United States Occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq: A Hindrance to Combating Global Terrorism

Kema Irogbe, Professor of Political Science, Claflin University

Abstract

The infamous attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, by Osama Bin Laden-led Al Qaeda network marked a turning point in the relationship between the United States and the Islamic world. This watershed event led to the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan (where Al Qaeda organization was harbored by Taliban regime) and the subsequent unjustifiable invasion of Iraq. How do the continued U.S. occupations of the two Islamic countries help to combat global terrorism? And do the occupations bridge the gulf between the Islamic world and the United States?

Drawing aggregate of quantitative and qualitative data, it is argued in this paper that the continued occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq ignite rather than reduce global terrorism and that complete withdrawals hold enormous promise for global peace and security. In doing so, the paper provides an analysis of the mounting cost of human and financial resources of the wars, the abuses or atrocities committed by the invaders including the application of extraordinary rendition, the indefinite detention of prisoners of war without the benefit of trials, the looting of Iraq treasures, and the effects of the seemingly perpetual and unwinnable wars on the polarization of Muslims and Christians in the United States. The conclusion is that there is insufficient evidence to establish an optimistic prognosis for the prospects of peace and security in the region of Middle East but ending the U.S. occupations of Islamic territories can be a turning point for the illusive peace.

Introduction

For years after the infamous September 11, 2001 (better known as 9/11), there had been no serious national debate in the United States on the root causes of the rising global terrorism for fear of one being labeled anti-American or sympathizer of Islamic fanatics orchestrated under the neoconservatives-dominated Bush administration. Yet, the burning question still remains: Why do the Islamic radicals hate America so much to the point of applying suicide terrorism? While the former President George W. Bush's publicly repeated answer was that they attacked the United States because "they hate our freedoms," Osama Bin Laden, the Al Qaeda leader, in several well-known statements and interviews cited their grievances for the attack against the United States which include the injustice done to the Palestinians, the cruelty of prolonged sanctions against Iraq, the presence of American troops in Saudi Arabia, and the repressive and corrupt nature of U.S.-backed gulf governments. How can these compelling positions be reconciled? Do the continued U.S. occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq help to combat global terrorism? And do the occupations bridge the gulf between the Islamic world and the United States?

Drawing aggregate of qualitative and quantitative data, it is argued in this paper that the continued United States occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq as a retributive measure ignites rather than reduces global terrorism and that complete withdrawals hold enormous promise for global peace and security. In doing so, the paper discusses what precipitated the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq as well as the aftermaths of the invasions which include the lootings of Iraq

treasures, the raping of Iraqi women, the Abu Ghraib Prison atrocities, the killing of Afghanistan civilians as a sporting spectacle or entertainment by American soldiers, the application of extraordinary rendition, the waterboarding of prisoners, the unresolved fate of Guantanamo prisoners, the polarization of Muslims and Christians, and the mounting cost of human and financial resources; all of which are the more compelling reasons to end the occupation of the two countries.

Background

A great many people had hoped that the post-Cold War era would offer mankind new opportunities for global peace and security. Unfortunately, the end of the Cold War by 1989 marked the beginning of an unprecedented and intense series of global conflicts. Some people thought that the competition during the bipolar era (the period of high tensions between the former USSR and USA) that had had a profound, and often violent, impact on many societies was the root cause of the global violence. So, they argued that since the balance of power had been replaced with collective security, the post-Cold War would genuinely provide new opportunities for global peace and security. But in actuality, the collective security that was exercised by the United Nations against Iraq's invasion of Kuwait had vanished. Its replacement is a lone superpower—the United States of America! In building an empire around the world under the disguise of spreading the evangelical "democracy and freedom," the U.S. government is determined to use any means necessary to achieve a globalized economy under the efficacy and tutelage of American corporations and that of their European junior partners. The transnational corporations always need the protection of their parent countries in order to control the host nations (mostly the underdeveloped countries) because without such protection their investments and expansion overseas would be in peril.

There is no politico-economic system that can automatically maintain and reproduce itself without constant effort being made to fortify the existing hegemonic order. Those who control the wealth of America, the owning class, have an influence over political life far in excess of their number. They have the power to influence policy through the control of jobs and withholding of investments. They own and exercise trusteeship over social and educational institutions, foundations, think tanks, publications, and mass media, thereby greatly influencing American ideological outputs, its values, and its information flow. That is why some of the marginalized groups of the society have become the advocate for the owning class. For example, an Ohio resident, Samuel Joseph Wurzelbacher, nicknamed "Joe the Plumber"[1] during the 2008 U.S. presidential elections argued against his self- interest by insisting that limiting tax increases only to those who earn more than $250,000 was a bad idea even though he was unlicensed plumber who dreams to own a plumbing company one day.

In short, the stewards of corporate capitalism make it their business to occupy the more important public offices or see that "reliable" individuals loyal to them do so. Hence, most national policymakers have been drawn from the dictatorships of these global corporations, prominent law firms, Wall Street banks, the military, the elite universities, most of which are Ivy

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[1] Larry Rohter, *The New Times,* 16 October 2008, See also Robert Barnes, "Joe the Plumber: Not a Licensed Plumber," *The Washington Post,* 16 October 2008. "Joe the Plumber is not exactly a plumber, he's not even close to making the kind of money that would result in higher taxes from Democrat Barack Obama's proposals and has such an aversion to taxes that a lien was filed against him by the state of Ohio."

League schools, think tanks, foundations as well as the scientific establishment. The policymakers carry into public life many of the class interests and values that shape their business careers such as former President George W. Bush (oil business) and Vice President Dick Cheney (CEO-Halliburton) before entering public service.

One important factor about the ruling class, or plutocracy, which is composed of largely the political active members of the owning class, is that it is not the class origin of leaders that matters most but rather it is the class interest they serve that determines who becomes a member of the economic elite. That means an affluent man who manifests remotely progressive leanings is not likely to be invited into a position of power while a person from the underclass or working class who demonstrates conservative leanings has a much better chance.

It is under this backdrop that the conservative-republican Bush and Cheney, who owe a debt of gratitude to the corporate political machine, were catapulted into power in 2000 elections as opposed to the "moderate" Al Gore and John Edward ticket. Even President Barack Obama, who rose from humble origin or relatively modest background, campaigned for his election progressively but now conducts foreign policy conservatively by reneging on his promise to resolve, among other things, the Guantanamo (GTMO) detainees' status and to close the prison entirely[2] which, he once had argued, was becoming an excuse for breeding terrorist recruitment. This background should help us to contextualize inside America's war on terror.

9/11 and Its Matrix

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, against the U.S. and the subsequent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq crystalized the need for critical and innovative research and analysis of the issue of global terrorism. This paper is not designed to discuss the issue simply from the perspective of dominant powers but also to shed the views of those who are dominated by them. After all, there are too many recorded examples of where victims learned the discourse of oppression from those who oppressed them and where the victims had been portrayed as aggressors and the aggressors as victims. The failure to challenge the U.S.-led Western discourse on global terrorism continues to undermine the hopes, dreams, and aspirations of those who struggle for liberation from hegemony and injustice.

What is terrorism? There is no consensus and there should not be one accepted definition of terrorism because where you stand depends on where you sit. Even in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, the United Nations failed to adopt an agreed definition on global terrorism and the impasse continues to this day.[3] Consequently, scholars from left to right have offered varied definitions of terrorism. David J. Whittacker provides a list of definitions in his work on the subject which includes:

1. The unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, a civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives (FBI).

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[2] "Obama reneges on vow to close Gtmo," *The Washington Post,* 8 March 2011.
[3] Straight UN Facts, "There is no UN definition of terrorism," *Eye on the UN*, Retrieved online, 19 January 2011, www.eyeontheun.org/facts.asp...

2. The calculated use of violence or threat of violence to inculcate fear, intended to coerce or intimidate governments or societies as to the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious or ideological (U.S. Department of Defense).
3. Premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetuated against noncombatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience (U.S. Department of State).[4]

The British government's definition is similar: "Terrorism is the use, or threat, of action which is violent, damaging or disrupting, and is intended to influence the government or intimate the public and is for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, or ideological cause."[5]   Even if we accept the official definitions of both the British and the American, it will be difficult for any objective observer to see how the actions of the U.S. and the British armies will be viewed differently from the Al Qaeda network. Neither would the definition of the current Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, who sees terrorism as "the deliberate and systematic assault on civilians to inspire fear for political ends"[6] be any different.

For the purposes of this paper, global terrorism is defined as the use of violence by an aggressor or aggressors whether they are states or stateless against their declared enemies that result to the dead of innocent civilians or damage to property in order to achieve some political objectives. In applying this definition, a distinction is drawn between the aggressors who perpetuate global terrorism and the victims who engage in counterterrorism in order to resist the bullies. For instance, the U.S., Britain, and Israel and other countries in the west regard Hezbollah as one of the leading terrorist organizations in the world even though it was formed to resist the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon. Hezbollah, certainly a counterterrorist organization, succeeded in driving out the invaders after two decades of defiance of Security Council orders to withdraw. Similarly, Afghanistan Taliban and Iraqis fighters who are resisting the continued illegal occupations of their lands by the United States cannot be called terrorists as the U.S. will have us believe but rather they qualify as counter-terrorists who are resisting the U.S. direct aggression.

 Another example of counter-terrorism occurred in South Africa during apartheid era. In 1985, former Vice President Dick Cheney as the then member of the U.S. House of Representatives voted against a resolution urging the release of the African National Congress (ANC) leader, Nelson Mandela, after spending 23 years of imprisonment at that time because he said: "The ANC was then viewed as a terrorist organization."[7] But the ANC was formed as a legitimate counter-terrorist/counter-insurgency organization to resist the white settler regime and its allies in Washington and London that used terrorism against over 30 million black majority including Sharpsville Massacre[8] and other despicable atrocities. Thus, counter-terrorism strategy

[4] David J. Whittacker, ed., *the Terrorism Reader* (London: Routledge, 2010), p.3. See also Jamal R. Nassar, *Globalization & Terrorism: The Migration of Dreams and Nightmares* (2nd Edition) (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2010), pp. 17-18.

[5] Noam Chomsky, *Hegemony or Survival: American's Quest for Global Dominance* (New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company Publishers, 2003), p. 188.

[6] Jamal R. Nassar, *Globalization & Terrorism The Migration of Dreams and Nightmares* (2nd Edition) Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2010), p. 18.

[7] Joe Conason, "Dick Cheney is relying on our cultural amnesia to wipe away his record on South Africa," 1 August 2000. www.hartford_hwp.com/achieves/45c/210.html

[8] On 21 March 1960 at least 180 blacks South Africans were injured (there are claims of as many as 300) and 69 killed when the apartheid regime police opened fire on approximately hundreds of demonstrators, who were

as applied by Hezbollah, Taliban, Iraqis, and the ANC is surely a weapon of the weak against the strong.

The Invasion of Afghanistan

On 9/11, 19 members of exiled Saudi millionaire Osama Bin Laden's terrorist network Al Qaeda hijacked four fully fueled American Airlines and United Airlines 757 and 767 jetliners bound from Boston, Newark, and Washington to the West Coast. Two of the hijacked planes slammed into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York, destroying the towers, and killing almost 3,000 people as well as over 6,000 injured. Another hijacked plane American Airline 77 that plunged into the Pentagon killed 189 people. The fourth plane plummeted into a field in western Pennsylvania after passengers, having been told by phone what had happened with the other planes, charged the hijackers, and forced them to lose control of the plane. Consequently, everyone on board died.[9]

There was a spontaneous outburst of condemnations worldwide for the callous and unjustifiable attacks. However, a few countries such as Iraq declared that United States had received what it deserved because of past and present U.S. policies in the Middle East and elsewhere. Also, there were some Islamic fundamentalist groups and individuals such as Palestinians who praised the aggressive terrorist attacks because of the U.S. continuing support for Israel and its military presence in Saudi Arabia, a vestige of 1990-91 Persian Gulf War.

The Iraqis praised the attacks because they were unhappy for the continued unjust U.S.-Britain-led United Nations-imposed economic sanctions that took the lives of over a million Iraqis, the vast majority of whom were children. Yet, Madeleine Albright, who in May 1996 was former President Bill Clinton's United Nation's Ambassador, said the sanctions were justified. In a CBS 60 Minutes aired interview with Leslie Stahl, she was asked: "We have heard that a half million children have died. I mean 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—the price is worth it."[10] This is clearly an absurd statement from a diplomat to say the least. In the case of Palestinians who jubilated for the U.S. attacks, they have known terrorism ever since the partitioning of their territories in 1948, the year the state of Israel was created. Their anger relates to the strong U.S. support of Israel, a country that occupies Palestinians' territories. Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, the man who negotiated Camp David Accord between Egypt and Israel, wrote in his illuminating piece of work: *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*:

> ….The area between the segregation barrier and the Israeli border has
> been designated a closed military region for an indefinite period of
> time. Israel directives state that every Palestinian over the age of
> twelve living in the closed areas has to obtain a "permanent resident
> permit" from the civil administration to enable them to continue to live

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protesting against the unjust pass law at the township of Sharpsville, near Vereeniging in the Transvaal. See the work of Kema Irogbe, *The Roots of United States Foreign Policy Toward Apartheid South Africa, 1969-1985* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1997).

[9] CNN, "Chronology of Terror," Accessed online, 22 January 2001. www.articles.cnn.com_09_11/us/...

[10] Democracy Now, "Democracy Now Confronts Madeleine Albright on the Iraq Sanctions: Was It Worth the Price?" 30 July 2004. http://www.democracynow.org/article.pl?sid=04/07/30/1519218

in their own homes. They are considered to be aliens, without the
rights of Israeli citizens.[11]

There is no objective observer that can deny the oppression of the homeless Palestinians by
Israeli government nor can any fair-minded individual who believes in justice not have sympathy
to their cause. The fact is that Israel's continued occupation and confiscation of privately-owned
Palestinians' land in the West Bank and control over Gaza, are extremely oppressive, with
Palestinians having minimal control over their lives. Over 10,000 Palestinian men, women, and
children are held in Israel prisons without having a legitimate trial. Physical abuse and torture
are frequent. Palestinian borders (even internal ones) are controlled by Israeli forces.
Periodically, Palestinian men, women, and children are strip searched; they are beaten; women in
labor are presented from reaching hospitals (at times resulting in death) food and medicine are
blocked from entering Gaza, producing an escalating humanitarian crisis. Israel forces invade
almost daily, injuring, kidnapping, and sometimes killing inhabitants.[12] The U.S. has stood
staunchly with Israel ever since its creation. The U.S. government readily provides Israel
technical and financial assistance of an average of $7 million per day due largely to the Israeli-
American special-interest lobbying groups.[13] The U.S. steadfast support of Israel and the
authoritarian and oppressive regimes in the Middle East such as Egypt which receives roughly
$1.3 billion annually are the root causes of the opposition of U.S. policy in the region.

However, the U.S. policies toward the Middle East do not justify the 9/11 terrorist act by
Al Qaeda network. The offensive act was carried out of frustration by people who have failed to
vigorously confront their oppressive governments internally in their dual struggle. While the
assistance of external powers to the autocratic regimes hardened the ability of the oppressed and
the marginalized people of the region to achieve an authentic national liberation, it is only
through an unrelenting systematic internal campaign can they ultimately free themselves. We
saw some examples of that in Iran 1979 and now in Tunisia and Egypt in January 2011. The
plight of the people in the region will lose its legitimacy when they globalize their struggle by
resorting to killing of the innocents worldwide through terrorist acts of the kind that Al Qaeda
perpetrates. That tactics is counterproductive. It makes it difficult for the people around the
world who are concerned about peace and justice to lend their support.

This is why the United Nations passed a Resolution 1368 (2001) which condemned the
9/11 terrorists acts viewed as a threat to international peace and security and recognized "the
inherent right of individual and collective self-defense in accordance with the charter…"[14]
Within weeks of the attacks and the passage of the resolution President George W. Bush
organized a coalition of the willing states to confront the Al Qaeda. He demanded that the
Taliban government of Afghanistan, which had been providing safe haven for Osama Bin Laden
and his Al Qaeda terrorist training camps, turn Bin Laden over to the United States. When the
Taliban failed to meet the demand, the U. S. in October 2001 initiated extensive and intensive air
strikes against the Taliban and Al Qaeda targets throughout the country. The United States also
began providing military assistance to the Northern Alliance, a group of Anti-Taliban Afghans

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[11] Jimmy Carter, *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2006), p. 192.
[12] "A Synopsis of the Israel/Palestine Conflict," Retrieved online, 29 January 2011,
http://infamericansknew.org/history
[13] Ibid.
[14] UN Security Council 4370th Meeting (2001), "Unanimously Adopting Resolution 1368 – Council Calls on All
States to Bring Perpetrators to Justice," Accessed online, 12 December 2010, www.un.org/resolution 1368.

consisting of several nationalities. The Northern Alliance had been fighting the Taliban since it seized power in 1996. American Special Forces including Marine and Army Personnel were all introduced.[15] By the end of 2001, the Taliban had been removed from power, and Afghanistan was no longer a safe haven for Bin Laden and Al Qaeda. The U.N. resolution of "the inherent right to individual….self-defense" had been accomplished. A retribution had been appropriately fulfilled.

Nevertheless, by March 2002, in addition to anti-Taliban Afghanistan forces, 16,500 troops from 17 countries were deployed in and around Afghanistan to aid in what the U. S. now calls "war against global terrorism"[16] which is turning out to be a perpetual war. As a lone superpower, the U.S. solicited and reportedly received offers from 136 countries in the form of military assistance. The international community pledged $1.8 billion in 2002 to help rebuild Afghanistan, with another $2.7 billion to come in subsequent years.[17] Rather than declare victory and pull-out of the country and hand over these funds to the people of Afghanistan to rebuild their own country, the U.S., despite the defeat of the Taliban continues to escalate the war. While Bin Laden, Mullah Omar, the leader of the Taliban and other senior Taliban and Al Qaeda Leaders remained at large, the U.S.-led assault on terrorism has become an American war against Islam just as Samuel Huntington predicted in his work: *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order.[18]*

The 9/11 legacy has aggravated the persecution of Muslims in the United States. A survey conducted by the Pew Research Center has found that a majority of respondents place Muslims as the persecuted religious group in the U.S. Fifty-eight percent of Americans polled said that Islamic faith promotes violence more than other religions. This is why two women dressed in traditional Islamic clothing were recently harassed and threatened at a gas station in New York[19]—a city where there is growing opposition for Muslims to build a mosque near "Ground Zero"—the site of former World Trade Center in violation of the U.S. Constitution. Racial profiling also remains a concern after high profile Bollywood actor Shahrukh Khan (an Indian citizen) was detained and questioned at an airport because of his Muslim name. Ironically, Khan was in the United States to film a movie on discrimination against Muslims in the post-9/11 world.[20] In short, since 9/11, Muslims have been under siege. They are picked up and jailed with hardly any probable cause; the majority is basically living in virtual internment camps. The conditions of Muslims today in the United States are very much analogous to that of Americans of Japanese descent in 1942 during World War II.

The Japanese-Americans in the western states were rounded up and moved to internment camps so that they would not aid and abet the enemy: motherland Japan. The only difference is that the camps of today are virtual. Patriot Act (which allows Federal Bureau of Investigation to

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[15] Daniel S. Papp. *The Impact of September 11 on Contemporary International Relations to Accompany Contemporary International Relations,* 6th Edition (New York, NY: Longman, 2003), p. 4.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and The Remaking of World Order* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1996). Huntington believes that while the age of ideology had ended, the world had only reverted to a normal state of affairs characterized by cultural conflict. In his thesis, he argues that the primary axis of conflict in the future will be along cultural and religious lines.

[19] "The 9/11 Legacy: Persecution of Muslims Continues," 11 September 2009. http://uprisingradio.org/home/p=10066?

[20] Ibid.

search, spy, seize, and detain suspected terrorists) and other draconian laws aimed at limiting freedoms were mainly directed at Muslims. The persecution of Muslims have become much easier because of the dubious role played by the corporate media, apathetic citizenry, hate-filled public utterances by well-known figures on such cable channels like Fox News. Due to government secrecy, it is difficult to obtain aggregate of quantitative data that demonstrate the full extent of the persecution of the Muslim community in the United States in the aftermath of 9/11. However, the following **Table I** has been extrapolated from media accounts and from projections based on available government reports.

Table I—Population Estimates of Virtual Internment Camp: Muslim-Americans since 9/11

Government	Government Admissions	Conservative Estimates
FBI: interviewed/interrogated, investigated/questioned/raided	27,000	90,000
Detained or arrested	6,483	15,000
Deported	3,208	3,208
In process of deportation	13,434	13,434
Undergoing voluntary deportation	n/a	Unknown
Fled the country in fear	n/a	50,000
Subpoenas/search warrants	18,000	18,000
NSERS: special registration/ interviewed/fingerprinted/ photographed	144,513	144,513
Under surveillance through libraries	n/a	unknown
Electronic surveillance	n/a	100,000
Gone underground	n/a	Unknown
TOTAL	**212,638**	**434,155**

Source: Abdul Makik Mujahid "In a Virtual Internment Camp: Muslim Americans Since 9/11," Retrieved online, 2 February2001. http://www.soundvision.com/info/muslins/internment.asp

The oppression of the Muslims in the United States and elsewhere does not only undermine democracy, but it also radicalizes possibly thousands of Islamic youth, many of whom study at Islamic fundamentalist madrassa schools around the world, particularly in the Middle East. It further makes them more Anti-American and force them to become in alliance with Al Qaeda network.

Even though the Taliban lost the battle and were dethroned, they had not lost the war. The continuing occupation of Afghanistan by the United States provides them the opportunity to reclaim their country. Wars have been waged against the Afghans throughout their history. Afghanistan is known to be the 'graveyard of empires'. The British, and even recently the former Soviet Union invaded the country and they all failed woefully. The Afghans may be perceived to be dour, conservative, fatalistic, perhaps, slow in mind and initiative, but they have historically proven to be stubborn, patient, resilient, capable of endurance; they are a race of fighters ruthless in battle, responsive to leadership and ready to die on order. The Taliban, who have been nurtured with strong rulers rooted in certain earthiness of spirit and love of the soil—mountains, valleys and terrain—are proud and formidable people.

In spite of somewhat primitive arsenal, negligible number of fighters and without the support of any known ally of the kind that Afghanistan Mujahideens received from the United States during the Soviets occupation in 1980s, the lowly Taliban fighters continue to put up a stiff resistance. The incoming Obama administration is certainly aware of that. In January 2009, President Barack Obama deployed additional 17,000 more troops to join roughly 294,000 foreign troops out of which approximately 90,000 were American troops to face "the insurgence Taliban."[21] Determined to fight a "just war" and end future terrorism emanating from Afghanistan, President Obama deployed another 30,000 troops to that country.[22] By October 2010, the U.S. troops alone had surpassed 100,000.[23] Nevertheless, the number of United States casualties continue to rise. **Table II** shows the trend of casualty figures.

Table II—Operation Enduring Freedom/Afghanistan

Afghanistan Coalition Military Fatalities by Year

Year	US	UK	Other	Total
2001	12	0	0	12
2002	49	3	18	70
2003	48	0	10	58
2004	52	1	7	60
2005	99	1	31	131
2006	98	39	54	191
2007	117	42	73	232
2008	155	51	89	295
2009	317	108	96	521
2010	499	103	109	711
2011	27	4	7	38
TOTAL	**1473**	**352**	**494**	**2319**

Source: icasualties.org, Retrieved online, 7 February 2011. http://icasualties.org/OEF/index.aspx

While the coalition forces have suffered a significant number of casualties, it is generally believed that the Taliban and the Al Qaeda fighters may have experienced much more casualties. However, it is difficult to know how much of Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters have been killed so far due to a number of factors. First, Islamic law requires immediate burial after death; second, some of the deaths are burned to ashes; third, U.S. Department of Defense does not readily release the statistics of the enemy casualties to the public for military strategic reason. Such statistics, which are quite unreliable, can be inflated for propaganda or deflated to avoid negative publicity. But, there are several reports that indicate that the Taliban and their Al Qaeda

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[21] Gilles Dorronsoro, "Obama's Afghanistan Policy: Q & A with Gilles Dorronsoro" Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, DC, Retrieved online, 23 March 2009. www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=22884

[22] Israeli News, "Obama Is Not Bushy Enough" Accessed online, 4 December 2009, http://samsonblinded.org/news/obama_is_not_busy_enough_15093

[23] Michael E. O'Hanlon, "Staying Power: The U.S. Mission in Afghanistan Beyond 2011," Accessed online, September/October 2010. www.brookings.edu/articles/2010/0825_afghanistan_ohanlon.aspx

supporters may be losing far more fighters than the U.S.-led coalition-of-the-willing. In a report of November 18, 2010, by Bill Roggio in *The Longwar Journal: A Project of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies*, while 49 Taliban fighters were killed, only 6 U.S. troops were killed during what the U.S. military called "Operation Kunar," a province in the eastern Pech River Valley of Afghanistan, five miles to Pakistan. In another report by Noor Khan of *The Washington Post*, September 4, 2006, warplanes and artillery killed more than 200 Taliban insurgents hiding in orchards during the U.S.-led, NATO-Afghan offensive in southern Afghanistan. In yet another report in *The Washington Post* of August 28, 2010, by David Nakamura and Joshua Partlow, Taliban insurgents disguised as American soldiers attacked two U.S. bases in eastern Afghanistan; they said that the simultaneous assaults on Forward Operating Base Salerno and nearby Forward Operating Base Chapman in Khost province resulted to 21 Taliban fighters killed but no U.S. deaths. In a report by Dexter Filkins in *The New York Times* of February 15, 2010, he wrote that a quarter of the 400 Taliban fighters estimated to be in Marja, a broad agricultural area crisscrossed by irrigation canals, were killed without any report of coalition casualties.

Despite the enormous number of casualties the Taliban fighters and their Al Qaeda supporters are experiencing, they remain resilient even though they can barely feed or sustain themselves. There is little for Obama administration to show for the new Afghanistan strategy which has forced some U.S. commanders to still urge for more reinforcements reminiscent of Vietnam or face the possibility of defeat. The word defeat has rarely been uttered by any military force; however, Afghanistan is the exception, where defeat is a realistic outcome. There, defeat is a reality just like all previous invaders had experienced since the beginning when Pashtuns inhabited the land. That is the fate of U.S. and its NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) alliance.

Clearly, the NATO Coalition forces are inflicting far more damages than the Taliban. But as Michael Scheuer, former CIA Counter-Terrorism Analyst has stated in an interview with Fox News aired February 8, 2011: "You fight a war until the enemy is no longer willing to fight any more." Scheuer correctly points out the obvious. It is not the number of casualties that one side is able to inflict on the other in a war that is decisive but the will to fight to a bitter end. It reminds us of William Shakespeare well-known quote: "The past is prologue." The Taliban have historically shown the willingness to fight to the end. For the United States, this is Vietnam being revisited.

The Invasion of Iraq

The terrorist attacks of 9/11 stunned and horrified Americans that used to believe that the strategic location of the United States, protected by the Atlantic Ocean was sufficient to deter potential enemies from any attacks. Most Americans had largely lost interest in global politics after the end of the Cold War a decade earlier. Now they have realized that the U.S. is no longer invincible or untouchable. While the vast majority of Americans rallied behind the Bush administration, supported by the United Nations and the global community, in its military retributive campaign against the Al Qaeda, neither the United Nations nor the American public was willing to signal the green light for the United States to widen the war on terror. But after declaring "mission accomplished" in December 2001, President George W. Bush swiftly moved on to a larger campaign, condemning the "axis of evil" that included Iraq, Iran, and North Korea

and called for the largest American defense build-up in history. Claiming that Iraq under Saddam Hussein threatened America with weapons of mass destruction and that it had ties to the Al Qaeda terror network, Bush defied American public opinion, the United Nations, traditional allies (except Great Britain) whom his Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, referred to as "the old Europe"[24] and embarked on a war with a "coalition of the willing" that toppled Hussein's regime in March 2003.

The United States foreign policy under the Bush administration can better be understood by studying the "Bush Doctrine." The doctrine is a phrase used to describe various related foreign policy principles of President Bush. It includes such components as preventive war (pre-emptive strikes), which held that the United States should depose foreign governments that represented a potential or perceived threat to the security of the United States, even if that threat was not imminent; a policy of spreading democracy around the world, especially in the Middle East, as a strategy of combating terrorism; attacking countries that harbor terrorists; and a willingness to unilaterally pursue United States military interests[25] in achieving its political and economic objectives. To reaffirm the doctrine and its seriousness, Vice President Cheney in June 2003 boasted in a speech: "If there is anyone in the world today who doubts the seriousness of the 'Bush Doctrine', I would urge that person to consider the fate of the Taliban in Afghanistan and of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq."[26]

The invasion of Iraq received widespread condemnations both at home and abroad. Former South African President Nelson Mandela deservingly rebuked the United States in the strongest term while speaking to International Women's Forum. He said: "If there is a country that has committed unspeakable atrocities in the world, it is the USA. Iraq produces oil and Bush wants to get hold of that oil."[27] It is obvious that Iraq's undeniable attraction as a source of immense oil wealth lies at the heart of the unilateral and unprovoked attack of the country. As a matter of fact, when Paul Wolfowitz, a neoconservative top official of the Bush administration, was asked why Iraq, which had no weapons of mass destruction (WMD) was invaded instead of North Korea, which does (or claims) to have WMD, he bluntly stated that: "Let's look at this simply. The most important difference between North Korea and Iraq is that economically we had no choice in Iraq. The country swims in a sea of oil."[28] While oil wealth is the primary economic factor, of greater significance is the fact that North Korea was aware that Saddam Hussein regime's compliance with the imperialist nations' demands to disarm simply facilitated the invasion, hence Pyongyang took some steps to build a nuclear deterrent. That factor was conveniently ignored by Wolfowitz. A bully usually goes after the weak, not against another bully otherwise the result would be mutual assured destruction. This is not to suggest that North Korea is America's equal in terms of quantitative and qualitative military arsenal or prowess. However, it has been generally speculated that Pyongyang has long range ICBM

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[24] Noam Chomsky. *Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance* (New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, 2003), p. 131.

[25] See George W. Bush, "The Bush Doctrine and the War in Iraq" in the work of Bruce Miroff, Raymond Seidelman and Todd Swanstrom, *Debating Democracy: A Reader in American Politics,* 5th Edition (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005) pp. 375-397.

[26] "Class of 2003 Graduation Speaker – Vice President Dick Cheney," Accessed online, 20 July 2011. http://www.usma.edu/class/2003_graduation_speach.html

[27] CNN Report, "Mandela: U.S. Wants Holocaust," 30 June 2003.

[28] Stephen Gowans, *A Rape in The Making* (San Francisco, CA: Global Exchange, 2007) See also *The Guardian*, Accessed online, 4 June 2003, www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/wbimf/3216.html

(intercontinental ballistic missiles) capable of reaching California. The U.S. appeasement rather than confrontation is therefore understandable.

Another person who vehemently opposed the invasion of Iraq is a billionaire philanthropist and founder of CNN, Ted Turner, who said: "It literally broke my heart. You don't start wars just because you don't like somebody…One of the dumbest moves that was ever made by anybody."[29] Of course, if the logic of the invasion were to be followed by other countries to attack those that we despise, that would mark the beginning of the end of civilization as we know it. Turner, who pledged to donate $1 billion to the United Nations to help to make this world a better place to live, argued that the invasion had caused "incalculable damage" that will take 20 years for the U.S. to overcome.[30] This is echoed by even Gary Hart, a two-time presidential candidate and former U.S. senator from Colorado, who posited that "It [USA] must address the circumstances that lead people to resort to terrorism rather than simply attack other nations."[31] The naked and unprovoked aggression against nations whose policies the aggressive nations may not like cannot be described in any other way but new form of imperialism. This new imperialism is associated with neoliberal capitalist globalization and the coming into being (since the end of Cold War) of a unipolar world headed by the lone superpower—the USA—is the origin or cause of the new wave of global terrorism. Thus, the new terrorism including Al Qaeda and others cannot be defeated without ending the forces of new imperialism. A protracted confrontation between the two will only lead the world back to barbarism; however, this can be averted if we recognize the linkage between the new imperialism and the new terrorism and work to stop the forces of the new imperialism in order to prevent or eradicate the new terrorism.

Apparently, this new imperialism is being recognized by some keen observers. In an address to the United Nations in September 2006, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez had this to say: "The American empire is doing all it can to consolidate its hegemonistic system of domination, and we cannot allow him [President George W. Bush] to do that. We cannot allow world dictatorship to be consolidated."[32] Likening President Bush who addressed the UN General Assembly earlier to the devil and as the spokesman of imperialism who came to share his nostrums - 'the devil's recipe' - to try to preserve the current pattern of domination, exploitation and pillage of the peoples of the world, President Chavez contended that the U.S. government engages in a double standard, protecting terrorists when it suits its leaders.[33] There are several examples of that. Although, one part of Bush doctrine says: "Those who harbor terrorists are as guilty as the terrorist themselves,"[34] the United States unilaterally and conveniently excludes itself from such nefarious act. There is the case of Orlando Bosch, whom the FBI accused of numerous serious terrorist acts and whose activities included participation in the destruction of a Cubana airliner, in which 73 people were killed in 1976. He was harbored in the United States. Instead of a deportation at the request of Cuban government, President

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[29] "Ted Turner: Iraq War among History's 'Dumbest'" Retrieved online, 20 September 2006.
http://www.cnn.com/2006/us/09/20/turner.reut/index/html
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ann Crittenden, "A National-Security Gender Gap," *The American Prospect: Special Report: The Right and the Courts*, March 2003, p. 28.
[32] "Chavez Calls Bush 'Devil' in U.N. Speech," Accessed online, 20 September 2006,
http://www.cnn.com/2006/world/americans/09/20/chavez.un/index.html
[33] Ibid.
[34] George W. Bush, Remarks by the President on Iraq, Cincinnati Museum Center, Cincinnati, Ohio, 7 October 2002.

George H. W. Bush, at the request of his son, Jeb, the Florida Governor, gave Bosch a presidential pardon.[35] Consequently, Bosch is living happily in the United States even though the FBI once regarded him as a threat to national security.

In fact, when it became clear that the United States was unwilling to stop terrorists harbored in Miami from carrying out attacks against the legitimate government of Cuba, the Cuban government decided to infiltrate the terrorist groups in Florida with agents of its own to collect information. To prove the existence of terrorists being harbored in the United States, Cuban government decided to provide evidence:

> Cuba then invited FBI agents to come to Havana, which they did. In 1998, Cuba provided high-level FBI officials with the thousands of pages of documents and videotapes about the planning of terrorist actions in Florida. And the FBI responded, namely, by arresting the infiltrators. That's the Case of Cuban Five; the infiltrators who gave the FBI the information about terrorists in the United States were arrested. They were brought to court in Miami, and the judge refused a change of venue….The prosecutor conceded that there was basically no case against the Cubans, but they were convicted anyway. The case is being appealed.[36]

Indeed, it was no secret that the United States was engaged in covert and overt subversive activities designed to undermine the "communist" government of Cuba under Fidel Castro who survived over 100 attempted assassinations. In addition to comprehensive economic embargo by the United States against Cuba since its revolution in 1959, the U.S. has made fruitless efforts to overthrow the government including the Bay of Pigs disaster.

Besides Cuba, there are two other examples of where terrorists, harbored in the United States, had caused enormous damages such as Venezuela and Haiti. In 2002, two military officers who participated in a military coup in Venezuela fled the country and sought for political asylum in the United States. This unpopular coup against the legitimate government led by Hugo Chavez had the blessings of the United States. The accused officers were involved in bombing attacks in Caracas but failed ultimately to oust Chavez government.[37] For many countries, a treason, which had been committed by the two officers, would have been tantamount to death. But the U.S. was willing to tolerate the terrorist act because it was against a "totalitarian" regime.

The case of Emmanuel Constant of Haiti is even more egregious. He was responsible for the death of roughly four to five thousand innocent Haitians. Today, he is living joyously in Queens, New York, because the United States even refused to respond to requests for his extradition.[38] These examples show that the U.S. harbor terrorists. For the U.S., "crimes are those that others commit."[39] In a nutshell, the idea is that 'do as we say, not as we do.' By

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[35] Tim Weiner, *New York Times*, 9 May 2005. See also Noam Chomsky, *Hegemony or Survival* (New York: Owl Books, 2004), pp. 86-87; and Noam Chomsky, *Imperial Ambitions: Conversions on the Post 9/11 World* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2005), pp. 70-71.

[36] Noam Chomsky, *Imperial Ambitions: Conversions on the Post 9/11/World* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2005), pp. 71-72.

[37] Ibid., p. 72

[38] Ibid., pp. 72-73.

[39] Ibid., p. 73.

harboring these individuals, only the apologists of American bankrupt foreign policy cannot see that the U.S. government is the biggest sponsor of terrorism.

The invasion of Iraq by the United States probably will go down in world history as the greatest flagrant aggression based on lies. After learning that the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States found no Al Qaeda-Iraq tie, that Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction and that Saddam Hussein had no involvement in the 9/11 terrorist attacks, exasperated Bush had this to say: "The reason I keep insisting that there was a relationship between Iraq and Saddam and Al Qaeda is because there was a relationship between Iraq and Al Qaeda. The administration never said that the 9/11 attacks were orchestrated between Saddam and Al Qaeda. We did say there were numerous contacts between Saddam Hussein and Al Qaeda."[40] Even when he was confronted with the truth, Bush was reluctant to accept it. Bush and his aides, according to the study conducted by two nonprofit journalism groups (Center for Public Integrity and its affiliate, the Fund for Independence in Journalism), made 935 false statements about the security risk posed by Iraq in the two years following September 11 to justify the invasion. The study revealed that Bush made 232 false statements about Iraq and Saddam Hussein's possession of weapons of mass destruction, and 28 false statements regarding Iraq's links to Al Qaeda. The study also revealed that Donald Rumsfeld and Press Secretary Ari Fleischer each made 109 false statements, Condoleezza Rice 56, Cheney, 48, Scott McLellan (Press Secretary) 14 and Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz 85. Even the Secretary of State Collin Powell, who was well-respected and admired by a sizeable number of Americans as a war hero, made 244 false statements including one to the United Nations Security Council.[41] This is one of the reasons why a civil rights leader and singer, Harry Belafonte, referred to Powell as "a house slave who does exactly what his slave master says."[42] Powell, who had the second-highest number of false statements, was simply fulfilling the desire of his master, George W. Bush, even if he was somewhat uncomfortable with that role.

That Bush came to power with a "plan to attack" Iraq is now beyond dispute, or that Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction or any ties to Al Qaeda have all authoritatively been confirmed in the work of Bob Woodward: *Plan of Attack.*[43] Confronted with these findings, Rumsfeld resorted to semantics to obfuscate the truth: "There are known knowns and there are unknown unknowns," which he interpreted to mean that there are things we know and that there are things we do not know.[44] The implication is that just because weapons of mass destruction (WMD) were not found does not suggest the nonexistence of such weapons. Rumsfeld was shifting the blame from the Bush administration that claimed that WMD existed in Iraq to the opponents who failed to prove the nonexistence of the WMD. How do you prove the negative?

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[40] Thomas H. Keane and Lee H. Hamilton, *The Complete Investigation: The 9/11 Report – The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States* (New York: St. Martin's Paperbacks, 2004), p. XXVI.
[41] CNN.com (International), "Study: Bush, Aides Made 935 False Statements in Run-up to War," 23 January 2008. http://edition.cnn.com/2008/politics/01/23/bush.iraq/index.html
[42] Belafonte Won't Back Down from Powell Slave Reference"
<cnn.com/20215/us/Belafonte.powell_1_slave/_reference_powell_and_and_rice_state_collin_powell_s+pm:us> Retrieved online, 20 February 2011.
[43] Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack: The Definitive Account of the Decision to Invade Iraq* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004). The work exposes a succinct account of the anatomy of war in Iraq that toppled Saddam Hussein and the occupation of the country.

[44] "Donald Rumsfeld Quotes," Retrieved online, 20 February 2011.
www.brainyquote.com/quotes/d/donaldrums148142.html

To some people, all these false statements may be considered a display of the arrogance of power but, more importantly, the false statements were made on the erroneous assumption that when you repeat the same lies so many times they could become the gospel truths. The false statements also prove that the most dangerous thing least sensed in the American political culture is its childish belief in the efficacy of lies as a method of conducting foreign policy and the uplifting of mankind.

The fact is that the lies about Iraq and the subsequent invasion and occupation of the country have resulted to the killings of more than one million Iraqis and caused about 4 million to leave homes, half of whom are displaced internally and half externally. The invasion has strengthened Iran—an "axis of evil"—and made the country to become less compromising in its desire to acquire WMD for its defense against U.S. aggression. It has created a generation of Islamic fundamentalists or "jihadists" worldwide. On every front, by America's own tawdry standards, the Iraq war has been an unmitigated disaster for the hegemonic lone superpower. Its failure is not just humiliating for the United States neocons, militarists and republicans but for those who gave the U.S. cover, including the British[45] and Australian governments. The "Operation Iraqi Freedom Military Fatalities" have started to decline since 2009 as **Table III** shows due to the decision of a new administration led by President Barack Obama to reduce troops and extend the occupation of Iraq until 2011 but leave indefinitely up to 50,000 "noncombatant" troops in the country.[46] How can 50,000 troops be considered "noncombatants" in a known hostile environment? This suggests that the hegemon has no intention of relinquishing or vacating its occupation of Iraq in the foreseeable future, especially when it is considered that the U.S. has opened its $700 million embassy in Iraq, the largest and most expensive embassy ever built—the compound is six times larger than the United Nations' compound.[47]

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[45] Gary Younge, "Time for New Coalition for Obama" *The Hindu*, 3 March 2009.
www.hindu.com/2009/03/03/stories/200903055120900.html

[46] Ibid. See also *the Daily Beast*, 20 August 2010.
[47] Fox News, "US Embassy in Iraq Largest, Most Expensive Ever" 5 January 2009.
www.foxnews.com/story/0,293,476464.html

Table III - Operation Iraq Freedom

Iraq Coalition Military Fatalities By Year

Year	U.S.	UK	Other	Total
2003	486	53	41	580
2004	849	22	35	906
2005	846	23	28	897
2006	822	29	21	872
2007	904	47	10	961
2008	314	4	4	322
2009	149	1	0	150
2010	60	0	0	60
2011	6	0	0	6
Total	**4436**	**179**	**139**	**4754**

Source: icasualties.org, Retrieved online, 7 February 2011. http://icasualties.org/oef/index.aspx

Rather than end its occupation of Iraq, the United States is engaged in militaristic pretensions. Although, the disdain for U.S. foreign policy had been broadened and sharpened by the indefinite occupation of Iraq, neither Bush nor Obama invented American imperialism, but they have tested its limits. So, for those who claim that Bush, in particular, tarnished America's great reputation abroad, they must be apparently unaware that "in vast swaths of Central and South America, the Middle East (with the exception of Israel) the Arab world, and parts of Asia, Africa and the Caribbean it was already pretty grubby."[48] As the former U.S. administrator, Paul Bremer, once said: "If [Iraqi] provisional government asks us to leave we will leave. I don't think that will happen, but obviously we don't stay in countries where we're not welcome."[49] Undoubtedly, the puppet government that the U.S. has established in Iraq will need the protection of the hegemon in order to survive, and the notion that the U.S. does not stay in countries where they are not welcome defies any logic: Did the people of Iraq welcome the U.S. invasion of their country? The answer is, of course, no.

Despite the declaration of 'Operation New Dawn'—reduction of troops to 50,000 noncombatants—since September 1, 2010, by Obama administration, **Table III** reveals that at least six U.S. service members have been killed in Iraq between January and early February 2011. Regardless of the advice-and-assist role they may have purportedly been assigned, the U.S. service members are still in a hostile, combat environment until they are completely withdrawn. The war has had a negative impact on domestic policy issues. For example, Democratic Representative Pete Stark who was frustrated for the failure of the U.S. House to override former President Bush's veto of State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), asserted that Bush would rather use government revenues of $200 billion to send U.S. soldiers to

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[48] Gary Younge, "Time for New Coalition for Obama," *The Hindu*, 3 March 2009.
www.hindu.com/2009/03/03/stories/200903035512099.html
[49] The Associated Press, "Bremer Says U.S. Will Leave Iraq If New Government Asks" 14 May 2004,
www.msnbc.msn.com/id/4978361

war in Iraq than to pay $35 billion for low-income kids' health care.[50]   He made this timely remark:

> You don't have money to fund…children…But you're going to spend it [money] to blow up innocent people if we can get enough kids to grow old, enough for you to send to Iraq to get their heads blown off for the president's amusement.[51]

Perhaps, some people might find that statement offensive. But for Bush, the Iraq war is quite an entertainment besides the economic interest for the oil corporations in particular. During his visit to Australia for the 15th Annual Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum after a surprise visit to Iraq, Bush was asked how things are coming along in Iraq by his host, Australian Deputy Prime Minister Mark Vaile and he arrogantly answered: "We're kicking ass"[52] in Iraq. Yet, after roughly 8 years of waging aggressive war against Iraq, a U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee in February 2011 has revealed that "the situation in Iraq is at a critical juncture. Terrorist and insurgent groups are less active but still adept, the Iraqi army continues to develop but is not yet capable of deterring regional actors, and strong ethnic tensions remain along Iraq's disputed internal boundaries. Although a government has finally been formed, it remains to be seen how cohesive and stable it will be."[53]   However, after providing this gloomy picture, the report "concluded that too many lives have been lost—more than 4,400 soldiers alone—and more than $750 billion spent to abandon U.S. hopes of forging a long-term diplomatic relationship with Iraq."[54] The implication is that the human and monetary costs should not be in vain; thus, the U.S. has no intention to leave Iraq.

It is also important to know that the estimated cost of the war of $750 billion provided by the report is very conservative. A Nobel Prize-winning economist, Joseph Stiglitz and his co-author Linda Bilmes in their illuminating work: *The Three Trillion Dollar War* have revealed that the cost to America of the war in Iraq is wildly underestimated. The authors believe that if factors such as "past and future required expenditures, health and disability costs for veterans, and the expenditures hidden in the Defense Department budget are factored," they estimated "total expenditures of $1.3 to $2 trillion without counting interest payments—for Iraq alone."[55] They have further revealed that if Afghanistan and Iraq wars were to be combined, the total, with interest added, comes to $2.3 trillion which is a conservative estimate while a whopping $3.5 trillion is given as a "realistic case" scenario.[56] Consequently, the mounting human and financial losses for the conflicts are having some impact on American policymakers. Defense Secretary Robert Gates has warned that the U.S. should avoid future land wars like Afghanistan and Iraq and stated that:

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[50] Foxnews.com, "Attacks on President Bush Continues Past SCHIP Veto Override Vote," Accessed online, 19 October 2007. www.foxnews.com/printer_friendly_story/9,3566,303119,00.html
[51] Ibid.
[52] *The New Times*, 19 May 2007.
[53] Lara Jakes (AP), "Senate Report Says Iraq Is At Critical Juncture," Accessed online, 1 February 2011, http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/ml_inq/print
[54] Ibid.
[55] Joseph E. Stiglitz and Linda J. Bilmes, *The Three Trillion Dollar War* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2008), p. 56.
[56] Ibid.

> In my opinion, any future defense secretary who advises the president to again send a big American land army into Asia or into the Middle East or Africa should 'have his head examined' as General [Douglas] MacArthur so delicately put it.[57]

Furthermore, the U.S. invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan have had other dire consequences besides the loss of innocent lives and wasteful expenses. The conflicts had further damaged America's image worldwide. The invasion of Iraq led to the lootings of its treasures, the raping of Iraqi women by American soldiers, and the abuses of Abu Ghraib prisoners.

Lootings of Iraq's Treasures

The U.S.-led invaders consciously facilitated the dismantling of Iraq's intellectual, academic and cultural apparatus in order to wipe the slate clean as a prelude to the rebirth of the country based on a neo-capitalist secular democracy. The U.S. neoconservatives had hoped that Iraq would serve as a model for change across the Middle East. According to one observer, "To be remade, a state must be rendered malleable."[58] This accounts for the destruction of Iraq's archaeological, historical, cultural, archive resources and memories. It further explains why Iraq's top-notch academicians were not safe from the threat of kidnap, torture or death. At least 432 scholars - [and probably many more] - from "across all disciplines of the academic spectrum had been [systematically] murdered."[59] Like Europeans' empires imposing their cultural hegemony on their colonial subjects, the U.S. chief objective is to remake Iraq to its own taste. But it remains to be seen how that would be accomplished.

Meanwhile, thousands of artifacts worth millions of dollars chronicling some 7,000 years of civilization in Mesopotamia were looted from Iraq in the chaos which followed the U.S.-led invasion in 2003. Many of these valuable artifacts can still be seen in the galleries of London, New York, Chicago and Los Angeles; although, some of them have been repatriated back to Iraq due to international outcry. According to Donny George's Iraq new general director of museums, 5,200 pieces of artifacts out of roughly 13,000 stolen have been returned, much fewer than the 170,000 initially reported missing.[60] The looting was made possible because the occupation forces protected only the Ministry of Oil, with its detailed inventory of Iraq's oil reserves.[61] When asked why did the looting occur under the U.S. watch? Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld uttered the infamous and cavalier rejoinder: "Freedom's untidy, and the people are free to make mistakes and commit crimes and do bad things."[62] He added that "democracy is messy"; looting was "part of the price" to pay for liberation of Iraq and was a result of "pent-up feelings" of oppression on the part of Iraqis.[63] The implications are that the Iraqis were solely

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[57] Thom Shanker, "Warning Against Wars Like Iraq and Afghanistan," *The New York Times*, 25 February 2011.

[58] "Cultural Cleansing in Iraq: Why Museums Were Looted, Libraries Burned and Academics Murdered," *Times Higher Education, 20 December 2010. www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/sotry.asp?storycode+411036*

[59] Ibid. See also Raymond W. Baker, et al., *Cultural Cleansing in Iraq: Why Museums Were Looted, Libraries Burned and Academics Murdered* (London, England: Pluto Press, 2009).

[60] Roger Atwood, "Stop, Thieves! Recovering Iraq's Looted Treasures," *The Washington Post*, 3 October 2004, p. B2.

[61] Patrick Martin, "How and Why the U. S. encouraged looting in Iraq," 15 April 2003, www.wsws.org/articles/2003/apr2003/iraq_a15.shtml

[62] Sean Loughlin, CNN Washington Bureau, "Rumsfeld on Looting in Iraq: 'Stuff Happens," CNN, 11 April 2003.

[63] Ibid.

responsible for the lootings. The fact is that the most valuable treasures were repatriated home by the invaders, leaving some pieces for the Iraqis to scramble. How did the precious antiquities quickly appear in New York and London within days of the invasion? What Rumsfeld was implicitly suggesting can be summed up in a political proverb that says: "The spoils of victory." The spoils of victory are the extra bonuses, perks, and treasures you get for winning even if that winning may be tenuous.

The Abuses of Prisoners of War (POWs)

An alarming number of Iraqi and Afghan prisoners of war had been (and continue to be) abused by the invaders—a fact which has not received a fair amount of attention by the western corporate press. The POWs have been greatly abused and treated as sexual prey and booty for the "conquering" soldiers from the outset but largely ignored by rank-and-file of the U.S. military until hundreds of photographs that had been circulating among the U.S. troops in Iraq were leaked to the public. Following this revelation, Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez, the senior officer in Iraq, appointed Major General Antonio Taguba to investigate the conduct of the U.S. 800th Military Police (MP) Brigade that was responsible for Abu Ghraib Confinement Facility between October and December 2003. Known as Taguba Report, the investigation unfolded the incidents of sadistic, blatant, and wanton criminal abuses inflicted on several detainees intentionally perpetrated by members of the U.S. Military police and guard force, substantiated by detailed witness statements and the discovery of extremely graphic photographic evidence. The report revealed, among other examples, the following:

- Punching, slapping, and kicking detainees; jumping on their naked feet.
- Videotaping and photographing male and female detainees.
- Forcibly arranging detainees in various sexually explicit positions for photographing.
- Forcing detainees to remove their clothing and keeping them naked for several days at a time.
- Forcing naked male detainees to wear women's underwear.
- Forcing groups of male detainees to masturbate themselves while being photographed and videotaped.
- Arranging naked male detainees in a pile and then jumping on them.
- Positioning a naked male detainee on a MRE Box, with a sandbag on his head, and attaching wires to his fingers, toes, and penis to simulate electric torture.
- Writing "I am a Rapest" [sic] on the leg of a detainee alleged to have raped a 15-year-old fellow detainee, and then photographing him naked.
- Placing a dog chain or strap around a naked detainee's neck and having a female soldier pose for a picture.
- A male MP guard having sex with a female detainee.
- Taking photographs of dead Iraqi detainees and MPs posing with cheerful looks.
- Breaking chemical lights and pouring the phosphoric liquid on detainees.
- Threatening detainees with a loaded 9mm pistol.
- Pouring cold water on naked detainees.
- Beating detainees with a broom handle and a chair.
- Threatening male detainees with rape.

- Allowing a military police guard to stitch the wound of a detainee who was injured after being slammed against the wall in his cell.
- Sodomizing a detainee with a chemical light and perhaps a broom stick.
- Using military working dogs (without muzzles) to frighten detainees with threats of attack, and in one instance actually biting and severely injuring a detainee.[64]

In addition to these despicable and unimaginable abuses, there were other reports of sexual violence and abduction of women and girls, particularly in Baghdad in the early days of the occupation. Due to social stigmatization that sometimes provokes "honor" killings among the Muslims, so many women and girls could not (and do not) come forward to report the brutal rapes. The most unconscionable aspect of these heinous criminal acts is that the incidents were photographed and videotaped for the depraved enjoyment of perverts.

The invading U.S. forces were, perhaps, provided with amphetamines and pornographic materials to incite their thorough ravaging of Baghdad. It was widely reported that a number of U.S. soldiers had pornographic materials in violation of U.S. military code of conduct. All of the decadent, perverted and immoral abuses were not perpetrated by the U.S. mobile police guards alone; they were joined by a significant number of the U.S.-government-recruited mercenaries from South Africa and Serbia. Ernesto Cienfuegos presented this report:

> The American people and the rest of the world are generally not aware that the U.S. government has hired literally thousands of hired [mercenaries], many with notorious war crime records. A significant number of these are rapists, sodomites and murderers from South African and Serbia. These vile individuals work for [the so called] "Security Service" under contract to the Pentagon. Most of these "Security Services" are cronies of both Bush and Cheney and are owned by nefarious [individuals] who also have ties to the Burbank, California pornography industry.[65]

Cienfuegos, the editor in chief of La Voz de Aztlan, an internet service founded by a Vietnam War veteran Hector Carreon, has further revealed that:

> Among the Afrikaner war criminals hired by the Pentagon are Frans Strydom and Deon Gouws, both with despicable atrocity records against South Africa Blacks that sought independence. There are an estimated 1,500 South Africans employed by "Security Service" in Iraq, according to South African foreign ministry. Many used their atrocities backgrounds during Apartheid to bolster their credentials to the Pentagon. Many other hired mercenaries are Serbians known rapists of Muslim-Croatian women…The Military Police, including Brigadier General Jamis Karpinski, [have] said that the cell where the sexual torture took place were dominated by these mercenaries in collusion with the CIA and Military Intelligence…"film crews" run mostly by mercenaries actually instigated the rapes and sodomy of the POWs inside the Abu Ghraib prison. The mercenaries had the full cooperation of the CIA and Military Intelligence

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[64] For "Taguba Report," see the work of Jeremy Brecher, Jill Culter and Brendan Smith (eds.) *In the Name of Democracy: American War Crimes in Iraq and Beyond* (New York: NY: Metropolitan Books, 2005), pp. 74-76.
[65] Ernesto Cienfuegos, "USA Rape and Sodomization of Iraqis Worse Than Imagined," Available online, 10 March 2011, www.aztlan.net/rape_rape_of_iraq.html

> and perverted elements inside Pentagon and the U.S. government. In addition, these mercenaries trolled the Iraqi countryside for Iraqi women they could abduct, rape and film.[66]

Contrary to what the U.S. government may have us believe that the Abu Ghraib and other related incidents of sexual exploitation and abuses were in aberration, the U.S. military deliberately created the conditions for the existence of such malady. This is not entirely surprising if we consider the fact that the U.S. is one of the seven countries that failed to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (EDAW). Ironically, Iraq and Afghanistan appended their signatures to the treaty.[67] The ultimate purpose for the films and photographs was not just for sexual pleasure for the perverted military personnel and the dehumanization of Iraqis, but also to profit in the multi-billion dollar pornography industry in the U.S. and other Western countries. As we have seen in recent times, there are certainly powerful government officials among the American republicans and democrats, and affluent individuals as well as significant number of people in the population who spend large amount of money for these filthy sexual materials. The films and photographs also reinforce the allegation by some Islamists that the U.S. is really "The Great Satan."

The abuses of the POWs which are rarely prosecuted are not limited to Iraq or exclusively perpetrated by American troops. In Afghanistan, the U.S. soldiers were caught burning the bodies of killed Taliban fighters,[68] a known violation of international law. Responding to this flagrant violation of rule of combat, Major General Jason Kamiya made this remark: "…corrective action will be taken,"[69] a phrase repeatedly used to pacify the concerned public. More importantly only few people will take him seriously when one reflects on the statement of his colleague, Marine General James Mattis who had shown indifferent to the value of human life and treat the grim business of war as sporting event. He said: "It's fun to shoot some people. I'll be right up-front with you, I like brawling."[70] This absurd, repugnant and irresponsible assertion is what has accounted for the thousands of innocent civilians usually dubbed "collateral damage." But the case of General Mattis is not in isolation. Twelve U.S. soldiers that killed Afghan civilians for sport and collected their fingers as trophies but covered up the killings by fabricating a story of being under attack were faced with court martial; one of them, Sgt. Robert Stevens, was charged with conspiracy to commit assault and battery, dereliction of duty and aggravated assault.[71] It is doubtful if he would spend much time in jail.

On the contrary, there is a well-publicized case of an African-American football quarterback, Michael Vick, who was convicted and served 21 months in prison, followed by two months in home confinement for being implicated in an illegal interstate dog fighting in August 2007. In reaction to this criminal act, the now deceased democratic Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia, a former member of Ku Klux Klan, a terrorist organization well-known for lynching

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[66] Ibid.

[67] Nealan Afaari, "What do Somalia, Sudan, Iran and the U.S. have in Common?" Available online, 3 December 2010. www.pbs.org/wnet/need_to_know/voices/what_do_somalia_sudan_iran_and_theU.S.h....

[68] "U.S. Troops 'burnt Taliban bodies," Available online, 20 October 2005. www.cnn.com/2005/world/asiapcf/10/20/agfhanistan.taliban/index.html

[69] Ibid.

[70] Peter Goodyear, "Lt. Gen. James Mattis gets fun in shooting some people!" Available online, 4 February 2005. www.earthtimes.org/articles/show/1505.html

[71] BBC News US & Canada, "U.S. Soldier faces Court Marshal over Afghan Killings," Available online, 1 December 2010. www.bbc.co.uk/news/world_us_canada_11890392?print+true

African-Americans, had this to say: "Barbaric! Let that word resound from hill to hill, and from mountain to mountain, from valley to valley, across this broad land… May God help those poor souls who'd be so cruel. I am confident the hottest places in hell are reserved for the souls of sick and brutal people who hold God's creatures in such brutal and cruel contempt."[72] Unfortunately, Senator Byrd who hardly expressed any outrage for the abuses in the occupied countries had more sympathy for dogs than his fellow human beings. There are undoubtedly some people in this society who love their pets more than their neighbors or lowly Afghans and Iraqis. In any case, the killing of innocent civilians helps the Taliban's recruitment efforts.

Rendition

The United States military, purportedly seeking to obtain valuable information, abducts suspected terrorists from various countries and transfer them to countries known to practice torture. This situation known as rendition is a violation of United Nations Convention Against Torture which the U.S. signed and ratified according to Michael John Garcia of Congressional Research Service Report of January 26, 2009, "U.N. Convention Against Torture (CAT): Overview and Application to Interrogation Techniques." Rendition leads to torture which is cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment of prisoners. Rendering suspects to other countries by U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) is carried out in order to avoid U.S. laws mandating due process and prohibiting torture. Defenders of this dubious practice generally contend that culturally-informed and native-language interrogations are more successful in gaining information from suspects; hence the suspected terrorists are transferred to where there are no language barriers. That is, of course, a flawed argument because the U.S. is diverse and rich with linguists as a result of steady new immigrants from all over the world. There is a ready pool of linguists in the society that can serve as interpreters, even, in some cases, willing to render *pro-bono* services. The fact is that Washington has determined that the Geneva Conventions do not apply to the war on global terrorism.

What is more troubling about the cases of rendition is that a great number of the suspected terrorists who are usually abducted on the streets are innocent civilians. The cases of Khalid El-Masri and Laid Saidi which the CIA admitted were "erroneous rendition" demonstrate the faulty practice. While El-Masri's abduction was a result of mistaken identity, Saidi's extraordinary rendition was apparently due to a taped telephone conversation in which the Arabic word "tirat", meaning "tires" in English, was mistaken for the Arabic word "tairat" meaning "airplanes."[73] Just imagine the idea that a Muslim who alters the word "airplanes" in any conversations is automatically a terrorist suspect! We live in an era of paranoia. Another case of rendition relates to the painful experience of Maher Arar. When Arar heard that he was being transferred to Syria, he cried and feared for the worst to happen to him because Syria is synonymous with torture. He was abducted, tortured and questioned by CIA operatives for 13 days in the U.S. and then rendered to Syria for more questioning and torture because he was "guilty" of knowing a suspected terrorist.[74] Just imagine in a society where a person can be

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[72] Roland Martin, "Commentary: Where is the outrage when humans are Abused," CNN.com. Available online, 12 September 2007. www.cnncom/2007/us/09/12/martin/index.html

[73] Craig S. Smith and Souad Mekhennet, "Algerian Tells of Dark Terms in the U.S. Hands," *The New York Times,* 7 July 2006. http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/07/world/africa/07algeria.html?pagewanted=1

[74] "The Unfinished Case of Maher Arar," 17 February 2009. http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/18/opinion/18wed2.html,

found guilty for knowing a suspected criminal! Can there be any free person left in that society? Unlike the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) report to coalition forces in February 2004 that 70 to 90 percent of those in custody in Iraq had been arrested by mistake according to *Los Angeles Times* of May 11, 2004, there is no statistical data to ascertain the percentage of those abducted and tortured under the extraordinary rendition because the operation is done in secrecy. It is generally believed that there are secret jails at the disposal of the CIA and other interrogators.

Nevertheless, some detainees have been transferred to the following autocratic regimes: On November 3, 2005, U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) transferred five detainees from Guantanamo Bay to Kuwait; on February 9, 2006, three detainees were transferred to Morocco and one detainee to Uganda; on December 12, 2007, fifteen detainees were transferred to Sudan; on August 26, 2008, two detainees were transferred to Algeria; on December 16, 2008, three detainees were transferred to Bosnia and Herzegovina; and on September 28, 2007, one detainee was transferred to Mauritania.[75]

There is another form of torture that the CIA interrogators have invented: waterboarding. It is a form of torture (even though Bush administration denied it) in which "a bound, gagged prisoner is forced to breathe in water. It consists of several techniques: a prisoner is trapped to a board, or submerged, or held down and forced to breathe through a water-soaked cloth held over his mouth."[76] Yet, Dick Cheney, whom former CIA Director Stansfield Turner has called "vice president for torture,"[77] argued that it is simply a "dunk in the water."[78] Waterboarding was used against Al Qaeda operative, Abu Zubaydah (83 times) and Khahid Shaikh Mohammed (183 times) the alleged planner of September 11 according to *The New York Times* of April 20, 2009. That is just one of many cases of waterboarding.

Not surprisingly, some medical professionals have been used in perpetrating waterboarding and other torture techniques in violation of medical ethics, basic human rights, modern laws, and international agreements. A doctor is not supposed to violate the Hippocratic tradition that says: "do no harm"[79] and to uphold the fundamental values of medical profession. But some American doctors have been used too often by their government for human research and experimentation. Two examples readily come to mind: some African-Americans[80] and

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[75] "Guantanamo Bay Detainees," Available online, 11 March 2011.
www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/guanatanamo_bay_detainees.html
[76] Amy Zalman, "Waterboarding Definition," About.com, Available online 12 March 2011,
http://terrorism.about.com/od/w/g/waterboarding.html
[77] "Ex-CIA Chief: Cheney 'VP for Torture," Available online, 18 November 2005,
www.cnn.com/2005/world/europe/11/18/turner.cheney/index.html
[78] Julia Layton, "What is waterboarding?" Available online, 12 March 2001.
http://science.howstuffworks.com/waterboarding.html
[79]Hana Akselrod, Brendan Milliner and Jamie Zimmerman, "Restoring our professional integrity: Perspectives on torture from U.S. medical students," Available online, 13 December 2010.
www.thelancestudent.com/2010/10/28/restoring_our_professional_integrity_perpec... See also James Risen, "Medical Ethics Lapses Cited in Interrogations," *The New York Times*, 7 June 2010.
[80] About 40 years, the U. S. Public Health Service conducted a study in which some African Americans were used as guinea pigs, not given proper treatment, died of syphilis and its side effects. The Public Health Service, working with Tuskegee Institute (hence it is called Tuskegee Experiment), began in 1932 with nearly 400 poor black men who were infected with syphilis. They were not told they had the disease nor were they treated for it. The experiment lasted four decades and by then dozens of the men had died, and many wives and children had been infected. It was not until 1997 that President Bill Clinton formally apologized to the survivors.

Guatemalans[81] were used as guinea pigs by the U.S. government when it purposely infected them primarily with syphilis and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and later apologized. As former U.S. House Speaker Tip O'Neil once said "all politics is local." If the U.S. government could use some of its own citizens as guinea pigs, it is difficult to see how the government could have any mercy to non-citizens. Foreign policy is an offspring of domestic policy.

Guantanamo (GTMO) Detainees

Guantanamo detainees, held at U.S. facility in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, are mostly "jihadists," senior Al Qaeda operatives and leaders as well as Taliban leaders who took up arms against the "infidel" United States. These are prisoners of war (POWs), but the U.S. calls them "enemy combatants" to justify torture and all kinds of abuses perpetrated against them. The U.S. military rationalizes the detention and torture including waterboarding against "enemy combatants" by arguing that the detention prevents them from continuing to fight against the U.S. and its partners in the war on terror, thereby shortening, not prolonging, the conflict. The U.S. military further contends that the various techniques used in questioning or interrogating the detainees are helping in the war on terror and that information provided by "detainees have revealed Al Qaeda leadership structures, operatives, funding mechanisms, communication methods, training and selection programs, travel patterns…and plans on U.S. and Coalition forces."[82] If all these are true, one wonders why it is taking almost 10 years to dismantle the Al Qaeda network and bring an end to the conflict. The fact is that information obtained under duress or torture cannot be all reliable and, in some cases, can be counterproductive. A drowning man is willing to say anything in the hope of freedom.

Many of the GTMO detainees who are classified as "enemy combatant" are actually POWs because they were captured not from the cities of New York or London but from Afghanistan and its vicinity, the theater on the war on terror. They ought to be treated as POWs and protected in accordance with international rules of engagement. Yet, the U.S. Department of Defense maintains that "the Third Geneva Convention of 1949 accords POW status only to enemy forces that follow certain rules: wear uniforms; do not deliberately target civilians; and otherwise fight in accordance with the laws and customs of war."[83] But it is the U.S. military and its coalition forces that have killed far more civilians than the Al Qaeda and the Taliban forces in Afghanistan. To disqualify the Taliban as POWs because they do not "wear uniform" is not simply trivial but laughable. Most combat troops in a war generally tend to camouflage their uniforms in order to protect their true identities. That is a war strategy.

Meanwhile, President Obama announced on March 7, 2011, that GTMO Detention Center will remain open for the foreseeable future, reneging his campaign promise and his proclamation after taking the oath of office that it would be shut down. As a result, "a significant number of the 172 currently being detained at GTMO will be held without charges indefinitely

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[81] "U.S. apologizes for infecting Guatemalans with STDs in the 1940s," Available online, 1 October 2010. www.cnn.com/2010/world/americas.apology/index.html?hpt=T2 A statement by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius under Obama administration in October 2010 called, the U.S. research study in 1946-1948 that purposely infected people in Guatemala with sexually transmitted diseases, reprehensible and apologized on behalf of the United States.
[82] "Guantanamo Detainees," Accessed online, 23 December 210. www.defense.gov/news/april2004/d200404pbgua.pdf
[83] Ibid.

and perhaps for their entire lives."[84] Interestingly, in a study conducted by Mark Denbeaux and Joshua Denbeaux at Seton Hall University, they found that 55 percent of the detainees were determined to have committed no hostile acts against the U.S. and its coalition allies; out of the number being detained, only 8 percent were classified as Al Qaeda fighters.[85] Yet, all the detainees are facing indefinite detention without the benefit of military or civilian court trials in violation of international law.

Former President Bush gave this response regarding international law: "I don't care what the international lawyers say; we are going to kick some ass."[86] Understanding that counterterrorism is only a tool of the weak as a last resort against a bully, the real terrorist, Bush proclaimed that "our strength as a nation will continue to be challenged by those who employ a strategy of the weak using international fora, judicial processes and terrorism."[87] Still, no one is more blunt about the U.S. ability to undermine the Geneva Conventions and the UN Charter than a neocon and former U.N. Ambassador, John Bolton, who asserted: "If I were doing the Security Council today, I'd have one permanent member because that's the real reflection of the distribution of power in the world…and that member would be the United States."[88] It is this kind of arrogance that is igniting stiff resistance against the U.S. worldwide. The world is not ready to allow any country, irrespective of superpower status, to become the lord of life and or the peddler of death. This explains why the leaders of Iran and North Korea, the two remaining "axis of evil" according to Bush's famously stated characterization of the countries including Iraq, do not want to idly standby and wait for their funerals. The two countries want to acquire weapons of mass destruction including nuclear in order to protect themselves against the aggression of U.S. and its allies.

Bolton may want to know that there is no permanent condition and that the fading American empire is partly due to the continued occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq. He may also want to know that the way to reverse the declining trend lies between the choice of American global hegemony or global leadership. Global domination leads to unilateralism, preemptive strikes against any perceived enemy, and the promotion of a "clash of civilizations" (i.e. Muslims versus Christians) while global leadership which recognizes multilateralism and multiculturalism in a global community of shared interests holds enormous hope for mankind.

Conclusion

The invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq as well as the continued occupation of the countries have done incalculable damages to the United States as a superpower. The United Nations Security Council's resolution 1368 on "the inherent right of self-defense" following 9/11 attacks, does not suggest the occupation of Afghanistan in perpetuity, particularly since the announcement on May 1, 2011, by President Obama that the leader of the Al Qaeda terrorist network, Osama Bin Laden, had been killed in Pakistan and that "justice has been done." That is a more compelling

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[84] Peter Jan Honigsberg, "Without Human Rights We Are Just Another Country," *Huffington Post*, 14 March 2011.

[85] March Denbeaux and Joshua Denbeaux, "The Guanatanamo Detainees: The Government's Story," Available online, 15 March 2011. http://law.shu.edu/publications/guantanamoreports/guanatanamo_report_final_2_08_ob.pdf

[86] Bendan Smith, "Why War Crimes matter" in the edited work of Jeremy Brecher Jill Culter and Brendan Smith (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2005), p. 308. See also Richard A. Clark, *Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror* (New York: Free Press, 2004).

[87]Ibid.

[88] Ibid., See also "The World According to Bolton," *New York Times*, 9 March 2005.

reason to withdraw. The continued occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq is a gross violation of international law.

Injustices cannot be bombed or "missiled" out of thin air nor can mutual assured destruction discourage the "jihadists" in their determination for the liberation of their countries by applying suicide bombs as counterterrorist tactics. The Afghanistan Mujahideens' attacks against the former Soviet Union ceased after the Russians vacated their land. Similarly, the Afghan Taliban fighters will cease to attack America and its allies only when the invaders leave their land. Torture and all other forms of abuses being perpetrated against the "enemy combatants" or POWs can only ignite rather than help the U.S. stated objective of implanting democracy in the heart of Middle East. It reminds us of the famous quote of Martin Luther King, Jr., the great U.S. civil rights leader: "The means we use must be as pure as the end we seek." It is doubtful to see how an Afghan or Iraqi who had suffered miserably under the occupation marked by all kinds of atrocities in the name of democracy will choose to become an American ally, not a foe.

Surprisingly, not many Americans speak out against these atrocities and injustices of keeping secret prisons, holding POWs without trial, transferring POWs to where they are most likely to be tortured, etc. The inability or unwillingness of well-meaning Americans to speak out and hold their government accountable and responsible contributes to the accentuation of the problem. Even after invading Iraq in March 2003 which received worldwide condemnations, Americans still re-elected President Bush to the surprise of the world in 2004, even though the price of that invasion will continue to drain an average American's pocket for many generations to come. Americans should know that throughout history, it has been the inaction of those who should have acted, the indifference of those who should have known better, the silence of those of the voices of justice when it matters most that had made it possible for evils to triumph. Most Americans seem to feel that sacrificing other people's liberty is fine as long as it means security for Americans. We should heed the words of one of America's founding fathers, Benjamin Franklin, who eloquently said: "They who can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."[89] Americans ought to look out for the long term interest of the country and not allow their emotions to be exploited by the corporate media and the corrupt politicians.

But what are the prospects for peace and security in Afghanistan and Iraq? And what are the prospects for the eradication or the reduction of global terrorism, since it is now generally known that the leader of Al Qaeda, Osama Bin Laden, had been killed by the U.S. intelligence operation and that "justice had been done" in the words of President Obama's announcement to the nation on May 1, 2011? The prospects for peace in Afghanistan and Iraq hinge on the United States complete withdrawals from both countries. These are not winnable wars for the U.S. The Afghan Taliban and Iraqis will ultimately prevail. Therefore, it is in the best interest of the U.S. to let the principle of self-determination as embodied in the United Nations Charter and endorsed by all peace-loving people determines the outcome in Afghanistan and Iraq, not installation of neocolonial puppet governments. Such regimes cannot be sustained in this millennium as we have seen so far in Tunisia, Egypt and more to follow. Ending occupation alone is not sufficient to bring about peace and stability in the Middle East unless the problem of the homeless

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[89]"Benjamin Franklin Quotes," Available online, 15 March 2011.
www.brianyquote.com/quotes/b/benjaminfr151592.html

Palestinians is treated with a fair and balanced approach. That is an approach that guarantees homeland and sovereignty for the state of Palestine with assurance of security and the right of Israel to exist as embodied in the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. Anything less is sophistry.

The U.S. should stop supporting the autocratic regimes in the region. Unfortunately, the U.S. veto on February 18, 2011, of an Arab resolution at the UN Security Council condemning Israeli illegal settlements in the Palestinian territories is an obstacle to peace. The resolution was supported by 14 members; the U.S. was the only member that voted against it.[90] This is unfair exercise of veto power by the U.S. that is certainly not helpful; it further aggravates rather than ameliorates the tensions in the region.

The war on terror will end when there is justice, and if and when the powerful is no longer perpetuating aggression on the weak. But can the United States continue to perpetuate aggression against the weak with impunity? President Obama's campaign slogan framed under the rubric of American exceptionalism is: "Yes We Can." Thus, there is insufficient evidence to establish a more optimistic prognosis for the prospects of global peace and security, but complete withdrawals from Afghanistan and Iraq can be a turning point for the illusive peace.

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