

The war on terror



The War On TerrorInternational TerrorismIntroduction: In the following pages I would like to examine the concept of the global war on terror. I will describe it as a metaphor that needs to be examined because it has been accepted uncritically and applied literally.

It is my position that the war on terror as we have employed it has done more to promote terrorism than to reduce it. It certainly has not prevented terrorist attacks around the world, yet it has diverted our attention from other priorities, damaged our credibility and has threatened our liberties and undermined our democracy. (Soros 2005) With the recent killing of Osama Bin Laden we should declare an end to the war on terror and find a better way, to continue the fight against terrorism.

History of the War on Terror: President Bush chose the term “ war on terror” to characterize the U. S. conflict with radical Islamic extremists. This was contrary to the advice of his top aides who suggested he use the term “ global struggle against violent extremism.” Nevertheless the September 2001 terrorist attacks required that President Bush take action against terrorism.

Terrorism is considered as a problem not just for the United States, but also for all nations. (Ebsco Library 1 2012)Soon after the September 2001 attacks, the United States faced a series of biological attacks in the form of anthrax laced letters. These letters were responsible for the lives of five Americans. These letters, are considered by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), to represent the worst biological attack in American history. The confluence of these two strings of events, the airplanes used as

missiles and the letters laced with anthrax; led to extensive changes in the United States foreign and domestic policy. These changes included the development of the USA PATRIOT Act and the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, both of which were designed to overhaul the countrys surveillance and intelligence operations. A short time after the nine eleven attacks, President Bush called on Afghanistans Taliban government to arrest Osama bin Laden, (the primary suspect in the nine eleven attacks) and turn him over to the United States.

The same request was made for other Al Qaeda members thought to be in the country Afghanistan. The Taliban government refused to comply with the Presidents™ demands. This forced President Bush to initiate combat operations in Afghanistan in October 2001. A side affect of identifying Muslim extremist as the perpetrators of the nine eleven attacks was that non Arab Americans sought out, an attacked other citizens of Arab appearance, either physically or verbally. This happened, in the first few days following nine eleven attacks, the FBI had reports of at least ninety hate crimes directed at Muslims, Sikhs, Arab-Americans, or Middle Eastern-looking people (Ebsco Library 1 2012). Almost a year later in September 2002, President Bush announced the Bush Doctrine. This policy stated that the United States had the right to launch a preemptive military strike at any nation that could put weapons of mass destruction in the hands of terrorists.

This policy would enable him to justify a war in Iraq. As history reveals President Bush sought and obtained congressional approval for Operation Iraqi Freedom. However, he never found the weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. In the eyes of most of the free world the U.

S. has greatly flawed by attacking Iraq. This war served to further alienate the U. S. from the Arab world and many millions of Muslims from around the world. The main accusation is the U.

S. launched the wrong war against the wrong target for the wrong reasons.

The Legal Basis for the War on Terror: Although after the attacks of nine eleven Congress did not chose to exercise its power to declare war.

However, what Congress did do was to issue a joint resolution.

This is presently referred to as the Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF), this document authorized the President to use military force, if necessary, to respond to the attacks with all necessary and appropriate force against any entity associated with the terror attacks of September 11, 2001. In addition, the resolution also authorized the President to take additional action to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States. (AUMF 2001) See the following: AUTHORIZATION FOR THE USE OF MILITARY FORCE Public Law 107-40, 107th Congress Joint Resolution JOINT RESOLUTION To authorize the use of United States Armed Forces against those responsible for the recent attacks launched against the United States.

Whereas, on September 11, 2001, acts of treacherous violence were committed against the United States and its citizens; and Whereas, such acts render it both necessary and appropriate that the United States exercise its rights to self-defense and to protect United States citizens both at home and abroad; and Whereas, in light of the threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States posed by these grave acts of violence; and Whereas, such acts continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat

to the national security and foreign policy of the United States; and Whereas, the President has authority under the Constitution to take action to deter and prevent acts of international terrorism against the United States: Now, therefore, be it Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, The extent of the application of the War on Terror President Bush™ war on terror has developed as a multifaceted effort to prevent the spread of terrorist ideologies and activities. It was the Presidents™ intent to destroy both state sponsored and international terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda, Hamas, and Hezbollah; as a result the war on terror has mostly taken the form of extended military operations. Like the “ war on drugs” and the “ war on poverty,” the war on terror is considered an ideological war, however, unlike other ideological wars the war on terror is also an active military operation (Ebsco Library 2, 2012).

Many American believe that the wound inflicted to the civil liberties of citizens as a result of the United States anti terror legislation has been too high a price to pay for curbing the spread of terrorism. It reminds me of a saying I heard often as a child Better Red than Dead implying given in to the Soviets is better than nuclear war. Using that mentality, as others have said Better Safe than Free. I don™t necessary agree with the concept that we need more extensive wiretapping to be safe. There are supporters of President Bushs war on terror that claim that sacrificing minimal personal liberties for the greater cause of preventing terrorism is worthwhile.

It is said that rather than merely fighting and killing terrorists, the war on terror is designed to prevent the governments of the world from supporting

organizations that operate using terrorist tactics. (Ebsco Library 2, 2012)Some effects of the War on Terror It probably goes without saying: that military force is both justified and required in the war on terror. The invasion of Afghanistan was necessary.

From the perspective of the U. S. government, Afghanistan was where Bin Laden lived and Al Qaeda has its training camps. However, not everyone agrees that the invasion of Iraq was necessary or justified.

Critics of the Bush Administration argue that the Iraq War has wrought havoc upon Iraqi society and that the Bush Doctrine has more broadly damaged America™s international standing. In this criticism, they have found an unlikely ally in President Bush™s own father. In his book *A World Transformed*, the 41st President™s reasoning for having refrained in 1991 from overthrowing Saddam Hussein implicitly challenges his son™s later decision to do so: Trying to eliminate Saddam, extending the ground war into an occupation of Iraq would have violated our guideline about not changing objectives in midstream, engaging in mission creep, and would have incurred incalculable human and political costs(Jarecki 2008 P 47). Looking past the combat casualties Bush Sr. was concerned with the political damage that unilateralism poses to America™s role in the world: He believed rightly so, that going in and occupying Iraq, thus unilaterally exceeding the United Nations™ mandate would have ruined the precedent of international response to aggression that we hoped to establish. LTC Karen Kwiatkowski (RET) sees the war against Iraq as corruption in the U.

S. government on a number of different levels. Her story goes beyond the scope of this paper, however she served inside the pentagon as a political military affairs officer, prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom. She has testified to Congress and was interviewed in the film Why we fight.

Her position of the Iraq invasion, describes the motives behind the War in Iraq as being driven by oil. (Follmer 2008)When the U. S. first invaded Iraq in 2003, the presidents stated rationale was that Iraq had ties to Al Qaeda, a claim that was later set straight by improved intelligence. Later, the position was we the U.

S. had to get rid of Iraqs weapons of mass destruction, which turned out to be nonexistent, as well. I can™t really say if President Bush was intentionally lying to the American public or was his staff misleading him. I tend to believe the later. I believe what some of the critics have argued is true.

That the U. S. actions in Iraq and Afghanistan have incited many people men and women to become terrorist. The U. S. by our actions helped some terrorist groups better define their enemy, the United States. We may have also inspired anger from the international community. It is possible that the reason the Palestinian group Hamas won the majority of the seats in the Palestinian Authoritys parliament in early 2006, is because of the U.

S. war on terror. Under present administration, there is some debate on the “ war on terror. President Obama now uses the term the “ Overseas Contingency Operation,.

President Obama has sent mixed signals as to how far he wants to distance himself from his predecessor. He has condemned harsh interrogation techniques and torture of alleged terrorists, and he has announced the closing of the prison at Guantanamo Bay. He has stated that closing Guantanamo will ensure a safer America in the long run because he views it as a recruiting tool for terrorists. The President has argued that the prison, which has held hundreds of detainees for years without charges or trials, motivates U. S. enemies overseas (Ebsco Library 3 2012). Although he has renamed it, President Obama has continued to execute the war on terror in much the same way as our former President Bush did.

His Administration continues to hide behind the state secrets doctrine, he persists with the transfer of prisoners to other countries without any legal rights, and there has been no evidence of any major changes to the war on terror. Conclusion: The war on terror is not working in its literal application. We have caused many innocent victims. These victims cause sympathy and outrage from the global community, just as we received when nine eleven happened to us.

When we take action that creates more innocent victims we are outraging the world. That response supports what the terrorists wanted to achieved. I like how George Soros States the problem: Using the war metaphor creates other problems. First, a state of war undermines the normal functioning of the critical process that is the foundation of our democracy.

Second, the sense of emergency associated with war has been used to extend executive powers, infringe civil liberties, run up a budget deficit and

neglect other burning issues like global warming. Third, the way the war on terror was conducted America in the past and lost us the moral high ground. Fourth, we ended up with unsavory allies like President Karimov of Uzbekistan who boiled political prisoners alive and massacred unarmed demonstrators in Andijon. Finally, the war on terror drove a wedge between America and the rest of the world. President Bush™s assertion that we must fight terrorism abroad so that we do not have to fight it at home may have appealed to the public at home but it had the opposite affect abroad. Attitudes toward the US have never been so negative (Soros 2005). We have had great success in fostering the concept of the rule of law in Afghanistan.

I think that if we the U. S. stay within the confines of the law and stop creating more innocent victims we have a chance of winning the intent of the war on terror. References White, J. R.

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