
THE SECOND AMERICAN REVOLUTION

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We are in the midst of a new American revolution. The task at hand according to the Pentagon's own official documents, is nothing less than establishing "full spectrum dominance" of a "unipolar" world.

To accomplish this goal requires a radical transformation not just of American foreign policy but of domestic policy as well—by loosening the constraints of well-established laws at home and abroad. Dick Cheney has told us that "we can no longer operate under 20th century standards" given that the war against terrorism "may never end, at least not in our lifetime."

The revolution is already well underway. War in Iraq marks the next phase in this process of transformation.

Under the new Bush Doctrine, a bold military strategy of so-called preemptive attack including the possibility of unilateral nuclear first strike—is intended to prevent any state or group of states from challenging our preeminent role in the world. As President Bush told the graduating class at West Point Military Academy last year: "America has, and intends to keep, military strengths beyond challenges."

Preemptive attack, however, is an Orwellian term for illegal invasion. As far back as 1946, the Nuremberg Tribunal rejected Germany's argument of the necessity for preemptive war against Norway and Denmark, judging it: "the supreme international crime differing only from other warcrimes in that it contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole."

This prohibition was incorporated into the United Nations Charter as the basis for a new system of collective security in which no state retained the unilateral right to attack another—with two specified exceptions: self defense and Security Council authorization.

In self-defense, states may retaliate against an armed attack or the imminent threat of one. But only if, in the words of Daniel Webster, an earlier Secretary of State, the threat is "instant, overwhelming, leaving no choice of means and no moment for deliberation." The Bush Administration never provided a shred of substantiated evidence that Iraq either participated in the attacks of 9/11, or had the means and intention to launch an imminent attack against the U.S.

The Security Council may, as a last resort, authorize force outside of self-defense when necessary to maintain international peace and security. But only after all peaceful alternatives have been

exhausted—clearly not the case in Iraq with the UNMOVIC weapons inspectors literally begging for more time.

U.S. double standards were exposed for the world to see during the bungled effort to squeeze a second resolution out of the Security Council. Having first derided the U.N. as "irrelevant" and then failed to sway even Guinea and Angola to the cause of war, the White House has now been forced into the ironic position of justifying the legality of a war opposed by the Security Council as a whole by invoking a 12-year old Security Council resolution.

The untenable contradiction between U.S. policy and international law arises because the revolutionaries in Washington are more concerned with the unrestrained projection of American military power than with disarmament, democracy or human rights.

This agenda is often misunderstood as a direct response to 9/11. But Bush strategists have been writing for more than a decade about the need to remove Saddam Hussein—despite the U.S. having armed and supported him for years. Their openly articulated goal is to reshape the Middle East to better serve American geopolitical interests.

Even Americans unconcerned by naked imperialism should consider whether this radical new strategy is good for our country. In a world bristling with fearsome weapons, what is the likely outcome of dismantling the legal framework designed half a century ago to protect humanity from the carnage of unlimited force? Can pure military might really defend us from evil and secure our freedom at the same time?

While loudly predicting swift military victory, our own leaders are also quietly preparing us to lose the peace. We have been told by the White House and the CIA itself to prepare for increased anti-American terrorism at home and abroad, as war in Iraq incites extremist reactions around the globe, not just in the Arab world. This can only mean one thing: we will be even less safe after the war than we are now.

Consider, too, how other countries will exploit the U.S. example. Repressive governments the world over have already increased human rights abuses against their own brand of home-grown "terrorists"—usually anyone opposing their policies. Simmering tensions in nuclear flashpoints like India-Pakistan, Israel-Palestine, and China-Taiwan could easily and quickly escalate beyond control. Taken to its logical—though never inevitable—conclusion, the absence of law will lead to the absence of peace and human rights altogether.

The revolution is underway at home as well. In just two years the Bush Administration has turned a \$400 billion plus surplus into a \$300 billion plus deficit—without yet allocating a penny to war and occupation in Iraq or to reconstruction in Afghanistan (remember that country we were repeatedly told would never again be forgotten and abandoned?). Americans are suffering through a painful recession, buffeted by waves of corporate crime and mass lay-offs, facing increased poverty and unemployment. In the face of these dire economic conditions, the White House has rammed tax “reform” legislation and increased military-security budget allocations through a compliant Congress to achieve a massive upwards redistribution of wealth undreamed of even in the Reagan years.

Our Constitution is also under attack. Since 9/11 our civil liberties have been significantly eroded in the name of protecting our freedom. At some point after the invasion of Iraq, John Ashcroft’s Justice Department will present to Congress secretly-drafted legislation, the Patriot Act II, which further limits fundamental and long-cherished American principles of free speech and due process. Mr. Ashcroft has even condemned lawful dissent as “aiding and abetting terrorism”—raising the specter of criminalizing opposition to government policy.

The practice of racial profiling—generally abhorred in American society—has become institutionalized through mass detentions and special registration procedures. American citizens can now be subject to indefinite detention without trial. Our government has

gone so far as to justify and even practice torture for God and Democracy, or course.

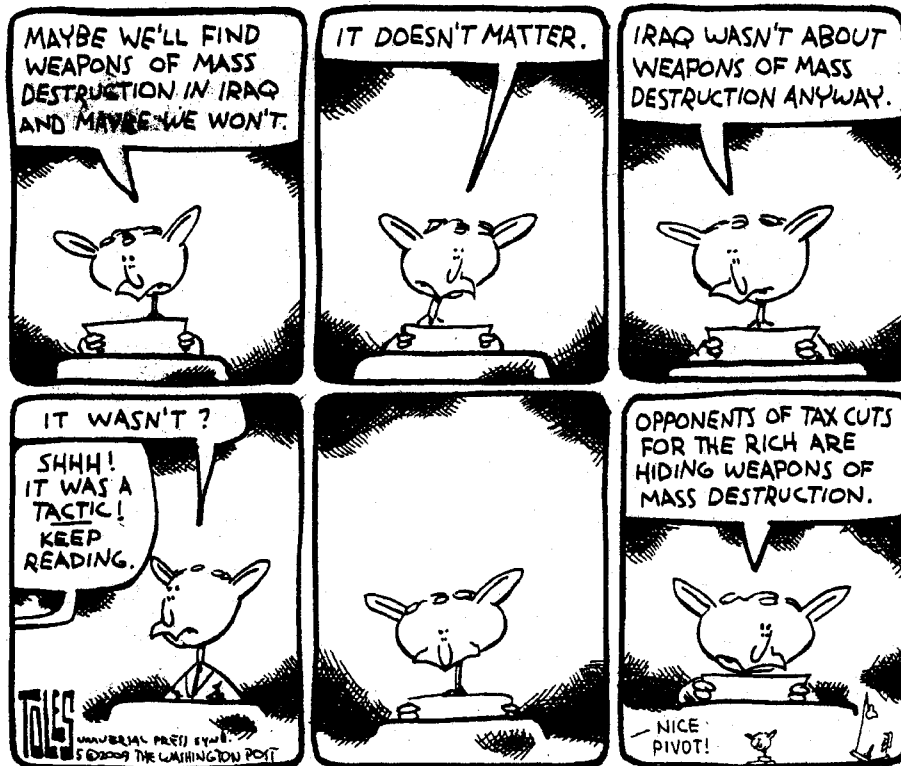
The bottom line is this: we face a carefully planned preemptive attack against our most basic rights—Constitutional rights and human rights. There is a pitiless logic at play that must at some point be confronted: imposing American Empire abroad requires building Fortress America at home. The two cannot be separated.

What lies ahead in the unfolding revolution? When and where will this “endless war” finally end?

With U.S. troops engaged in battle, Americans will pray for their safety and—for a time—also rally round the government. But before it is too late, we would do well to heed Sir Thomas More’s advice to Will Roper, his protégè turned vigilante, in the play “A Man for All Seasons”:

And when the last law was cut down and the devil turned around on you, where would you hide, the laws all being flat? Do you really think that you could stand upright in the winds that would blow then?

Americans of all political opinion have the right to speak and act freely in opposition to Washington’s revolutionary program—without being treated as terrorists by our own government. This is, after all, still our country. And if we truly love our homeland, we must take it back. ■



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