

Political Opportunism. The Boston Marathon Tragedy Used as a Pretext To Extend the “Global War on Terrorism”

By [Colin Todhunter](#)

Region: [USA](#)

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In a 2011 interview for an Australian TV channel, US Republican Senator John McCain talked about Islamic extremism ‘spreading’ if left unchecked by military intervention in Afghanistan and elsewhere (1). In the same interview, he spoke of the US having held fast in Iraq and having ‘succeeded’ there. He stated that ‘we’ must do the same in Afghanistan because ‘we’ are succeeding there too. In the warped world of neo-con mouthpieces like McCain, the ongoing carnage and turmoil that US-led criminality has caused in the two countries in question equates with ‘success’ (2)(3)(4)(5).

Given the problems at home, it comes as little surprise that US public support for militarism abroad has been waning for some time (6). McCain is fully aware of this. His comments were little more than an attempt to hoodwink the public into continuing to support the US’s war of global terror because he knows that people have other things on their minds, such as housing foreclosures, the outsourcing of jobs and livelihoods, increasing impoverishment, the crackdown on civil liberties and the slaughter of young (often poor) men who fight wars that have no end in sight. The public is also becoming increasingly aware that over half of government spending goes on the military when it could be better spent in other areas (7).

In 2006, former US military commander and CIA boss General Petraeus said the US strategy is to conduct a war of perceptions continuously through the news media. People like McCain are the foot soldiers in such a war and hope that the public mindset can be manipulated with propaganda about US national security interests, perceived military successes and fear about Islamic extremism.

No doubt both Petraeus and McCain have taken their cue from US commentator Walter Lippmann who in the 1920s said that ‘responsible men’ make decisions and had to be protected from the ‘bewildered herd’ — the public. Lippman believed that the public should be subdued, obedient and distracted from what is really happening and should be admiring with awe the leaders who save them from destruction and provide peace. The words of Lippman might have been ringing loud and clear in the minds of many observers as people came onto the streets of Boston to celebrate and chant “USA!USA!” after the authorities had suspended civil liberties and effectively implemented Martial Law in the aftermath of the Boston Marathon explosions. Saved from destruction and admiring their leaders with awe!

After a decade of creeping ‘war fatigue’ among the public, the recent bomb blasts in Boston comes as a timely and convenient reminder to US citizens that the ‘war on terror’ must be maintained. What better than a terrible short, sharp shock in Boston to sleep-walk them back towards this version of ‘reality’?

Much has been written about the two men who are allegedly responsible for the attack in Boston. The US media has gone out of its way to speculate on links with Chechnya and even Iran. Despite no proof of Iranian involvement, it's always a good thing to throw the latest US designated bogeyman into the mix in order to demonise it and keep the public's mind focused and supportive of continued action against it.

With all the talk of extremist Islamic terror and enemies of the US who may have been behind the attack, the mainstream media has ignored the role of the US government itself when it comes to terror attacks within the US. Such a task has been left to analysts such as Michael German and James Corbett, who have written on how FBI sting operations make jihadists out of gullible Muslims and hapless malcontents (8)(9). They document many examples of how the FBI has infiltrated, nurtured and encouraged rag tag groups to devise terror plots on US soil. It is therefore of interest that the FBI had also been monitoring the two Boston bomb suspects for a number of years (10)(11).

Without the FBI, many half baked 'terror plots' against the US on its own soil might never have existed at all. In true Lippman-esque style, however, the publicity surrounding such schemes and the media celebration of 'heroic' government agencies foiling them serve to create or strengthen public perceptions about an ongoing threat in order to keep the public on side. Indeed, in the wake of the Boston bombings the influential Council of Foreign Relations has voiced the opinion that the event once again raises the specter of terrorism on US soil, thereby highlighting the vulnerabilities of a free and open society.

Such statements and the mainstream media, with all its wild speculations and accusations concerning events in Boston, act to condition the public to continue to support the 'war on terror'. And that involves the notion that the US is under constant threat at home and abroad therefore civil liberties must be curtailed (in the name of a 'free and open society'!) in order to prevent terror. It also involves the notion that imperialist wars thinly disguised as a global war on terror must be continued.

Regardless of who is ultimately responsible for the attack in Boston, whether it was individuals acting alone or whether they were being guided by other players, the attack has served to propagate the myth about the need for ongoing US militarism and has probably conveniently served to counter waning public support for it.

Notes

- 1) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-5QiZSZmcV4>
- 2) <http://www.globalresearch.ca/iraq-crimes-against-humanity-the-babies-will-haunt-us/5316119>
- 3) <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/mar/19/iraq-make-it-impossible-to-unleash-barbarism>
- 4) <http://www.countercurrents.org/polya051209.htm>
- 5) <http://stopwar.org.uk/index.php/afghanistan-and-pakistan/1878-a-weekend-of-carnage-in-afghanistan-but-the-pointless-and-lost-war-goes-on>
- 6) <http://www.ipsnews.net/2006/09/us-9-11-poll-finds-waning-faith-in-military-interventions/>

7)

<http://www.globalresearch.ca/more-than-50-of-us-government-spending-goes-to-the-military/18852>

8) <http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article34322.htm>

9)

<http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-boston-bombings-in-context-how-the-fbi-fosters-funds-and-equips-american-terrorists/5331872>

10) http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=ARE9rcIzCqw#!

11) <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324763404578433113880189762.html>

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Articles by: [Colin Todhunter](#)

About the author:

Colin Todhunter is an extensively published independent writer and former social policy researcher. Originally from the UK, he has spent many years in India. His website is www.colintodhunter.com
https://twitter.com/colin_todhunter

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