

Wars to Come

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For many, the Obama candidacy represented a change so profound that they thought (or perhaps more accurately, hoped), that an Obama presidency would not only mean a deep domestic social transformation, but an end to the American cycle of war.

To them the news of an upsurge in U.S. troops in Afghanistan means those hopes were dashed.

They will not be the last ones.

For among those many are those who never regarded the U.S. as an empire, and thus were woefully unprepared for the hunger of any president for more executive power, or the necessities of any empire to expand rather than simply cede power.

Many of the most vociferous critics of the expansive powers of the Bush administration — of his wiretaps, his secret prisons, of his penchant for total surveillance over Americans at home or abroad — are strikingly silent now, when under Obama, these same powers reside in the executive.

Secret prisons? Yes - still there; illegal renditions ? Still there: Wire taps of Americans without court order? Yup.

Indeed, little has changed but the public tone of debate. There's little bombast, a good deal less bluster, and a whole lot less fear-talk, but the same programs are running — full speed ahead.

And there's still wars — begun in deception and greed; continued because of simple political necessity.

Yet, there's more.

In the next 5 years or so, many of the men who fought in these wars will be back in the States, working as prison guards, cops, security specialists and the like.

Many will be bitter as vinegar, as angry as a hornet's nest, because they'll know, as previous generations of veterans learned, that they fought, not for the people — not even for the constitution — but for the wealthy rulers who could not care less about their lives or their loss.

What will this mean for U.S. society? How will it impact the future?

Almost 90 years ago, at the end of World War I, soldiers, bitter at the loss of the war, and

humiliated by the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, became a right wing political force that would years later re-emerge as the Nazis—which tore through Europe with a vengeance.

That is to say, wars don't necessarily end when politicians or diplomats shake hands and sign treaties. They fester and feed off of unresolved issues and re-emerge — sometimes worse than before.

And they sometimes return to the land that birthed them.

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