

Leon Panetta, Head of Pentagon and C.I.A. under Obama, Says Brace for 30 Year War with ISIS

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"I vividly recall how, in the wake of Osama bin Laden's killing, Obama partisans triumphantly declared that this would finally usher in the winding down of the War on Terror. On one superficial level, that view was understandable: it made sense if one assumes that the U.S. has been waging this war for its stated reasons and that it hopes to vanquish The Enemy and end the war.

But that is not, and never was, the purpose of the War on Terror. It was designed from the start to be endless." - Glenn Greenwald, in [his latest piece](#) for the Intercept

Leon Panetta is pretty much the epitome of a status quo insider. Someone, who due to his influence and mainstream veneer of respectability, is capable of inflicting an almost inconceivable amount of damage to freedom and prosperity in America. In fact, you could say that Mr. Panetta is as responsible as almost anyone else for the banana republic laughing stock that this nation has been transformed into over the past several decades. Why? Because he served in top positions for several of America's Presidents over that time.

He started out working for Richard Nixon, before switching parties and serving nine terms as a Democratic Congressman from California. He then served the Clinton Administration, including as Chief of Staff. Most recently, he was head of the Department of Defense and the CIA under Obama. This is an extremely political animal.

His ties run deepest with the Clintons, and while he criticizes Obama heavily in his new book, he excitedly proclaims that Hilary Clinton would be **"great president,"** and that **"one thing about the Clintons is, they want to get it done."**

I'm sure they do, but get **what** done exactly. In the case of Bill Clinton, it was dismantling Glass Steagall, and fully turning over the entire U.S. economy and public policy to financial oligarchs.

Think I am exaggerating? In a recent *USA Today* interview, we can clearly see exactly what "getting it done" would mean during a Hilary Clinton Presidency: **Endless War.**

[USA Today](#) reports that:

"I think we're looking at kind of a 30-year war," he says, one that will have to extend beyond Islamic State to include emerging threats in Nigeria, Somalia, Yemen, Libya and elsewhere.

In the book's final chapter, however, he writes that Obama's "most

conspicuous weakness” is “a frustrating reticence to engage his opponents and rally support for his cause.” **Too often, he “relies on the logic of a law professor rather than the passion of a leader.”** On occasion, he “avoids the battle, complains, and misses opportunities.”

Back to *USA Today*...

Panetta also argues that there is time for Obama to change tactics and recover — and that it is imperative he do so.

He makes a similar observation about Hillary Clinton, saying she would be a “great” president. “One thing about the Clintons is, they want to get it done,” he says, in words that draw an implicit contrast with Obama. “When it comes to being president of the United States, it’s one thing to talk a good game. It’s another thing to deliver, to make things happen.”

“He may have found himself again with regards to this ISIS crisis. I hope that’s the case. And if he’s willing to roll up his sleeves and engage with Congress in taking on some of these other issues, as I said I think he can establish a very strong legacy as president. I think these next 2 1/2 years will tell us an awful lot about what history has to say about the Obama administration.”

Think about that deeply for a moment. He thinks Obama may have “*found himself again with regards to this ISIS crisis.*” This is quite telling, since what has characterized Obama’s ISIS policy, is him [launching an illegal war](#) that makes George W. Bush look like a constitutional scholar. According to Panetta, that decision characterizes Obama “finding himself.” Naturally, what appeals to Panetta most about Hilary Clinton is her bloodlust for more war. Glenn Greenwald [chimes in](#):

Leon Panetta, the long-time Democratic Party operative who served as Obama’s Defense Secretary and CIA Director, [said this week](#) of Obama’s new bombing campaign: “I think we’re looking at kind of a 30-year war.” **Only in America are new 30-year wars spoken of so casually, the way other countries speak of weather changes.** He added that the war “will have to extend beyond Islamic State to include emerging threats in Nigeria, Somalia, Yemen, Libya and elsewhere.” **And elsewhere: not just a new decades-long war with no temporal limits, but no geographic ones either. He criticized Obama - who has [bombed 7 predominantly Muslim countries plus the Muslim minority in the Phillipines \(almost double the number of countries Bush bombed\)](#) - for being insufficiently militaristic,** despite the fact that Obama officials themselves have [already instructed the public](#) to think of The New War “in terms of years.”

Then we have Hillary Clinton (whom Panetta gushed would make a “great” president). At an event in Ottawa yesterday, [she proclaimed](#) that the fight against these “militants” will “be a long-term struggle” that should entail an “information war” as “well as an air war.” The new war, she said, is “essential” and the U.S. shies away from fighting it “at our peril.” Like Panetta (and [most establishment Republicans](#)), **Clinton made clear in her book that virtually all of her disagreements with Obama’s foreign policy were the by-product of her view of Obama as insufficiently hawkish, militaristic and confrontational.**

At this point, it is literally inconceivable to imagine the U.S. not at war. It would be shocking if that happened in our lifetime. U.S.

officials are now all but openly saying this. “Endless War” is not dramatic rhetorical license but a precise description of America’s foreign policy.

Just yesterday, [Bloomberg reported](#): “Led by Lockheed Martin Group (LTM), the biggest U.S. defense companies are trading at record prices as shareholders reap rewards from escalating military conflicts around the world.” Particularly exciting is that “investors see rising sales for makers of missiles, drones and other weapons as the U.S. hits Islamic State fighters in Syria and Iraq”; moreover, “the U.S. also is the biggest foreign military supplier to Israel, which waged a 50-day offensive against the Hamas Islamic movement in the Gaza Strip.” **ISIS is [using U.S.-made ammunition and weapons](#), which means U.S. weapons companies get to supply all sides of The New Endless War; can you blame investors for being so giddy?<**

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But that is not, and never was, the purpose of the War on Terror. It was designed from the start to be endless. Both Bush and Obama officials have explicitly said that the war will last at least a generation. The nature of the “war,” and the theories that have accompanied it, is that it has no discernible enemy and no identifiable limits. More significantly, this “war” fuels itself, provides its own inexhaustible purpose, as it is precisely the policies justified in the name of Stopping Terrorism [that actually ensure its spread](#) (note how Panetta said the new U.S. war would have to include Libya, presumably to fight against those empowered by the last U.S. war there just 3 years ago).

As I outlined in my post, [The American Public: A Tough Soldier or a Chicken Hawk Cowering in a Cubicle? Some Thoughts on ISIS Intervention](#), as long as the citizenry remains in a fetal position praying for the return of a middle-class lifestyle that is not coming back without concerted effort and struggle, it will continue to be slaughtered like sheep and milked like cows.

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