

By Norman Pollack

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In the name of addressing climate change, Obama, with his order for new Coast Guard icebreakers, encouragement of National Park use, and of course permission for Shell Oil to engage in off-shore drilling, has placed the Arctic in a massive capitalistic framework, suitably militarized and commercialized, to accelerate the very thing he claims to oppose. Even if emissions were controlled in the Lower 48 (which will not be the case), point-specific damage within the Arctic itself will transform the ecosystem into a step-by-step collapse of safeguards into a slithering mess—courtesy the American value system of waste, want not, bully all comers. Climate change, far from being just another issue, becomes a mirror reflecting into the darkest chambers of the American soul: a contempt, as though enthralled by a death wish, for life itself. Whether the US has murdered villagers in a Vietnamese hamlet, engaged in support of death squads in Latin America, actively encouraged the greatest concentration of wealth in US history (and consequent economic and social degradation of the unemployed and working poor), or consciously, willfully raped the environment in myriad ways, these actions are all of one cloth, the violation of life, future as well as present generations and the Nature which sustains us all.

How contemptuous our leadership, bi-partisan in outdoing each other in facilitating the destruction of the natural order. From “Better dead than red,” we’ve come to, “Better self-indulgent than create the common good,” a progression tied together by cords of nihilism, opportunism, moral emptiness. Our treatment of the environment tells us who we are, just as how a nation treats its poor reveals its inner secret, what defines its spirit. If Obama had skipped the Alaska visit, the platitudes of American leadership and self-righteousness, the gobbledegook, and straightforwardly announced rather than sought to cover up the leases he authorized for Shell oil-drilling, one might at least have respected his honesty. Instead we have duplicity worthy of a Goebbels—true, nothing new, coming out of this administration from the moment of taking office, all now colorfully packaged in the name of the President’s Legacy.

I’d rather think, his legacy lies in drone assassination, confrontation with Russia and, more systematically, China (the Trans-Pacific Partnership), enlarged military spending, Washington’s protective, enriching arm over Wall Street, these just for starters and not necessarily the most important if one attempted to bring together all the steps in the assertion of US global military-financial-commercial-ideological hegemony, with, now, Alaska, a somewhat poor,

unconvincing diversion from the main scene of action. Are we imbeciles, that we cannot see through them? The New York Times may voluntarily remain hoodwinked, even the public, habituated to official lies, but, hopefully, not everyone. Open the way to greater maritime traffic. Perhaps even modernize the salmon industry. Why not? What's good for GM is good for—no, right imagery and reasoning, wrong particulars. What's good for Shell Oil is good for America. So, Obama is going to hike into the wilderness to dramatize his manhood and love of nature. It reminds me of TR's camping out in Yosemite with, I believe, Muir: luxury tents rolled out, a bevy of Secret Service men in attendance, etc.

Hogwash. When Obama shows he cares about climate change he will simultaneously cut the military budget by two-thirds, crack down with an iron fist on domestic pollution, establish a crash program on alternative energy sources, start construction on a mass transportation system, again, for starters, and where leadership comes in, show by an ethic of asceticism that living close and eschewing waste (both antithetical to consumerism), along with a redistribution of wealth to make such a living transformation possible, then we can begin to believe him, and not until. The environment is a jealous mistress. It abhors war, it abhors intervention, it abhors regime change—it abhors the contradiction between aggression (through every facet of life) and a loving gentleness (toward the world which sustains us). Addressing climate change is not a balancing act; one Shell oil drilling right vitiates the presumed aim and exposes Obama for consistent villainous action, a momentous counterrevolution against nature and aspirant democracy in the world alike.