen Falling In Number, Increasing In Sophistication," NTI, 6/4/12)

- **Obama Cut $291 Million For Two Programs Intended To Strengthen Nuclear Security At Civilian Sites And In Areas "Of Special Concern."** "Two programs at the Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration were pinched hard. Funding for the Global Threat Reduction initiative, designed to secure nuclear material at civilian sites around the world, was cut by $32 million to $466 million, and will be down $500 million over the next four years compared with the levels envisaged a year ago. … A bigger hit was taken by the International Nuclear Materials Protection and Cooperation program, designed to improve

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security at vulnerable stockpiles of nuclear weapons in countries deemed to be of special concern. Its funding request was trimmed by $259 million in 2013 to $311 million." (Matt Spetalnick and Alister Bull, "Momentum Stalls On Obama Nuclear Agenda," *Reuters*, 3/20/12)

Little More Than "Lip-Service" From Obama On Issue Of Nuclear Proliferation In Iran And North Korea. "From nuclear-armed North Korea to potentially nuclear-armed Iran, the Obama administration has won only lip-service pronouncements of agreement on the endgames, but little more. U.S. officials say Russia and China supported new penalties on Iran and fresh condemnations, but previous administrations had similar records. China and Russia have blocked Obama's attempts to get the United Nations to take significant action against Syria's government and ignored U.S. warnings that they will end up on the wrong side of history." ("Limited Success For Obama's Russia, China Approach," *The Associated Press*, 4/28/12)

- **Obama's Policy Of Engagement Has Failed To Stop Iran's Continuing Quest For Nuclear Weapons.** "The regime scoffed at Mr. Obama after he delivered a conciliating message for the Persian New Year in March, scoffed again after he mildly criticized its post-election crackdown and killing spree in June (following days of silence), and scoffed a third time by rejecting the West's offer last month to enrich Iran's uranium for it. Yet the Administration insists the enrichment deal is still Iran's for the taking." (Editorial, "500,000 Iranian Centrifuges," *The Wall Street Journal*, 11/29/09)

- **A Former U.S. State Department Official Said That North Korea "Is On Track To Build A Warhead That Could In A Few Years Hit Any Regional Target And Eventually The United States."** "The missile test, in April, was a failure, but that did little to alleviate concerns within the Obama administration that Mr. Kim was intent on pushing ahead with its nuclear weapons program. 'The North is on track to build a warhead that could in a few years hit any regional target and eventually the United States,' said Evans J. R. Revere, a former United States principal deputy assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs." (Jane Perlez, "North Korea Tests The Patience Of Its Closest Ally," *The New York Times*, 6/24/12)

OBAMA HAS NOT LIVED UP TO HIS HUMAN RIGHTS PROMISES

In Berlin, Obama Promised To Strive For Greater Dignity And Opportunity For "People In The Forgotten Corners Of This World." OBAMA: **"**Now the world will watch and remember what we do here - what we do with this moment. Will we extend our hand to the people in the forgotten corners of this world who yearn for lives marked by dignity and opportunity; by security and justice? Will we lift the child in Bangladesh from poverty, shelter the refugee in Chad, and banish the scourge of AIDS in our time?" (Senator Barack Obama, "A World That Stands As One," Berlin, Germany, 7/24/08)

- **In Berlin, Obama Asked "Will We Give Meaning To The Words 'Never Again.'"** OBAMA: "Will we stand for the human rights of the dissident in Burma, the blogger in Iran, or the voter in Zimbabwe? Will we give meaning to the words "never again" in Darfur?" (Senator Barack Obama, "A World That Stands As One," Berlin, Germany, 7/24/08)

Around The World, Human Rights Defenders Feel Forgotten By Obama

Obama Sacrificed U.S. Principles Of Freedom To Achieve Diplomatic Objectives. "But critics on the left and right have accused the president of sacrificing some of the U.S. principles he has publicly celebrated on behalf of a diplomacy that administration officials often describe as willing to accept progress if a perfect outcome is not possible." (Scott Wilson, "Shared Interests Define Obama's World," *The Washington Post*, 11/2/09)

- **In 2009, Secretary Of State Hillary Clinton Said Human Rights "Can't Interfere" With More**

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Pressing Issues That Needed Chinese Cooperation. SECRETARY OF STATE HILLARY CLINTON: "But successive administrations and Chinese governments have been poised back and forth on these issues, and we have to continue to press them. But our pressing on those issues can't interfere with the global economic crisis, the global climate change crisis, and the security crisis. We have to have a dialogue that leads to an understanding and cooperation on each of those." (Secretary Of State Hillary Clinton, Roundtable With Traveling Press, Seoul, South Korea, 2/20/09)

- **To The Dismay Of "Reform-Minded Muslims," Obama Was Silent While Iranian Government Arrested And Murdered Peaceful Iranian Protestors In June 2009.** "You hear the greatest letdown on Iran. Reform-minded Muslims are disappointed that Obama has been reluctant to lead an international campaign against the Iranian regime…Obama has carefully calibrated his comments to the Iranian government's increasing repression." (William Schneider, "A Too-Careful Approach On Iran?" *National Journal*, 7/18/09)

- ***The Washington Post*: "Return Of Vladimir Putin To The Russian Presidency Ought To Have Caused The Obama Administration To Reshape Its Policy Toward The Kremlin" But "Obama Has Decided To Bet On Deal-Making With Mr. Putin Rather Than On Democratic Change In Russia."** "The return of Vladimir Putin to the Russian presidency ought to have caused the Obama administration to reshape its policy toward the Kremlin. Putin based his election campaign in large part on anti-Americanism; he has increasingly pursued policies contrary to vital U.S. interests, such as his military support for the Syrian regime of Bashar al-Assad and his threats against NATO's European missile-defense system. Most important, Mr. Putin's decade-old autocratic regime is looking shaky. Hundreds of thousands of Russians have turned out to demonstrate against fraud in the presidential and parliamentary elections, and to demand political reform. … Remarkably, however, President Obama has responded to Mr. Putin's return to the presidency by strongly affirming his commitment to partnering with the strongman. His meant-to-be-confidential assurance to outgoing President Dmitry Medvedev on Monday, that 'after my election I have more flexibility' to solve 'all these issues, but particularly missile defense,' was only the latest sign that Mr. Obama has decided to bet on deal-making with Mr. Putin rather than on democratic change in Russia." (Editorial, "President Obama's Bad Bet On Vladimir Putin," *The Washington Post*, 3/28/12)

The Obama Administration Has Struggled To Strike A Balance Between "Protecting Its Strategic Interests And Promoting Democracy." "What the administration does with Bahrain is likely to be a telling indicator of how it will deal with the balance between protecting its strategic interests, and promoting democracy -- a balance some critics said it never properly struck in its sometimes awkward response to the Egyptian turmoil. What will make this diplomatic maneuvering even more complicated is Bahrain's proximity to Saudi Arabia, another Sunni monarchy with even greater strategic value to the United States." (Mark Landlar, "Unrest in Bahrain Presents Diplomatic Puzzle For Obama," *The New York Times*, 2/17/11)

U.S. MORAL STANDING HAS NOT IMPROVED UNDER OBAMA

In Berlin, Obama Said "There Are Times When Our Actions Around The World Have Not Lived Up To Our Best Intentions." OBAMA: "I know my country has not perfected itself. At times, we've struggled to keep the promise of liberty and equality for all of our people. We've made our share of mistakes, and there are times when our actions around the world have not lived up to our best intentions." (Senator Barack Obama, "A World That Stands As One," Berlin, Germany, 7/24/08)

Obama Has Clearly Not Lived Up To His Own "Best Intentions"

Around The World, People Are Disappointed That "Relatively Little Has Changed" Under Obama.

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"It was not just U.S. Democratic voters who were looking forward to 'hope and change' when Barack Obama became the 44th U.S. president. Around the world, many anticipated the United States would behave very differently under the new leader. They wanted to hear less about Americans swaggering and throwing their weight around. Some, perhaps, wanted more talk of U.S.-style freedom and democracy, but not if it meant Washington imposing its will. Few dispute that Obama's election brought with it a noticeable change in tone. But 3-1/2 years later, there are growing complaints that when it comes to substance, relatively little has changed." (Peter Apps, "Analysis: Obama Falls Short Of Meteoric Expectations Abroad," *Reuters*, 4/29/12)

- **In The Palestinian Territories, Pakistan, Syria And Even Europe, Obama's Failure To Fulfill Lofty Promises Has Damaged U.S. Standing And Credibility.** "Many add another failure, asking how a president who spoke so movingly about the plight of the Palestinians during his first trip to the Middle East in 2009, and who said he could imagine Palestinian statehood by 2011, seemed to abandon that cause in face of overwhelming opposition. Ask Pakistanis about the signature achievements of the Obama presidency, and they will launch into the subject of civilian casualties from drone strikes. Ask the Syrian opposition, and they will describe an America of double standards that enters wars when they are relatively easy, as in Libya, but ignores carnage when the solutions could put American lives at risk. Even the Europeans, who were so eager to see George Bush return to Texas, and who massed at the Brandenburg Gate to hear candidate Obama in 2008, now grumble that there was more hope than change." (David E. Sanger, *Confront And* Conceal, 2012, p. xvii-xviii)

- **66 Percent Of Americans Say That Barack Obama Has Either Made Things "Worse" Or "Not Made Much Difference" With Regards To America's Standing In The World, While Just 33 Percent Say He Has Made Things "Better."** (NBC News/*The Wall Street Journal*, 1000A, MoE 3.1%, 5/16-20/12)

Despite His "High-Profile" Cairo Speech In 2009, Obama's Effort To "Bolster The U.S. Image" In The Middle East "Has Been A Failure." "'Anyone who tells you otherwise, anyone who tells you that America is in decline or that our influence has waned, doesn't know what they're talking about. That's not the message we get from leaders around the world, all of whom are eager to work with us. That's not how people feel from Tokyo to Berlin; from Cape Town to Rio; where opinions of America are higher than they've been in years.' Obama's self-congratulatory tone aside, the most striking thing about this list is that it does not include any cities in the Islamic world. Obama had made a high-profile speech in Cairo in 2009 designed to bolster the U.S. image; judging by recent polling, his effort has been a failure." (Glenn Kessler, "Fact-Checking The 2012 State Of The Union Speech," *The Washington Post's* "Fact Checker", 1/25/12)

- **"The Pew Research Center In May Said That Both The U.S. Favorability Rating And Confidence In Obama Had Fallen Sharply Since 2009," And "That Obama's Handling Of the Political Change Spawned By The Arab Spring Was A Key Factor In The Slumping Numbers."** "The Pew Research Center in May said that both the U.S. favorability rating and confidence in Obama had fallen sharply since 2009. In Turkey, a NATO ally, for instance, the confidence in Obama fell from 33 percent in 2009 to 11 percent in 2011; in Jordan, another key ally, the favorability rating for the United States fell from 25 percent in 2009 to 13 percent in 2011. Numbers had even fallen in Indonesia, where Obama had lived for some years as a child. The survey said that Obama's handling of the political change spawned by the Arab Spring was a key factor in the slumping numbers." (Glenn Kessler, "Fact-Checking The 2012 State Of The Union Speech," *The Washington Post*, 1/25/12)

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