

America: An Ordinary Nation Ruled by Greedy, Unjust, and Inhumane People

Realpolitik! Taking the Low Road

By [John Kozy](#)

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"It will be worthy of a free, enlightened . . . great nation, to give to mankind the magnanimous and too novel example of a people always guided by an exalted justice and benevolence." —George Washington

Washington devoted his *Farewell Address* to advising those who would follow him into governing the United States of America. He tried to get them to travel the high road of virtue, honesty, and fairness and eschew the low road of viciousness, duplicity, and favoritism.

". . . virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government. . . . Observe good faith and justice towards all nations; cultivate peace and harmony. . . . Who can doubt that, in the course of time and things, the fruits of such a plan would richly repay any temporary advantages which might be lost by a steady adherence to it ? . . . nothing is more essential than that permanent, inveterate antipathies against particular nations, and passionate attachments for others, should be excluded; and that, in place of them, just and amicable feelings towards all should be cultivated."

Almost immediately, Washington's successors began to repudiate his advice, and his New World nation began its descent into an Old World one in which people are pawns who are used as mere means to the ends of unscrupulous power brokers. John Kennedy expressed this *status quo* sentiment when he uttered the famous line, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but ask what you can do for your country." Yet people do not come to this or any other country to serve as means to the country's goals. They come to serve their own modest ends and are happy when their own ends are congruent with the nation's.

America's power brokers seem to believe that governments determine the goals of their peoples. Only such a belief can explain this nation's maniacal attempts at regime change. Somehow or other the belief exists that changing a nation's government will change the desires and attitudes of its people. History fails to support this belief. Careful thinking requires that the people who populate a country be distinguished from the people who rule it.

In March, 2003 the United States invaded Iraq in an attempt to depose Saddam Hussein's autocratic government. Members of the invading army had been told they would be welcomed as liberators. Instead an insurgency emerged which opposed the invading forces. The United States, after deposing Hussein and having installed an American "friendly" government, withdrew its military forces in December, 2011. The war for regime change had

succeeded. But the attitudes of the people who inhabit Iraq did not. The killing continued, the region's political forces were destabilized, and now a full-phased civil war has emerged. American troops are again being sent to Iraq. The country may end up being dismembered. Regime change, although successful, instead of stabilizing the region, destabilized it and denied America the achievement of all of its goals. Governments do not comprise countries, people do.

Syria became independent in 1946, but in March, 1949, army Chief of Staff Husni al-Za'im staged a *coup d'état* with American help which ended civilian rule. Za'im met at least six times with CIA operatives in the months prior to the coup to discuss his plan to seize power. Once in power, he took several steps that benefited the United States. He also improved relations with Israel and Turkey. However, Za'im's regime was short-lived. He was overthrown just four and a half months after seizing power. Again, America's attempt at regime change had succeeded but it was soon undone by the actions of the Syrian people. Today America is again supporting regime change in Syria. Failure is no deterrent to an American government!

In fact, America's attempts at regime change have failed or been only temporarily successful more often than not. And the countries whose regimes it has tried to change are by no means advanced and developed. America picks on what it believes are the primitive and weak. And even then, regime change has not proven to be an effective policy. Of the more than two dozen countries in which regime change has been tried, only one is now a strong American ally. Trying to change the governments of nations is not a way to make friends.

Two groups of countries comprise most of America's attempts at regime change—Latin American and Muslim.

American politicians have always sought to keep Latin Americans under the thumb of Uncle Sam. Early in the Nineteenth Century, America's fifth president, James Monroe, who is famous for having promulgated his Doctrine, proclaimed that the Americas should be free from future European colonization and from European interference. Although Monroe claimed that the nations of Latin America would be kept independent, American governments continually interfered in their affairs which formed the subject of General Smedley Butler's "[War is a Racket](#)" which exposed the interference. Since then America has attempted to change the governments of Argentina (1976), Brazil (1964), Chile (1970-73), Cuba (1959), Dominican Republic (1961), Guatemala (1954), Haiti (2004), Nicaragua (1981-90), and Venezuela (2002). A guarantee of independence indeed!

America's interference in the affairs of Muslim nations is similar. Since 1949, the United States of America has attempted to bring about regime change in Afghanistan (1979-89 & 2001), the Gaza Strip (2006-present), Iran (1953 & 2005-present), Iraq (1960-63 & 1992-96 & 2002-03), Libya (2011), Somalia (2006-07), Syria (1949 & 2012-present), and Turkey (1980). Of these, only Turkey today is an American ally. The United States of America has become the rhinoceros in the coffee shop. I suspect it has generated more hatred than any other nation in history.

How has America become this nation belligerent to all? How has this nation that its founding father advised to always be guided by an exalted justice and benevolence become one guided by shameful injustice and malevolence? It adopted the philosophy of *realpolitik*!

Realpolitik was formulated by a German, Ludwig von Rochau, in 1853. To Rochau, the law of power governs international relationships just as the law of gravity governs the physical world. Otto von Bismarck is the most famous advocate of realpolitik. As Chancellor of Prussia, Bismarck sought to bring about Prussian dominance in Europe. He manipulated political issues to antagonize other countries and started wars to attain his goals. Sounds familiar, doesn't it?

E. H. Carr, a British historian and international relations theorist, argued for realpolitik by promoting the belief that there is no God, that there is no moral dimension, and that what is successful is right. But as Friedrich Nietzsche writes,

“God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. Yet his shadow still looms. How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent?”

Yes, God is dead and we have killed him, so everything is permissible—kidnapping, torture, assassination, collateral killing, war, terrorism, unlimited incarceration without charges, lying, promises meant not to be kept.

What implications for other countries follow from this American adoption of realpolitik? Well, it follows that American government is utterly unreliable. The American government can be expected to abrogate any agreement or treaty whenever abiding by it is no longer in America's national interest. To fulfill such agreements and treaties would be an act of principle, but realpolitik is completely unprincipled.

Some foreign diplomats are beginning to understand this. Poland's Foreign Minister, Radoslaw Sikorski, recently [said](#) that the Polish-American alliance is worthless, even harmful, as it gives Poland a false sense of security.

Realpolitik consists of policies based primarily on power rather than ideology or morals. Henry Kissinger, a modern day Machiavelli, is a prominent exponent of realpolitik. He formally introduced realpolitik to American diplomats during the administration of Richard Nixon. But Machiavellians have always existed among human beings, even before *Il Principe* was written.

The trouble is realpolitik has never worked for more than a short time. It enabled Bismarck to unify Germany under a Prussian hegemony, but it utterly destroyed Europe twice in thirty years in the Twentieth Century and is responsible for the slaughter of millions of people by the commission of atrocities hitherto never heard of. It is not working today.

The United States Department of Homeland Security was formed in 2003 after the September 11 attacks. A ten year war on terrorism, if successful, would have lessened the need for such a department; yet the need is ever and ever greater. The Lernaean “terrorist” Hydra not only has many heads it seems to grow two more when one is severed. Homeland Security can never get powerful enough to subdue it. America will fight its war to exhaustion. What Americans have not learned is that the low road goes to no benign destinations.

Washington suspected that his advice would be rejected:

“In offering to you . . . these counsels . . . I dare not hope they will make the strong and lasting impression I could wish; that they will control the usual current of the passions, or prevent our nation from running the course which has hitherto marked the destiny of nations.”

I suspect that Washington knew that the leaders of nations are not selected for their wisdom or character. Once they leave office, these leaders are quickly forgotten. America has made it into a Constitutional principle—no president can serve more than two terms. When an American president completes the second term, s/he is pensioned and told to find a rock to crawl under never to be heard from again on any policy issue. Neither character, wisdom, or experience is of any value.

So, America will never be that great nation that will give to mankind the magnanimous and too novel example of a people always guided by an exalted justice and benevolence. In reality, America is a militarily powerful but otherwise ordinary nation ruled by small minded greedy, unjust, and inhumane people.

John Kozy is a retired professor of philosophy and logic who writes on social, political, and economic issues. After serving in the U.S. Army during the Korean War, he spent 20 years as a university professor and another 20 years working as a writer. He has published a textbook in formal logic commercially, in academic journals and a small number of commercial magazines, and has written a number of guest editorials for newspapers. His on-line pieces can be found on <http://www.jkozy.com/> and he can be emailed from that site's homepage.

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