

Obamageddon: War as the “Solution” to Economic Depression

The Celente thesis

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Global Research, August 12, 2009

[Antiwar.com](#) 10 August 2009

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Global Economy](#), [US NATO War](#)
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An American president is launching the most ambitious, the most expensive, and certainly the most dangerous military campaign since the Vietnam War – and the antiwar movement, such as it is, is missing in action. After a long and bloody campaign in Iraq and the election of a U.S. president pledged to get us out, our government is once again revving up its war machine and taking aim at yet another “terrorist” stronghold, this time in Afghanistan. Yet the antiwar movement’s motor seems stuck in the wrong gear, making no motions toward mounting anything like an effective protest. What gives?

We shouldn’t doubt the scope of the present war effort. Make no mistake: the Obama administration is radically ramping up the stakes in the “war on terrorism,” which, though renamed, has not been revised downward, as the Washington Post reports:

“As the Obama administration expands U.S. involvement in Afghanistan, military experts are warning that the United States is taking on security and political commitments that will last at least a decade and a cost that will probably eclipse that of the Iraq war.”

There are always “warnings” in the beginning, aren’t there? For some reason, however, they are never heeded. Instead, we just barrel ahead, undaunted, into the tall grass where ambush awaits us. War opponents predicted the Iraq invasion would prove unsustainable – and we were right. We said that, far from greeting us with cheers and showers of roses, the Iraqis would soon be shooting at us and demanding our ouster – and we were right. We said the rationale for war was based on a series of carefully manufactured and marketed lies – and that was the truth, now wasn’t it? Yet it seems we are caught in an endlessly repetitive nightmare, where the same prophetic voices are being drowned out by a chorus of “responsible” voices – to be followed by an all-too-familiar disaster.

The problem, however, is that the scale of these disasters seems to be increasing exponentially. As Gerald Celente, one of the few economic forecasters who predicted the ‘08 crash, put it the other day, “Governments seem to be emboldened by their failures.” What the late Gen. William E. Odom trenchantly described as “the worst strategic disaster in American military history” – the invasion of Iraq – is being followed up by a far larger military operation, one that will burden us for many years to come. This certainly seems like evidence in support of the Celente thesis, and the man who predicted the 1987 stock market crash, the fall of the Soviet Union, the dot-com bust, the gold bull market, the 2001 recession, the real estate bubble, the “Panic of ‘08,” and now is talking about the inevitable popping of the “bailout bubble,” has more bad news:

“Given the pattern of governments to parlay egregious failures into mega-failures, the classic trend they follow, when all else fails, is to take their nation to war.”

As the economic crisis escalates and the debt-based central banking system shows it can no longer re-inflate the bubble by creating assets out of thin air, an economic and political rationale for war is easy to come by; for if the Keynesian doctrine that government spending is the only way to lift us out of an economic depression is true, then surely military expenditures are the quickest way to inject “life” into a failing system. This doesn’t work, economically, since the crisis is only masked by the wartime atmosphere of emergency and “temporary” privation. Politically, however, it is a lifesaver for our ruling elite, which is at pains to deflect blame away from itself and on to some “foreign” target.

It’s the oldest trick in the book, and it’s being played out right before our eyes, as the U.S. prepares to send even more troops to the Afghan front and is threatening Iran with draconian economic sanctions, a step or two away from outright war.

A looming economic depression and the horrific prospect of another major war – the worst-case scenario seems to be unfolding, like a recurring nightmare, and there doesn’t seem to be any way to stop it. Are we caught, then, helpless in the web of destiny, to be preyed upon by those spiders in Washington?

I have to admit that, at times, I’m inclined to believe it: the early years of the Bush era, particularly the dark days right after 9/11, were hard times for advocates of liberty and peace. For us here at Antiwar.com, they were days of nearly unrelieved gloom. As the Bush era drew to a close, however, there were many signs that we were in for a turnaround, that the dark ages were over and a new day was dawning. The Iraq war was discredited, along with its cheerleaders, and the collapse of the War Party’s political fortunes seemed all but assured with the rise of an insurgent movement within the Democratic Party, a movement that happened to coalesce around Barack Obama but could have rallied to any charismatic or even remotely appealing figure, so desperate were people for any sign of hope.

In the beginning, I was enamored of the possibilities of this electoral insurgency against the presumed nominee, Hillary Clinton. By stubbornly sticking to her pro-war position and refusing to second-guess her decision to support the invasion of Iraq, Hillary turned the primary campaign into a tug-of-war between the interventionist faction of the Democratic Party – centered in the leadership – and the antiwar rank-and-file, many of whom were beginning to develop a comprehensive critique of interventionist foreign policy and were well on their way to becoming principled opponents of imperialism.

Then Obama stepped into the picture.

I am not among those who are currently whining that Obama has somehow “betrayed” his antiwar supporters – prominent among them the organizers of the principal peace coalition, United for Peace and Justice. After all, he’s just doing what he said all along he’d do, and that is fight the “right war,” which, he averred, we ought to be waging in Afghanistan rather than Iraq. At the end of this month, his generals will report to him on how many more troops they need to “do the job,” and you can bet they won’t be calling for any reductions.

History has shown that Afghanistan is practically unconquerable, and we could send an army of a million or more and still fail miserably. But think how the endless expenditures will “stimulate” our economy!

Forecaster Celente has identified several bubbles, the latest being the “bailout bubble,” slated to pop at any time, yet there may be another bubble to follow what Celente calls “the mother of all bubbles,” one that will implode with a resounding crash heard ’round the world – the bubble of empire.

Our current foreign policy of global hegemonism and unbridled aggression is simply not sustainable, not when we are on the verge of becoming what we used to call a Third World country, one that is bankrupt and faces the prospect of a radical lowering of living standards. Unless, of course, the “crisis” atmosphere can be sustained almost indefinitely.

George W. Bush had 9/11 to fall back on, but that song is getting older every time they play it. Our new president needs to come up with an equivalent, one that will divert our attention away from Goldman Sachs and toward some overseas enemy who is somehow to be held responsible for our present predicament.

It is said that FDR’s New Deal didn’t get us out of the Great Depression, but World War II did. The truth is that, in wartime, when people are expected to sacrifice for the duration of the “emergency,” economic problems are anesthetized out of existence by liberal doses of nationalist chest-beating and moral righteousness. Shortages and plunging living standards were masked by a wartime rationing system and greatly lowered expectations. And just as World War II inured us to the economic ravages wrought by our thieving elites, so World War III will provide plenty of cover for a virtual takeover of all industry by the government and the demonization of all political opposition as “terrorist.”

An impossible science-fictional scenario? Or a reasonable projection of present trends? Celente, whose record of predictions is impressive, to say the least, sees war with Iran as the equivalent of World War III, with economic, social, and political consequences that will send what is left of our empire into a tailspin. This is the popping of the “hyperpower” bubble, the conceit that we – the last superpower left standing – will somehow defy history and common sense and avoid the fate of all empires: decline and fall.

We are in for some “interesting” times, and, these days, I know you won’t want to be without Antiwar.com, which is going to be more essential than ever before. However, we can’t guarantee our continued survival – in fact, I can predict our imminent demise – if we fail to enjoy your continued financial support. You’ll notice that we are now embarked on our summer fundraising campaign, and, let me tell you, summers are always the worst. Everyone who can afford to give is off on vacation, and these are difficult times, to boot. I have the feeling this one is going to be a long, hard slog, but I’d love to be pleasantly surprised. So, please, surprise me.

The prospects of a major war just over the horizon are increasing by the hour, yet we haven’t heard much in the way of protest from the formerly “antiwar” liberal-progressive community, or, at least, not from their institutions and leaders, who are getting in line behind the Obama administration and are afraid to rock the boat.

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