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Making the Future: Occupations, Interventions, Empire and Resistance

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Plenty of pitfalls are ahead. Some of Ehud Olmert's closest advisers have endorsed a version of the "land-swap" policy of the ultra-right Yisrael Beitenu leader Avigdor Lieberman. Such a swap would give the Palestinians technical authority over the heavily Arab "triangle" region in Israel, bordering the Green Line. In exchange, Israel would annex the West Bank settlements that encompass precious water resources and valuable land, leaving the rest cantonized and imprisoned, with the Israeli takeover of the Jordan Valley. The inhabitants, of course, are not to be consulted.

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global superpower. There was a quid pro quo: President Bush I agreed that NATO would not expand to the East, granting Russia some measure of security. In violation of a verbal agreement, NATO expanded at once to East Germany. President Bill Clinton reneged further on the agreement. NATO not only expanded eastward but also rejected the proposal of Russia (with Ukraine and Belarus) to establish a formal nuclear-weapons-free zone from the Arctic to the Black Sea, encompassing central Europe. In response, Russia withdrew the policy of no-first-use of nuclear weapons that it had adopted after the Bush-Gorbachev agreement, reverting to the first-use policy that NATO has never abandoned.

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Gorbachev agreed to the concession on the basis of "assurances that

NATO would not extend its jurisdiction to the east, 'not one inch' in [Secretary of State] Jim Baker's exact words," according to Jack Matlock, the U.S. ambassador to Russia in the crucial years 1987 to 1991. Bush-Baker and Clinton quickly reneged on

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There Obama's campaign greatly impressed the public relations industry, which named him "Advertising Age's marketer of the year for 2008," easily beating out Apple. The advertising industry's prime task is to ensure that uninformed consumers make irrational choices, thus undermining market theories that are based on just the opposite. And public relations recognizes the benefits of undermining democracy the same way.

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The business press reviewed the records of Obama's Transition Economic Advisory Board, which met on November 7 [2008] to determine how to deal with the financial crisis. In Bloomberg News, Jonathan Weil concluded that "Many of them should be getting subpoenas as material witnesses right about now, not places in Obama's inner circle." About half "have held fiduciary positions at companies that, to one degree or another, either fried their financial statements, helped send the world into an economic tailspin, or both." Is it really plausible that "they won't mistake the nation's needs for their own corporate interests?"

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The task presumably includes the projected \$7.6 billion TAPI pipeline that would deliver natural gas from Turkmenistan to Pakistan and India, running through Afghanistan's Kandahar province, where Canadian troops are deployed. The goal is "to block a competing pipeline that would bring gas to Pakistan and India from Iran" and to "diminish Russia's dominance of Central Asian energy exports," the Toronto Globe and Mail reported, plausibly outlining some of the contours of the new "Great Game" (when Britain and Russia vied for influence in Central Asia during the nineteenth century).

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Iran hasn't invaded another country for hundreds of years—unlike the United States, Israel and India (which occupies Kashmir, brutally). The threat from Iran is minuscule. To believe Iran would use nuclear weapons to attack Israel, or anyone, "amounts to assuming that Iran's leaders are insane" and that they look forward to being reduced to "radioactive dust," strategic analyst Leonard Weiss observes, adding that Israel's missile-carrying submarines are "virtually impervious to preemptive military attack," not to speak of the immense U.S. arsenal. In naval maneuvers in July [2009], Israel sent its Dolphin-class subs, capable of carrying nuclear missiles, through the Suez Canal and into the Red Sea, sometimes accompanied by warships, to a position from which they could attack Iran—as they have a "sovereign right" to do, according to U.S. Vice President Joe Biden.

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Wilson's invasion of Haiti in 1915 killed thousands, restored virtual slavery and left much of the country in ruins. Demonstrating his love of democracy, Wilson ordered his Marines to disband the Haitian parliament at gunpoint for failing to pass "progressive" legislation that allowed U.S. corporations to buy up the country. The problem was remedied when Haitians adopted a U.S.-written constitution, under Marine guns (with 99.9 percent approval, under 5 percent of the population participating). The achievement would be "beneficial to Haiti," Wilson's State Department assured its wards. Wilson also invaded the Dominican Republic to ensure its welfare. Both countries were left under the rule of vicious national guards. Decades of torture, violence and misery there come down to us as a legacy of "Wilsonian idealism," a leading principle of U.S. foreign policy.

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During the Great Moderation, American workers had become accustomed to a precarious existence. The rise of an American precariat was proudly hailed as a primary factor in the Great Moderation that brought slower economic growth, virtual stagnation of real income for the majority of the population, and wealth beyond

the dreams of avarice for a tiny sector, mostly the agents of this historical transformation. The high priest of this magnificent economy was Alan Greenspan, described by the business press as “saintly” for his brilliant stewardship. Glorifying in his achievements, he testified before Congress that they relied in part on “atypical restraint on compensation increases [which] appears to be mainly the consequence of greater worker insecurity.” The disaster of the Great Moderation was salvaged by heroic government efforts to reward the perpetrators. Neil Barofsky, stepping down on March 30 [2011] as special inspector general of the bailout program, wrote a revelatory New York Times op-ed about how the bailout worked.

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Part of the bargain was kept: The financial institutions were rewarded lavishly for causing the crisis, and forgiven for outright crimes. But the rest of the program floundered. As Barofsky writes: “Foreclosures continue

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There appears to have been no attempt to apprehend the unarmed victim, as presumably could have been done by the seventy-nine commandos facing almost no opposition. President Obama announced that “justice has been done.” Many did not agree—even close allies.

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Pakistani and international law require inquiry “whenever violent death occurs from government or police action,” Robertson points out. Obama undercut that possibility with a “hasty ‘burial at sea’ without a post mortem, as the law requires.”

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Another perspective on the attack comes in a report in The Atlantic by veteran Middle East and military correspondent Yochi Dreazen and colleagues. Citing a “senior U.S. official,” they conclude that the bin

Laden killing was a planned assassination.

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