

By Debra Sweet

Wrapped in some benign sounding words about prosperity, peace, and “shifting from a perpetual war footing,” the core of Barack Obama’s message to the United Nations yesterday made clear that if the U.N. doesn’t pass a resolution the U.S. wants against Syria, he still could execute a strike.

Here’s the take-home:

“The United States of America is prepared to use all elements of our power, including military force, to secure our core interests in the region . We will confront external aggression against our allies and partners, as we did in the Gulf War.

“We will ensure the free flow of energy from the region to the world. Although America is steadily reducing our own dependence on imported oil, the world still depends on the region’s energy supply and a severe disruption could destabilize the entire global economy.”

Jeremy Scahill reacted somewhat as I did on hearing it yesterday:

“You have this democratic president who won the Nobel Peace Prize who then goes and stands in front of the United Nations and basically stakes out a neo-con vision of American foreign policy and owns it and kind of wraps it in this cloak of democratic legitimacy. I think when we look back at Obama’s legacy, this is going to have been a very significant period in U.S. history where the ideals of very sort of radical right wing forces were solidified and continued under Mr. Constitutional Law Professor, Nobel Peace Prize Winner. It is really kind of devastating what is going on right now and I think if you take the long view of it or you step back and look at it and don’t just see the trees but look at the forest, President Obama has been a forceful, fierce defending of empire and I think that is going to be the enduring legacy of his presidency is that he was an empire president.”

Scahill’s film [Dirty Wars](#) comes out on DVD October 15.