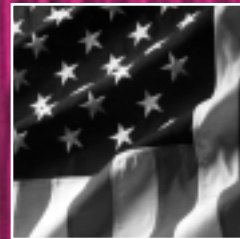
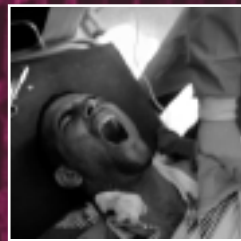
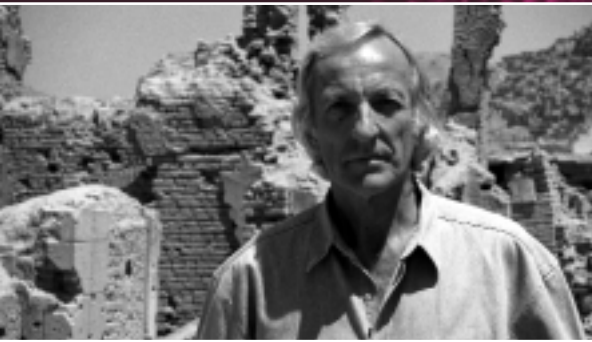


Breaking The Silence: Truth and Lies in the War on Terror

A Special Report by John Pilger



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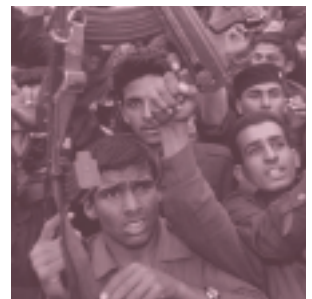
A Special Report by John Pilger

“September 11 2001 dominates almost everything we watch, read, and hear. “We are fighting a war on terror,” say George Bush and Tony Blair, “a noble war against evil itself.” But what are the real aims of this war – and **who** are the most threatening terrorists? Indeed, who is responsible for far greater acts of violence than those committed by the fanatics of al-Qaeda – crimes that have claimed many more lives than September 11, and always in poor, devastated, faraway places, from Latin America to South East Asia?

‘The answer to those questions are to be found in the United States, where those now in power speak openly of their conquests and of endless war. Afghanistan . . . Iraq . . . these, they say, are just a beginning. Look out North Korea, Iran, even China.

Breaking the Silence is about the rise, and rise, of rapacious imperial power, and a terrorism that never speaks its name, because it is “our” terrorism.”

John Pilger – Breaking The Silence Carlton 2003





Afghanistan's 'New Era of Hope'

“It’s hard for us to understand in America, but these (the Taliban) are people who attempted to control every mind and every soul in the country. They . . . had a vast network of terrorist camps available to train extremists from around the world. Thanks to America, and thanks to our friends, thanks to people who love freedom for everybody, the oppressive rule has been lifted . . . Afghanistan has entered a new era of hope.”¹

George W Bush, October 2002

“How hollow would the charges of American imperialism be when these failed countries are and are seen to be transformed from states of terror to nations of prosperity, from governments of dictatorship to examples of democracy.”²

Tony Blair, July 2003

“What has changed in Afghanistan? All our hopes are crushed. We are completely disappointed. Look – all the same warlords are in power as before. Fundamentalism has come into power, and every day they strengthen their power.”³

Citizen of Herat, western Afghanistan, September 2002



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Afghanistan was the Bush administration’s first target in the war on terrorism. Its fate, therefore, is a test case of the real nature of this war. Over the past generation Afghanistan has been the victim of a series of terrible wars that are the result of the intervention of outside powers.

These began in the late 1970s, after the United States, Britain, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia backed Islamist guerrillas – the Mujaheddin – against the left-wing military regime, resulting in the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 (see below ‘America and Britain’s Role in Creating Afghan Terrorists’). The Soviet occupying army found themselves fighting an unwinnable war that played its part in the final collapse of the Soviet Union.



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But the withdrawal of Russian forces in 1989 and the final ending of Soviet aid two years later did not end Afghanistan’s agony. The leaders of different Mujaheddin factions and of Moscow’s client army fought over the spoils of victory. Between 1992 and 1996 Kabul was devastated in successive sieges by rival warlords. This fighting was encouraged by neighbouring states eager to shape Afghanistan in their own interests. The country’s diverse ethnic composition made outside powers’ policies of divide and rule easier.

The Pakistani military’s Directorate of Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), which had worked closely with the US Central Intelligence Agency to build up the Mujaheddin in the first place, played a particularly important role. Concerned that Iranian support for President Burhanuddin Rabbani would give the Islamic Republican regime in Tehran dominant influence in Afghanistan, the ISI backed the Taliban. This was a movement of young zealots in the puritanical Wahhabi version of Islam (promoted by the rulers of Saudi Arabia) and based among the Pashtuns of south-eastern Afghanistan, the largest ethnic group.

Backed by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and benefiting from the weariness induced by years of civil war, the Taliban succeeded in winning control of much of Afghanistan in 1995-6. They imposed on the Afghan people a highly repressive regime based on an extremely rigid and reactionary interpretation of Islam. The ousted warlords eventually regrouped and formed the Northern Alliance with the backing of Russia, Iran, and India. But what transformed their fortunes was 11 September 2001

and the war launched by the United States on 7 October against the Taliban and their allies in al-Qaeda.

The Taliban were driven out of the towns astonishingly quickly. Kandahar, the last major city they held, fell two months after the war began, on 7 December 2001. This was in part thanks to the support US air power, guided by Special Forces on the ground, gave Northern Alliance troops. But arguably at least as important was the money spent by the CIA to buy potentially hostile forces. Bob Woodward of the **Washington Post** reports in his semi-official history of the Afghan War that the CIA spent \$70 million in Afghanistan – what George W Bush called a ‘bargain’⁴.

Woodward describes a meeting soon after 9/11 between a CIA agent known as ‘Gary’ and Muhammed Arif, a Northern Alliance leader who now heads the Amniat-i Melli, the Afghan intelligence agency: *“Gary placed a bundle of cash on the table: \$500,000 in 10 one-foot stacks of \$100 bills. He believed it would be more impressive than the usual \$200,000, the best way to say, We’re here, we’re serious, here’s money, we know you need it . . . Gary would soon ask CIA headquarters for and receive \$10 million in cash.”*⁵

CIA money was also used to persuade Taliban commanders to switch sides. Woodward reports a visit to Afghanistan by another CIA officer in November 2001:

“The millions of dollars in covert money the teams were spreading around was working wonders. He calculated that thousands of Taliban had been bought off. The Northern Alliance was trying to induce defections from the Taliban themselves, but the CIA could come in and offer cash. The agency’s hand would often be hidden as the negotiations began – \$10,000 for this sub-commander here and his dozens of fighters, \$50,000 for this bigger commander and his hundreds of fighters.”⁶



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Defenders of the war on terrorism justify the use of such methods as necessary to rid Afghanistan and the world of a dreadful regime. Certainly few Afghans regretted the removal of the Taliban from power. But the effect has been to return control over Afghanistan to a coalition of the same warlords whose factional struggles wrecked the country after the collapse of the Soviet-backed regime in the early 1990s and created the context for the Taliban’s original bid for power.

Afghanistan’s ‘transitional government’, confirmed in office by a **loya jirga** (grand council) in June 2002, is headed by a hitherto obscure Pashtun leader, Hamid Karzai, but the ministerial posts are dominated by regional warlords and their nominees. According to Human Rights Watch:

Far from emerging as a stable democracy, Afghanistan remains a fractured, undemocratic collection of “fiefdoms” in which warlords are free to intimidate, extort, and repress local populations, while almost completely denying basic freedoms. Afghanistan, a textbook definition of a failed state under the Taliban, now runs the risk of becoming a state that fails its own people, except this time on the international community’s watch.⁷

The Warlords Who Still Rule Afghanistan

■ **General Muhammed Qasim Fahim:**

Minister of Defence in the 'transitional government', formerly a senior commander in the Jamiat-e Islami wing of the Northern Alliance; now also leader of Shura-i Nazaar, an alliance of former Northern Alliance commanders and officials;



■ **Burhanaddin Rabbani:**

One of the founders of the radical Islamist movement in the early 1970s; President of the Islamic State of Afghanistan proclaimed after the fall of the Soviet-backed regime in 1992; driven out of Kabul by the Taliban in 1996 after years of factional warfare that devastated the city; leader of the Jamiat-i Islami party, a predominantly Tajik party that was the most powerful force in the Northern Alliance and that now controls Kabul and the northeast of the country;



■ **Abdul Rasul Sayyaf:**

Islamic scholar and also a founder of the Islamist movement; backed during the Soviet occupation by Saudi Arabia to promote the Wahhabi version of Islam among the Mujaheddin (Osama bin Laden also sees himself as a defender of pure Wahhabism); founded the Ittihad-i Islami in the early 1980s; a leading Pashtun member of the Northern Alliance; now closely allied to Shura-i Nazaar; has the allegiance of several military commanders in south-eastern Afghanistan;



■ **Ismail Khan:**

veteran leader of the war against the Soviets; governor of Herat in western Afghanistan; according to Human Rights Watch, *"Ismail Khan has created a virtual mini-state in Herat, with little allegiance to Kabul. Herat has remained much as it was under the Taliban: a closed society in which there is no dissent, no criticism of the government, no independent newspapers, no freedom of the press, no freedom to hold open meetings, and no respect for the rule of law"*⁸;



■ **General Abdul Rashid Dostum:**

militia commander under pro-Soviet regime of President Muhammed Najibullah; fighting first against and then in alliance with the now exiled Mujaheddin leader Gulbuddin Hikmetyar subjected Kabul to devastating bombardment in 1992-4; one of the main commanders of the Northern Alliance against the Taliban; now a Security Advisor to President Karzai; leader of the Junbish-i Milli-yi Islami party dominant in the Uzbek provinces of northern Afghanistan, which is in fierce competition with Jamiat-i Islami and Shura-i Nazaar.



Following a long Afghan tradition, the government in Kabul is heavily dependent on external funding. According to Dr Omar Zakhilwal, senior adviser to the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, 70 per cent of the \$4.5 billion allocated by the international community for Afghanistan has actually gone to non-governmental organizations for humanitarian projects. The government has received less than 20 per cent, which is used to pay salaries and meet other running expenses. 'The government has no money for reconstruction, period.'⁹

Human Rights Watch recently produced a detailed report on human rights abuses in south-eastern Afghanistan, the most densely populated part of the country. It stressed the central role played the ruling warlords and their forces in these abuses:

Human Rights Watch found evidence of government involvement or complicity in abuses in virtually every district in the southeast . . . The three main types of abuse documented in this report are violent criminal offences – armed robbery, extortion, and kidnappings – committed by army troops, police, and intelligence agents; governmental attacks on media and political actors; and violations of the human rights of women and girls.¹⁰

Human Rights Watch stresses how official and unofficial violence has prevented the development of anything resembling a genuinely democratic political process. The warlords intervened to rig the selection of the **loya jirga** that is the source of their government's legitimacy. Indeed: 'During the **loya jirga** itself, several powerful military and party leaders threatened less powerful delegates, and agents of the Amniat-i Melli (intelligence service) spied on and delivered threats to delegates.'¹¹

One of the most striking respects in which the new regime in Kabul resembles its predecessors concerns the position of women. The Taliban imposed an immensely restrictive regime on Afghan women, banning them from work and education and requiring them to wear the all-enveloping burqa. Many in the West supported the 2001 war in Afghanistan because they believed it would bring liberation for the country's women. US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld even used the compulsory wearing of the **burqa** to justify Washington's detention of 'unlawful combatants' from the Afghan War in Guantanamo Bay.

But restrictions on Afghan women did not begin with the Taliban. Afghanistan is an extremely male-dominated society, with women exchanged between households for their labour and the bride price traditionally paid by the groom's family. After the fall of the pro-Soviet Najibullah regime in 1992, the Mujaheddin proclaimed an Islamic state and imposed various restrictions on women – for example, women had to observe hijab (covering the head, arms, and legs). The same political forces are back in power today. According to Human Rights Watch, 'Most Afghan women and girls, especially outside Kabul city, are not free to take off the **burqa**.'¹²



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Almost every woman interviewed by Human Rights Watch in southeast Afghanistan said life now was better than it was under the Taliban. Many women told us there were no longer government regulations barring them from studying, working, and going outside without wearing a *burqa* or without a close male relative (a *mahram*). However, when Human Rights Watch asked women and girls if they were, in fact, studying, working, and going out without *burqas*, many said they were not. This was especially true in rural areas. Most said this was because armed men have been targeting women and girls. Men and women told Human Rights Watch that women and older girls could not do out alone and that when they did go out they had to wear a *burqa* for fear of harassment or violence, regardless of whether they would otherwise choose to wear it. And in Jalalabad and Laghman, certain government officials have threatened to beat or kill women who do not wear it.

"We couldn't go out during the Taliban," said a woman in rural Paghman. "Now we are free and we can go out, but we don't."

In many areas in the southeast and even in some parts of Kabul city, sexual violence against women, girls and boys is both frequent and almost never reported. Women, girls, and boys are abducted outside of their homes and sexually assaulted; in some areas girls have been abducted on their way to school. Women and girls are raped in their homes, typically during the evening or night during armed robberies. One attack was seemingly intended to silence a women's rights activist . . . Many women and girls are essentially prisoners in their own homes.¹³

Although the perpetrators of these abuses are Afghan outside powers continue to play a major role in perpetuating the rule of the warlords. Some of these states are regional actors: for example, Russia and Iran continue to back Ismail Khan in Herat. But the most important are the US and its European allies. In August 2003 NATO, under a German commander, assumed control of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), whose mission is confined to maintaining the Karzai government in Kabul.

The US is not involved in ISAF. Elite American units based at Bagram airbase mount raids against surviving Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters, who have recently become more active in remote parts of eastern and southern Afghanistan, apparently now in alliance with the guerrillas of Hitkmetyar's Hizb-i Islami. Amnesty International has reported widespread allegations of torture and ill-treatment at the US 'holding facility' at Bagram, where suspects are held without trial and often shipped off to Guantanamo Bay.¹⁴

According to Human Rights Watch, 'the primary power broker in Afghanistan – the United States – continues to embrace a divided strategy toward Afghanistan: on the one hand, the United States supports Karzai in Kabul, while on the other hand, US military forces cooperate with (and strengthen) commanders in areas within and outside of Kabul, some of whom seek merely to enrich themselves or to strengthen their own political power at the expense of Karzai and the national administration.'¹⁵ The US is thus helping to ensure that Afghanistan's 'new era of hope' resembles nothing more than the country's age-old domination by provincial notables and their armed retainues vying for the support of outside powers.

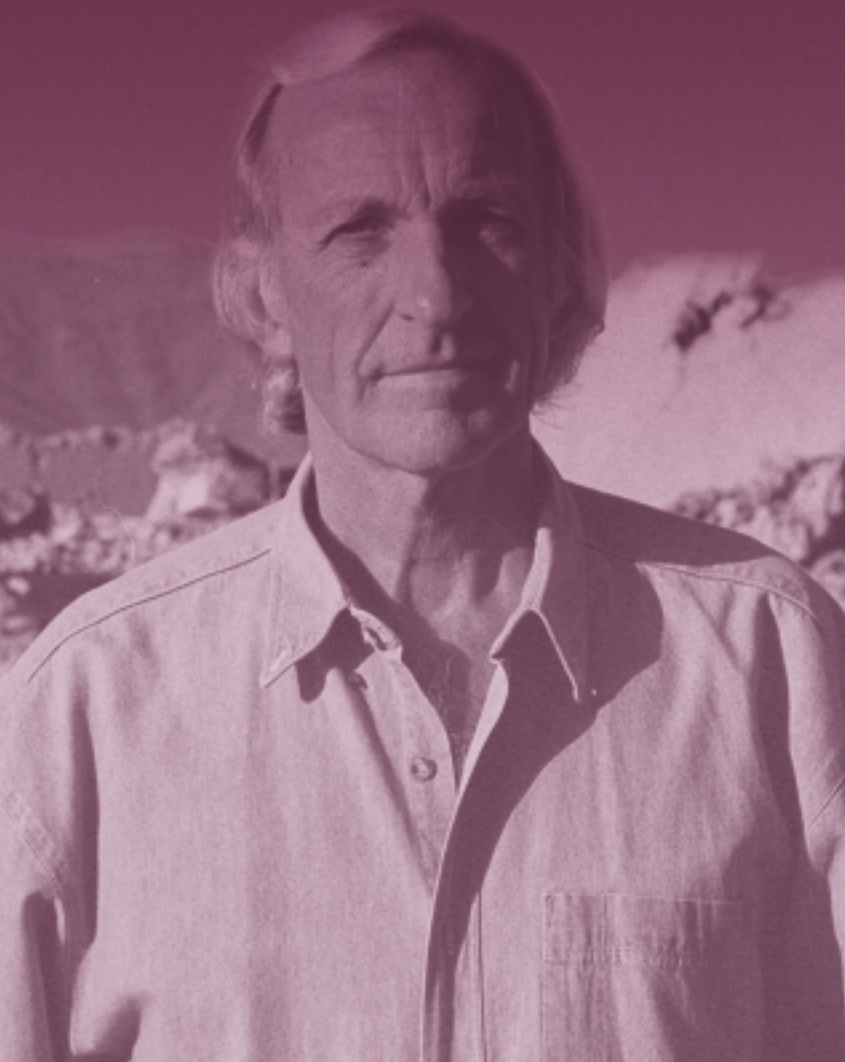


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8 America and Britain's Role in Creating

“One of the most closely guarded secrets of the Cold War was America’s role in supporting the Afghan Islamist guerrillas known as the Mujaheddin. It’s often accepted that America backed these fundamentalists in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979. But that’s not true. It was six months before the Soviet invasion – on 3 July 1979 – that US President Jimmy Carter authorized \$500 million to help set up the Mujaheddin as a terrorist organization. The American people were completely unaware that their government, together with the British Secret Intelligence Service, MI6, had begun training and funding Islamist extremists, including Osama bin Laden. Out of this came the Taliban, al-Qaeda, and 11 September.”

John Pilger – Breaking The Silence Carlton 2003



On 27 April 1978 a left-wing military coup overthrew the regime of Muhammed Daoud, President of Afghanistan. Supporters of the Communist party, known as the People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), took power. The new regime began to carry through a ‘revolution from above’, imposing a programme that included land reforms and measures to improve the status of women. This provoked considerable resistance from Muslim traditionalists in the Afghan countryside, where the majority of the population lived.

The PDPA, which rested on a relatively narrow base composed mainly of urban intellectuals and left-wing soldiers, found itself facing a growing guerrilla war, and was destabilized by violent internal divisions. On 24 December 1979, the Soviet Union, the regime’s main external backer, invaded Afghanistan and imposed its own client government. The role of the United States in backing the Mujaheddin and luring the Soviet Union into invading Afghanistan was confirmed by Zbigniew Brzezinski, National Security Advisor to President Carter, in a remarkable interview published in 1998:

Q: The former director of the CIA, Robert Gates, states in his memoirs that American intelligence services began to aid the Mujaheddin in Afghanistan six months before the Soviet intervention ... Is that correct?

Brzezinski: Yes. According to the official version of history, CIA aid to the Mujaheddin began during 1980, that is to say, after the Soviet army invaded Afghanistan, 24 December 1979. But the reality, secretly guarded until now, is completely otherwise: Indeed, it was 3 July 1979 that President Carter signed the first directive for secret aid to the opponents of the pro-Soviet regime in Kabul. And that very day, I wrote a note to the president in which I explained to him that in my opinion this aid was going to provoke a Soviet military intervention ... We didn’t push the Russians to intervene, but we knowingly increased the probability that they would.



Zbigniew Brzezinski

Afghanistan's Terrorists

Q: When the Soviets justified their intervention by saying that they intended to fight against a secret involvement of the United States in Afghanistan, people didn't believe them. However, there was a basis of truth. You don't regret anything today?

Brzezinski: Regret what? The secret operation was an excellent idea. It had the effect of drawing the Russians into the Afghan trap and you want me to regret it? The day that the Soviets officially crossed the border, I wrote to President Carter: We now have the opportunity of giving to the USSR its Vietnam War. Indeed, for almost ten years, Moscow had to carry on a war unsupportable by the government, a conflict that brought about the demoralization and finally the break-up of the Soviet empire.

Q: And neither do you regret having supported Islamic fundamentalism, having given arms and advice to future terrorists?

Brzezinski: What is more important in the history of the world? The Taliban or the collapse of the Soviet empire? A few crazed Muslims or the liberation of Central Europe and the end of the Cold War?¹⁶

Under the presidency of Ronald Reagan (1981-9), US aid to the Mujaheddin was stepped up. In April 1985 Reagan signed National Security Directive 166, authorizing a policy of driving the Soviets from Afghanistan 'by all means available'. Beginning in September 1986, the US supplied Stinger shoulder-held anti-aircraft missiles to the Afghan guerrillas. These weapons have now become a potential terrorist threat to civilian aircraft all over the world.¹⁷

The Mujaheddin didn't benefit merely from American assistance. Pakistani military intelligence (the ISI) acted as the main channel for arms and money to the Islamist guerrillas. To keep the Afghan resistance to the Soviet occupation weak and divided, the ISI supported no less than seven rival Islamist parties. This helped to ensure a legacy of political fragmentation and factional warfare after the Soviet army withdrew from Afghanistan.

The veteran journalist John Cooley has documented the role of America's allies and clients in supporting the Mujaheddin. The path to American intervention in Afghanistan was smoothed during the 1970s by the highly secret Safari Club, convened by Count Alexandre de Marenches, director-general of the French foreign intelligence service (SDECE), and comprising President Anwar al-Sadat of Egypt, the Shah of Iran, King Hassan II of Morocco, and Kamal Adham, chief of Saudi Arabian intelligence.¹⁸



President Jimmy Carter

During the premiership of Margaret Thatcher (1979-90), the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS or MI6), was another staunch ally of the CIA. Former soldiers of the Special Air Service, which works closely with SIS, were used to train Mujaheddin through the intermediary of private security firms such as KMS and Saladin Security. RAF bases in Oman were used by American flights to supply the Mujaheddin.¹⁹

This was the context in which Osama bin-Laden and the al-Qaeda terrorist network developed. The ISI encouraged radical Muslims from all over the world to join in the guerrilla war in Afghanistan. This policy was endorsed by William Casey, Director of Central Intelligence under Reagan, in 1986. According to the Pakistani journalist Ahmed Rashid,

“ Between 1982 and 1992 some 35,000 Muslim radicals from 43 Islamic countries in the Middle East, North and East Africa, Central Asia and the Far East would pass their baptism under fire with the Afghan Mujaheddin. Tens of thousands more foreign Muslim radicals came to study in the hundreds of new madrassas (religious schools) that (Pakistani dictator General) Zia's military government began to fund in Pakistan and along the Afghan border. Eventually more than 100,000 Muslim radicals were to have direct contact with Pakistan and Afghanistan and be influenced by the jihad.²⁰ ”

Osama bin Laden, the devout son of a Yemeni building magnate based in Saudi Arabia, was encouraged by Saudi intelligence and the CIA to use his family wealth and connections to recruit, transport, and train Arab volunteers who wanted to fight in Afghanistan. Out of bin Laden's work in Afghanistan developed al-Qaeda. After the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, he directed his attention into developing a world-wide radical Islamist movement whose main target was now the United States.

This brought him into increasing conflict with both the Saudi authorities and the US, especially after American troops were sent to Saudi Arabia in response to Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. Eventually, in 1996 bin Laden took refuge in Afghanistan, now ruled by the Taliban, who, like him, are fanatical followers of the puritanical Wahhabi version of Islam.

This link with what was developing into a serious terrorist challenge didn't stop the US from initially courting the Taliban. Rashid argues that, at least initially, *"The Clinton administration was clearly sympathetic to the Taliban, as they were in line with Washington's anti-Iran policy and were important for the success of any southern pipeline from Central Asia that would avoid Iran."*²¹ The Taliban were backed by two close American allies, the Pakistani military and the Saudi regime; their rise counterbalanced the influence of those powers – notably Russia, Iran, and India – that were backing the regime of President Burhanaddin Rabbani.



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Since the end of the Cold War Central Asia has become the prize of what Rashid calls a new 'Great Game' among the Great Powers, mirroring the struggle between the British and Russian empires at the end of the nineteenth century. Today it is Central Asia's vast reserves of oil and natural gas that are at stake. During the second half of the 1990s, the American oil company Unocal was trying to build a gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to Pakistan via Afghanistan.

Unocal and the Clinton administration hoped that the Taliban could provide the stability needed for this project to succeed. In September 1996, Robin Raphel, US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, appealed to the international community to engage with the Taliban. *"It is not in the interests of Afghanistan or any of us here that the Taliban be isolated,"* she said.²² In February 1997 Taliban representatives visited Washington to meet State Department officials and Unocal executives.

The pipeline project eventually fell through, partly because of the difficulty of negotiating with the Taliban, partly because of growing revulsion at the regime's domestic policies. But the initial welcome given the Taliban in Washington wasn't confined to the Clinton administration. Zalmay Khalilzad is a leading neoconservative intellectual and currently George W Bush's Special Assistant for Near East, Southwest Asian and North African Affairs. Himself of Afghan origin, during the 1980s Khalilzad served in Ronald Reagan's State Department, where he strongly supported arming the Mujaheddin against the Soviet occupation forces.

Under Clinton, he advised Unocal during its efforts to court the Taliban. In 1997 Khalilzad wrote an article in the **Washington Post** arguing that the US should 'reengage' with Afghanistan and denying that the Taliban represented 'the kind of anti-US style of fundamentalism practised by Iran'. Khalilzad seems to have forgotten this article when he took on the role of special US envoy to Afghanistan after the overthrow of the Taliban.²³



The Price of Empire

The war on terrorism is presented as a response to an unprovoked attack on the United States – and more generally on the cause of freedom and democracy – on 11 September 2001. *“Americans are asking, why do they hate us?”* George W Bush famously said to Congress after 9/11. *“They hate what they see right here – a democratically elected government . . . They hate our freedoms – our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other.”*²⁴

Yet the history of US intervention in Afghanistan shows how America and its allies helped to create the radical Islamist terrorist networks that have now targeted them. Of course, this doesn't justify the atrocities that al-Qaeda inflicted on New York and Washington on 11 September – nothing could do that. But these didn't simply fall out of that beautiful blue sky in Manhattan. They came out of a history in which the US is deeply implicated.

In a remarkable and prophetic book first published before 9/11, Chalmers Johnson, a leading American academic specialist in East Asian history, argued that policies designed to maintain 'a global military-economic dominion' by the United States were producing more and more cases of blowback – a term introduced by the CIA to refer to 'the unintended consequences of policies that were kept secret from the American people':

*Terrorism by definition strikes at the innocent in order to draw attention to the sins of the invulnerable. The innocent of the twenty-first century are going to harvest unexpected blowback disasters from the imperialist escapades of recent decades. Although most Americans may be largely ignorant of what was, and still is, being done in their name, all likely to pay a steep price – individually and collectively – for their nation's continued efforts to dominate the global scene.*²⁵

The emergence of al-Qaeda is a very good example of blowback. The radical Islamist movement that the US and its allies fostered to defeat the Soviet Union in Afghanistan has produced a terrorist network that is now targeting American power. Al-Qaeda is, moreover, nourished by grievances arising from other US policies – notably the American military presence in Saudi Arabia, which is home to the Muslim holy places of Mecca and Medina, and Washington's support for Israeli repression of the Palestinians.

American policy in Afghanistan is simply the tip of the iceberg. The United States has been enormously active around the world since the end of the Second World War. The neoconservatives

now shaping US global policy – like earlier generations of American political leaders throughout the twentieth century – portray themselves as struggling against a strong current of isolationism that seeks to keep the US out of world affairs. Andrew Bacevich, a retired colonel in the US Armored Cavalry turned university professor, has criticized what he calls

“the myth of the ‘reluctant superpower’ – Americans asserting themselves only under duress and then always for the noblest purposes . . . The myth survives in the post-Cold War era less because it is true than because it is useful. Its utility stems in large part from the fact that it comes complete with its own cast of stock characters. Its heroes are ‘internationalists’, wise, responsible, and broad-minded in outlook. Opposing the internationalist project is a motley crew of narrow-minded, provincial, and frequently bigoted cranks, known collectively as ‘isolationists’.”²⁶

The US record since the end of the Second World War certainly suggests that the 'internationalists' have found it pretty easy to defeat the isolationists.



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A Selection of Major US Interventions since 1945²⁷

- **Korea 1945-** : Divided between US and Soviet forces at the end of the Second World War, the Korean peninsula has probably been the longest standing subject of American intervention; the US wages a hot war against North Korea and China in 1950-3 and has maintained a major military presence in South Korea ever since; despite US violations of the 1953 armistice agreement by introducing nuclear weapons into South Korea, the Clinton administration contemplates a pre-emptive strike on North Korea's nuclear programme in 1993-4; the Bush administration's decision to include North Korea in the 'axis of evil' causes the collapse of the Agreed Framework that ended that crisis, provoking a confrontation that could yet lead to another shooting war;
- **Philippines 1946-53:** Military and CIA support for campaign against Communist-led Huk guerrillas;
- **Greece 1947-early 1950s:** Military support for the right-wing monarchy in its civil war against the Communist-led National People's Army;
- **Italy 1947-8:** Covert propaganda campaign by the CIA to ensure the defeat of the Italian Communist Party in the elections of April 1948;
- **Albania 1949-53:** Disastrously unsuccessful campaign by CIA and British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) against the Communist regime;
- **Vietnam 1950-73:** US military support first for the French colonial authorities in Indochina, then, after the 1954 Geneva accords, for the client south Vietnamese regime of Ngo Dinh Diem (murdered in an American-backed coup in November 1963), and, when this fails, the deployment of 486,000 US troops by the end of 1967; outcome: the biggest American military and political defeat of the 20th century;
- **Iran 1953:** CIA-SIS operation, this time successful, to overthrow the nationalist prime minister, Muhammed Mossadegh, whose government (with overwhelming parliamentary support) nationalized the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (controlled by BP) and drove the Shah into exile;
- **Guatemala 1953-4:** CIA-engineered coup to remove President Jacobo Arbenz, a legally elected moderate reformer;
- **Guyana 1953-64:** Ultimately successful campaign by the CIA to bring down the left-wing nationalist government of Dr Cheddi Jagan;
- **Laos 1957-73:** The CIA organizes **l'Armée Clandestine** recruited from tribal people in Laos to help the American war for Indochina; Laos is also systematically bombed by the US between 1965 and 1973;
- **Lebanon 1958:** President Dwight Eisenhower sends 15,000 troops to Lebanon in an effort to halt the spread of Arab nationalism;
- **Cuba 1959-:** The Eisenhower administration reacts to the 1959 Revolution that brought Fidel Castro and his comrades to power by deciding to invade Cuba, leading to the humiliating failure of the April 1961 Bay of Pigs attack by CIA organized Cuban exiles; President John F. Kennedy responds by ordering Operation Mongoose, a more low-profile campaign to subvert the Cuban regime and assassinate Castro, which provokes the Soviet Union to base nuclear missiles on Cuba, leading to the biggest crisis of the Cold War in October 1962, and which may have also contributed to Kennedy's assassination; subsequent US administrations keep Cuba under economic blockade and tolerate terrorist attacks on the island by right-wing exiles based in Florida;²⁸
- **The Congo 1960-64:** After the mineral-rich Belgian colony becomes independent, the CIA connives at the arrest and murder of the young nationalist prime minister, Patrice Lumumba, and supports the seizure of power by General Joseph Mobutu, who misrules the country (renamed Zaire) for the next 30 years;
- **Brazil 1961-4:** The Kennedy and Johnson administrations help to subvert the mildly left-wing government of President João Goulart, encouraging a coup that keeps the military in power for 25 years;
- **Guatemala 1962-90s:** The Pentagon and other American agencies – notably the Agency for International Development's Office of Public Safety – help the Guatemalan security forces crush successive left-wing guerrilla movements with considerable use of air power, death squads, and torture;
- **Iraq 1963:** The CIA, eager to destroy the strongest Communist Party in the Middle East, connives at the overthrow of Colonel Qasim's radical nationalist regime in a military coup that leads to the coming to power of the Ba'ath;²⁹
- **Dominican Republic 1965:** President Lyndon Johnson sends 23,000 marines and paratroops to suppress a rebellion aimed at restoring to power Juan Bosch, a reformist president removed in an earlier American-backed coup;
- **Indonesia 1965:** CIA-backed military coup removes the neutralist nationalist regime of President Sukarno; the army and right-wing militias slaughter between 500,000 and one million supporters of the Indonesian Communist Party, which supported Sukarno; American diplomats supply the Indonesian military with lists of Communist activists: according to Howard Federspiel of the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research, "*No one cared, so long as they were Communists, that they were being butchered*";³⁰ the army commander, General Suharto, rules Indonesia till overthrown by a popular rising in 1997;
- **Ghana 1966:** The CIA helps organize the military coup that overthrows President Kwame Nkrumah, one of the fathers of Pan-Africanism;
- **Cambodia 1969-73:** In an unsuccessful effort to win the Vietnam War, President Richard Nixon and his National Security Advisor, Henry Kissinger, order first the secret bombing of Cambodia and then its invasion in April 1970 by their South Vietnamese client army;

- **Chile 1970-73:** The CIA, on the orders of the Nixon administration, works systematically to subvert the left-wing coalition government headed by President Salvador Allende (elected October 1970) and to support the military coup mounted by General Augusto Pinochet on 11 September 1973 that overthrew and killed Allende and subjected Chile to 25 years of dictatorship: *"I don't see why we need to stand by and watch a country go communist just because of the irresponsibility of its own people,"* says Kissinger;³¹
- **Greece 1967-74:** In April 1967 the army seizes to power to prevent the election of a moderate left-wing government; the new regime is dominated by officers close to the CIA;
- **Iraq 1972-5:** The CIA and the Shah of Iran support the Kurds of northern Iraq wage a guerrilla war against the Ba'athist regime in Baghdad (then closely aligned to the Soviet Union); when the Shah makes an agreement with the Iraqi government settling their territorial disputes, the Kurds are abandoned by Washington and Tehran to the Ba'ath's revenge;
- **Angola 1975-90:** After the collapse of the Portuguese colonial empire, the US intervenes in alliance with South Africa and Zaire to prevent the left-wing Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) coming to power, but is defeated thanks in part to Cuban military intervention; during the 1980s the Reagan administration resumes the campaign to subvert the MPLA government, backing the right-wing UNITA guerrillas of Jonas Savimbi and military incursions by apartheid South Africa;
- **Afghanistan 1979-92:** The CIA, with British, Pakistani, and Saudi support, funds and trains Islamist guerrillas, forcing the USSR eventually to withdraw from Afghanistan and end support for the Najibullah regime (see above);
- **Libya 1981-9:** On coming to office, Ronald Reagan orders the CIA to develop a plan for the overthrow of the radical nationalist regime of Muammar e-Qaddafi; in April 1986 American planes bomb Libya in an effort to kill Qaddafi himself; the justification for the raid was a terrorist bombing in Berlin for which Libyan responsibility is disputed; questions also remain over whether the Libyan regime was behind the bombing of Pan Am 103 in December 1988, in which 270 people died at Lockerbie;
- **Lebanon 1982-4:** After Israel invades Lebanon, besieges Beirut and allows the massacre of at least 700 Palestinian refugees by Christian fascist militiamen, US troops are sent to Beirut to help stabilize the situation, only to be withdrawn when 241 Marines are killed in a suicide bombing in October 1983;
- **Grenada 1983:** After the left-wing prime minister Maurice Bishop is killed in a coup, President Reagan orders 7,000 troops to seize control of the island, ostensibly to rescue American medical students studying there;
- **Nicaragua 1978-90:** Very extensive and ultimately successful US campaign to destabilize the left-wing Sandinista regime that comes to power in the 1978 revolution; the Reagan administration illegally funds the right-wing **contra** guerrillas by selling arms to Iran;
- **El Salvador 1980-94:** The US provides massive aid (at least \$6 billion) and technical assistance to the Salvadorian military in a bloody but unsuccessful campaign to crush the left-wing guerrillas Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front;
- **Iran/Iraq 1980-88:** The US tacitly supports Iraq during its eight-year war with Iran; Donald Rumsfeld, President Reagan's Middle East envoy, meets Saddam Hussein twice in 1983-4; at the climax of the war in 1987-8, US air and naval power intervenes decisively to tip the balance in Saddam's favour;
- **Panama 1989:** US troops invade Panama to overthrow and capture the military dictator, General Manuel Noriega, a long-standing CIA 'asset';
- **Iraq 1990- :** After Iraq seizes Kuwait in August 1990, US leads coalition to drive Saddam out of Kuwait, maintains an economic blockade and bombing campaign against the country for the next 12 years, despite dwindling international support (with the exception of Britain), and invades Iraq to impose 'regime change' in March 2003;
- **Somalia 1992-3:** US troops sent to Somalia to support aid operations, but become drawn into fighting with the population of Mogadishu; after 18 American soldiers are killed in a firefight in October 1993, Clinton administration pulls US forces out;
- **Balkans 1995:** US initiates NATO attack on Serbian forces and provides training and weapons to Croatian and Bosnian armies to force Slobodan Milosevic to negotiate the Dayton agreement ending the Bosnian War;
- **Afghanistan and Sudan 1998:** In unsuccessful retaliation for the al-Qaeda bombing of American embassies in East Africa, President Bill Clinton orders cruise missile attacks on Afghanistan and Sudan;
- **Balkans 1999:** US leads NATO bombing campaign against Yugoslavia to force Slobodan Milosevic to withdraw from Kosovo; Yugoslav forces react to the bombing by expelling hundreds of thousands of Kosovo Albanians from their homes; the ultimate NATO victory leads to reverse ethnic cleansing of the Serbian minority in Kosovo.

This astonishing record invites us to reflect on the meaning of terrorism. The US Army defines terrorism as 'the calculated use of violence to attain goals that are political, religious, or ideological in nature . . . through intimidation, coercion, or instilling fear'.³² But by that criterion, hasn't the US itself been practising terrorism for many years – using its vast military power and all the resources at the command of the CIA to achieve political ends, overthrowing governments and unmaking states? Hasn't the unofficial terrorism of bin Laden – ghastly though its consequences has been – been dwarfed by the state terrorism practised by the United States itself?

An Imperial Project

Informing these interventions has been the consistent aim to maintain the US as the dominant power in the world. George Kennan, the chief theorist of America's global strategy during the Cold War and then Director of the Policy Planning Staff at the State Department, wrote in February 1948:

“We have about 50% of the world's wealth but only 6.3% of its population . . . In this situation, we cannot fail to be the object of envy and resentment. Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships which will permit us to maintain this disparity without positive detriment to our national security.”³³

This imperial project still governs American global policy. Andrew Bacevich argues that “Since the end of the Cold War the United States has pursued a well-defined grand strategy” that in its essentials has been followed by every American administration since the start of the twentieth century. Its aim

is to preserve and, where both feasible and conducive to US interests, to expand an American imperium. Central to this strategy is a commitment to global openness – removing barriers that inhibit the movement of goods, capital, ideas, and people. Its ultimate objective is the creation of an integrated international order based on the principles of democratic capitalism, with the United States as the ultimate guarantor of order and enforcer of norms.³⁴



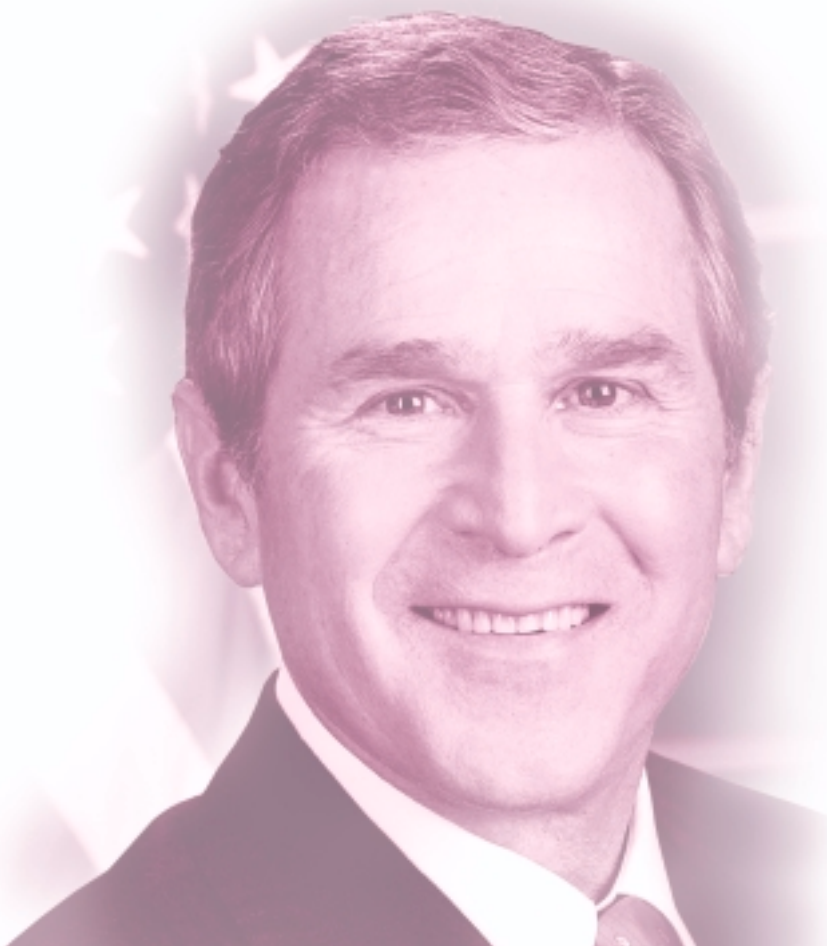
Andrew Bacevich

What distinguishes the administration of George W Bush is more than anything else the bluntness with which it asserts the military power underpinning this ‘strategy of openness’. This approach dates back to the administration of the current president's father, George H W Bush, in the early 1990s. In March 1992 a draft **Pentagon Defense Planning Guidance** document was leaked to the **New York Times**:

Our first objective is to prevent the re-emergence of a new rival. This is a dominant consideration underlying the new regional defence strategy and requires that we endeavour to prevent any hostile power from dominating a region whose resources would, under consolidated control, be sufficient to generate global power . . . we must maintain the mechanisms for deterring competitors from even aspiring to a larger regional or global role.³⁵

Dick Cheney, now Vice-President under Bush Junior, was then Secretary of Defense. Though the document was watered down by the administration, its outlook informed the outlook of the group of neoconservative intellectuals that have played a major role in shaping the Bush administration's global policy. The best known of them, Paul Wolfowitz, now Deputy Defense Secretary, supervised the preparation of the **Defense Planning Guidance**. Its substance is reaffirmed in **The National Security Strategy of the United States of America**, issued by the Bush administration in September 2002, which warns: ‘Our forces will be strong enough to dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military build-up in the hopes of surpassing, or equalling, the power of the United States.’³⁶

The Project for the New American Century, launched in 1997 under the Clinton administration by William Kristol, editor of **The Weekly Standard** (a magazine owned by Rupert Murdoch), provided the neoconservatives with their rallying point. Surprisingly enough given America's unparalleled military lead over all other states, their main preoccupation was US weakness. Wolfowitz argued that the rise of new economic powers in East Asia – above all, China – posed the danger of new ‘peer competitors’ emerging to challenge American dominance. In the face of these potential threats, US military strength needed to be built up even further and asserted where necessary.



The Neoconservatives Waging Global War: Washington's Warlords?

■ Dick Cheney:

Vice-President; former chief executive of the oil company Halliburton; as Defense Secretary under George Bush Senior sought to define a right-wing agenda for the world after the Cold War; author of a National Energy Plan that stresses America's growing dependence on imported oil.



■ Donald Rumsfeld:

Defense Secretary; like Cheney, Rumsfeld is less of an ideologue and more a pragmatic conservative than intellectuals such as Wolfowitz; nonetheless he is firmly committed to the unilateral assertion of American military power.



■ Paul Wolfowitz:

Deputy Defense Secretary; generally seen as the leader of the 'democratic imperialists' in the administration, who want to impose American-style democracy by force on the Middle East.



■ Douglas Feith:

Under Secretary of Defense for Policy; in 1996 co-authored (with, among others, Richard Perle) a strategy document for the incoming Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu that largely anticipated the aggressive policies that the present US administration is pursuing in the Middle East;

■ Condoleezza Rice:

National Security Advisor to the President; ex-director of Chevron; main author of **The National Security Strategy of the United States of America**, the Bush administration's war manifesto.



■ John Bolton:

Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security; the leading neocon in the State Department; main spokesperson within the administration for a highly confrontational policy towards North Korea;



■ Richard Perle:

known as the 'prince of darkness' for his role at the Pentagon under Reagan; in March 2003 forced to resign as chairman of the Defense Policy Board because of alleged conflicts between this role and his business interests; still influential.



Targeting Iraq

Iraq became for the neoconservatives the test case of American will to dominate the world. In January 1998 the Project for the New American Century produced an open letter to President Clinton, signed by a number of leading Republicans (including many senior officials in the present administration), that called for the US to take military action against and ultimately overthrow Saddam Hussein.

The campaign for 'regime change' in Iraq thus developed long before 11 September. In the aftermath of the attacks, Wolfowitz and his boss, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, argued that the US shouldn't merely target Osama bin Laden and the Taliban, but should go to war against Iraq as well, even though there was not (and is still not) any evidence linking Saddam to al-Qaeda or 9/11. Even though the Bush administration initially concentrated on Afghanistan, Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz ultimately got their way.

In June 2002 the American president announced what has come to be known as the Bush Doctrine. This asserts the right of the US unilaterally to wage preventive war against any state that it deems to be a threat. It was on this basis that both George W Bush and Tony Blair justified the conquest of Iraq, arguing that Saddam's weapons of mass destruction represented an urgent danger to what Bush likes to call the 'civilized' world.



Tony Blair, George W Bush and (above) NATO Secretary General, Lord Robertson – Meeting of the NATO-Russia Council, 28 May 2002.

© NATO Photos



Even before the war Iraq had been bled dry by 12 years of economic sanctions maintained by the US and Britain against the growing opposition of the rest of the international community. Washington and London sought to blame Saddam Hussein for the impoverishment of what had been one of the most advanced and prosperous societies in the Middle East. But Hans von Sponeck, former United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq, points out that the total amount of \$28 billion released by the UN for humanitarian supplies in Iraq amounted to \$183 a year for every Iraqi citizen.

This provided everyone in Iraq with 50 cents a day to spend on food, electricity, and medicine – way below the level of absolute poverty set by the World Bank at two US dollars a day. Meanwhile, at Anglo-American behest, the UN Compensation Commission in Geneva has been using Iraq's wealth to meet claims against Saddam's regime from the Israeli and Kuwaiti governments for such essential items as unsold flowers and air tickets.³⁷

In a notorious 1996 interview, Madeleine Albright, then US Ambassador to the UN and soon to become Bill Clinton's Secretary of State, was asked: *"We have heard that half a million children have died (because of sanctions against Iraq) . . . that's more children than died in Hiroshima . . . is the price worth it?"* Albright replied: *"I think this is a very hard choice, but the price – we think the price is worth it."*³⁸



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Iraq's suffering has certainly not ended as a result of its conquest by US and British troops. Within months of the fall of Baghdad these forces have become embroiled in a bloody low-intensity war against guerrilla forces resisting the occupation. The main victims of this escalating violence have been ordinary Iraqis. As of 10 September 2003 Iraq Body Count estimated the number of civilian deaths in Iraq at between 6,131 and 7,849. But the real figures may be much higher.

Dr Mohammed al-Obeidi of the anti-Saddam Iraqi Freedom Party told the **Village Voice** in September 2003 that party activists, after interviewing undertakers, hospital officials, and ordinary citizens, estimated that 37,137 civilians had been killed since the beginning of the invasion in March, 6,103 of them in Baghdad.³⁹ Later the same month the veteran journalist Robert Fisk reported that the mortuaries in Baghdad and Najaf were receiving the corpses of respectively 70 and 20 victims of violence every day. He estimated that almost 1,000 Iraqi civilians were being killed each week.⁴⁰

According to John Bolton, Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security,

“ I think Americans, like most people, are mostly concerned about their own countrymen . . . One of the stunning things about the quick coalition victory was how little damage was done to the Iraqi infrastructure . . . and how low Iraq casualties were . . . (The figure of ten thousand Iraqi civilians killed during the invasion is) quite low if you look at the size of the military operation that was undertaken. In fact, what's going on today is that the . . . civilian infrastructure will come very rapidly back up to the pre-war level.”⁴¹

At least initially, despite the neoconservatives' efforts, the second Bush administration denied that an Iraq weakened by sanctions and the Anglo-American bombing campaign represented any significant threat. As recently as 2000 Condoleezza Rice, later to become George W Bush's National Security Advisor, was arguing for a continuation of previous administrations' policy of containing Saddam rather than seeking regime change. Referring to 'rogue states' such as Iraq and North Korea, she wrote:

“ These regimes are living on borrowed time, so there need to be no sense of panic about them. Rather, the first line of defence should be a clear and classical statement of deterrence – if they do acquire WMD (weapons of mass destruction) – their weapons will be unusable because any attempt to use them will bring national obliteration.”⁴²



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Colin Powell and George Bush

In February 2001 the new Secretary of State, Colin Powell, was still arguing that this strategy of containment and deterrence was working:

“ The sanctions exist – not for the purpose of hurting the Iraqi people, but for the purpose of keeping in check Saddam Hussein's ambitions towards weapons of mass destruction . . . And frankly they have worked. He has not developed any significant capability with respect to weapons of mass destruction. He is unable to project conventional power against his neighbours.”⁴³



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Two years later, in February 2003, the same Colin Powell sought to persuade the UN Security Council that sanctions weren't working and that war was necessary against Iraq in order to prevent Saddam using the weapons of mass destruction he had somehow been accumulating despite the Anglo-American blockade. The failure by US and British forces to discover **any** weapons of mass destruction in Iraq since Saddam's fall and the growing suspicion that Washington and London exaggerated the threat before the war have – particularly in the wake of the apparent suicide of weapons expert Dr David Kelly in July 2003 – thrown the Blair government into a crisis that is beginning to spread across the Atlantic.



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But the Iraq War and the Bush Doctrine that is supposed to justify it aren't primarily reactions to 9/11. Condeleezza Rice has stressed that the attacks on New York and Washington offered the Bush administration with the opportunity to do what it wanted to do anyway:

“ an earthquake of the magnitude of 9/11 can shift the tectonic plates of international politics. The international system has been in flux since the collapse of Soviet power. Now it is possible – indeed, probable – that that transition is coming to an end.

If that is right, if the collapse of the Soviet Union and 9/11 bookend a major shift in international politics, then this is a period not just of grave danger, but of enormous opportunity. Before the clay is dry again, America and our friends and allies must move to take advantage of these new opportunities. ⁴⁴ ”



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9/11, in other words, provided the Bush administration with the pretext to use American military power to 'reorder the world', as Tony Blair famously told the Labour Party conference in October 2001. The Middle East is at the centre of these plans. After the conquest of Iraq Wolfowitz explained: "for reasons that have a lot to do with the US government bureaucracy we settled on the one issue that everyone could agree on which was weapons of mass destruction as the core reason". The real reasons were much more diverse. Wolfowitz stressed the benefit that the American occupation of Iraq offered by allowing Washington to withdraw most of its forces from Saudi Arabia.⁴⁵

Removing one of bin Laden's main grievances against the US doesn't mean that America is pulling out of the Middle East. On the contrary, occupying Iraq means that the Bush administration now has a much tighter grip on the region than any of its predecessors. Summing up the administration's motives for going to war, former NATO commander General Wesley Clark (now a Democratic presidential candidate) said:

“ I think there were . . . many who did believe Saddam was a threat. I think there were others who believed that well he was the most convenient way to get military power on the ground. ”⁴⁶



The main reason why the Middle East matters so much to the US strategically is, of course, the oil it contains. In May 2001 a team headed by Vice-President Dick Cheney reported on US future energy needs. It estimated that by 2020 the US would be dependent on imports for two thirds of its oil needs. This would tie America even more closely to unstable and potentially hostile regions – the Middle East, Latin America, Central Asia, Russia, and West Africa.



The Cheney report stressed the importance of US diversifying the sources of its energy supplies. But it also underlined the central role of the Middle East, home to about two thirds of global oil reserves. Middle Eastern oil is even more important for other countries – including America's main economic rivals, the European Union and Japan, and China, possibly, in the long-term, the most dangerous challenger of all.

Occupying Iraq has given the US control over the country with the second largest oil reserves in the world. It is also in a strong position to put pressure on Saudi Arabia, which has the largest reserves. Relations between the US and Saudi Arabia have been getting worse, especially since 9/11 (15 out of the 19 suicide hijackers were Saudi citizens). Now, not only is the US less dependent on Saudi Arabia, but its military power in the Middle East – plus that of its ferocious client state in Israel – gives it a potential chokehold on the oil supply to the other leading powers in the world.



The war on terrorism is, in other words, a war for global domination. Al-Qaeda's atrocities have given the Bush administration the pretext it needed to use its unparalleled military supremacy to reshape the world in its image. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have demonstrated to the rest of the world the costs of resisting American power.

But the costs of not resisting American power are also high. Protesting against the impact of the war on terrorism, Amnesty International argues that 'some of the US administration's actions since 11 September threaten to erode international law and standards forged over the past half-century or more'. Amnesty accuses the administration of an attitude of 'outright rejectionism' towards international human rights law:

The USA's active opposition to the International Criminal Court is a case in point. Its worldwide campaign to have US nationals exempted from the Court's jurisdiction coincided with the US administration's own plans to try foreign nationals by military commissions – executive bodies, not independent and impartial courts. Similarly, the USA's attempt to block the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention on Torture, which will establish a system of regular visits to places of detention, came at a time when the government was denying international human rights organizations access to hundreds of detainees held in its 'war on terror'.⁴⁷

The cost of tolerating the war on terrorism is thus not merely the death and suffering that this war is causing, but also the erosion of civil liberties, as arbitrary detention without trial and the use of torture become acceptable in the liberal democracies that are supposed to set the standards for the rest of the world to follow. Already opposition to this war has produced what looks like becoming the greatest global citizens' movement in history. 15 February 2003 saw the largest international day of protest that has ever taken place. Millions of people around the world marched to stop the Anglo-American war on Iraq.

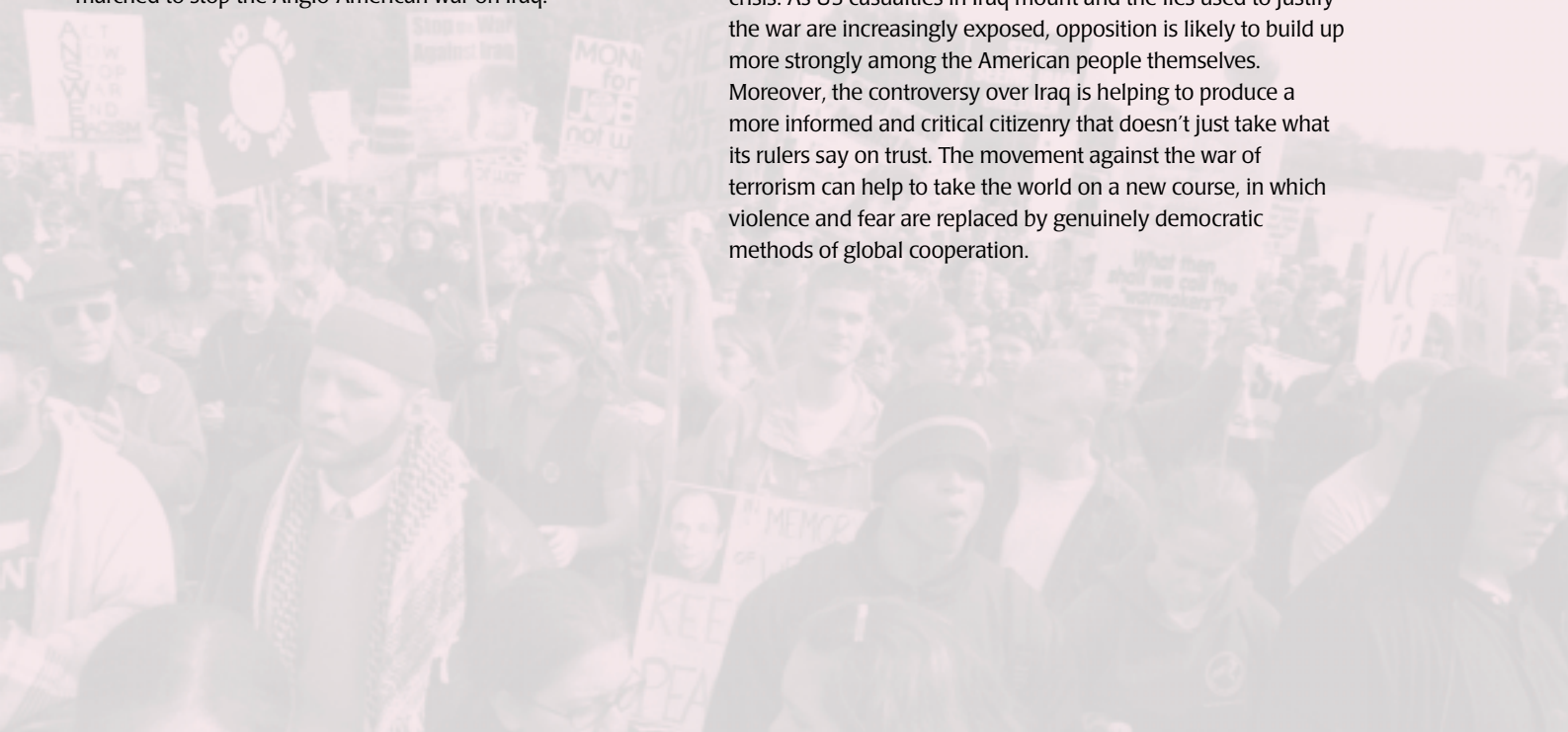


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Neither these protests nor those that took place in response to the actual attack on Iraq prevented the conquest of Iraq. But this doesn't mean that these efforts were futile. The failure of the 'coalition' to discover the weapons of mass destruction with which Saddam Hussein supposedly threatened the world has come to haunt Tony Blair in particular. And the development of resistance to the occupation within Iraq has called into question the objectives of the invasion.

As incidents such as the destruction of the UN headquarters in Baghdad in August 2003 have shown, far from defeating terrorism the war is provoking new terrorist attacks. Indeed it turns out that this is precisely what British intelligence warned Tony Blair before the war. On 10 February the Joint Intelligence Committee reported that 'al-Qaeda and associated groups continued to represent by far the greatest terrorist threat to Western interests, and that threat would be heightened by military action against Iraq' – an assessment that for some reason didn't find its way into any of the British government's notorious intelligence dossiers.⁴⁸

Mass protests have already isolated the Bush administration internationally and helped to throw its main European ally into crisis. As US casualties in Iraq mount and the lies used to justify the war are increasingly exposed, opposition is likely to build up more strongly among the American people themselves. Moreover, the controversy over Iraq is helping to produce a more informed and critical citizenry that doesn't just take what its rulers say on trust. The movement against the war of terrorism can help to take the world on a new course, in which violence and fear are replaced by genuinely democratic methods of global cooperation.



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- | | | | |
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Arab Media Watch	www.arabmediawatch.com
ATTAC	www.attac.org
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Citizens Concerned for the People of Iraq	www.scn.org/ccpi
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People and Planet	www.peopleandplanet.org
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The White House	www.whitehouse.gov
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* MediaLens, which seeks to correct the bias of the corporate media, contains, among other valuable resources, links to many more websites than could be listed here.

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