

# War Making 101: A User's Manual

The move from a Republic to Tyranny

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I've lived through seven decades and can remember the late 1930s before WW II began. In fact, I began my formal education in kindergarten within days of when Hitler sent his Wehrmacht across the Polish border in an act of illegal aggression and began that near six year horror. I was too young to understand it then, and I can barely remember that fateful "first Pearl Harbor" on December 7, 1941. Franklin Roosevelt wanted in on that fight and did all he could to goad the Japanese to attack us. He knew with enough prodding they would, and when it came, we knew about when and where it would happen. We were ready to mobilize and join the battle, we did it, and nothing's been the same since.

FDR at least took the country to war as the Constitution says we must. On December 11, 1941 he asked the Congress to make that declaration against Japan and also Nazi Germany in response to Hitler's declaring it against us. It was the last time a US Congress would ever use the constitutional authority it alone is allowed in Article I, Section 8 of that sacred document. The Founding Fathers thought that authority so important they codified it. They believed that on what is the single most important issue a nation ever faces, that awesome power should never be placed in the hands of a single person. They wanted only the Legislative Branch to have it and only exercise it after careful, deliberative debate. That Branch still has it if it so wishes, but for the last 65 years it decided in its infinite indifference to abrogate its authority and allow the President to usurp it and use it at his pleasure and choice. We've seen the result - a mess without end. We've had war after war after endless war (including the ones fought by others we encouraged and financed plus all the CIA covert mischief and abuse) with no end in sight and in every instance since WW II against designated "enemies" that never threatened or attacked us or had any intention to. Doing that by direct intervention based on no provocation, as we have, is called illegal aggression, which is exactly the crime the Nazis were tried for at Nuremberg. In the words of the Tribunal: "To initiate a war of aggression....is not only an international crime, it is the supreme crime, differing only from other war crimes in that it contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole." The worst of those found guilty in that Tribunal were hanged. Think any of our leaders will ever meet the same fate as they should, of course? Fat chance, even though the worst of ours are as guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity as were the worst Nazis.

THE RESULT OF THE CONGRESS SCRAPPING THE MOST IMPORTANT CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY IT ALONE HAS

Here's one definition of a dictator or at least one practicing to become one. It's a head of state able to decide alone with unchallengeable authority whether or not to take a nation to war for any reason. Here's an add-on to that definition. If a leader does it for any reason

other than to respond to an attack by another nation or clear evidence an attack is coming, that leader is also a war criminal. Noam Chomsky believes every US president since WW II was and is a war criminal. Ditto, so do I.

This essay will concentrate on the current “war criminal in charge.” With some background for the historically uneducated, I’ll then fast forward to the present and take you into the heart of the beast we better get to know well and quickly before it eats us alive. I’ll lay out what I call a war maker’s manual, step by step or rule by rule, from when we were new at this ugly business and still learning to the present. Ready? Here we go.

I can’t match the famous Chinese general Sun Tzu who wrote his masterful Art of War 2400 years ago and won’t even try. But I’ve seen the modern day script played out enough times and think I’ve gotten the hang of it now. First, some basic rules:

A. Get the language right. It’s not enough to say Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan or Venezuela are threats to our national security. We have to say or imply it’s the new Hitler Saddam, the “crazed Arabs and mullahs” running Iran (sorry – they’re Persians, not Arabs, and only changed the country’s name to Iran in 1934.....you can call them “crazed Arabs” though, who’ll know the difference besides the Iranians), the demonic Taliban who beat up on defenseless women, or the “demagogue” Hugo Chavez “awash in oil money and trying to destroy democracy and destabilize the region”.....he happens to have the most vibrant democracy in the Western Hemisphere and is selling the country’s oil at a discount to poor nations and poor US communities in need. Think Exxon-Mobil would do that? Now you’re getting it.

B. Always pick on a much weaker target country, the weaker the better, preferably defenseless and unable to fight back. It’s then best to soften them up in advance by stealth bombing or sabotaging their strategic infrastructure. It’s also best to pick on a weak nation of color (we almost always do – Yugoslavia was a rare exception), and best of all is to pick on a Muslim nation of color. Arab nations (and Persia/Iran) qualify as they’re not quite white enough, not at least the “crazed Arab ones.”

C. When you “pull the trigger”, strike the target with overwhelming force. You know the new “Militaryspeak” language – “shock and awe.” Who dreams up this stuff? You can bet it’s a big PR firm, ad agency or something out of a Hollywood bad dream factory. The target country may be defenseless, and likely is, but you gotta hit ‘em like a using a howitzer to kill a gnat even though a strong wind will do the trick. The reason for the “blitzkrieg” approach is it not only grinds your enemy to dust and fast, it also scares hell out of all other nations worried they may be next or in the queue and moving up.

D. There’s one other element peculiar to today in the US that’s not a rule but a resurrection of sorts from the First Crusade 900 years ago. Back then Pope Urban II, who no doubt believed he got his marching orders from the Almighty, launched his assault against Islam and Muslims in his holy Crusade to regain control of the sacred city of Jerusalem. When his forces finally got into the city they weren’t very nice to the Muslims, Jews and even Eastern Christians living there.

It’s timely for this essay to note that the Vatican has begun to rehabilitate the Crusaders by sponsoring a late March conference that portrays those holy wars as having been fought with the “noble aim” of regaining the Holy Land for Christianity. I’m sure all Muslims around the world will understand, forgive and forget.

Students of Western Civilization might also recall that Napoleon invaded Egypt in 1798 for “glory” (that’s French for empire) and to restore Islam to its genuine teachings (I guess meaning to bring those misguided souls back to their Christian roots). The Little Corporal didn’t fare much better there than he did at Waterloo or that a latter day Napoleon wannabe is now doing in Iraq. It’s a shame he’s not still around to explain that to our current “head dreamer of empire.” But I doubt it would do much good as below I explain the only authority our warrior president listens to.

The point from my brief history lesson is to connect it to our own present situation. For the first time ever, we now have a president, at least the first one admitting it publicly, who also believes the Almighty speaks to him, tells him what to, and he’s just following orders from that higher authority. I don’t think he’s kidding when he says God told him to invade Afghanistan and Iraq. I wonder if that same God told him to steal from the poor and give to the rich. I also wonder what God he’s referring to. It’s not the one I was brought up to believe in and the principles I was taught to think are pretty sacred in the Ten Commandments, especially the core “golden rule” one.

#### NOW LET’S GO THROUGH THE STEPS/RULES

Rule No. 1- Develop a tradition of militarism over time. It takes many years of practice to hone skills and perfect them. The US has followed this practice and incredibly has been at war (real war with mass slaughter) internally and/or abroad every year without exception with one or more adversaries since its inception.

No other nation today is more addicted to war than the US. It seems like it’s always been that way, and it has. Of course, you’d never know it from the sanitized history we’re taught up to the highest levels in all our schools – even the best of them like the two esteemed universities I was lucky enough to attend. I later understood their mission was to program my mind, teach me acceptable doctrine to “make me a good citizen.” It’s part of the package called “The American Way.” Fill their heads with mush and make ’em believe the sun is out when it’s really dark and pouring rain. They did teach me how to learn though, and I’ve tried to use that skill ever since to discover and understand what they should have taught me but never did.

Militarism and empire go way back to our Founding Fathers including the one we call the Father of the country. Some Father. He referred to the nation as a “rising empire”, and he helped build it during and after the Revolutionary War. During that conflict he not only dispatched the British (they really just decided it wasn’t worth it and left), he waged a second war against our native Indians, all of whom he thought of as subhumans (American Untermenschen). He called for their total annihilation and sent General John Sullivan and 5,000 troops to attack the noncombatant Onondaga people in 1779 with orders to destroy all their villages, homes, fields, food supplies, cattle herds and orchards. He also stole Indian land from the Onieda people who aided him when he was most in need at Valley Forge. I guess it was his way of showing gratitude. The guy we’re taught to revere was a racist and genocidist. With that kind of Father what could we expect from the “offspring.” I’ll bet they’re still teaching George’s military tactics to the recruits at West Point and telling these impressionable kids that “Father knew best.”

George’s tradition was handed down and became more robust over time. Along the way to the present day, we expanded the frontier west and south and slaughtered about 18 million of our native people in the process. Their only offense was they happened live on the land

we wanted, so we stole it from them. It didn't matter that they'd been there for about 20-30,000 years. How could we let a "little tradition" stand in the way of "progress" and "development." Once we had it all from coast to coast (including the half of Mexico we also stole), we set our sights offshore for conquests and easily found a few. In our beneficence to our southern "neighbor" we let the Mexicans keep half their country, but only because the majority population was in the southern half, and we didn't want all those dark-skinned people "diluting" our white Anglo-Saxon majority.

As fate would have it we spared Canada. But it was touch and go for our northern neighbor as we coveted their land too, and it may only have been our attention diverted to other "adventures" plus a few cooler heads that kept us from taking it. During our so-called War of 1812, there were those in the US more interested in annexing territory in "British North America" than fighting the British over their naval blockades, interception of our ships and impressment of our seamen. We were humming "O Canada" again in the 1920s, when the "Canucks" as now were friendly allies with no hostile intention toward us or anyone else. We actually drew up serious war plans to invade the country and occupy it. I'm not kidding. Why? The same reason we invaded Iraq or at least one of them. To steal their oil, and back then we had plenty of our own and lots more we'd find. We also had a similar war plan approved in 1919 to attack Mexico and steal their oil too. We want everyone's oil and most everything else they have as well. One day we may change our mind and just declare both countries and all others (or just their resources, markets and cheap labor) US property by an act of Congress or a Presidential directive or decree. Our neighbors (and all other nervous nations) shouldn't worry though. Whenever we conquer or colonize we make it clear we come as friends to help them. In the old days it was to bring them civilization. Now that "help" comes in our special style of "friendship" at the barrel of an M1A1 tank or sights of a cruise missile or nuclear bomb. But "it's for their own good, to bring them democracy and freedom" and the rest of the tired old rhetoric. It was shameless bunk back then just as now.

Fast forward a bit to WW II and its aftermath when the US emerged as the only nation left standing as the world's sole superpower. The Soviets may have developed "the bomb", but the war so devastated them (along with most of Europe and East Asia) it took about 15 years of redevelopment for them to regain even a semblance of normalcy. The US was now free to run amuck and took full advantage. What "amuck" we've run since needs much more space than I have here. So fast forward again to the current era and let Nobel Laureate Harold Pinter explain more recent US policy and its incurable addiction. He did it eloquently when he said "US foreign policy can be defined as follows: kiss my arse or I'll kick your head in." He said that during the Clinton years. He had a lot more to say about the Bush administration in his 2005 Nobel lecture and acceptance speech when he called the invasion of Iraq "a bandit act, an act of blatant state terrorism, demonstrating absolute contempt for the concept of international law." He went on to say the US "quite simply doesn't give a damn about the UN, international law or critical dissent, which it regards as impotent and irrelevant."

## YOU GOTTA SHOW YOU MEAN BUSINESS

That brings us to Rule No. 2 - When you're the meanest, toughest, baddest guy in the neighborhood, you gotta show it by beating up on a weakling occasionally. Otherwise no one will take you seriously, and someone else might try to challenge your supremacy. That's how a local godfather does it in my city of Chicago. It works the same on the global stage as it does on the South Side here.

I can hardly improve on Harold Pinter's eloquence so I'll just add to it by calling the Bush-Cheney administration an unchallengeable practitioner of reckless and outrageous policies at home and abroad and being the most reactionary, statist and psychopathic administration in our history. It stands alone in its brazen uncompromising methods, fanatical extremism, bold and deceptive rhetoric and almost pathological insistence on secrecy. In sum - they're crazy and out-of-control. How's that Harold? It all came out after 9/11 that we now know was an event much different than the official explanation we were given. On that fateful day, the mask came off, the ugly face of a threatening tyranny could be spotted, and the bombs began falling.

So what's going on with us? Was this warped proclivity always there but never understood or quite so visible as now? Or is there something in our DNA that makes us like a modern day out-of-control Sparta? Is it a "bad seed?" Is it curable? Not a chance with the crowd running wild in Washington now declaring they'll throw nuclear bombs around like hand grenades in future wars and are already doing it below the radar in the two we're now fighting - that's right two ongoing wars, the other one being in Afghanistan which in case you hadn't noticed is still "hot" and killing US and other occupying forces. And that one has no end in sight either.

THEY PUT THEIR PLANS IN WRITING AND WE CAN ALL READ THEM - AND SHUDDER

Rule No. 3 - Write it all down clearly and in detail. That way everyone can read it and understand you mean business. What better way to scare shaky allies and intimidate and deter other nations thinking about defying us to forget about it or we'll beat up on them. It works most of the time.

The Bush-Cheney crowd try to make it work every time and since 9/11 have kept practicing to let everyone know they're not kidding. We believe 'em. But just to make sure no one forgets they just updated their September, 2002 National Security Strategy with more belligerent language than the original. The original, in case you didn't know or forgot, lays out an "imperial grand strategy." It's nothing less than a declaration of "preventive war" (the term "pre-emptive" is used incorrectly as that can only apply in a defensive action against a known impending attack) against any nation or force this administration decides is a threat to our national security. It doesn't mean it is, just that we say it is. That threat includes any nation we label "unstable" or a "failed state" (whatever that is). And a little add-on to the original NSS was their FY 04 Air Force Space Command Strategic Master Plan. It laid out a plan to "own outer space" (think the Martians will buy it), weaponize it with the most advanced and destructive weapons and technology including nuclear ones, and develop and place out there unmanned space vehicles to surveille the entire planet.

And there are two more gems everyone should know about. One is the May, 2000 DOD Joint Vision 2020 that outlined a plan for "full spectrum dominance." That's code language ("Militaryspeak" again) meaning total control over all land, sea, air and space and using any means including nuclear war to achieve it and keep it. The other jewel is the Nuclear Policy Review of December, 2001 that claims a unilateral right to declare and wage future wars using first strike nuclear weapons. Anyone nervous? You'd better be because the Bush administration declared a permanent state of war against "bad guys" we call "terrorists." I have my own definition of what each of those terms means and it's lots different from theirs. Dick Cheney gave us his message when he declared a "global war on terrorism" that may last for decades and may include in our target queue dozens of countries (the number keeps changing, but they have plenty in mind and don't plan to run out).



## THEY'RE NOT KIDDING AND IT JUST GOT WORSE

Rule No. 4 – Just in case anyone still misunderstands, ratchet up the rhetoric, make it even meaner and tougher and start beating the war drums to announce you're planning to demonstrate your seriousness. That should get everyone's full attention.

If all this doesn't scare you, then you didn't read the morning papers right after the ides of March (amazing they didn't choose that day when another noted warning was made, went unheeded and led to a bad ending for a guy whose initials were JC – no, the other one). On March 16 we learned that an updated National Security Strategy outlined the first full statement of US strategic goals since the original 2002 document written in the run-up to the Iraq war and which, in fact, was a declaration of war against that country six months before it began. The new Strategy identifies Iran as the “single country” that may pose the biggest threat to the US and reaffirms our unilateral right to take preventive military action against them. It denounced Tehran as an “ally of terror” and “enemy of freedom” along with daily accusations they're trying to acquire nuclear weapons and even use them. It also audaciously claims “we may face no greater challenge from a single country than from Iran.”

Iran never attacked any other nation or even threatened to. It endorses a negotiated settlement (didn't we use that ploy with Saddam) but warns of “confrontation” if that effort fails. Sound familiar? Haven't we heard that song before? The clincher will be when we call the Iranian mullahs and/or President Ahmadinejad “Hitler.” And haven't we overdone that one too? Can't we let the old brute stew in his special hell without degrading his ignominy by equating all our other designated “bad guys” with him? And shouldn't the public have caught on to this snake oil sales pitch by now? You're giving them too much credit. They never get it or understand in this nation the renowned author and social critic Gore Vidal calls the “United States of amnesia.” The equally renowned author and my fellow Chicagoan, Studs Terkel, calls our malady a “national Alzheimer's disease.” Sadly, it's true. The public can't recall last week's headlines let alone the events of months or years past or heaven knows any knowledge or sense of history – the real kind, that is, not the mythology we're fed in school or through the corporate media.

The updated document goes further and claims the right to take preventive action against any nation we designate an enemy state or any undefined terrorist group we say seeks to acquire WMD. Again, it doesn't matter if it's true, only that we say it's true. And we never explain what WMD is, so I will. Only nuclear weapons so qualify, not chemical or biological. The war hawks want you to think all three types do, but all weapons experts know otherwise. The latter two types can only cause havoc over a small area while only the former can really cause mass destruction not only on its target but over a vast area affected by deadly toxic radiation fallout that can never be remediated.

The report goes on to warn us that while al-Qaeda has been “significantly degraded” since the Afghan war it's also been dispersed and decentralized which now poses new challenges. And it claims the “fight in Iraq has been twisted by terrorist propaganda as a rallying cry.” I wish someone would explain what that means. And there's more:

Besides Iran, clearly number one in the target queue, the document also lists North Korea, Syria, Cuba, Belarus, Burma and Zimbabwe as “despotic systems.” It specifically labels Syria an ally of terror and enemy of freedom – meaning Israel wants us to do their dirty work by ousting their leader and replacing him with someone more subservient to Israeli and

Western interests.

It says the US must “isolate enemy elements” but engage those willing to give up violence (read: they’re violent because we say they are, but we’ll forgive them if they surrender their national sovereignty to the “Godfather”).

It specifically singles out Venezuela and Hugo Chavez as “a demagogue awash in oil money (who is) undermining democracy and seeking to destabilize the region.” This stuff is breathtaking, and allow me to translate it. First, though let me thank and commend President Chavez for being one of the few world leaders with the courage and backbone to respond to the reckless US policy and vicious lies about him and all else by pointing his finger at the real king of destabilizers and state terrorists. In comments he made on March 19 during his regular Sunday TV program, Hello, President, for ordinary Venezuelans to call and speak to him directly, ask a question and get his response, he called George Bush “Mr. Danger”, the world’s greatest terrorist, a coward, murderer, immoral and sick among other things. The man’s very perceptive.

Now the translation of the NSS comments on President Chavez. What they’re saying is that the Chavez extraordinary reforms bringing the Venezuelan people vital social benefits like free health care and education they never had before; his most vibrant democracy in the Americas; his innovative trade agreements that are fair to all participating countries and his opposition to the US promoted exploitive ones; and his beneficent policy of helping his neighbors, other developing countries, and some poor communities in US cities like selected neighborhoods in my own city of Chicago by selling them discounted oil (or heating oil to US cities – again, think Exxon-Mobil would do that?) are not in the interests of the US or the giant transnational corporations who want the right to exploit the country and every other developing one as well for their own benefit. That means no social programs for the people, just opportunities for US giant transnationals to have open and free access to plunder for profit. We call that “free trade.” I call it “the American way.” Hugo Chavez and the great majority of Venezuelans justifiably want no part of it. Neither should we.

It also emphasizes the need to enhance the administration’s post-conflict capabilities and to create a “civilian reserve corps” to rebuild countries after a war ends – meaning after we destroy them by illegal aggression we’ll award big no-bid contracts to the likes of Halliburton and Bechtel to rebuild them.....shoddily..... and steal the US taxpayers blind while doing whatever it is they’re doing. We do know Halliburton is expert at building US military bases and “torture-prisons.”

Finally, it states a policy to promote nuclear power abroad to provide “reliable, emission-free energy.” I love this one too. This is a sales pitch for General Electric and all other US corporations that will profit big time if we can convince other countries to let US corporations build nuclear power plants for them and all the rest that goes with them. And, oh yes, these plants most definitely are not emission-free. Where I live in Chicago is testimony to that. I’m surrounded by 11 nuclear power plants, many of them aging (as are most others) and all of them have a disturbing history of safety violations caused by aging and shoddy maintenance (another common problem in many other cities). Even without a serious accident (which will happen one day), these facilities (and all others everywhere including any newly built ones) discharge enough deadly toxic radiation daily in their normal operations to contaminate the food we eat (even organic food), the water we drink and the air we breathe into our lungs. And if one of these plants ever has a core meltdown and metropolitan Chicago is downwind from the fallout, the city and suburbs alone will become

uninhabitable for the next 4.5 billion years (forever) and would have to be evacuated quickly with all possessions left behind and lost (including our homes) except for what we could carry in suitcases or in the trunks of our cars if we own one which I don't. This is the kind of madness our government is trying to sell the US public and the world. But no matter. They'll do that and anything else to help their corporate friends.....even if it kills us.

## SELLING WAR - IT'S NOT HARD TO DO

Rule No. 5 - After putting your intentions clearly in writing and showing you mean business, the next step is scaring the public by choosing a "target country" and convincing them it threatens our security and welfare. You explain you're trying to reason with it, but if it won't listen, force may be necessary as a last resort. But not to worry. We'll only do this for our own safety and security. If you do this well enough (and these guys are experts, they've had so much practice), you hope the public will go along with your madness even if things don't go well and despite what your real objectives are.

With two out-of-control wars on their hands, why would they ever want to start another one? We don't have enough troops to handle Iraq and Afghanistan, there's growing discontent in the ranks including desertions in the thousands, and our military spending is off the charts and running up massive budget deficits even the new Fed chairman is alarmed about. He and other experts know they're only sustainable by "the kindness of strangers" that one day may become less kind as well as the wholesale shredding of our social safety net to fund wars. For me that's a clinical definition of insanity, but that doesn't deter this crowd. The war drums are beating loudly and the demonizing of our new number one public enemy is clearly Iran. In mid-February Secretary of State Rice told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee the US would "actively confront" Iran and asked for an extra \$75 million in funding for anti-Tehran propaganda and support for opposition groups outside the country. And she just turned up the heat a notch or two more by accusing Iran of lying about its (nuclear) activities and calling the country "a central banker to terrorism" - an overused false, deceptive and demonizing line she and others have used before.

Of course, this is all part of "the big lie" and prepping of the public for the "fun and games" they have in mind. What's never mentioned and what the sleepwalking public doesn't understand is there's only one "king" and undisputed world champion of "terrorism" (the state-sponsored most deadly kind of all) and central banker of terrorism. There may be a few other bit players around that come and go, but the US for at least many decades has been financing the most widespread and egregious terrorist activities on the planet - mainly its own, but it spreads it around when it can get other willing co-conspirator nations to join in. I'll let some of the worst of them go unnamed, but the reader need only check what nations have become part of our "coalitions of the willing" in victim countries now under the heel of the oppressive US boot. And then they can add a few more to that list like our closest of all allies in the Middle East and a few more in South and East Asia.

The issue with Iran has nothing to do with the furor over that country's wanting to develop its commercial nuclear industry, having the right to enrich its own uranium and even the right to develop weapons to defend itself against really hostile enemies. They'd be crazy and irresponsible not to want to want an adequate defense. Iran is a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), is in full compliance with it, and has every legal right to enrich its uranium. But that doesn't cut it with the "Godfather" because Iran won't sell out its sovereignty to the US and our oil and other corporate interests. India, Pakistan and Israel, on the other hand, are nuclear outlaws, have known stockpiles of nuclear bombs, and have



not signed the NPT. But they know “who’s boss”, show proper deference, can build and stockpile nuclear bombs (maybe even use a few) and they’re valued and trusted strategic allies. It follows that attacking Iran is quite acceptable because the “Godfather” tolerates no disobedient “outliers”, and such behavior must be severely punished to oust their leaders, replace them with more “friendly” ones, and deter other nations from showing the same independence or notion of moving that way.

## WELCOME TO THE MODERN NUCLEAR AGE UNMASKED

Rule No. 6 – First the rule and then the message from it. The rule is: when you’ve got ‘em, use ‘em. Of course, that means using whatever most destructive or high tech weapons you have, especially if the target country only has lesser ones. It also means: what’s the point of having ‘em if you can’t or don’t use ‘em. The message then is: toxic radiation is good for you. That must be what they’re selling because the US has now stated its intent to use industrial strength nuclear bombs in any future wars if it chooses to. Can they really sell this line of sheer madness? They’re trying, and I don’t hear anyone screaming about it yet.

Waging war by illegal aggression is bad enough, but doing it recklessly in another so-called “shock and awe” attack with so-called “bunker-buster mini-nukes” that aren’t mini is reckless and insane. The rhetoric about them is false and deliberately deceptive. These bombs are industrial strength and can be made to any potency and likely would be from one third to two thirds as powerful as a Hiroshima bomb. They’re designed to penetrate a designated target and explode underground for supposed protection. The DOD falsely claims this fantasy. They deceptively state that these weapons are safe to use because only the protected target is destroyed while the toxic radiation from the detonation is contained underground. Baloney. This is just another shameless lie. Some of it will be contained, but any bomb this powerful will release most of its toxic and lethal radiation into the atmosphere contaminating a vast area depending only on how many targets are struck, where they are, and by how many nuclear bombs. Let’s be clear what will happen if this attack goes ahead as planned or any other like it they may have in mind. It will likely be Hiroshima and Nagasaki x you pick the multiple – anywhere from double to infinity. And the result will be many thousands of innocent people murdered, many more thousands poisoned by toxic, lethal radiation and a vast area irremediably contaminated for the next 4.5 billion years. Think it’s worth it, never mind unjustified, egregious and a gross breach of international law.

Should this administration be insane enough to do this (and after the announcement of March 16 it looks more likely than ever), the entire Middle East may boil over, and the US will have descended even deeper into its hellish sinkhole of endless (and now full-scale) nuclear war, massive destruction and killing, and nation bankrupting levels of endless spending with no end in sight. Doesn’t this crowd understand this? They must, but that doesn’t deter the damn fools. They’re often wrong but never in doubt. Haven’t they ever heard the great lyrics to folk singer Pete Seeger’s Vietnam era ode to the damn fool of that period – “Waste deep in the Big Muddy and the big fool says push on.” And don’t they remember the memorable Stanley Kubrick 1964 film, Dr. Strangelove, that even I saw back then, and I dislike movies. Kubrick portrayed a nuclear Doomsday Machine. The film’s subtitle was “how to stop worrying and love the bomb.” Anyone believing that then or now can only love great suffering and large-scale death and destruction instead of life. But you can bet these guys will convince a lot of people it’s worth it – for what and whom. Them maybe, but not us.

## AND NOW THE NEXT STEP – THE MOVE FROM A REPUBLIC TO TYRANNY

Rule No. 7 (the last one) – Your manual is almost complete, and you’re about to become as expert at this game as the big boys actually playing it. The only step left is to do at home everything you want to do abroad without having to nuke the public to sell it. Scaring hell out of them should do the trick.

We may find out and sooner than we think if it’ll work. But this time we may be getting in over our heads and headed for the abyss if the alarm sounded by retired General Tommy Franks proves true. A few months after he retired he gave an interview to Cigar Aficionado magazine (a most unlikely venue – maybe he envisioned the world going up in smoke) and made what to some was an astonishing statement. He said if another terrorist attack occurs in the US “the Constitution will likely be discarded in favor of a military form of government.” He went on to say such an attack will result in our losing our “freedom and liberty we’ve seen for a couple of hundred years.....(and that Bush)..... will likely declare martial law.....”

Have I ruined your day? Fasten your seat belt, it gets worse. For some time now, a number of US government officials and private “terrorism” experts are on record predicting it’s just a matter of when, not if, the US will be struck again. Some say it will be worse than 9/11. And on June 6, 2003, the AP quoted a US government report that “there is a high probability that al-Qaida will attempt an attack with weapons of mass destruction in the next two years.” Now I’d never advise anyone believe anything said by any government official. But those of us, including myself, convinced our own government was behind or complicit in the first 9/11 attack, should take this warning very seriously. It means if that conclusion is true (and again, I believe it is) this warning and General Franks’ grim assessment may, in fact, be advance word of what’s ahead. We should heed that warning and be prepared as best we can. One astute observer I heard comment said in all seriousness that for anyone with enough resources a prudent option today would be to have “a second passport and a little property in Vancouver.” He added we should think out our escape route in advance and be ready to take it.

## HERE’S THE NIGHTMARISH SCRIPT YOU CAN PRACTICE LOSING SLEEP OVER

Rule (or reality) No. 8 – The script is written and the plans are ready to go. Here’s how it’s likely to play out.

I’ve discussed this scenario before in another essay, but it deserves repeating here with some added embellishment to scare you even more. I began by suggesting we’re being set up (as well as being given fair warning if we can read the tea leaves) for a planned major strike against us. I then went on to say.....You know the drill by now. A major attack happens on US soil, the Bush administration and complicit corporate media hype what happened, scare the public and get them mad enough to demand retribution. If they haven’t yet attacked Iran, they blame this on them so they now have public and outside support to do it claiming secret intelligence they can’t reveal and it’s (nuclear) bombs away – and George Bush’s approval rating skyrockets just like after 9/11, and the Republicans keep control of both houses of Congress in November. Karl Rove couldn’t plan it any better.

And there’s one more thing I didn’t write before but will add here. Tommy Franks’ assessment and vision will become reality, the Constitution will be suspended, martial law will be declared and we’ll have crossed the Rubicon and passed from a republic (what’s left

of it) to tyranny just as it happened in ancient Rome and more recently in Weimar Germany. We're no different or safer than they were. It works the same in every country, and we should understand nothing is more fragile than our sacred freedom and liberty. It can easily be taken from us without our knowledge or with our compliance when we think it guarantees us security. The reputed old Chinese proverb and curse (likely derived from another source) said "May he (or you) live in interesting times." It didn't mean "let the good times roll and all is well in the world." Whether of Chinese origin or not, I'll settle for the curse and say it surely applies to today in this country like never before in our history.

I've tried to use this essay to warn everyone reading it how deadly serious the times we're now living in are. We must understand that, spread the word, enlist the support of others, and desperately try to head off the impending disaster I think lies ahead if we all don't act in time. It's really that serious.

I could end this a lot of ways. I usually do it either inspirationally or with a warning. This time it's the latter because the situation is grave, and the time is short. What's at stake is nothing less than saving the republic (again what's left of it) and our sacred Constitutional rights. Unless enough of us are willing to fight for both and do it soon, there may be nothing left to fight for. Understand the threat, get mad, energized and heed Pogo's advice and wisdom that "we've met the enemy and it's us." Now what are we gonna do about it?" It's our move next.

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