

War is the Enemy
Perceptions of Reality and the US 'War on Terror'.

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Arguments by media pundits regarding the 'war on terror' and how the U.S. can 'win' it, assume that the U.S. is fighting a genuine war in which it seeks victory and ultimately peace. This assumption is based on a flawed assessment of the causes of war and its relationship to the U.S. political economy. The faulty premise, almost always involves an equation in which war is considered an abnormality (something undesirable) and peace, the normal (or desirable) state of affairs. In the past, war was a means to an end, be it self-defense or protection (just) or ruthless conquest, political or economic (unjust). The military, as an institution was subservient to the political economy. That hierarchy of institutions does not exist anymore. War now has become a 'fact' of life, that people have accepted as a normal state of affairs, and other institutions have adjusted to accommodate this new reality. Victory or no victory, post World War 2, the U.S. has never settled for peace; when one conflict ended, it has started another.

During the 'cold war' there never were two foes that met directly on the battlefield, there was no genuine battle in which victory would determine peace. Ideological differences were exploited for militarism, the continual preparation for war, and as a jump off point for many smaller conflicts. Demilitarization was equated with appeasement, peace with being unrealistic, the world divided into competing spheres of influence, and domestic issues relegated to the background as war dominated lives and contoured perceptions of reality for entire generations. In our time, war itself is the driver of war; war itself the perception of mass reality, war itself is the enemy. To achieve peace, we will have to fight "war", the war that the U.S. elite impose upon the

world, and the perceptions of reality that go with it. When war becomes a rescuer of global capitalism from collapse, an averter of economic crisis, a distraction from pressing domestic and international issues, predominating the national budgets, a driver of profits, an easy escape from responsibility for the ruling elite, then the foundation is set for it to become institutionalized in a social structure as the feeder of the status quo, peace in these circumstances is dealt a mortal blow. When other institutions like the family and religion submit to war, feeding it with manpower and legitimation, when the political economy is geared towards militarism, and international conflict takes precedence over domestic issues, peace can never succeed. Under these conditions, one war will lead to another, due to structural precedent regardless of the official distractions or the face of the advertised enemy or the language of fear.

War is the way of life of the U.S. elite; it is this 'way of life' that they want to protect at all cost, and the ability and legitimation to embark on it whenever needed is the 'freedom' they desire. If 'freedom' is under attack, it is not the freedom granted to the masses, they have very little left in a bureaucratically circumscribed society, rather it is the 'freedom' of these elite to embark on war after war, unimpeded. In pursuing this lifestyle, they expect families to willingly give up their children for sacrifice, they expect the world to alter its agenda on their demand, ignore domestic problems and thus structurally alter not only the premature institutions in the developing world, but any remnants of democratic institutions at home. The "you are with us or with the enemy" mentality, plunges poor countries in a cycle that ensures that they go from one humanitarian crisis to another, from one dictator to the other, from one coup to the other. As with people that are malnourished, mortality and disease are high so with underdeveloped institutions. War related crises are quite apparent in the Middle East.

The modern Middle East along with its monarchies was a creation of the Colonials, their division was for the purpose of exploitation and domination [as reflected in the Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916], it was not for the purpose of development, democracy, modernization or peace. The best way to dominate the region was to keep it in a state of perpetual conflict and turmoil, which the colonial elite recognized early on in the history of these artificially created nation states. The economic significance of oil in a world in which industrialization determines wealth and power, cannot be understated in this regard. The U.S. elite are not interested in peace in the Middle East, if they were, it could have readily been achieved. The institutions, dominated by the U.S. in those countries, would have progressed in a fashion that was democratic and that region would now equal the U.S. in economic might. That was not done and will never be done because it would spell the end of U.S. hegemony, not only in the Middle East but also possibly in the global arena. Democracy would result in Arab unity, and a total exit of Western economic dominance in the region and an eventual withering away of the state of Israel, whose nurturing is linked more to a neo-colonial setup than any Zionist aspirations (which would be of mere 'nuisance value' otherwise). These elite have thus confronted any attempts that would strengthen democracy in Arab lands; a recent example is their treatment of the Hamas government in Palestine. Their methodology is simple: starve the people, ferment a civil war and force out a democratically elected government. The U.S. corporate elite would rather drag the U.S. presidents through the streets of Washington than have any democracy in the Middle East.

Well financed think tanks, populated by elites that float between the political and corporate arena and interlocking directorates, push their agenda quite effectively. Decision makers avidly embrace these recommendations across the official political spectrum, regardless of party affiliation. We can safely conclude that these recommendations have constituted what

can be described as 'elite agenda' in this 'war on terror'. The recommendations can broadly be classified as either 1. Accommodative or 2. Militaristic: The accommodative recommendation involves 'drugging' the rebelling slaves so that they are pacified in a cheerful manner, using various polite mechanisms. These mechanisms include appeals to freedom and democracy, pushing American corporate culture, giving token freedom of the press (shadowed by foreign influence, if not outright owned by the occupiers like Radio 'Free Iraq'), some facade of elections to grant legitimacy, outright bribing of decision makers and opponents, etc. The militarist recommendation, on the other hand suggests outright brutal force, so that the rebels in the majority world give up their rebellion, or are contained (jailed) and encircled in continent wide prisons- with a claim that it is better to fight them "over there" than at home. The 'over there' is thus degraded as an alien environment, which can be catastrophically destroyed with little or no remorse, the suffering of whose public is quite tolerable even commendable, while any disruption at home is seen as intolerable. Seemingly decent people, among the American public, accept this as the logical and moral path to pursue.

When the 'accommodative' version is implemented and a fragile though unjust peace is achieved, why do we still see a militarist response on top of this, that is repeated quite often. It is in the answer to this question that the key to understanding the nature of war in our time can be found. If we understand why militarism wins in spite of successes of other responses, just or unjust then we would understand the nature of militarism in a U.S. dominated world. All countries in the Middle East have been pacified using various mechanisms and they are in peaceful submission to the U.S: Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the UAE are military satellites of the U.S, from which wars have been launched on another Arab state. Not only do they host U.S. troops, as occupation and attack forces, they spend billions every year in purchasing arms from

the U.S. military industries. Saudi Arabia alone spends around \$25 billion every year on arms and armament. Egypt is neatly tucked away in the pockets of the U.S elite through provision of massive aid (bribes) to its non-democratic political establishment. Libya was brought to its knees over a civilian aircraft, (Iraq is practically destroyed), the Palestinians are imprisoned in country wide ghettos, being starved as we speak. Syria was disciplined over the alleged murder of one person, Al-Hariri, and now is peacefully subdued. Why then have wars and threats of wars not ended in that region? It is because war is ingrained in the psyche of the U.S. elite, who shape and dominate the U.S. political economy.

These wars will not end, they cannot end until the 'military metaphysic' (the near religious dogma of these power elite, the driving force of their view of the world), the military definition of reality, an effect of institutional fusing, the military, political and the economic, is altered. It is up to the victims of this mentality, people in the poor countries, as well as the public in the U.S. to challenge this crackpot version of reality and alter their courses together. Authority by definition involves power that is legitimized. If people reject the definition of reality pushed upon them by these elite, their authority will disappear. When their authority disappears, their ability to conduct warfare will end. The real 'war' that is to be fought, between the people and these elite, is a war over definitions of reality. The U.S. elite, being in command of the cultural apparatus; the mass media and education, are winning this 'war', having out resourced all opponents. Their victory means that actual wars will continue unabated. Let us direct our efforts towards challenging their projected perceptions of reality, looking past the official distractions and untruths, only then can consciousness be cultivated and peace achieved.