

# Imperial Road to Conquest: Peace and Disarmament Agreements

By [Prof. James Petras](#)

Global Research, May 01, 2018

Theme: [Military and WMD, US NATO War Agenda](#)

## *Introduction*

*In recent years US imperial strategy has sought to lessen the cost of defeating and overthrowing independent countries.*

The means and method are fairly straight forward. World-wide propaganda campaigns which demonize the adversary; the enlistment and collaboration of European and regional allies (England, France, Saudi Arabia and Israel); the recruitment, contracting, training and arming of local and overseas mercenaries dubbed “rebels”, or ‘democrats’; economic sanctions to provoke domestic social tensions and political instability of the government; proposals to negotiate a settlement; negotiations which demand non-reciprocal concessions and which include changes in strategic weapons in exchange for promises to end sanctions, diplomatic recognition and peaceful co-existence.

The strategic goal is disarmament in order to facilitate military and political intervention leading up to and beyond defeat, occupation, regime change; the impositions of a ‘client regime’ to facilitate the pillage of economic resources and the securing of military bases, international alignment with the US empire and a military springboard for further conquests against neighbors and independent adversaries.

We will apply this model to recent and current examples of US tactical and strategic empire building in diverse regions, especially focusing on North Africa (Libya), the Middle East (Iraq, Palestine, Syria and Iran), Asia (North Korea), and Latin America (FARC in Colombia).

## Case 1: Libya

After several decades of failed efforts to overthrow the popular Libyan government of Muammar Gaddafi via local tribal and monarchist armed terrorists, and international economic sanctions , the US proposed a policy of negotiations and accommodation.



Hillary Clinton with Libyan rebels

The US opened negotiations to end sanctions, offered diplomatic recognition and acceptance in the 'international community', in exchange for Gaddafi's demobilization and abandonment of Libya's strategic arms including its long-range ballistic missiles and other effective deterrents. The US did not reduce its military bases, ready and alert , targeting Tripoli.

In 2003 Gaddafi signed off on the agreement with the George W. Bush regime. Major US Libyan oil agreements and diplomatic accords were signed. US security adviser Condoleezza Rice visited President Gaddafi as a symbol of peace and friendship, even as US military aid was channeled to armed US clients.

In February 2011 the US led by President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton joined with their EU allies (France, UK . . .) and bombed Libya - its infrastructure, ports, transport centers, oil facilities, hospitals and schools... US and EU backed terrorists seized control of the major cities, and captured, tortured and murdered President Gaddafi. Over 2 million immigrant workers were forced to flee to Europe and the Middle East or return to central Africa.

## Case 2: Iraq

Iraq under Saddam Hussein received arms and support from Washington to attack and invade Iran. This de facto agreement, encourage the Iraqi leader to assume that collaboration between nationalist Iraq and imperial Washington reflected a shared common agenda. Subsequently Baghdad believed that they had tacit US support in a territorial dispute with Kuwait. When Saddam invaded, the US bombed, devastated, invaded, occupied and partitioned Iraq.

The US backed the Kurds territorial seizure in the North and imposed a no-fly zone. Subsequently, President William Clinton engaged in several bombing attacks which failed to dislodge Saddam Hussein.

Under President G. W. Bush, the US launched a full-scale war, invasion and occupation, killing several hundred thousand of Iraqis and alienating and entire nation. The US systematically dismantled the modern secular state and its vital institutions while fomenting

the most brutal religious and ethnic wars between Shia and Sunni Iraqis.

The attempt by Iraq to collaborate with Washington in the 1980's against its nationalist neighbor Iran, led to the invasion, the destruction of the country, the killing of thousands of secular leaders including Saddam Hussein as well as the entire secular and scientific intelligentsia, and the transformation of Iraq into a toothless vassal state of the empire.

### Case Three: Syria

Syria's President Bashar Assad, unlike Gaddafi and Hussein, retained a degree of independence from Washington's overtures, even as he sought to accommodate US incursions in Lebanon and its support for the largely minority Christian and pro-western opposition.



A female trainee with the Syrian Democratic Forces at her graduation ceremony in northern Syria on August 9, 2017. (Credit: Sgt. Mitchell Ryan for US Army)

In 2011, the US broke its tacit accommodation and provided arms and financing to its local Islamist clients for an uprising which seized control of most of the countryside and major cities, including half of Damascus. Fortunately, Assad sought the support of Russia, Iran and the Lebanese Hezbollah fighters. Over the next seven years, the US-EU backed terrorists were defeated and forced to retreat, despite massive military, financial and logistic support from the US, EU, Israel, Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

Syria has survived and reconquered most of the country, where Libya and Iraq failed, because it was able to secure an armed-alliance with strategic allies who succeeded in neutralizing domestic insurgents.

#### Case 4: FARC (The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia)

The FARC was formed in the early 1960's as a largely peasant army which grew, by 2000, to nearly 30,000 fighters and millions of supporters, mostly in the countryside. In effect a dual system of power predominated outside the major cities.

The FARC made several attempts to negotiate a peace settlement with the Colombian oligarchical regime. In the late 1970's a temporary agreement led sections of the FARC to shed arms, form an electoral party, the Patriotic Union, and participate in elections. After several electoral gains, the oligarchy abruptly broke the agreement, unleashed a campaign of terror, and assassinated 5,000 party activists and several presidential and congressional candidates and elected officials. The FARC returned to armed struggle.

During subsequent negotiations, between 1980-81, the oligarchical regime broke off talks and raided the meeting site in an attempt to assassinate the FARC representatives, who successfully evaded capture. Despite the repeated failures, in 2016 the FARC agreed to enter into 'peace negotiations' with the Colombian regime of President Juan Manuel Santos, a former Defense minister who was a leading force during the extermination campaign in the countryside and urban slums between 2001-2010. However major political changes took place within the FARC. During the previous decade the historic leaders of the FARC were killed or died and were replaced by a new cohort who lacked the experience and commitment to secure agreements which advanced peace with justice, while retaining their arms in the eventuality that the untrustworthy oligarchical regime, which had repeatedly sabotaged negotiations, reneged on the so-called 'peace agreement'.

In blind pursuit of peace, the FARC agreed to demobilize and disarm its revolutionary army; it failed to secure control over socio-economic reforms, including land reform; it turned security over to the regime's military forces linked to landlords, the seven US military bases and narco-death squads.

The 'peace agreement' destroyed the FARC. Once disarmed the regime reneged on the agreement: dozens of FARC combatants were assassinated or forced to flee; the oligarchs retained total control over land from dispossessed peasants, natural resources, public funding and elite controlled elections; FARC leaders and activists were jailed and subject to death threats and a constant barrage of hostile public and private media propaganda.

The FARC's disastrous peace agreement led to internal splits, divisions and isolation. By the end of 2017, the FARC disintegrated: each fraction went its own way. Some rejoined reduced guerrilla groupings; others abandoned the struggle and sought employment; others opportunities to collaboration with the regime or became coca farmers.

The oligarchy and the US secured the surrender and defeat of the FARC through negotiations, which it had failed to accomplish during four decades of military warfare.

#### Case 5: Iran: The Nuclear Accord

In 2015 Iran signed a peace accord with seven signatories: the US, the UK, France, Germany, China, Russia, and the European Union. The agreement stipulated that Iran would limit its manufacture of enriched uranium which had dual use – civilian and military – and ship it out of the country. Iran permitted Western inspection of nuclear facilities—which found Teheran in full compliance.



In exchange the US and its collaborators agreed to end economic sanctions, unfreeze Iranian assets and end restrictions on trade, banking and investment.

The Iranians fully complied. Enriched uranium laboratories ceased producing and shipped-out remaining stock. Inspections were granted full access of Iranian facilities.

In contrast the Obama regime did not fully comply. Partial sanctions were lifted but others were reinforced, deeply restricting Iran's access to financial markets – in clear violation of the agreement. Nevertheless, Iran continued to maintain its part of the agreement.



With the elections of Donald Trump, the US rejected the agreement ('it's the worst deal ever') and in compliance with the Israeli Prime Minister B. Netanyahu's military agenda, demanded the total restoration of sanctions, the dismantling of Iran's entire military defenses and its submission to the US, Israeli and Saudi Arabian dictates in the Middle East.

In other words, President Trump discarded the agreement in opposition to all the major countries in Europe and Asia, in favor of Israel's demands to isolate, disarm and attack Iran and impose a puppet regime in Teheran.

French Prime Minister Emmanuel Macron sought to 'modify' (sic) the agreement to include some of Trump's demands to secure new military concessions from Iran, including that it (1) abandon its allies in the region (Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Palestine, Lebanon-Hezbollah, and Islamic mass movements), (2) dismantle and end its advanced inter-continental ballistic missile defense system, (3) accept US (Israeli) supervision and inspection of all its military bases and scientific centers.

President Macron's posture was to 'save' the form of the 'agreement' by ...destroying the substances. He shared Trump's objective but sought a step by step approach based on 'modifying' the existing agreement. Trump chose the Israeli approach; a frontal repudiation of the entire agreement, accompanied by overt threats of a military attack, if Iran rejected concessions and refused to capitulate to Washington.

#### Case 6: Palestine

The US pretended to broker a peace agreement between Israel and Palestine in which Israel would recognize Palestine, end colonization and pursue a peace settlement based on mutually agreed to a two state solution based on pre 1967 territorial and historical rights. The United States under President Clinton hailed the settlement and then..... proceeded to back each and every one of Israel's present and future violations. Over 600,000 Israel's colonists seized land and expelled tens of thousands of Palestinians. Israel regularly invades

the West Bank and has assassinated and jailed tens of thousands of Palestinians. Israel seized total control of Jerusalem. The US endorsed, armed and financed, Israel's step by step ethnic cleansing and the Judaification of Palestine.

#### Case 7: North Korea

The US has recently stated that it favors a negotiated agreement initiated by North Korean President Kim Jong-un. Pyongyang has offered to end its nuclear programs and testing, and to negotiate a permanent peace treaty including the denuclearization of the peninsula and the retention of US military forces in South Korea.



South Koreans against the THAAD

President Trump has pursued a strategy of 'support' of the negotiation..... while tightening economic sanctions, and ongoing military exercises in South Korea. In the run up to negotiations the US has made no reciprocal concessions. Trump overtly threatens to scuttle the negotiations if North Korea does not submit to Washington's insistence that North Korea disarm and demobilize their defenses.

In other words, President Trump wants North Korea to follow the policies that led to the US successful invasion and military conquest and destruction of Iraq , Libya and the FARC.

Washington's negotiations for a Korean peace agreement will follow the same path as its recent broken 'nuclear agreement' with Iran- one-sided disarmament of Teheran and the subsequent renegeing of the agreement.

For empire builders like the US, negotiations are tactical diversions to disarm independent countries in order to weaken and attack them,as all of our case studies demonstrate.

#### Conclusion

In our studies we have highlighted how Washington uses 'negotiations' and 'peace processes' as tactical weapons to enhance empire-building. By disarming and demobilizing adversaries it facilitates strategic goals like regime change.

Knowing that empire builders are perfidious enemies does not mean countries should reject peace processes and negotiations - because that would give Washington a propaganda weapon. Instead imperial adversaries could follow the following guidelines.

Negotiations should lead to reciprocal concessions - not one sided, especially non-reciprocal reductions of arms programs.

Negotiations should never demilitarize and demobilize its defense forces which increases vulnerability and permits sudden attacks. Negotiators should retain their ability to impose a high cost for imperial violations and especially sudden reversals of military and economic agreements. Imperial violator hesitate to invade when the human and national costs are high and politically unpopular.

Imperial opponents should not remain isolated. They must secure military allies. The case of Syria is clear. Assad built a coalition of Russia, Iran and Hezbollah which effectively countered the US-EU-Israeli- Turkish and Saudi backed terrorist 'rebels'.

Iran did agree to dismantle its nuclear capacity but it retained its ICBM program which can retaliate to surprise military attacks by Israel or the US. Almost surely Israel will insist that the US suffer the cost of Middle East wars, to Tel Aviv's advantage.

North Korea has already made unilateral, non-reciprocal concessions to the US and to a lesser degree to South Korea. If it is unable to secure allies (like China and Russia ) and if it ends its nuclear deterrent it invites pressure for more concessions.

Lifting economic sanctions can be reciprocated but not by compromising strategic military defenses.

The basic principles are reciprocity, strategic defense and tactical economic flexibility. The guiding idea is that there are no permanent allies only permanent interests. Misguided trust in lofty western imperial 'values' and not realistic recognition of imperial interests can be fatal to independent leaders and destructive to a people, as was clearly the case of Iraq, Libya and Palestine and near fatal to Syria. The most recent example is the case of Iran: the US signed a peace agreement in 2015 and repudiated it in 2017.

It behooves North Korea to learn from the Iranian experience.

The imperial time frame for repudiating agreement may vary; Libya signed a disarmament agreement with the US in 2003 and Washington bombed them in 2011.

In all cases the principle remains the same. There is no historical example of an imperial power renouncing its interests in compliance with a paper agreement. It only abides with agreements when it has no other options.

\*

*Prof. James Petras is a Research Associate of the Centre for Research on Globalization.*

The original source of this article is Global Research  
Copyright © [Prof. James Petras](#), Global Research, 2018

---

**[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)**

**[Become a Member of Global Research](#)**

Articles by: [Prof. James Petras](#)

**Disclaimer:** The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)

[www.globalresearch.ca](http://www.globalresearch.ca) contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)