NO BASIC DIFFERENCE

Those who think there will be a radical shift in America's foreign policy orientation if Barack Obama wins the November Presidential Poll, live in a world that does not exist.

As their contest for the White House draws closer, Barack Obama and John McCain draw nearer to each other. They already concur on America's divine right to control all before it.

"We lead the world in battling immediate evils and promoting the ultimate good," said Obama. "We must lead by building a 21st-century military...to advance the security of all people." McCain agrees. Obama says in pursuing "terrorists" he would attack Pakistan. McCain wouldn't quarrel.

Both candidates have paid ritual obeisance to the regime in Tel Aviv, unquestioning support for which defines all presidential ambition. In opposing a UN Security Council resolution implying criticism of Israel's starvation of the people of Gaza, Obama was ahead of both McCain and Hillary Clinton. In January, pressured by the Israel lobby, he massaged a statement that "nobody has suffered more than the Palestinian people" to now read : "Nobody has suffered more than the Palestinian people from the failure of the Palestinian leadership to recognize Israel." Such is his concern for the victims of the longest, illegal military occupation of modern times.

Like all the candidates, Obama has furthered Israeli/Bush fictions about Iran, whose regime, he says absurdly, "is a threat to all of us."

On the war in Iraq, Obama the dove and McCain the hawk are almost united. McCain now says he wants US troops to leave in five years (instead of "100 years," his earlier option). Obama has now "reserved the right" to change his pledge to get troops out next year. "I will listen to our commanders on the ground," he now says, echoing Bush.

Like McCain he world extend the crippling embargo on Cuba.

The conflict in the Middle East, said Obama, was rooted not "primarily in the actions of stalwart allies like Israel," but in "the perverse and hateful ideologies of radical Islam." Journalists applauded. Islamophobia is a liberal specialty.

The American media love both Obama and McCain.

Despite claiming that his campaign wealth comes from small individual donors, Obama is backed by the biggest Wall Street firms : Goldman Sachs, UBS AG, Lehman Brothers, J P Morgan Chase, Citigroup, Morgan Stanley and Credit Suisse, as well as the huge hedge fund Citadel Investment Group. "Seven of the Obama campaign's top 14 donors," wrote the investigator Pam Martens, "consisted of officers and employees of the same Wall Street firms charged time and again with looting the public and newly implicated in originating and/or bundling fraudulently made mortgages."

What is Obama's attraction to big business? Precisely the same as Robert Kennedy's. By offering a "new," young and apparently progressive face of the Democratic Party—with the bonus of being a member of the Black elite—he can blunt and divert real opposition. That was Colin Powell's role as Bush's secretary

of state. An Obama victory will bring intense pressure on the US antiwar and social justice movements to accept a Democratic administration for all its faults. If that happens, domestic resistance to rapacious America will fall silent.America's war on Iran has already begun. The US is also engaged in attacks or subversion against Somalia, Lebanon, Syria, Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, Bolivia and Venezuela. With US missiles soon to be stationed provocatively on Russia's borders, the Cold War is back. None of these piracies and dangers has raised a whisper in the presidential campaign, not least from its great liberal hope.

Moreover, none of the candidates represents so-called mainstream America. In poll after poll, voters make clear that they want the normal decencies of jobs, proper housing and health care. They want their troops out of Iraq and the Israelis to live in peace with their Palestinian neighbours. This is a remarkable testimony, given the daily brainwashing of ordinary Americans in almost everything they watch and read. □□□

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