

CONSEQUENCES OF THE WAR ON TERROR

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“For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction.”²

In the wake of 9/11, prescriptions have been adopted, and actions have been commenced, to combat terrorism on a multiplicity of levels. The “war” on terror—if we are to assume that the hostilities the U.S. is presently engaged in meet the classical definition³—has been alternatively described as an act of national defense and self preservation, a clash of cultural values, a fight between good and evil, a holy war between Islam and the West, and—in one of the more bizarre characterizations—a result of latent male aggression and sexuality.⁴ Thankfully, the responses have been less ambiguous. Congress has passed legislation designed to strengthen airport security, civilian preparedness, and our national borders; the military has undertaken a campaign against Al-Qaeda across the globe—i.e., in Afghanistan, the Philippines, and Yemen; the powers of U.S. intelligence services have been expanded; and, state and local authorities have joined the crusade against terrorism, beefing up public and private facilities, and mobilizing emergency services and the public for future attacks.

No *reasonable* person questions the appropriateness of such measures. But these actions have produced some unintended consequences, which extend to areas of foreign affairs, the economy, individual rights, and the American psyche itself. The effects cannot be seen as separate and apart from the war on terror, but as components integral to the conflict itself. And if the U.S. is to be successful in defeating terrorism, federal, state, and local authorities must be responsive to the effects of various anti-terror policies and actions, modifying tactics appropriately to the demands of domestic and foreign battlefields.

U.S. responses to the war on terror can be classified into domestic and foreign responses.⁵ Foreign action generally manifests itself in the form of military, intelligence, diplomatic, and economic intervention.⁶ Domestic action appears in the guise of immigration legislation, economic and security measures, and the establishment of the Office of Homeland Defense.⁷ For instance, a military campaign is already underway in Afghanistan, and appears to be a qualified success.⁸ What little we know about the efforts of U.S. intelligence services also appears to be encouraging, as voluminous amounts of hitherto unknown facts and data about Al-Qaeda are being revealed regularly. In the diplomatic sphere,

calculated leaks concerning the implementation of U.S. Nuclear Strategy, and public statements designating Iran, Iraq, and North Korea as the “axis of evil” work as valuable disincentives for nations to engage in future terrorist acts. Anti-terror legislation has been enacted to dissuade foreign operatives from carrying out T-acts on our shores.⁹ And finally, the seizure of public and private funds is drying up the terrorist’s lifeblood—money.¹⁰ Indeed, money is not just the mother’s milk of politics, but of terrorism as well.

These solutions, however, are not without consequences. Some are quite benign and, therefore, require no modifications; but the effects of other policies and actions are complex, and might seriously undermine U.S. efforts on a more fundamental level.¹¹ For instance, in the foreign theatre of operations, offensive military involvement might breed alienation and multiply the amount of terrorists in host countries¹²; widespread monetary and material aid could be used for purposes other than combating terrorism¹³; limited resources might require cutting corners on critical programs, sacrificing components essential to the war on terror; and, reliable intelligence might be a scarce commodity, especially in an atmosphere where notions of jingoism and Jihad suffuse the air.¹⁴

But these problems are not intractable. Indeed, they should be looked at as opportunities to expand the American sphere of influence, thereby enabling the U.S. to more capably defeat terrorism.¹⁵ For instance, foreign policy initiatives can respond to the problem of military blow back by actively engaging foreign governments, and utilizing a program of “carrots and sticks.”¹⁶ Aid programs could be monitored, and subject to specific requirements for future monies.¹⁷ Through a careful assessment, and management, of available resources, there should be ample quantities of money and material to achieve the desired ends of the anti-terror campaign. And finally, flexibility and diversity in intelligence gathering procedures will increase the benefits of clandestine operations, and minimize the drawbacks.

The domestic war effort is not without difficulties either, spawning a range of diverse contingencies.¹⁸ For example, intrusive security regulations and protocols might seriously weaken the vitality of the U.S. economy¹⁹; restrictions on immigration policy and invasive policing could initiate a range of lawsuits and Anti-American sentiment on the home front²⁰; the price of increased security might be too much for the public trough to support; and, the mass of legislation and organizations designed to combat terrorism might be too byzantine to understand, much less effectively respond to future T-acts.

Likewise, the negative effects of these domestic programs and activities can be overcome.²¹ For instance, an active dialogue between government, business leaders, and the citizenry could overcome the possibility of economic constriction, and despite 9/11 American optimism and consumer confidence remains high²²; “tweaking” of federal, state, and local immigration and investigatory policy and policing should be able to provide for the security concerns of the public, while at

the same time respecting individual rights; and, the integration and communication of various agencies will minimize the complexities of government bureaucracy.²³

Certainly, there is no reason why U.S. policies and actions cannot meet the military, diplomatic, economic, and domestic peculiarities of the 21st century terrorist battlefield. So long as the U.S. remains true to its principles, forthright in response, and flexible in action, a defeat of worldwide terror is assured. Furthermore, the responsiveness of American intervention will breed confidence, and reinforce the effectiveness of anti-terror goals.

NOTES

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Note—the attached “Islamic Terrorist [Chart](#)” (2002) should be referred to when reading the applicable notes and material.

² Newton, Sir Isaac. “The Third Law of Motion,” *Principia Mathematica Philosophiae Naturalis* (1686).

³ While the U.S. Congress has not validly declared war, as per explicit constitutional directives, the hostilities we are presently involved, nonetheless, fit the definition of “war” in its most general form. For instance, *Funk & Wagnalls* defines “war” as a “state of active opposition,” or “a contest, or conflict.” According to this usage, the U.S. is, in fact, engaged in a “war.” *Funk & Wagnalls Standard Desk Dictionary*, Volume 2, (Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1984), s.v. “war.”

⁴ Foxnews, “Headlines: Back of the Book: Interview with Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz,” *The O’Reilly Factor*, March 8, 2002.

⁵ “Islamic Terrorism Chart” (2002), columns (3) & (4).

⁶ *Ibid.*, column (3).

⁷ *Ibid.*, column (4).

⁸ *Ibid.*, (3)(A)-(E).

⁹ *Ibid.*, (3)(B)-(E).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, (4)(A), (B), (E), (F), (K), & (L).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, column (5).

¹² *Ibid.*, (5)(A)-(D).

¹³ *Ibid.*, (5)(E), (F), & (I).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, (5)(B)-(D).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, column (7).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, (7)(C), (F), (I), & (K).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, (7)(A)-(B).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, column (6).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, (6)(C), (E), & (J)-(L).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, (6)(D)-(F), (I), & (L).

²¹ *Ibid.*, column (8).

²² *Ibid.*, (8)(C), (D), (F), (I), & (K).

²³ *Ibid.*, (8)(C), (D), & (K).