

Terror as a Tool of Empire

by Chris Floyd via krill - Empire Burlesque *Thursday, Apr 2 2009, 10:34am*

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Darkness Renewed

Here's a purely hypothetical scenario. Let's say you were a dedicated imperial militarist who believed that your country's security, prestige and financial interests could best be served by war and the ever-present threat of war. Let's say you had some really hot and juicy operations going on, endless deadly conflicts that were pouring hundreds of billions of dollars into your war machine and entrenching national policy even more deeply in the militarist philosophy – the *machtpolitik* – that you believe in.



Leo Strauss, teacher

But there's a problem. The general public – the cow-like herd out there that doesn't understand grand strategy the way you and your fellow elites do – is growing weary, and wary, of your Long War. The national treasury is bankrupt, the national infrastructure is rotting, the nation's communities are dying; millions of people are out of work, losing their homes, losing their dreams, spiraling down into want, privation and despair. Yet you have big plans to escalate the war, expand your war machine, and maintain the global dominance that you believe is the right and natural role for your special nation – and its elites. What to do? How to galvanize the truculent, self-absorbed herd into enthusiastically supporting your vital agenda once more?

Well, here's one purely hypothetical approach you might try. You goad and provoke violent extremist groups into retaliating against your attacks, your civilian-slaughtering invasions and incursions into their territory. Being unable to confront directly your war machine – the largest, most advanced military force in the history of the world, sustained by a tsunami of public money that each year surpasses the military spending of the rest of the world – they naturally respond with "asymmetrical" operations. At first, these are directed at nearby targets: your supply lines, the forces of your local proxies and allies, and other chaos-inducing depredations in the groups' own regions, designed to foul the lines of your control and drive you out. Just as naturally, you use these attacks to justify an even greater military presence in their regions. The cycle inevitably, inexorably ratchets upwards and outwards, until at last the extremists strike at your homeland – either with your connivance, or your covert acquiescence, or, in any event, with your foreknowledge that such an attack was sure to come. This is the moment you have waited for; this is exactly what you wanted. Now you can whip the herd back into a martial frenzy, keep the Long War going, and push aside the rabble's petty, small-minded desires for a peaceful, prosperous life at home, minding their own business.

One never knows exactly what goes on behind the imperial drapery in the Potomac palaces, of course; ordinary American citizens were long ago turned into Kremlinologists of their own government, trying to discern -- through ceremonial signs, backstairs gossip, and slight deviations in ritualized rhetoric -- just what their masters are really up

to. But some cynics darkly suspect that scenarios something like the one sketched out above have already been enacted; for instance, in the "new Pearl Harbor" that struck America on September 11, 2001 – one year after a group channeling the views of future Bush Administration bigwigs (including Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Scooter Libby and many others) [had openly pined for a "new Pear Harbor"](#) to "catalyze" the American people into supporting their militarist agenda, which included an invasion of Iraq – whether Saddam Hussein was in power or not.

But leaving aside for now the ever-thorny matter of divining the varying proportion of connivance, acquiescence, foreknowledge, exploitation, incompetence and fate involved in 9/11, we can say *this* as an established fact: It is the policy of the United States government to provoke violent extremist groups into action. Once they are in play, their responses can then be used in whatever way the government that provoked them sees fit. And we also know that these provocations are being used, as a matter of deliberate policy, to rouse violent groups on the "Af-Pak" front to launch terrorist attacks.

In other words, just as I first wrote [in the Moscow Times more than six years ago](#) (and followed up [three years later](#)), the United States is deliberately fomenting terrorist attacks in order to pursue its political and military agendas.

[For more on how these policies and similar uses of terrorism and death squads have been realized in Iraq and elsewhere, see "[A Furnace Seal'd: The Wondrous Death Squads of the American Elite](#)," "[Ulster on the Euphrates: The Anglo-American Dirty War in Iraq](#)," and "[Willing Executioners: America's Bipartisan Atrocity Deepens in Somalia](#)."]

Eagle-eyed Jason Ditz at Antiwar.com [draws the connection](#) between this policy and the most recent "asymmetrical" strike by a "tickled" terrorist group in Pakistan: the deadly attack on a police center in Lahore by the Tehreek-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP). The group, led by Baitullah Mehsud, said the attack was in retaliation for the American campaign of drone strikes in Pakistan's frontier regions – strikes which have killed many civilians along with usually unidentified "militants." As Ditz notes, one goal of the campaign – which has been intensified by Barack Obama – is precisely the aforementioned fomenting of terrorist activity:

The Obama Administration has launched an ever growing number of attacks in the FATA, generally aimed at Mehsud's training facilities in North and South Waziristan. In September, then-CIA Director Michael Hayden said the attacks were an attempt to "provoke a reaction" from the militant groups led by Mehsud. It appears that now, six months later, they have finally done so. [Hayden described this bloodsoaked strategy as "[tickling](#)" terrorists into a response.]

What's more, Mehsud has now vowed to carry the fight back to American soil. As [The Times notes](#) (via Antiwar.com):

"Soon we will launch an attack in Washington that will amaze everyone in the world," [Mehsud declared.] "The maximum they can do is martyr me. But we will exact our revenge on them from inside America."

Whether or not the rag-tag TTP could actually carry out such a threat is another matter, [as Juan Cole notes](#). But that is not really the point. The point is that once again, a violent group has been knowingly prodded into murderous action. Even better, it has now set itself up as a "deadly terrorist threat" to the sacred Homeland itself: yet another made-to-order supervillain from central casting.

And remarkably, this new, open threat to bring terror to the American heartland comes just days after [Barack Obama announced his vaunted surge](#) in the Af-Pak War, citing – what else? – the need to protect the United States from terrorists based in Afghanistan and Pakistan as his chief reason for escalating and expanding the conflict. Yet another astonishing coincidence to justify the militarist agenda, which needs a constant supply of PR-plausible villains and hyped-up, nation-rattling threats like a junkie needs smack. And once again, we are left to puzzle out the varying proportion of connivance, acquiescence, exploitation, luck, etc., involved in this serendipitous pairing of declarations from Obama and Mehsud.

II.

It is worth looking again at the implications of this policy of terrorist-tickling. As we noted recently, such things are not just counters on the Great Gameboard: they are deadly realities that kill, maim and despoil multitudes of innocent

people around the world. So let's go back to the first glimmers of this strategy in its Terror War context. This is from the Moscow Times article in November 2001:

In [a Los Angeles Times] article by military analyst William Arkin... [comes] the revelation of Rumsfeld's plan to create "a super-Intelligence Support Activity" that will "bring together CIA and military covert action, information warfare, intelligence, and cover and deception." According to a classified document prepared for [Donald] Rumsfeld by his Defense Science Board, the new organization - the "Proactive, Preemptive Operations Group (P2OG)" - will carry out secret missions designed to "stimulate reactions" among terrorist groups, provoking them into committing violent acts which would then expose them to "counterattack" by U.S. forces.

In other words - and let's say this plainly, clearly and soberly, so that no one can mistake the intention of Rumsfeld's plan - the United States government is planning to use "cover and deception" and secret military operations to provoke murderous terrorist attacks on innocent people. Let's say it again: Donald Rumsfeld, Dick Cheney, George W. Bush and the other members of the unelected regime in Washington plan to deliberately foment the murder of innocent people - your family, your friends, your lovers, you - in order to further their geopolitical ambitions.

For P2OG is not designed solely to flush out terrorists and bring them to justice - a laudable goal in itself, although the Rumsfeld way of combating terrorism by causing it is pure moral lunacy... No, it seems the Pee-Twos have bigger fish to fry. Once they have sparked terrorists into action - by killing their family members? luring them with loot? fueling them with drugs? plying them with jihad propaganda? messing with their mamas? or with *agents provocateurs*, perhaps, who infiltrate groups then plan and direct the attacks themselves? - they can then take measures against the "states/sub-state actors accountable" for "harboring" the Rumsfeld-roused gangs. What kind of measures exactly? Well, the classified Pentagon program puts it this way: "Their sovereignty will be at risk."

The Pee-Twos will thus come in handy whenever the Regime hankers to add a little oil-laden real estate or a new military base to the Empire's burgeoning portfolio. Just find a nest of violent malcontents, stir 'em with a stick, and presto: instant "justification" for whatever level of intervention/conquest/rapine you might desire.

When the Obama Administration speaks of "continuity" in American foreign policy, this is an integral part of what they are talking about. So look to see much more on TTP and the demon de jure, Baitullah Mehsud, as the bipartisan Long War grinds on and on, with its ever-present need for "catalyzing" - and terrorizing - the American people into support for the militarist project.

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PNAC: The Untold Story



Richard Perle, pupil



Barack Obama, adherent

<http://tinyurl.com/cx8evw>

Cleaves Alternative News. <http://cleaves.lingama.net/news/story-1508.html>