

The War on Terror Presaged Covid Mania

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Global Research, September 11, 2020

[American Institute for Economic Research](#) 9

September 2020

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [History](#), [Intelligence](#), [Terrorism](#)

This week is the 19th anniversary of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. America never recovered politically from those attacks, and government responses to the Covid pandemic are repeating many of the same follies of the War on Terror.

Three days after the World Trade Center towers tumbled down, President George W. Bush promised to “[rid the world of evil.](#)” After making an outlandish promise that should have earned him derision in perpetuity, the media and the political elite rallied around Bush to give him unlimited power to purportedly achieve that goal. The fact that the 9/11 attacks were preceded by the biggest intelligence failures since Pearl Harbor became irrelevant.

Nowadays, presidents are expected to rid the nation of all risks. Politicians who promise to keep citizens safe have been permitted unlimited power to shut down businesses, churches, and almost any other activity. The Democratic Party is echoing this theme in its campaign message that President Trump is practically guilty of murdering 180,000 Americans because he failed to prevent the Covid pandemic. The fact that stunning errors by the Centers for Disease Control and the Food and Drug Administration compounded the Covid death toll did not stop the rush to sacralize all government experts.

Both the 9/11 attacks and Covid Mania instantly made individual freedom irrelevant. After the Bush administration suspended habeas corpus and secretly arrested more than a thousand people in the U.S., Attorney General John Ashcroft proclaimed that “those who scare peace-loving people with [phantoms of lost liberty](#)... give ammunition to America’s enemies.” Critics were still traitors regardless of how many constitutional rights the Bush administration trampled.

Mandatory masks have become the Covid equivalent of antiterror absolutism. In his acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention, presidential candidate Joe Biden declared, “We’ll have a national mandate to wear a mask — not as a burden but as a patriotic duty to protect one [another.](#)” When asked if he will force everyone to wear a mask, Biden replied, “This isn’t about freedom, it’s [about freedom for you](#), your neighbors.” For Biden, any presumed benefit from government edicts to curb Covid infections makes freedom irrelevant.

Last April, the [New York Times declared](#) that the Covid “virus generates much the same fear and anxiety caused by terrorism, but it is brought by nature, not by humans.” And the task for government was to “learn how to frighten [citizens] into acting for the common good.” But the vast majority of the harm inflicted during this pandemic was due to government edicts and political-bureaucratic fearmongering, not the virus itself.

Both the War on Terror and the Covid Mania quickly became permeated by “security theater.” At 400+ airports around the nation, the Transportation Security Administration erected checkpoints and proceeded to endlessly harass and molest peaceful American travelers. When protests erupted over the TSA’s nude body scanners (which [failed to detect 95%](#) of bombs and weapons smuggled past them by testers) and pointless groping of boobs and butts, politicians and much of the media defended the agency. A *Los Angeles Times* editorial headline proclaimed, “[Shut Up and Be Scanned](#),” while a *Washington Post* columnist sneered, “Grow up, America.”

After politicians promised to vanquish Covid, they entitled themselves to micromanage Americans’ lives, shutting down almost all businesses (except for big-box stores like Wal-Mart and Target), outlawing gymnasiums (except for [government employees](#)) and hair salons (except for House Speaker Nancy Pelosi), prohibiting anyone from leaving their home to visit family or friends (Michigan), banning all recreational travel (Oregon), and shutting down public beaches (Los Angeles).

After 9/11, any purported terrorist threat anywhere purportedly justified the Bush administration’s seizure of boundless power. With the pandemic, almost all Covid cases justify politicians prohibiting almost any type of behavior. In Montgomery County, Maryland, for instance, the local health czar sought to dictate that all private schools must [remain shut down](#) as long as the county of one million had more than nine new Covid cases per day.

The most visible folly of Bush’s War on Terror was his invasion of Iraq, which his administration justified based on an array of ludicrous claims including that Saddam Hussein had a nuclear weapon. Bush never apologized for using false pretenses to take America into a war that left more than 4,000 Americans dead and tens of thousands others badly wounded. The fact that most foreign policy “experts” supported the invasion settled the issue, according to the establishment media.

Similarly, governors and mayors justified placing hundreds of millions of Americans under de facto house arrests based on mortality predictions on Covid-19 from the World Health Organization that [were 50 times higher](#) than the rate the U.S. experienced. Those lockdowns were far more effective at destroying 14 million jobs than preventing the spread of Covid-19 to more than six million Americans. But most of the media still presumes that the lockdown dictates were legitimate because they were based on “science and data” – regardless that much of the data was bogus and the epidemiological forecasts were wildly inaccurate.

After 9/11, many Americans felt instant hatred for anyone who protested against Bush administration crackdowns or the Iraq War. (Remember the Dixie Chicks?) After the Covid shutdowns began, the problem was not the bogus data but anti-lockdown protestors who refused to abandon their daily lives. A Democratic congressional candidate in Indiana [denounced the protestors](#) as “COVIDIOTS” and declared that he hoped Covid “disproportionately” killed them. But when even larger protests erupted after the killing of George Floyd, [more than a thousand public health “experts” blessed the mass gatherings](#) as a worthwhile risk to promote social justice.

In both the War on Terror and Covid Mania, the “solution” to blunders was unleashing even greater destruction. After Bush’s invasion of Iraq unleashed chaos and a religious civil war, neoconservatives claimed that the only solution was to also invade Iran. American troops in Baghdad would supposedly never be safe until the U.S. military toppled the regime in

Tehran.

Similarly, lockdown zealots claim that the only reason that so many Americans died of Covid was because politicians did not shut down everything practically in perpetuity – or at least until a vaccine is available. Biden recently endorsed dictating a national shutdown if Covid infection numbers rise again. British politicians have gone even further, championing perpetuating severe restrictions on citizens' lives until “zero Covid” is achieved. As author Patrick Henningsen warned, “#ZeroCOVID is an excuse for [fools & authoritarians](#) to ruin society.”

The War on Terror vivified how a single vague congressional resolution – the Authorization to Use Military Force that Congress passed shortly after the 9/11 attacks – unleashed endless aggression abroad, justifying bombing Syria, Libya, Somalia, and other nations and leading to U.S. troops now [fighting in 14 nations](#). Covid Mania precedents could spur radical shutdowns in the coming year any time that politicians or government bureaucrats claim that a new virus is “COVID-like,” thereby necessitating again placing hundreds of millions of Americans under house arrest.

Another commonality between the War on Terror and Covid Mania is that

politicians are entitled to define collateral damage out of existence. Most Americans are oblivious to the vast carnage inflicted by the U.S. military on Afghan and Iraqi civilians. Similarly, the “experts” who score the pandemic shutdowns ignore the surge in suicides and skyrocketing drug abuse, as well as the vast loss of learning for tens of millions of students due to school shutdowns.

Stunning debacles are no impediment to politicians pirouetting as saviors. George W. Bush ran for [reelection in 2004 touting pictures](#) of the World Trade Center wreckage. New York Governor Andrew Cuomo is trumpeting a new book, *American Crisis: Leadership Lessons from the COVID-19 Pandemic* – even though his dictate requiring nursing homes to admit Covid patients helped cause more than 10,000 deaths. Nationwide, nursing home residents account for almost half of Covid-19 fatalities, and governors in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Michigan issued disastrous orders similar to Cuomo's.

Like the endless War on Terror, the Covid shutdowns will likely be viewed as one of the greatest political debacles in modern American history. But many politicians still believe that there is no problem that cannot be solved by a bigger federal iron fist. Will the media continue venerating “experts” until American freedom and prosperity are both obliterated?

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