

## **Obama the 21<sup>st</sup> Century NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN**

Neville Chamberlain was, the British Prime Minister whose policies failed to avert the outbreak of World War II in Europe in 1939.

Chamberlain confronted the threat to peace posed by Germany and Italy. Seeking to appease Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini, he first negotiated a treaty with Italy accepting the conquest of Ethiopia and then in the Munich pact (1938), signed also by France, Chamberlain accepted Hitler's territorial claims to predominantly German areas of Czechoslovakia. Though Chamberlain assured Britain that his concession had brought "Peace In Our Time", Hitler soon broke his agreement and occupied the rest of Czechoslovakia. World War II broke out after Germany invaded Poland in 1939. Although his policies were discredited, he held on as Prime Minister until May 1940, when he resigned and was succeeded by Winston Churchill.

A few months ago when Russia invaded Georgia, Obama's first statement was "I strongly condemn the outbreak of violence in Georgia and urge an immediate end to armed conflict. Now is the time for Georgia and Russia to show restraint and to avoid an escalation to full scale war." Georgia did not invade Russia; it was only trying to defend its territory. Is Ukraine next?

Obama views Russia a key partner in contending with international disputes, including Iran's nuclear programs. "We need to keep on talking with them [the Russians] if we want to get rid of this problem". Unfortunately, Russia has shown no inclination to participate. Obama says he will pursue tough, direct diplomacy without preconditions to end the threat from Iran:

Obama plans to stress co-operative diplomacy over military action. Initially, he stated that he would pull all American soldiers out of Iraq within 16 months of taking office which begins Jan. 20. But, this past summer, he seemed to back away from such a high-aim stump speech, hinting about a "sensible withdrawal." Obama has promised to shift troops out of Iraq and redeploy them to Afghanistan, where the fight with the Taliban is heating up.

He promises to continue talking directly to North Korea about its nuclear program while building a strong international coalition to eliminate the program, much as Mr. Bush has done through his six-nation process on this issue.

Obama and Biden say they will renew American diplomacy to meet the challenges of the 21st century. They will rebuild our alliances and they would be willing to meet with all nations, friend and foe, to advance American interests.

If Obama pursues the Chamberlain's policy of appeasement, as his first statements on the Russian invasion of Georgia stated, it will be a show of weakness and as history has shown it could lead to a major world catastrophe. It is very naive to believe that international cooperation and collective resistance to aggression might prevent another war. It proved to be ineffectual in the past when confronted by the aggression of dictators.

One truth is that America's financial crisis will limit his power to act, drawing his attention away from pressing global problems and putting strains on the overseas alliances he seeks to nurture.

Consider the European Union and China. Obama needs Europe's backing to stabilize Afghanistan, combat terrorism and impede the spread of nuclear weapons. He needs firmer ties with China to shore up U.S. interests in volatile South Asia and slow global warming. But he risks alienating both powers if his administration erects trade barriers to protect American jobs, an imperative he stressed in the campaign.

The other truth is that even with wider international support, it may be impossible for Obama to win the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, prevent Iran from building a nuclear weapon, broker peace between Arabs and Israelis or stabilize African countries beset by civil strife with diplomacy alone.

His statements so far have just shown a clear lack of foreign policy experience that could have catastrophic results for the nation and the world.

Forces within the Democratic Party are already talking about a 25% cut in the military budget. Out of the 140,000 troops in Iraq, Obama is only talking about shifting 7,000 troops to Afghanistan, a total not considered adequate. If Obama removes US troops too soon, Iran will use the opportunity to move into southern Iraq while Turkey will invade northern Iraq to stop the Kurds in the north. Obama will be powerless to stop it. The rest of the mid eastern countries, recognizing the vacuum created by the US withdrawal, will quickly align with Iran. This will put Israel in danger and they will be forced to act on their own against Iran. If and when Iran consolidates control of all mid eastern countries, they can bring the west to its knees by turning off 40% of the world's oil.

This show of weakness will embolden the Russians, who are already showing aggressiveness to continue to try to reestablish the cold war USSR boundaries by completing the take over of Georgia and moving into the Ukraine and the Balkans. The excuse will be to save the lives of Russian citizens. Putting further pressure on the US, Russia will put military forces in Cuba and Venezuela using them as negotiating points to reach an agreement with the west to recognize the new USSR borders.

With the US bogged down in Afghanistan/mid east and with Russia, North Korea could use the opportunity to invade the south.

In the past cultural differences and misunderstandings have had catastrophic results. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, in 1941, was never part of a plan to defeat the US. Their aims were limited. Once they grabbed what they wanted their strategy was to seek peace. They believed this was possible based on their analysis of the character of the American people, who were strongly isolationist and were believed to be culturally inferior. They knew that they could not defeat the Americans militarily so they had to rely on defeating the US will to win. But they miscalculated the effect of their surprise attack at Pearl Harbor which unified a divided people and aroused the United States to wage a total, not a limited, war.

The Clinton Administration's lack of an active campaign against terrorism and Al Qaeda's misunderstanding of the American character figured prominently in the attack on the World Trade Center. Bin Laden declared war on the US as early as February 26, 1993 when Islamic terrorists tried to bring down the World Trade Center with car bombs. They failed to destroy the buildings, but killed 6 and injured over 1000 people. Attacks continued culminating with the October 12, 2000 Al

Qaeda bombing of the USS Cole with an explosive-laden speedboat, killing 17 US sailors and wounding 40, off the port coast of Aden, Yemen and finally the world Trade Center on September 11, 2001.

It is no wonder that Bin Laden thought he could attack the United States with impunity. It wasn't until the World Trade Center disaster and the Bush administration that fighting against Islamic radicals became the single most important issue of our time. As in the case of the Japanese prior to World War II Bin Laden must know he cannot defeat the US militarily so must rely on defeating the US will to win. A lack of understanding of the American people and watching the debate on Iraq and Afghanistan could only embolden him.

Obama takes over with America at war and in financial crises. Many are questioning whether he has the military and diplomatic experience to lead the nation in wartime. A naive decision or mistake can lead to world war III.