

Why The War Party Prevails In Spite of Its Policy Disasters

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With the [failure to find](#) “weapons of mass destruction” in Iraq, and the disastrous outcome of that war, one would think the War Party would be so discredited that they’d never make a comeback – that they’d never be able to recover from the horrific results of their misguided policies and that no one outside of an insane asylum would ever listen to them again.

And remember, it wasn’t just that little matter of “faulty intelligence.”

- They said it would be a “[cakewalk](#).”
- They said our mission had been [accomplished](#) and that the Iraqi resistance was a bunch of “[dead-enders](#)” who wouldn’t put up much of a fight.
- They said the region – [and the globe](#) – would see a new era of democracy and peace.
- They said the war would [pay for itself](#).

In short, they were wrong about absolutely *everything*.

Normally, when someone gives you consistently bad advice you tend to discount their subsequent pronouncements. Say your investment counselor tells you to buy stocks that lose enormous amounts of money – you’d fire him or her, wouldn’t you?

Except, when it comes to the [policymakers](#) and [pundits](#) who led us into the Iraqi quagmire, it didn’t [turn out](#) that way.

Why is that?

There are three big reasons for the War Party’s remarkable persistence.

First, they represent entrenched interests. The [arms lobby](#) and [the Israel lobby](#) have entered a marriage of convenience that has served them very well, although it hasn’t served the country. These two groups fund and otherwise support the politicians who have led us down the primrose path in the Middle East, and neither is going away any time soon.

The interest of the armaments industry is all too obvious: they profit directly from the policymakers’ militaristic policies. If war is always the answer, then their profit margins are guaranteed to continually rise – even as the United States teeters on the brink of financial ruin.

The Israel lobby’s interests are less obvious: Israel doesn’t really benefit from constant warfare and turmoil in the region, as several supporters of the Jewish state have [pointed](#)

[out](#). Yet the trajectory of Israel's political class has taken a sharp turn toward ultra-nationalism and militarism until, today, it is the world's Sparta, a state dedicated to a single-minded expansionism that threatens the peace of the region – and the world.

These powerful lobbies are, in effect, permanent fixtures on the American political landscape. So, in spite of the repeated havoc they wreak, they just keep on keeping on – relentlessly promoting their agenda of perpetual war.

Secondly, these two lobbies have tremendous resources. While they may be a minority within the population of this country, they wield influence way out of proportion to their actual numbers. You may have noticed that a whole platoon of [the richest people](#) in the country are supporting the War Party's presidential candidates this time around, single-handedly spending enormous amounts of money in the GOP presidential primaries – and wielding a less obtrusive but no less [decisive influence](#) on the Democrats.

A good example of their outsized effect is the current campaign to sabotage the President's deal with Iran, which is opposed by both the Israel lobby and the military-industrial complex. No sooner had the deal been announced than [anti-deal television ads](#) attacking it went up all over the country. AIPAC, the powerful pro-Israel lobbying group, launched a massive campaign to pressure lawmakers to nix it, literally marching on Capitol Hill to intimidate Congress into voting no.

[The budget](#) for this coordinated campaign: upwards of [\\$145 million](#).

The third reason for the War Party's persistence is a longstanding assumption on the part of our policymakers that the United States has a "responsibility" to police the world. This has been the basis of a bipartisan foreign policy consensus that has dominated the discourse since the end of World War II. It is, in part, a holdover from the cold war era, when the alleged threat from a supposedly advancing Soviet Union and its international proxies was portrayed as inexorable.

When the Soviet Union suddenly collapsed, and its international partners evaporated into ineffectuality, the lesson was not learned: instead of withdrawing from our forward position, US policymakers decided the time was ripe to emphasize – and implement – the idea of American "global leadership." With the main obstacle to US worldwide dominance out of the way, Washington – including partisan leaders on both sides of the aisle – began to [talk openly](#) of a "world order" policed by US force of arms. Neoconservative pundits began to rhapsodize about the glories of an "[American empire](#)." It was the Age of American Hubris.

And then came 9/11.

That signal event threw the US ruling elite into a frenzy of warmongering, and they have yet to relent. It gave Washington the green light to unleash a series of military campaigns in the Middle East and North Africa, the consequences of which we have only just begun to experience. The neoconservatives, ideologically predisposed to a foreign policy of constant aggression, had speculated in their propaganda about the potential uses of a "[new Pearl Harbor](#)." And so the wish became the deed.

As the momentum of the War Party began to run out, new "threats" – largely the creation of our own misplaced policies – arose: the so-called "Islamic State," and relatively small-scale terrorist incidents in Europe and the United States, provided fresh fuel to stoke the engines

of war. In a process that feeds on itself, US intervention abroad causes “blowback,” which justifies yet more intervention, which in turn generates more blowback – as the [wheel of war](#) continues to spin.

Can we stop the wheel from turning – or even slow it down?

We can – and we *must*.

Constant war threatens us with a permanent national security apparatus that is slowly but surely creating a police state in this country. The government tries to justify universal surveillance of American citizens – spying on our private communications – on the grounds that we’re at war. Yet if we’re *always* at war, then the alleged threat to the homeland will never abate – and the tentacles of government control will continue to insinuate themselves into every aspect of American life, until there is nothing left of our Constitution or the civil liberties it guarantees.

Yes, we can turn the situation around – by challenging the bipartisan foreign policy consensus that has dominated Washington for over half a century. That may seem like a tall order, but polls show the American people are ready for change. They’re tired of the endless futile crusade to make the world safe for American corporations: they’re weary of war, and want our leaders to focus on the problems we face here in this country.

Although the War Party commands considerable resources – including a veritable lock on the “mainstream” media – the Peace Party isn’t at a complete disadvantage. The Washington consensus and popular sentiment have been diverging radically in recent years, until the yawning gap between the two is all too apparent. The War Party is forced to constantly ratchet up the threat level so as to keep the war hysteria at the highest possible level, but that old trick is wearing a bit thin. People are catching on.

That’s why Antiwar.com is so important at this crucial moment in our history. We’ve been educating the American people since 1995 about the many ways in which the War Party snares us into overseas conflicts that are basically none of our business. And polls [show](#) that the people want a new foreign policy that consists largely of minding our own business.

This scares the Washington elites – and fills us with hope.

But before hope can translate into solid gains – into actually changing US foreign policy – we have a lot of work to do. And we can’t do it without your financial support.

That’s the one area where the War Party has an undisputed – and very significant – advantage over us: they have the money to flood the country with war propaganda at a moment’s notice. All we have is the truth – and yet that may be enough to win our battle, provided we can get our message out there.

Whether we can do that depends entirely on you, our readers and supporters. Antiwar.com has been reader-supported since our inception. We don’t have any billionaire backers: we get what we need to continue our work from thousands of small donations.

We appeal to our readers four times a year for the money required to keep going, and we’re right in the midst of one of those fundraising campaigns. As America stands on the brink of yet another extended conflict in the Middle East, the country could go either way – and Antiwar.com could make all the difference in the world.

That's why this may be our most important fundraising campaign ever – and why it's imperative that you make your tax-deductible donation today – [right now](#).

Your donation, if made today, will have double its usual impact: that's because we've raised \$32,000 in matching funds. For every dollar you give, a group of generous donors will match it – but *you* have to make the first move.

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