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## INTERVENTIONISM, NOT ISLAM, IS THE PROBLEM

by Jacob G. Hornberger

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President Obama, Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton, and others of the mainstream interventionist ilk continue to debate whether the terrorist problem that America is facing is due to radical Muslims or regular Muslims. Depending on where they come out on that question, their solutions inevitably encompass more destruction of American liberty and privacy, such as with gun control, immigration controls, or surveillance schemes.

There is one big problem with their analysis, however: The terrorism problem America has been facing even before 9/11 isn't due to Islam, Muslims, or the Koran. Instead, the anti-American terrorism problem is rooted in U.S. interventionism in the Middle East and Afghanistan, specifically the ongoing death and destruction that the U.S. military death machine has been wreaking in those parts of the world on an ongoing basis for the past 25 years.

Why is that distinction important? Because gun control, immigration controls, and secret mass surveillance are not going to solve the problem. They're only going to bring about a greater suppression of liberty, privacy, and prosperity for the American people.

Equally important, they're not going to bring an end to anti-American terrorism. As long as the U.S. death machine is killing people in the Middle East and Afghanistan, there will be the continuous threat of anti-American terrorism here at home.

Why do interventionists spend so much time discussing things like radical Muslims, regular Muslims, Islam, and the Koran?

Here's why: Their supreme goal is to maintain the U.S. national-security state's continued intervention in the Middle East and Afghanistan. Nothing must interfere with that goal. The entire well-being of the national-security establishment depends on it. Without the old Cold War or at least a renewed Cold War with China or Russia, the Middle East intervention is the only thing that can guarantee ever-increasing budgets, influence, and power for the Pentagon, CIA, and NSA and the rest of the military-industrial complex.

So, that's the goal: to make the Middle East intervention and the occupation of Afghanistan a permanent feature of American life. That's what the Persian Gulf War some 25 years ago was all about. And the sanctions on Iraq that killed hundreds of thousands of Iraqi children. And the illegal no-fly zones over Iraq, which also succeeded in killing children. And the invasion and occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan.

It all guaranteed massive anger and rage among people over there, which ultimately manifested itself in anti-American terrorism. That "blowback," as the noted analysis Chalmers Johnson titled his great book, has then been used to (1) generate deep-seated fear among the American people; (2) increase the budget, influence, and power of the national security establishment; (3) destroy the fundamental rights of freedom and privacy of the American people; and (4) make Americans more unsafe, both from terrorists and the government itself (through, for example, the national-security state's official anti-terrorist programs of assassination, torture, and indefinite detention that apply to Americans citizens too).

It's really the perfect racket. But it's important to note that essential to the racket is the propaganda and indoctrination regarding Muslims, Islam, and the Koran. The propaganda and indoctrination, including the debates on radical Muslims vs. regular Muslims and the debates over gun control and surveillance, are all designed to distract the public's attention from the root cause of the problem: continued U.S. interventionism in the Middle East and Afghanistan.

Here is where one government program — public schooling — intersects with another government program — foreign interventionism. The most successful aspect of public (i.e.,

government) schooling is the mindset of conformity and deference to authority that is inculcated into every child. One beauty of the system is that the child doesn't even realize what's happening. Another beauty is that he doesn't even realize what they did to him after he becomes an adult. When his mind automatically conforms to whatever national-security officials are saying, he thinks that he is arriving at his decision independently. He has no idea that it is a consequence of the deference-to-authority mindset that was molded in him during his 12 years under government control and tutelage.

There is no better example of this phenomenon than how so many Americans have bought into the government's suggestion that anti-American terrorism is caused by the Koran, Islam, radical Muslims, or regular Muslims. Equally important, thanks to propaganda and indoctrination, all too many Americans are convinced that U.S. interventionism in the Middle East and Afghanistan is necessary to fight the terrorists before they come to the United States. In other words, their minds do not permit them to even entertain the notion that the interventionism comes first and that it produces the anti-American terrorist blowback.

How can we tell that this mindset has been brought about by propaganda and indoctrination?

Easy. Just consider the following two factors:

First, recall the Cold War, when the official bugaboo of the national-security establishment was communism and communists. Throughout the 45 years of the Cold War, the national-security establishment inculcated Americans with the same deep seated fear of communists that they have today with Muslims. The communists were everywhere. Americans had to go fight and die in Vietnam to prevent a communist takeover of America. Cuba was a communist dagger pointed at America's throat. Communists were taking over regimes all over the world. Everything had to be done to prevent more communist takeovers, including the destruction of democratic regimes and partnerships with brutal dictatorial regimes and even a criminal organization like the Mafia.

Now, ask yourself this question: Throughout the Cold War, how many Americans expressed any concern about radical Muslims, regular Muslims, Islam, or the Koran?

Answer: It would be hard to find anyone who did. That's because everyone's mind had automatically conformed itself to what the national-security establishment said was the official bugaboo — communism.

No one talked about the centuries-old war that Muslims had been waging to establish a world-wide caliphate. No one called for color codes to tell people about the latest threat of a Muslim terrorist attack on America. No one talked about restricting immigration for Muslims in particular. No one talked about the violence in the Koran.

It was all about communism and communists. Americans were even exhorted to look for communists, not Muslims, under their beds.

In fact, recall when the Soviet communists, rather than the U.S. national-security state, were the invaders and occupiers of Afghanistan. Take a wild guess who the U.S. national-security state partnered with to oust the commies from Afghanistan. Yep: radical Muslims! The U.S. national-security establishment was actually sending those radical Muslims weaponry, including Stinger missiles. Radical Muslims in Afghanistan, believe it or not, included Osama bin Laden.

How many Americans objected to that U.S. partnership with and support of radical Muslims in Afghanistan?

Answer: Very few. Most everyone supported the partnership with and arming of radical Muslims because the official bugaboo was communism.

Then, watch what happens when the Cold War suddenly and unexpectedly ends. Suddenly, both the national-security establishment and the American people are left without an official bugaboo. That changed with the Persian Gulf War. Suddenly the new official bugaboo became Saddam Hussein. In their current obsession with Muslims, Islam, and the Koran, people forget that the national obsession in the 1990s was not Muslims, Islam, or the Koran but instead Saddam Hussein, the dictator of Iraq, who, ironically, had been a partner of the U.S. national-security establishment during the 1980s.

Throughout the 1990s, “Saddam! Saddam! Saddam!” was the official lamentation being expressed by the American people, at the urging of the national security establishment. He was the new Hitler. He was going to conquer the world. He was going to unleash a WMD attack on the United States.

In other words, the mindset of Americans had automatically conformed to the new official enemy, which had gone from communism to Saddam.

What happened after they got Saddam? They needed a new official enemy. That became Osama bin Laden, which then morphed into terrorism, which then morphed into Muslims, Islam, and the Koran, which then morphed into ISIS, until today we have a combination of all them as the new official enemy that holds Americans in its grip.

Second, I would venture to say that most Americans have no idea about the type of government that the U.S. interventions in Iraqi and Afghanistan brought into existence in both countries.

Both countries now have official Islamic regimes. Yes, believe it or not, official Islamic regimes! If you don't believe me, just Google it.

How many Americans have objected to the U.S. installation of two official Islamic regimes? How many have participated in protests and demonstrations against U.S. troops for fighting and dying in Iraq and Afghanistan to preserve two official Islamic regimes?

Answer: None, not even those who say that America's new official enemy is Islam, the Koran, and Muslims. In fact, it's the exact opposite. Ever since the installation of official Islamic regimes in Iraq and Afghanistan, Americans have effusively thanked the troops for their "service" in Iraq and Afghanistan, notwithstanding the fact that such "service" has consisted of installing and protecting two official Islamic regimes.

Isn't that ironic and, well, somewhat humorous? If Islam is the problem, if the Koran is the problem, if Muslims are the problem, then how is that no American is protesting the installation and protection of two official Islamic regimes? Why isn't anyone objecting to the fact that thousands of U.S. soldiers have died in the protection of two official Islamic regimes? Indeed, why isn't anyone calling on the U.S. national-security state to fight the "enemy" by effecting regime changes in Iraq and Afghanistan that would oust those official Islamic regimes from power?

It's all the product of indoctrination and propaganda, all designed to make the interventions in the Middle East and Afghanistan permanent, by causing people to focus on Muslims, the Koran, and Islam rather than on U.S. interventionism, which is the cause of anti-American terrorist blowback.

Consider Switzerland, whose citizens are among the best armed in the world. Most everyone has an assault rifle in his home, in order to defend the nation in the event of an invasion.

Do you see any terrorist attacks on the Swiss? Do you see gun massacres? No, you don't. And there is a simple reason for that: The Swiss government is not an interloper or an intervenor. It isn't killing people in the Middle East and Afghanistan. Consequently, people from the Middle East and Afghanistan aren't killing Swiss citizens in terrorist attacks. There is no anti-Swiss terrorist blowback because there is no Swiss intervention in the Middle East and Afghanistan.

One more important thing: Given that Trump, Obama, Clinton, and their interventionist ilk want to make U.S. intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan a perpetual thing, their focus increasingly is on how to prevent terrorist blowback here in the United States. That's what the expanded efforts at gun control are all about. And the surveillance schemes. And the extraordinary "emergency" powers that have now been made a permanent part of America's governmental structure.

It will not work. It will only make the destruction of American freedom and privacy worse. As I wrote soon after 9/11, the war on terrorism will be like the war on drugs — never ending, always failing, and increasingly destructive of American liberty, security, and prosperity.

Can they protect every nightclub in America? Every bar? Every retail store? Every mall?

Of course they can't. And remember: Under America's system, they can't arrest people just because they are suspicious of them. Under our criminal-justice system, a person cannot be arrested until he actually commits a crime or attempts to commit a crime. America is not like totalitarian regimes or Guantanamo, where authorities can incarcerate anyone they want for as long as they want.

So, as long as the U.S. death machine is killing people over there, there are going to be people over there or over here who are going to retaliate. Get used to it. It's a fact of life for people living under an interventionist regime that is killing people over there.

Keep the interventions going and continue to suffer the deadly ravages of terrorist blowback. If Americans want to rid the nation of anti-American terrorist blowback, there is but one way to accomplish that: End U.S. interventionism in the Middle East and Afghanistan, stop the U.S. death machine from killing any more people, and bring all the troops home now.