

# Overreach: America's Imperial Waterloo?

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Global Research, November 06, 2012

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

*Arrogance defines US imperialism. In 1945, America's economic, political and military dominance stood unchallenged.*

In his book titled, "[The World in Crisis: The End of the American Century](#)" historian Gabriel Kolko said US decline "began after the Korean War, was continued in relation to Cuba, and was greatly accelerated in Vietnam – but (GW Bush did) much to exacerbate it further."

Obama exceeded the worst Bush policies. If reelected, he'll surpass what he's already done. So will Romney. Will waging war on humanity be America's Waterloo?

Immanuel Wallerstein also sees US dominance declining. He dates it from the 1970s. Post-9/11, it accelerated. "The economic, political and military factors that contributed to US hegemony are the same (ones) inexorably produc(ing) the coming US decline," he believes.

Chalmers Johnson wrote extensively on America's decline. His trilogy covers it in detail:

- "[Blowback](#): The Costs and Consequences of American Empire;"
- "The [Sorrows of Empire](#): Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic;" and
- "[Nemesis](#): The Last Days of the American Republic."

They discuss imperial arrogance, hubris, and overreach. Johnson described what he called "arrogant and misguided American policies (that) headed us for a series of catastrophes comparable to our disgrace and defeat in Vietnam or even to the sort of extinction that befell....the Soviet Union (that he believes is) now unavoidable."

It's "too late for mere scattered reforms of our government or bloated military to make much of a difference," he added.

America is plagued by the same dynamic that doomed other empires unwilling to change. Elements include "isolation, overstretch, the uniting of local and global forces opposed to imperialism, and in the end bankruptcy."

Tyranny and loss of personal freedom follow. It arrived unannounced. It's wrapped in an American flag. It'll harden. It's heading the nation for ruin.

Washington is permanently at war against enemies it creates. Doing so is secretive, unaccountable, intrusive, repressive, and self-destructive.

Duopoly power and diktat executive authority rule. Checks and balances don't exist.

Homeland social decay deepens. Corruption is endemic. It's too deep-rooted to reverse.

Institutionalized spying and police state laws threaten everyone. Major media mind manipulation substitutes for real news, information and analysis.

Johnson envisioned inevitable dictatorial rule, and decline. The founders founders knew the risks "and tried to create a form of government - a republic - that would prevent this from occurring."

They failed. Large "standing armies, almost continuous wars, military Keynesianism, and ruinous military expenses have destroyed our republican structure in favor of an imperial presidency."

America chose the wrong path. It's too late to change. Permanent wars may prove America's undoing. Will humanity go down with it?

In mid-September, [Der Spiegel](#) headlined "Obama's Middle East Policy Is in Ruins."

Issues cited included public rage and violence in dozens of countries after the US anti-Muslim film aired, attacks on American diplomatic missions, and killing ambassador Chris Stevens in Benghazi.

The Berliner Zeitung was quoted saying:

"Four years ago, Obama pledged to seek reconciliation with the Muslim world. Now, it is doubtful whether he has succeeded. The US and its European allies now have to ask themselves how much support they still enjoy in the countries of the (so-called) Arab Spring."

Die Welt said:

"US President Barack Obama's Middle East policy is in ruins....Anti-Americanism in the Arab world has even increased to levels greater than in the Bush era. It's a bitter outcome for Obama."

Handelsblatt added:

"Three years after Obama's speech in Cairo, which was supposed to initiate a new beginning in the Middle East, the United States now has even less support in the region than before."

"That's not a failure of this president. Instead, it is the consequences of an American foreign policy that for decades favored power over democracy, and a hard line over human rights - and which will suffer from a credibility problem for a long time for precisely those reasons."

"Naked (anti-US) hatred" rages, said Bild. "When US flags burn, embassies are vandalized, and diplomats are murdered, it is an attack on the West, and not just America."

Winning friends and influencing people isn't accomplished by attacking, killing, colonizing, and exploiting them. Imperial arrogance is blind to what others see. Nor will it stop what it's addicted to continuing. Bad endings follow.

Mindless militarism and belligerence costs trillions of dollars. Vital domestic needs go

begging. Occupied Iraq violence persists daily. Afghanistan is America's longest war. It was lost years ago. No end game looms.

Libya was ravaged and destroyed. Out-of-control violence continues. Installed puppet leaders have no control. In early November alone, one or more rocket propelled grenades struck Tripoli's intelligence headquarters.

It was set ablaze and looted. Casualties were reported. Merchandise in shops along Zawiya Street was stolen.

Rival militias clashed in the city. It's a war zone. So are other parts of Libya.

Central Tripoli Hospital was attacked. In Benghazi, a car bomb targeted a police station. Injuries were reported. Days earlier, dozens of Libyans stormed the National General Congress. Voting on new cabinet members was postponed.

According to Libya's Warriors Affairs Commission, around 250,000 armed men have their own agenda. Some are government militia forces. Others express open opposition.

Weapons are readily available. Armed clashes occur regularly. NATO wants Libya divided into Tripolitania, Fezzan, and Cyrenaica. Washington, Britain, France, and Italy supported this going back decades.

Green resistance fighters want Jamahiriya governance restored. Their struggle won't end until Libya is liberated. Tass said protesters blocked Libya's major Zawiya oil refinery.

Fuel shortages are reported. Wounded anti-Gaddafi fighters want promised compensation paid. Washington's concerned only about its own interests. Expect widespread rage to continue, not subside.

Western-backed conflict ravages Syria. Everything America tried so far failed. Replacing Syrian National Council (SNC) officials with new ones won't work better than America's Plan A.

On October 31, Hillary Clinton said, "We've made it clear that the SNC can no longer be viewed as the visible leader of the opposition."

Strategy changes show US plans in disarray. Plan B was crafted in Istanbul. At issue was determining if militia leaders could be more effective. Al Qaeda and Salafists control them. Washington uses them strategically. Empowering them might be too much to tolerate.

On November 4, Clinton met with SNC and new opposition figures in Doha. Four days of talks are planned. Current SNC head Abdel Basset Sayda denounced what he called "efforts to bypass the SNC and numerous attempts to find substitutes."

Clinton wants an opposition makeover. She wants Riad Seif heading a new government in exile. It's called the Syrian National Initiative (SNI). Seif's a former Syrian parliamentarian/dissident now living outside the country.

She hopes he has wide support. Previous efforts to pick leaders fell flat. Don't expect this time to be different. Seif, in fact, said he won't lead a government in exile. He's 66 with health problems.

By November 7, SNC/SNI plan to expand their ranks to over 400. They'll also elect a new 40 member secretariat. It will choose a new leader.

Washington and key NATO partners hope doing so will work better than previous efforts. Dialogue with Damascus is ruled out.

At her November 2 [press briefing](#), State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland was less than forthcoming. She wouldn't say who was invited to Doha or precisely what's planned.

She said Washington hopes broader, more representative opposition elements will emerge. Little else was explained. Observers know everything tried so far failed. Perhaps few believe Doha will turn out better.

Washington's efforts to build an effective opposition resemble failed US/UK mid-1950s plans to subvert Soviet Russia/Nasser/and Ba'ath Party influence.

A second year later scheme proved no more successful. Months later, the United Arab Republic emerged. Things that go around, come around. Syrians have good reason to resent Washington. Another Western defeat may follow.

On November 1, [Voice of Russia](#) contributor Dmitry Babich called "US Syrian Policy In Tatters." Regime change plans haven't worked.

Washington hoped to depose Assad easily. It took most of last year to oust Gaddafi. Assad's much more resilient. Multiple plans suggest "chaotic improvisation and not a coherent policy."

SNC officials say they're in charge. Clinton wants new leaders. Internal conflicts persisted for months. "The Washington Post reports that Qatar and Turkey continue to support the SNC."

Unresolved conflict claims scores of new victims regularly. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov expects continued bloodshed. He condemned US efforts for a new Security Council resolution he said assures intensified conflict if passed. Moscow's opposition will prevent it.

"If the priority is the change of the regime, then there will be more blood, but if the priority is to save lives, then there is no need for any type of resolutions," said Lavrov. "We have not yet tried to implement the Geneva accords."

He added that Western countries want opposition forces united to continue conflict. They won't dialogue, he said. They bear full responsibility for daily violence.

On November 2, Russia's Foreign Ministry released a statement saying Washington's giving anti-Assad forces "direct orders."

"We heard (about) direct orders (from America on) what the Syrian opposition should do to form a 'government in exile,' and about who should join such a government," it said.

"US representatives are saying that they do not intend to wait for a change in Russia and China's position. So they are bluntly making clear that they see the Syria conflict being settled exclusively on their terms."

Lavrov and other Russian officials repeatedly say Syrians should choose their own

government and run their own affairs.

Clinton warned Russia about “consequences” if Moscow doesn’t bend to US demands. Since conflict erupted last year, Putin/Medvedev remained firm. Expect no change of policy now.

On November 5, [Today’s Zaman](#) headlined “US initiative for Syrian opposition seen as insincere, set to fail,” saying:

Angry SNC figures responded to Clinton’s plan. Some say Washington was never sincere. It’s now trying to hijack Turkey’s role. Ankara from the beginning provided support.

America doesn’t have allies. It has interests. Alliances shift with objectives. Former SNC member, Fawaz Tello, said:

“I don’t believe that the initiative will work as the US never had any real intention of supporting the Syrian opposition on the ground as well as the ones in exile.”

“The US is just trying to steal the role of some countries, including Turkey, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, who have different approaches to the Syrian crisis than the American one.”

Tello stressed Washington’s insincerity. It’s concerned only about its own interests.

Academic Gokhan Bacik said:

Washington “is aware that there isn’t a united opposition to fight against Assad in Syria. So it aims to create such a group under US control.” He believes new efforts won’t work better than earlier ones.

Washington thought ousting Assad would go smoothly. After 20 months of conflict, his support perhaps is stronger than ever. Syrians want no part of Western dominance.

They know who’s responsible for daily violence. They want Syria kept secular. They reject fundamentalist Al Qaeda/Salafist rule. Perhaps Washington bit off more than it can chew.

It’s too early to know. Regime change plans are firm. Bipartisan complicity supports it. The road to Tehran runs through Damascus. Failure to oust Assad and isolate Iran disrupts America’s Greater Middle East agenda.

The fullness of time will determine if Syrians, Iraqis, Afghans, Libyans, Iranians, Palestinians, and others defeat US regional ambitions.

Peace advocates hope for the best. Humanity will have just cause to exhale. All the more so if defeat becomes America’s Waterloo.

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