

The Globalization of State Terror

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"This is not an isolated criminal act we are dealing with; it is an extreme and evil ideology whose roots lie in a perverted and poisonous misinterpretation of the religion of Islam"
Prime Minister Tony Blair

The "evil ideology" that underscores the war on terror is predicated on two basic theories; preemption and enemy combatants. Both of these run counter to fundamental principles of human rights and democratic governance. Both must be met head-on and defeated. There is no wiggle-room for equivocating or appeasement; this ideology is the greatest manifestation of fanaticism in the world since the rise of Nazism in the 1930's and must be collectively challenged. As Tony Blair says, "This is not an isolated criminal act "but "an extreme and evil ideology" thrusting us towards global war and ever-increasing human rights abuse.

The preemptive doctrine overturns the conclusions of the Nuremburg Tribunals that "War is the Supreme Crime" from which all the lesser crimes naturally flow. It elevates war to a viable form of foreign policy; an acceptable means of establishing one state's superiority over another. In the case of Iraq, where the theory was applied with the most appalling results; it has been exposed as a cruel facsimile of unprovoked aggression against a defenseless enemy. The horrific after-effects have been the destruction of Iraqi society, the death of over 100,000 civilians and an enduring conflict with no end in sight. These are the predictable consequences of a pernicious theory that glorifies force above all else.

The principle at the heart of "enemy combatants" is no less sinister than that of preemption. The theory presupposes that there is a category of men that are intrinsically undeserving of any human rights whatsoever. "Enemy combatants" is not intended to selectively deprive people of particular rights; it is a blanket indictment of anyone the president arbitrarily chooses to name; stripping them of their civil liberties without any legal recourse. It overturns every meaningful precedent of International law and American jurisprudence. Due process, habeas corpus and the presumption of innocence are all rescinded by executive edict. "Enemy combatants" is the language of tyrants; it represents the dénouement of the rule of law and the birth of the imperial presidency.

We have no choice but to categorically reject both these theories as a direct assault on the constitutional system, representative government and the inalienable rights of man.

It is clear now that the neocons, in their rise to power, developed a strategy to eliminate the obstacles in their path. They wisely narrowed their focus to three main areas where they anticipated the most resistance; civil liberties, congressional approval of war and the checks on presidential power. The monikers of "enemy combatant" and preemption, minted in neo-

fascist think-tanks, have concealed the real objectives of their creators behind modern-sounding jargon. The goals, however, remain the same; declaration of a permanent state of war and the supremacy of the president.

That's where we are now; the world tilting further and further to the right and the litany of horrors growing by the day. Torture and indefinite detention have become staples of the new foreign policy regime; compromising America's prestige in the world and eroding the nation's moral authority. "Usable nukes" are now an integral part of the Pentagon's forward-defense strategy making the Bush administration the first country to claim a "first-strike" policy if US national interests are at stake. This makes the US the most dangerous nation in the world; brandishing its high-tech weaponry at third world countries and threatening to attack if they fail to comply with Washington's directives.

The expression of Bush's maligned vision is now evident everywhere; from the gun-towers over Guantanamo, to the concertina wire surrounding Falluja, to the cement abutments enclosing the White House. The rising wave of militarism has been accompanied by an equal and opposite retreat in civil liberties and personal freedom. The full-force of the economic-political-military establishment is bearing down on the institutions that preserved the peace for the last 60 years. The old order is crumbling and being replaced by a system that accepts no rule except the absolute authority of the executive.

Ideas are the fuel that power the engine of history. The radical ideology that animates the Bush regime is a force as real as the laser-guided munitions that pummeled Baghdad. They may be obscured by the vile fictions of the media, but their deadly meaning is not hard to grasp. They represent the greatest danger the world has ever seen; the globalization of state terror.

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