

The Colder War

by John Pilger
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In America in the 1950s, the Red Scare was used to justify the growth of war industries, the suspension of democratic rights and the silencing of dissenters. That is happening now.

Last week, the US government announced that it was building the biggest-ever war machine. Military spending will rise to \$379 billion, of which \$50 billion will pay for its "war on terrorism".

There will be special funding for new, refined weapons of mass slaughter and for "military operations" -- invasions of other countries.

Of all the extraordinary news since September 11, this is the most alarming. It is time to break our silence.

That is to say, it is time for other governments to break their silence, especially the Blair government, whose complicity in the American rampage in Afghanistan has not denied its understanding of the Bush administration's true plans and ambitions.

The recent statements of British Ministers about the "vindication" of the "outstanding success" in Afghanistan would be comical if the price of their "success" had not been paid with the lives of more than 5,000 innocent Afghani civilians and the failure to catch Osama bin Laden and anyone else of importance in the al-Qaeda network.

The Pentagon's release of deliberately provocative pictures of prisoners at Camp X-Ray on Cuba was meant to conceal this failure from the American public, who are being conditioned, along with the rest of us, to accept a permanent war footing similar to the paranoia that sustained and prolonged the Cold War.

The threat of "terrorism", some of it real, most of it invented, is the new Red Scare.

The parallels are striking.

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Above all, the American industrial-complex has a new enemy with which to justify its gargantuan appetite for public resources -- the new military budget is enough to end all primary causes of poverty in the world. Donald Rumsfeld, the Defence Secretary, says he has told the Pentagon to "think the unthinkable".

Vice President Dick Cheney, the voice of Bush, has said the US is considering military or other action against "40 to 50 countries" and warns that the new war may last 50 years or more.

A Bush adviser, Richard Perle, explained. "(There will be) no stages," he said.

"This is total war. We are fighting a variety of enemies. There are lots of them out there . . . If we just let our vision of the world go forth, and we embrace it entirely, and we don't try to piece together clever diplomacy but just wage a total war, our children will sing great songs about us years from now."

Their words evoke George Orwell's great prophetic work, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. In the novel, three slogans dominate society: war is peace, freedom is slavery and ignorance is strength. Today's slogan, war on terrorism, also reverses meaning. The war is terrorism.

The next American attack is likely to be against Somalia, a deeply impoverished country in the Horn of Africa. Washington claims there are al-Qaeda terrorist cells there. This is almost certainly a fiction spread by Somalia's overbearing neighbour, Ethiopia, in order to ingratiate itself with Washington. Certainly, there are vast oil fields off the coast of Somalia. For the Americans, there is the added attraction of "settling a score".

In 1993, in the last days of George Bush Senior's presidency, 18 American soldiers were killed in Somalia after the US Marines had invaded to "restore hope", as they put it.

A current Hollywood movie, *Black Hawk Down*, glamorises and lies about this episode. It leaves out the fact that the invading Americans left behind between 7,000 and 10,000 Somalis killed.

Like the victims of American bombing in Afghanistan, and Iraq, and Cambodia, and Vietnam and many other stricken countries, the Somalis are unpeople, whose deaths have no political and media value in the West.

When Bush Junior's heroic marines return in their Black Hawk gunships, loaded with technology, looking for "terrorists", their victims will once again be nameless. We can then expect the release of *Black Hawk Down II*.

Breaking our silence means not allowing the history of our lifetimes to be written this way, with lies and the blood of innocent people. To understand the lie of what Blair/Straw/Hoon call the "outstanding success" in Afghanistan, read the work of the original author of "Total War", a man called Zbigniew Brzezinski, who was President Carter's National Security Adviser and is still a powerful force in Washington.

Brzezinski not long ago revealed that on July 3, 1979, unknown to the American public and

Congress, President Jimmy Carter secretly authorised \$500million to create an international terrorist movement that would spread Islamic fundamentalism in Central Asia and "destabilise" the Soviet Union.

The CIA called this Operation Cyclone and in the following years poured \$4billion into setting up Islamic training schools in Pakistan (Taliban means "student"). Young zealots were sent to the CIA's spy training camp in Virginia, where future members of al-Qaeda were taught "sabotage skills" -- terrorism. Others were recruited at an Islamic school in Brooklyn, New York, within sight of the fated Twin Towers.

In Pakistan, they were directed by British MI6 officers and trained by the SAS. The result, quipped Brzezinski, was "a few stirred up Muslims" -- meaning the Taliban.

At that time, the late 1970s, the American goal was to overthrow Afghanistan's first progressive, secular government, which had granted equal rights to women, established health care and literacy programmes and set out to break feudalism.

When the Taliban seized power in 1996, they hanged the former president from a lamp-post in Kabul. His body was still a public spectacle when Clinton administration officials and oil company executives were entertaining Taliban leaders in Washington and Houston, Texas.

The *Wall Street Journal* declared: "The Taliban are the players most capable of achieving peace. Moreover, they were crucial to secure the country as a prime trans-shipment route for the export of Central Asia's vast oil, gas and other natural resources."

No American newspaper dares suggest that the prisoners in Camp X-Ray are the product of this policy, nor that it was one of the factors that led to the attacks of September 11.

Nor do they ask: who were the real winners of September 11?

The day the Wall Street stockmarket opened after the destruction of the Twin Towers, the few companies showing increased value were the giant military contractors Alliant Tech Systems, Northrop Gruman, Raytheon (a contributor to New Labour) and Lockheed Martin. As the US military's biggest supplier, Lockheed Martin's share value rose by a staggering 30 per cent.

Within six weeks of September 11, the company (with its main plant in Texas, George Bush's home state) had secured the biggest military order in history: a \$200billion contract to develop a new fighter aircraft. The greatest taboo of all, which Orwell would surely recognise, is the record of the United States as a terrorist state and haven for terrorists.

This truth is virtually unknown by the American public and makes a mockery of Bush's (and Blair's) statements about "tracking down terrorists wherever they are".

They don't have to look far.

Florida, currently governed by the President's brother, Jeb Bush, has given refuge to terrorists who, like the September 11 gang, have hi-jacked aircraft and boats with guns and

knives.

Most have never had criminal charges brought against them.

Why? All of them are anti-Castro Cubans. Former Guatemalan Defence Minister Gramajo Morales, who was accused of "devising and directing an indiscriminate campaign of terror against civilians", including the torture of an American nun and the massacre of eight people from one family, studied at Harvard University on a US government scholarship.

During the 1980s, thousands of people were murdered by death squads connected to the army of El Salvador, whose former chief now lives comfortably in Florida.

The former Haitian dictator, General Prosper Avril, liked to display the bloodied victims of his torture on television. When he was overthrown, he was flown to Florida by the US government, and granted political asylum.

A leading member of the Chilean military during the reign of General Pinochet, whose special responsibility was executions and torture, lives in Miami.

The Iranian general who ran Iran's notorious prisons, is a wealthy exile in the US.

One of Pol Pot's senior henchmen, who enticed Cambodian exiles back to their certain death, lives in Mount Vernon, New York.

What all these people have in common, apart from their history of terrorism, is that they either worked directly for the US government or carried out the dirty work of US policies.

The al-Qaeda training camps are kindergartens compared with the world's leading university of terrorism at Fort Benning in Georgia. Known until recently as the School of the Americas, its graduates include almost half the cabinet ministers of the genocidal regimes in Guatemala, two thirds of the El Salvadorean army officers who committed, according to the United Nations, the worst atrocities of that country's civil war, and the head of Pinochet's secret police, who ran Chile's concentration camps.

There is terrible irony at work here. The humane response of people all over the world to the terrorism of September 11 has long been hijacked by those running a rapacious great power with a history of terrorism second to none. Global supremacy, not the defeat of terrorism, is the goal; only the politically blind believe otherwise.

The "widening gap between the world's "haves" and "have nots"", says a remarkably candid document of the US Space Command, presents "new challenges" to the world's superpower and which can only be met by "Full Spectrum Dominance" -- dominance of land, sea, air and space.

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