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Even as they stand in the rubble of their world, the Americans have retained their ability to make a decision to export ruins to any enemy of choice, while the rest of the world wallows in a stupor of parochial interests. After the chaos in Iraq, America is now bent on setting fire to the entire oil heartlands of our planet. You see, Americans like victory, having been spoilt into a triumphalist culture of supremacy. In the process, they have managed to alienate many mature and developed allies, not to mention the oppressed masses in the Muslim world, a mistake from which there is no recovery. Like the ancient Greek Goddess Nemesis, who relentlessly sought vengeance from the arrogant, the 'terrorist' will surely prove to be the present-day many-headed monster, so dreaded by the perpetrators of massive atrocities abroad.

The American department of "defence" now controls all American "offensive" activities around the globe, while also being responsible for natural disaster management at home from hurricanes to flu epidemics, while demonstrating gross incompetence from Iraq to Louisiana. The "defence" budgets are unprecedented in their enormity, while the fiscal deficits are the largest in US history. Nevertheless, Americans have never outgrown the narcissistic myth that the rest of the world looks up to them in awe, and that they would not be able to do without the US. The reality is that China, East Asia, India, Russia and Europe have largely replaced the US, except in weapons manufacture.

The dynamic East-Asians including China and India have collectively managed to usurp the US economically, while the sluggish Europeans have formed new and unexpected relationships, which are distasteful to the Americans. The fumbling and disoriented Gulliver that the US has now become, is being eaten away by a myriad of Lilliputians, even while it flexes its muscles and encroaches on their borders to intimidate emerging powers like Russia and China.

It is therefore absurd for the US to attempt to impose itself by claiming the advance of democracy, which really conforms to the definition of imperialism. The US record in this area is one of continuous and ignominious failure, although never acknowledged in the mainstream media. Through the years, it had helped install dictators like Pinochet in Chile, the Shah of Iran, Suharto in Indonesia, Batista in Cuba, Mobutu in the Congo, fascist colonels in Greece, Marcos in the Philippines, dictatorships in Portugal and Spain, Somoza in Nicaragua, militarists in Vietnam and Cambodia and a host of smaller nations, under various pretexts ranging from fighting communism to ushering in "democracy".

The Americans consistently fail to see beyond the ideological blinders they have always worn, where ever they place their obnoxious footprints. After a resounding rebuff from South America and East Asia, where its patronage has long since been



GLOBAL RE-POSITIONING, IMPERIAL DEMISE AND THE RISE OF FREEDOM

spurred, the US has now turned its ugly head towards re-making the Middle East in its own image, with a view to countering the ideology that runs diametrically against its hegemonic intentions and arrogant attitude. It continues to support dictatorships in countries like Saudi Arabia and Egypt, while attempting to stave off the effects of real democracy on a broken and shattered people in Iraq and Palestine. Various US military commanders in Iraq play General MacArthur, who in fact had been himself a dictator in occupied Japan, essentially installing hand-picked puppets from the Japanese establishment.

The hypocrisy embedded in American foreign policy has also been evident in virtually every foreign adventure it has ever undertaken, in the name of one just cause or other. While the West has not been fundamentally effected by them in the past, the price having always been paid by the victimised nation in question, there are definite signs that the tide is changing. The bombings in places like Madrid and London have shaken senior government executives, prompting them to take independent stances and to speak out against American policy initiatives on several occasions. However, the Muslim world is an entirely different matter altogether. It is driven by fierce nationalism, a strong cultural base, and very sound ethical grounds, albeit soured by sectarian tribalism. It merely lacks the economic strength or political maturity in many cases, to challenge American deception and manipulation.

While America erects a billion dollar memorial to the under 3000 dead of 9-11, one must reflect on the inequalities it continues to promote via its media. What catches people's sensitivity and emotion can be thus described: one raped or murdered blond haired white woman in America equals 30,000 Ethiopians being killed in a tribal exchange of enmity, or 5000 Indians dying from a gas explosion or 8000 Bangladeshis being swept away in a flash flood. This demonstrates, among

other things, the American imperial hubris even in the role of victim.

For most human beings in poor countries which have either been bombed by America or been otherwise devastated, no matter how bravely or honourably they

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die, there are no memorials built for them. No memorials will be built even if they died far more unfairly than the victims of 9-11. Those innocent men, women and children who died slow deaths from UN sanctions, destruction of water, sanitation, medical and electricity infrastructure, exposure to radioactive munitions with compliments from America, in places like Falluja, Baghdad, Mosul, Kabul or Gaza, only the emotions of hatred will remain, with thoughts of vengeance for generations to come.

As the death toll of the American military in Iraq surges well ahead of the figure killed on 9-11, they must reflect on the millions of lives extinguished without compunction, from Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Afghanistan and Iraq. The majority of these deaths had surely been intentionally caused by America and its allies. As long as double standards are maintained, and human life is treated with contempt outside the bastions of wealth and power, usually on the basis of colour or race, security and peace of mind will be elusive. The day will not be far off, when all the peoples who have suffered at the hands of the American-led wars of attrition will join forces in legitimate areas of social and economic activity to collectively reverse the gross injustices perpetrated across many decades against them.

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