

Trump's National Security Speech

By Maxim Nikolenko.

President Trump has orated a speech before the audience at the Ronald Reagan Building in Washington D.C, outlining the security policy of his administration. The speech was relatively short, precisely 28 minutes.

Listening to Trump's remarks was an unpleasant experience. Lies are presented as facts. Imperialism is celebrated. Arrogance is justified by America's self-proclaimed moral and historical superiority over the rest of humanity.

A reference to American exceptionalism, though repeated amplified in the speech, is not novel. While outlining their 'national security' strategy, previous administrations have applied this illusive dogma to justify the unjustifiable principles of an empire. This year, however, the government apparatus was not the only one to highlight American exceptionalism. Just a few days prior to Trump's speech on national security, the concept was emphasized by a man called Philip Alston, the UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights.

After Alston visited America's richest cities and the rural communities of its poorest states, he shared his experience with readers of the Guardian: "American exceptionalism was a constant theme in my conversations. But instead of realizing its founders' admirable commitments, today's United States has proved itself to be exceptional in far more problematic ways that are shockingly at odds with its immense wealth and its founding commitment to human rights. As a result, contrasts between private wealth and public squalor abound."

American People are in Ownership of their

Country

The gap between rich and poor is indeed shocking. According to the official count, over 40 million Americans are living in poverty. While spending more on health care than any other country in the developing world, the U.S. is home to over 28 million people who are unable to access its overpriced and privately-owned medical care system. While the stock market is setting new records on Wall Streets, a **report** by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development estimates that the number of people experiencing homelessness in New York now exceeds 76,000.

This is what modern America looks like. The failure of a system to protect the well-being of people was not addressed in Trump's speech. American people have "reclaimed ownership" of their country, was his message. Of course, this is a total absurd. The voice of people is missing on the Capitol Hill. As the country prepares for Christmas, for example, President Trump has signed into law a \$700 billion military budget for 2018, after it was unanimously ratified by the Senate. It is a massive welfare Christmas gift to the military-industrial corporations such as Lockheed Martin and Boeing. As Trump puts it "We are once again investing in our defense — almost \$700 billion, a record, this coming year."

The second "Christmas present" to the American people is also on the way. At the time of writing, the Republican-majority House has voted yes for an unpopular tax reform, enabling a document which promises enormous tax breaks for American bourgeoisie class and austerity to its most vulnerable citizens.

Trying to explain why most people do not support the reform, the Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell voiced that "big bills are rarely popular."

The War on Terror

Sweeping tax cuts for Wall Street banks and corporations, however, premise no cuts to the military budget. A Machiavellian vision of achieving "peace through strength",

resonated with the Trump administration. Perpetual war is the policy of American empire.

In his national security speech delivered last year, President Obama discussed the U.S.'s ongoing commitment to the War on Terror. President Trump and his team of "great generals" have continued Obama's legacy, bombing the people of Libya, Somalia, Yemen, Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq. The policy was portrayed as a success. "The coalition to defeat ISIS," emphasized Trump, "has now recaptured almost 100 percent of the land once held by these terrorists in Iraq and Syria."

This is a lie. The coalition (consisting of Washington's European and Middle Eastern allies) has dropped thousands of bombs on Syria and Iraq since 2014, achieving marginal success in the fight against its 'former Islamist allies'. Can a battle for Mosul, a **massacre** that took over 40,000 lives, be described as a success? Was it a success when American planes bombed 80 percent of the Syrian Raqqa into ashes, failing to defeat ISIS, and negotiated a deal to evacuate perhaps thousands of Islamist fighters from the ruined city? The precise number of civilians killed by the U.S.-led coalition is unknown. According to the latest data from the **U.S. Air Forces Central Command**, the two countries have experienced the might of 104,724 American bombs.

Victory against ISIS was in fact to a large extent an accomplishment of the Syrian army, supported by the airpower of the Russian Federation. Furthermore, the fight against Islamists in Syria has constantly been **complicated** by the U.S.-led coalition. As an example, the last remaining pocket of territory controlled by ISIS fighters is located on Syria's border with Iraq, surrounded to the West by the U.S.-backed Kurdish-majority Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). Damascus is not allowed to advance beyond the SDF positions and liberate the countryside of Deir ez-Zor province. The ISIS-controlled territories are still bombed by American planes. The U.S. has conducted more air strikes in Syria than in Iraq.

Another country where the U.S. fights terrorism is Afghanistan. There, as Trump describes: "our troops are no longer undermined by artificial timelines, and we no

longer tell our enemies of our plans.” This is a rhetoric of a modern colonial power. In translation, it means that the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan is no longer restrained by timelines. It also means a perpetual war for the millions of Afghans.

The Cold War with China and Russia

While making ludicrous threats towards the so-called ‘rogue regimes’ of North Korea and Iran, Trump spoke about his administration’s strategy towards Russia and China.

On top of the government’s vast military budget, Trump affirms that the North American Treaty Organization will be strengthened by “increases in member contributions, with tens of billions of dollars more pouring” into the NATO security apparatus. That means that the NATO will continue its military buildup in Eastern Europe, enhancing its military installations right near the Russian border. While a McCarthy-style witch hunt is under way in Washington, cooked in the rooms of Robert Muller’s ‘Russia investigation’ and served to the public via the corporate press, the imperial strategy of American neocons agitates for war with Moscow.

Simultaneously, the American empire is pivoting to the Asia-Pacific, expanding its military presence in the region, and threatening China. Proclaimed when President Obama was in office, the pivot to Asia aims to transfer two-thirds of the U.S. naval forces into the region by 2020 and thus strengthen the 400 American military bases that currently surround China and North Korea. Amidst Washington’s vigorous drive for militarization in Eastern Europe and the Asia-Pacific, a room for human error widens. Indeed, a nuclear war is unthinkable, no more.

According to the imperial messenger that is Trump, the risks are justified. We “face rival powers,” he declares, “Russia and China, that seek to challenge American influence, values, and wealth.”

In translation to reality, Russia and China are threatening the U.S’s model of the unipolar world, as they develop independently and maintain a sovereign foreign policy. As Trump made it clear, the empire cannot tolerate sovereignty and economic

independence.

On this note, it is worth concluding the analysis by Trump's own assessment of the U.S's contribution to peace and justice.

"America has been among the greatest forces for peace and justice in the history of the world."