

## **American Hegemony Bites The Dust**

by Paul Craig Roberts via rialator - ICH *Wednesday, Oct 29 2008, 9:52am*

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"We're an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you're studying that reality -- judiciously, as you will -- we'll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that's how things will sort out. We're history's actors . . . and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do." -- Bush White House aide explaining the 'New Reality.'

The New American Century lasted a decade. Financial crisis and defeated objectives in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Georgia brought the neoconservative project for American world hegemony crashing to a close in the autumn of 2008.

The American neoconservatives are the heirs of Leon Trotsky. Their dream of American "Full Spectrum Dominance" -- US military and economic superiority over any possible combination of states -- is matched in ambition only by the early 20th century Trotskyite dream of world Communist revolution.

The neocons used September 11, 2001, as a "new Pearl Harbor" to give power precedence over law domestically and internationally. The executive branch no longer had to obey federal statutes, such as the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act or honor international treaties, such as the Geneva Conventions. An asserted "terrorist threat" to national security became the cloak which hid US imperial interests as the Bush Regime set about dismantling US civil liberties and the existing order of international law constructed by previous governments during the post-war era.

Perhaps the neoconservative project for world hegemony would have lasted a bit longer had the neocons possessed intellectual competence.

On the war front, the incompetent neocons predicted that the Iraq war would be a six-week cakewalk, whose \$70 billion cost would be paid out of Iraqi oil revenues. President Bush fired White House economist Larry Lindsey for estimating that the war would cost \$200 billion. The current estimate by experts is that the Iraq war has cost American taxpayers between two and three trillion dollars. And the six-week war is now the six-year war.

On the economic front, the incompetent neocons overlooked the fact that a country that relocates its industry and best jobs abroad in order to maximize short-run profits becomes progressively economically weaker. Propagandistic talk about a "New Economy" built around financial dominance covered up the fact that the US was the world's greatest debtor country, dependent on foreigners to finance the daily operation of its government, the home mortgages of its citizens, and its military operations abroad.

In Iraq the neocons gave up their hegemonic military pretensions when they put 80,000 Sunni insurgents on the US Army's payroll in order to scale down the fighting and reduce US casualties.

In Afghanistan the neocons gave up more military pretensions when they had to rely on NATO troops to fight the Taliban.

US military pretensions came to an end in Georgia when the Bush Regime sent Georgian troops to ethnically cleanse South Ossetia of Russian residents in order to end the secessionist movement in the province, thereby clearing the path for Georgia's NATO membership. It took Russian soldiers only a few hours to destroy the US and Israeli trained and equipped Georgian Army.

The ongoing financial crisis has put an end to the pretensions of American financial hegemony and free-market illusions that deregulation and offshoring had brought prosperity to America.

In a long article, "The End of Arrogance," on September 30, the German news magazine Der Spiegel observed:

This is no longer the muscular and arrogant United States the world knows, the superpower that sets the rules for everyone else and that considers its way of thinking and doing business to be the only road to success.

Also on display is the end of arrogance. The Americans are now paying the price for their pride.

Gone are the days when the US could go into debt with abandon, without considering who would end up footing the bill. And gone are the days when it could impose its economic rules of engagement on the rest of the world, rules that emphasized profit above all else -- without ever considering that such returns cannot be achieved by doing business in a respectable way.

A new chapter in economic history has begun, one in which the United States will no longer play its former dominant role. A process of redistributing money and power around the world -- away from America and toward the resource-rich countries and rising industrialized nations in Asia -- has been underway for years. The financial crisis will only accelerate the process.

Looking at his defeated adversary, George W. Bush, brought down by military and economic failure, Iranian President Ahmadinejad observed: "The American empire in the world is reaching the end of its road, and its next rulers must limit their interference to their own borders."

Truer words were never spoken.

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