

# The Oldest Trick In the Book: Empire Pretends It Has to Launch Wars to “Defend” Itself

By [Washington's Blog](#)

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Theme: [History](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

## How Empires Justify War

Empires – almost by definition – fight imperial wars to gain land and resources.

But if they admitted to their citizens what they were up to, people wouldn't be that excited in sacrificing their families' blood and treasure to fight a series of wars.

So empires always pretend that they're being attacked ... and they are simply fighting to defend themselves.

The ancient Roman leaders whined, “But we have to *protect* ourselves!” And every empire has done it since.

For example, [FBI agents and CIA intelligence officials, a top constitutional and military law expert, Time magazine, the Washington Post and others](#) have all said that U.S. government officials “were trying to create an atmosphere of fear in which the American people would give them more power”. Indeed, the former Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge [admitted](#) that he was pressured to raise terror alerts to help Bush win reelection.

The threat from Al Qaeda – while real – has been [greatly exaggerated](#). Former U.S. National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski – also a top foreign policy advisor to President Obama – told the Senate that the war on terror is a “[a mythical historical narrative](#)”. (And statistics arguably show that many terror attacks are actually [carried out by non-Muslims](#).)

Indeed, every empire [exaggerates the mortal threat](#) from its enemies. For example:

- Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld made [false claims exaggerating the threat](#) posed by Russia's weapons [in the 1970s](#) to justify huge increases in military spending.
- There is a [mountain of evidence](#) that government officials intentionally lied about Iraqi WMDs
- The U.S. Navy's own historians now say that the sinking of the USS Maine — the justification for America's entry into the Spanish-American War — was [probably caused by an internal explosion of coal, rather than an attack by the Spanish](#).
- It is also now well-accepted that the Gulf of Tonkin Incident which led to the

Vietnam war was [afiction](#) (confirmed [here](#)).

- Two lies were used to justify the 1991 Gulf War: [the statement that Iraqis murdered Kuwaiti babies](#) and the statement that [a quarter of a million Iraqi troops were massed on the border with Saudi Arabia](#) (see also [this article](#)) (technically, the statement about Kuwaiti babies did not come from the U.S. government, but from a public relations firm *hired* by the government).

Another common tactic for pretending the empire is being attacked is [launching a false flag attack](#). If you haven't learned about this [2,000-year old trick](#), you can't even begin to understand empire and war.

Whipping up a state of hysterical fear is [vital for the empire to manipulate its people](#). And a necessary part of process of beating the war drums is to [demonize the enemy ... and pretend he is a bloodthirsty beast](#).

If the people stop being afraid of one enemy, the empire [needs to find a more suitable boogeyman](#).

But that [doesn't mean](#) that the empire has to [be consistent](#) ... if it can distract the population, it can switch allegiances as it wishes.

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