

America's New Crusade: Imperial U.S. vs Political Islam

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"I am as intolerant of imperialistic designs on the part of other nations as I was of such designs on the part of Germany. The choice is between two ideals; on the one hand, the ideal of democracy, which represents the rights of free peoples everywhere to govern themselves, and, the ideal of imperialism which seeks to dominate by force and unjust power, an ideal which is by no means dead and which is earnestly [sought] in many quarters still." U.S. President Woodrow Wilson, July 1919

"Fight and kill the disbelievers wherever you find them, take them captive, harass them, lie in wait and ambush them using every stratagem of war." The Qur'an (9:5), Islam's holy book

"We are fighting them (the terrorists) over there so that we won't have to fight them here at home." Former U.S. President George W. Bush's political slogan

"I, like any head of state, reserve the right to act unilaterally if necessary to defend my nation." U.S. President Barack Obama, December 10, 2009

"When the tyrant has disposed of foreign enemies by conquest...and there is nothing to fear from them, then he is always stirring up some war." Plato, ancient Greek philosopher (428/427-348/347 B.C.)

In the political movie "Charlie Wilson's War" about the Soviet-Afghanistan war, the hero states "America does not fight religious wars." Is this possibly wrong, dead wrong?

In fact, is it not possible that since September 11, 2001, a new type of "holy war" may have begun? This time, the new crusade with strong religious overtones pits fundamentalist Christian America and its allies, against political Islam and the Islamist al Qaeda terrorist organization. On September 16, 2001, then President George W. Bush set the tone when he said: "This crusade, this war on terrorism, is gonna take awhile."

On December 1, 2009 [Nobel "Peace" laureate Barack Obama](#), president of the United States since January 20, 2009, decided to follow in the footsteps of his predecessor, President George W. Bush. He announced a policy of stepping up the U.S.-led [war in Afghanistan-Pashtunistan](#). He announced an escalation in the military occupation of Afghanistan by sending extra American troops in that Muslim country, putting the number of American soldiers in Afghanistan at more than 100,000. Not satisfied in using the same vocabulary as George W. Bush, Barack Obama pushed the symbolism by adopting Bush's practice of announcing policies surrounded by more than 4,000 students dressed as soldiers at the West Point Academy. This was all too reminiscent of President Lyndon B. Johnson's fatal decision in 1965 to acquiesce to the request from U.S. commanders to enlarge the [Vietnam](#)

[war](#) by sending scores of additional U.S. soldiers to that Asiatic country.

America seems to be in a constant need of a foreign enemy. First, it was the British. Then it was the Indians. Then it was the Mexicans. Then it was the Spanish. Then it was the Filipinos. Then it was the Japanese. Then it was the Germans. Then it was the Italians. Then it was the Koreans. Then it was the Cubans. Then it was the Vietnamese. Then it was the Soviets. Then it was the Iraqis. Then it was the Islamists. Then it was the Talibans. And, once the current conflict in Pashtunistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan is over, it will possibly be the Iranians, the Chinese, the Russians...etc.!

The reason for such a permanent-war mentality is most likely related to the [U.S. military-industrial complex](#), an enormous beast that must be fed regularly hundreds and hundreds of billions of dollars, if not trillions of dollars, to sustain itself.

In the months following the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991, the high echelons at the Pentagon were busy designing a new post-cold-war strategy designed to keep the U.S. war machine humming. Paul Wolfowitz, then Undersecretary of Defense for Policy under Secretary of Defense [Dick Cheney](#) in the George H. Bush administration, wrote a memorandum titled "The Defense Policy Guidance 1992-1994", which was dated February 18, 1992. The new so-called [Wolfowitz Doctrine](#) was a blueprint to "set the nation's [military] direction for the next century." This new neocon military doctrine called for the replacement of the policy of "containment" with one of military "preemption" and international "[unilateralism](#)", in effect, discarding the [United Nations Charter](#) that forbids such international behavior.

The Pentagon's overall goal was to establish, through military force, a "one-Superpower World". The more immediate objectives of the new U.S. neocon doctrine was to "...preserve U.S. and Western access to the [Middle East and Southwest Asia] region's oil", and, as stated in an April 16, 1992 addendum, to contribute "to the security of Israel and to maintaining the qualitative edge that is critical to Israel's security".

Because of some opposition within the U.S. Government, the new policy did not become immediately effective. But the objective remained.

For instance, in September 2000, under the auspices of "The Project for the New American Century", a new strategic document was issued and was entitled "[Rebuilding America's Defenses, Strategy: Forces and Resources For a New Century](#)". The same goals expressed in the 1992 document were reiterated.

The belief was expressed that the kind of military transformation the (neocon) planners were considering required "some catastrophic and catalyzing event — like a new Pearl Harbor", to make it possible to sell the plan to the American public.

They were either very prescient or very lucky, because exactly one year later, they were served with the "New Pearl Harbor" they had been openly hoping for. Indeed, the Islamist terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, turned out to have been a bonanza for the American military-industrial complex. The military planners' wish for a "[New Pearl Harbor](#)", was fulfilled at the right time. It is important to remember that from 2001 to 2005, Paul Wolfowitz served as [U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense](#) in the [George W. Bush](#) administration, reporting to [U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld](#). In this capacity, he was well positioned to implement his own Wolfowitz doctrine that later morphed into the George W.

[Bush Doctrine](#). For the time being, this is the “doctrine” that newly-elected President Barack Obama continues to implement in the Pashtunistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan corridor. As a politician, Barack Obama may be new at the job, but the policy he is being asked to implement was crafted long before he even set foot in Washington D.C.

Another possible reason why the United States is so often involved in foreign wars, besides its obvious aim of imposing a [New American Empire](#) on the world, may be due to the strong influence of [religion](#) in the United States. Just as for some aggressive Islamic countries, the U.S. is also the most religious of all first world countries. Researchers have found strong positive correlations between a nation’s religious belief and high levels of domestic stress and anxiety, and other indicators of social dysfunction such as homicides, the proportion of people incarcerated, infant mortality, drug abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, teenage births and abortions, corruption, large income inequalities, economic and social insecurity...etc.

It is possible that wars serve as an emotional outlet that allows some Americans to forget about their nation’s domestic problems. I suppose more research would be necessary on this issue. Indeed, is it possible that foreign wars, including wars of aggression, are a way for the American elites to deflect attention from domestic social problems and, as such, are a convenient pretext to direct tax money to defense expenditures rather than to social programs? The issue deserves at least to be raised. This could explain why U.S. foreign policy is so devoid of fundamental [morality](#).

U. S. politicians who become president understand this American proclivity for war. They know that the best way to popularity is to be seen as a “war president”. A president who does not start a war abroad or who does not enlarge one already in progress is open to criticism and is likely to suffer politically. He must be seen less as a president than as “commander-in-chief”, in effect, as an emperor. How could this be, when the framers of the U.S. Constitution attempted precisely to avoid that?

Indeed, [Article One](#) (the [War Powers Clause](#)) of the U.S. Constitution gives Congress, and not the President, the authority to [declare war](#).

Since World War II, however, this central article of the U.S. Constitution has been circumvented by having Congress give the President a blanket authorization to deploy troops abroad for euphemistically called “[police actions](#)”, without an explicit or formal congressional declaration of war. The term was first used by [President Harry S. Truman](#) to describe the [Korean War](#).

This artifice has done a lot to trivialize the act of war. It also contributed much in the transfer of the powers of war and peace from the legislative branch to the executive branch. In doing so, it has reinforced the role of the U.S. president as a commander-in-chief or as a de facto emperor. Only a formal [constitutional amendment](#) could restore, in practice, the framers’ initial intent.

All said, it is easy to understand why when political faces change in Washington D.C., policies do not necessarily change. This push toward empire on the part of the United States can also explain why there is resentment and an anti-Americanism movement abroad.

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