

Popular Resistance from Caracas to Cairo

By [George Galloway](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

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09/17/06 "Al-Ahram" — — "Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!" reads the eponymous statue's inscription in Percy Bysshe Shelley's poem Ozymandias. But it is the boastful tyrant's monument, not the self-confidence of his enemies, that lies splintered in the sands.

Five years on from the atrocities of 11 September 2001, George W Bush and the neo-conservatives have managed to turn much of Afghanistan and Iraq into desolation, full of now lifeless things.

Amid this carnage lies another, unlamented casualty — the colossal wreck of US and British foreign policy. The authors of that wreckage cannot conceivably claim they were not warned of the calamities they would unleash.

Millions of us told them what would happen if they seized on the events of five years ago to launch what the Pentagon now calls the "long war". Four days after the attacks in New York and Washington I spoke in a sitting of the recalled British parliament. I warned that if the US and its allies mishandled the response, they would create a thousand, ten thousand Bin Ladens.

FIVE YEARS ON, IS THAT NOT WHAT'S HAPPENED?

Many tens of thousands of people — mostly women and children — have been killed in Iraq and Afghanistan. Do the ultimate perpetrators of the killings, as they sit behind their mahogany desks in the White House and Downing Street, imagine that the rest of us have not noticed how they do not deem those Arab and Muslim dead worthy of the same grief as attends their own?

Do they think we have not noticed how they refuse even to count the number killed in Iraq? Did they believe that the pornographic images of Abu Ghraib would be discounted? Did George Bush and Tony Blair delude themselves into thinking they could wet the knife that Israel plunged into Lebanon without being seen as accomplices to war crimes?

Blair certainly gave every appearance of having lost all contact with reality when he flew to Tel Aviv last weekend. With his own MPs plotting to oust him for damaging their re-election prospects, he went to occupied Jerusalem and threw his arms around Ehud Olmert, whose war in Lebanon the vast majority of people in Britain opposed.

As for Bush, he has always struggled even to give the impression of having a connection with reality. Nevertheless, the reality of the last five years stubbornly remains. The world is not a safer place; it is more violent, more dangerous.

There are more, not fewer, jihadists of the Bin Laden stripe. The bitterness in the Arab and Muslim world is deeper, broader and more incendiary.

In Afghanistan, Blair, oblivious to his nation's history of military catastrophe in that proud country, has hurled his soldiers into the most unforgiving terrain, against a ferocious and growing military resistance, in a part of the world that even Alexander the Great could not occupy.

In Iraq, the occupiers have spilt enough blood to turn the two great rivers red. In order to cling on they foment sectarian and confessional strife which, and this may be their parting gift, threatens tragically to trisect the country. Can they with a straight face claim Iraq is better off now than it was before the invasion?

REMEMBER WHAT THEY SAID THEIR WAR WOULD ACHIEVE: FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY, RESPECT FOR WOMEN, PROSPERITY AND DIGNITY.

In truth, it was the freedom of US corporate culture, the democracy of the dollar and an Arab world ruled by corrupt kings and puppet presidents just as pliant but a little less gauche, able to rig an election as the Bush's do in Florida rather than tactlessly incarcerating the opposition.

Even these, their own selfish ambitions, have not been achieved. That increasingly stands out as the most salient feature of the reality they have created over the last half- decade. Nowhere symbolises it more than Lebanon.

In March of last year the US State Department and British Foreign Office were incongruously playing the role of revolutionary pamphleteer. The "Cedar Revolution" in Lebanon was, we were assured, about to usher an irresistible movement for a "New Middle East".

Fifteen months later and we know what that looks like: the Israeli army pledging to bomb Lebanon back two decades and embarking on an invasion whose success was predicated on reigniting the flames of civil war which the people of Lebanon have done so much to douse.

LEBANON

The war this summer was not merely another episode in the bloody history of Israel lashing out at bordering states. It was a battle in Washington's wider war on terror. It was a front that opened up, ironically, precisely because the US is mired and losing on the Iraq front. The assault on Lebanon was meant to pave the way to further aggression against Syria and Iran.

That makes the reaction of those Arab leaders who denounced the Lebanese resistance all the more emetic. Their spurious claims that this was merely a Shia issue or that threats to bomb Iran are a Persian problem should be met with nothing but contempt.

In backing Israel against Hizbullah and the Lebanese resistance, they sided with the enemy who is garrotting the Palestinians in Gaza. While these leaders humiliated themselves before Washington and Tel Aviv, the name Sheikh Sayed Hassan Nasrallah was on the lips of millions from Rabat to Riyadh.

Israel's defeat at the hands of Hizbullah and the resistance in Lebanon is a defeat also for Washington and London. It has opened up a new prospect for ending the nightmare of the

last five years.

It is not only in the Arab and Muslim world that confidence is surging forward that there is an alternative to domination by the US, global corporations and their local junior partners. The same is happening in Latin America where President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela personifies a new radical generation, one that met its counterparts in the Middle East and the older generation of the great Fidel Castro at the Non-Aligned Summit this week.

THIS, I BELIEVE, IS GOING TO BE THE LASTING LEGACY OF THE LAST FIVE YEARS:

A renewed global movement in direct opposition to the Pentagon and the multinationals on whose behalf it acts as enforcer. The stakes are extraordinarily high. Just as the impasse in Iraq drove the US to support the Israeli adventure in Lebanon, so that defeat may in turn accelerate preparations for an assault on Iran.

That would be one of the most costly miscalculations in history. They stand warned. But they stood warned over their crazed reaction to 11 September, so no one should underestimate their capacity to wade deeper into the river of blood.

The US is not going to tip toe away, despite its losses. To do so would mean the American establishment accepting that its power and prestige had been thrown back to before 1989, when it faced a rival power.

It is going to take the power of the popular resistance from Caracas to Cairo to throw back that behemoth and settle accounts with all the quislings who it depends upon but who crucially also depend on it.

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