

Struggle Itself is Victory

The American Utopian Imperative

By [DL Adams](#) (August 2010)



The intense political discord currently on display in the United States no longer has its basis in a conflict between left and right, conservative and liberal, Democratic and Republican. This fundamental shift in the nature of the debates around culture, politics, foreign policy, history, immigration, and so many other contentious issues is

indicative of a shift to polar opposites within the culture.

We are no longer Democrats and Republicans, Liberals and Conservatives, now we are utopians or not.

The rising rancor that now characterizes disagreements in American political and cultural life is not entirely due to differences over existing problems but rather how these problems are seen through completely divergent lenses.

Politically and culturally we appear to be at a fork in the road – the future of the country and of the West itself is at stake.

The cultural conflicts and political disagreements ripping the fabric of our great country – many of them fueled by activist, ideologically motivated, anti-intellectual academics in our once great bastions of reason and higher education (described by Allan Bloom in his important 1986 book “Closing of the American Mind”) – have been brewing for many decades.

The differences in approach to problem resolution and of understanding the world and our place in it formerly described as “culture wars” or even simply as “differences of opinion” now have a much more profound importance. Every generation has a key moment during its tenure in leadership until the next generation takes the reins of power; our crucial moment is now. We are at the arc of an historical cycle that has been building since 1945. Crises of the not so distant past did not put the future development of the country or of the West at risk while our current crisis of meaning, values and direction does.

For instance, the Vietnam War did not put the future of American society or the direction of its development at stake. The war was unpopular at home and finally was ended mainly due to the domestic upheavals that that unpopularity caused. The turbulence that it caused at home and the high cost in treasure and blood made us reluctant to

fight in wars far from home that did not involve direct American need and national security. In the post-Vietnam period the phrase “let us learn the lessons of Vietnam” became a popular one, but many were (and still are) in disagreement as to their meaning. 9/11 changed all of that in an instant.

The failing war in Afghanistan now grinds on longer than the Vietnam war. Those who calculate the awful mathematics of warfare tout the comparatively “low” casualty counts in Afghanistan and in Iraq – though this brings little comfort to the families and friends of our fallen soldiers. An argument could be made, and was by two administrations, that Iraq (Bush) and Afghanistan (Obama) are conflicts that directly involve American national security interests. Are the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan illustrations of our having learned “the lessons” of Vietnam?

Militarily, our technology and war fighting capabilities remain unsurpassed though our ideological capabilities have not kept pace. A cursory review of the constitutions of Iraq and Afghanistan, documents that our State department and political leaders co-wrote and supported, show clearly that a terrible error has been made.

The first Article of the constitutions of both countries declares that both are Islamic states and Islam is the law of the land. Islamic Sharia law is therefore the fundamental law of both Afghanistan and Iraq. These founding documents were created with deep American involvement and support. How is it possible that the great democracy of the world now has created two states under Sharia law?

Because [Sharia law](#) is barbaric, misogynist, cruel, and [does not allow freedom of religion](#), freedom of conscience, is [supremacist](#), hateful, and intolerant it is then entirely in contravention to our own Constitution and Bill of Rights in addition to our American cultural preference for freedom, openness, tolerance, and individual rights. How can it make sense that American soldiers are fighting and dying, and our treasury is being stressed to the breaking point, to create

and support two Islamic Sharia law states?

How is it possible that our past leadership understood the ideology of Japan, and of Nazi Germany, and later Soviet Communism so well that the United States was able to defeat them all and support new democratic reform governments in their place but we are unable now to comprehend the history, ideology, and threat of Islam?

How is it possible that we are now engaged in two costly and lengthy wars whose purposes are the creation of two new “democracies” that are founded upon an ideology (Islam) that is diametrically opposed to democracy? The ideology of Islam is opposed to women’s rights, individual rights, freedom of speech, and religion, and the essential American constitutional concept of government being subordinate to the people.

Noted historian Barbara Tuchman wrote an important and insightful [book](#) on flawed decisions of politics and war; her term for them is “folly”. But there is much more at work here and abroad other than simply folly that is fueling our own ongoing political and cultural crises.

The assassination of President John F. Kennedy in November, 1963 shook the country to the core, but it did not endanger the future development of the country, at least institutionally.

The result of the horror, shock, and sorrow at the event – and finally the extreme doubt as to the [legitimacy of the “Oswald did it alone” findings](#) of the Warren Commission (“conspiracy” in the JFK case was confirmed by the House Select Committee on Assassinations in 1978) caused a massive surge of distrust in the government from which the country never recovered. The mood that distrust of government fosters in the country allows for foundational changes to be pushed in ways and for purposes that most Americans would find unacceptable and shocking.

After Kennedy’s murder the Johnson administration escalated the war in Vietnam despite Johnson’s promise that he would continue the policies of Kennedy which called for a planned withdrawal. This promise was one of the first public utterances of policy uttered by Johnson as

President.

JFK had signed “National Security Action Memorandum 263” which provided for the drawing down of American troops in Vietnam by 1000 soldiers per month so that an exit by 1964 was likely. Johnson’s “continuation” of JFK’s policies in fact did the opposite (see NSAM #273) – it increased American involvement in the war to staggering levels.

Johnson’s reversal of JFK’s policy of disengagement from Vietnam, as specified in NSAM263, further eroded trust between the people and the government at Washington. With domestic initiatives like the “Great Society” welfare programs meant to assuage anger on the left, Johnson could not escape the responsibility for Vietnam and the label “Johnson’s War.” Johnson’s refusal to seek a second term was then no surprise.

The domestic anti-Vietnam war movement and the new “youth movement” centered on drug use, opposition to institutional authority, and the shattering of sex roles and mores has been identified by many as one of the key reasons why the war in Vietnam was [finally abandoned](#). While the war itself was not likely to affect the institutions of the country over time, that is destroy or deconstruct them, the rising anti-war tide and strong cultural shifts that went with it very well could have.

The Watergate Scandal that resulted in Nixon’s resignation in 1974 did not put the country at risk nor its future development but rather was a crisis of the presidency which resulted then in a Constitutional crisis. The Constitution provides for a response when a President has committed criminal acts while in office – impeachment.

Rather than face impeachment that he knew was coming Nixon resigned and famously flew off in his helicopter (his comment after his 1962 loss in the California Governor’s race was a foreshadow: “You won’t have Dick Nixon to kick around anymore because, gentlemen, this is my last press conference!”), and Gerald Ford the Vice President ascended to the Oval Office. Americans were still recovering from and trying to

understand the disaster of Vietnam, the domestic upheavals of the youth movement, and the assassination of Kennedy. Nixon's dramatic departure avoided an impeachment trial and likely conviction but increased the loss of faith in the presidency and other fundamental institutions. Ford's controversial pardon of Nixon further eroded the people's trust in the federal government.

Every post-Nixon president must rebuke, through his, or her, character and integrity, the shame and deconstruction of the institution of the presidency that started with the shift of Johnson away from his promise of disengagement in Vietnam to Nixon's abandonment of his oath of office and Watergate crimes. The Oval Office carries a heavy load of responsibility – domestically, internationally, and culturally; there are few, apparently, who can successfully meet its many demands.

The deconstruction of the presidency and of Americans' faith in institutions continued into the administration of "Jimmy" Carter. The central event of his presidency has important implications for us today because Iran continues to be the greatest and most vocal threat to the United States and our sole democratic ally in the Middle East, Israel.

The act of war by the then-new revolutionary Islamic government of Iran which was the 1979 seizure of our Tehran embassy and the subsequent [444 days of captivity](#) of American embassy personnel in Tehran and the disastrous failure of the attempted rescue of our personnel (among other unfortunate events and missteps) assured Carter of a single term but did not undermine American national development or foundational institutions. The United States has never responded to this act of war on the part of Iran against our country. In fact, we have for some reason accepted multiple attacks by their proxies and agents against our people, interests and friends around the world all of which have gone unanswered; the as yet unanswered Iranian Act of War of 1979 may soon reveal itself to have been a critical moment in our history.

US Presidents have always been looked upon by American voters as caretakers and problem solvers. With great respect they take their

seat in the Oval Office and lead the nation out of crises and solve national problems for which the federal government with its immense resources and authority is particularly well qualified. The current administration has a very different approach.

Distrust of government since after World War Two and into the 60s and beyond has now brought to us a new form of leadership, those who do not see themselves as custodians of the Constitution and Republic but rather, more importantly, as activists and agents of change.

Our now highly partisan and often emotionally charged national political and cultural discussions punctuated by growing acrimony and (so far, as of this writing) two national political leaders openly mentioning secession (Tennessee Congressman and candidate for Governor [Zack Wamp](#), and the Governor of Texas, [Rick Perry](#)) could mean that we are at a "fork in the road" whose like has not been seen since the Civil War.

Rather than unifying the country by a temperate and respectful attitude during time of war and economic crisis and judicious exercise of national authority the current administration is splitting the country apart by selective failure to exercise that power (e.g., border security, Arizona, etc.) and responsibility and by reducing the importance, reputation, and impact of the United States on the global stage. As these diminutions of the United States continue at home and abroad ([our President bowing](#) before foreign leaders, for one example) it should be clear now that such actions which render the country (and its people) small rather than great are done not at all by accident but *for a purpose*.

American and Western war guilt and the residual shock and regret at the almost incomprehensible brutality and high losses of both wars (and later conflicts) combined to create an imperative over time for a final solution to the "sovereign state problem." For those on the left the solution would be internationalist utopianism.

Abandonment of the promise "Never Again" and of support of Israel

itself indicates an abandonment of a fundamental lesson of WW2 within the context of a world ordered around sovereign nation states.

The nightmare crimes of the Holocaust appeared to result (for a time) in a global re-assessment of how nations and peoples interacted with one another. The global cry of "Never Again" in the aftermath of the Nazi Holocaust against the Jews was associated with the promise of the creation (and support) of the state of Israel by United Nations vote which added substance to the promise.

As Rwanda, the Balkan wars, Darfur, Cambodia, and other post-WW2 genocides have occurred with little or no international response to stop these crimes, the promise of "Never Again" appears to be now cancelled.

The current demonization and delegitimization of Israel by the left is nothing less than an abandonment of the very first post-World War 2 internationally unified response to that war – a promise that crimes against humanity would never be allowed again by the international community. That such events have in fact been allowed to occur, coupled with a widespread loss of trust and faith in the idea of the "international community" itself the abandonment of the promise of "Never Again" now becomes understandable.

The eradication of this promise is now put to practice by the delegitimization of Israel. Intense opposition to and delegitimization of Israel is a component not only of a growing anti-Jewish and anti-Israel sentiment and pro-Islamic agitation, but in a wider sense is indicative of a rejection of the nation-state system entirely by utopians and others.

Ironically, the replacement for the nation-state system is now seen by the left to be a supranational construct which will override independent states entirely. The replacement of disparate sovereign states with one super-state is viewed by many as a requirement if humanity is to survive; ironically, this concept is forwarded mainly by those who have lost their faith in humanity itself.

Many on the left consider the creation of Israel to be an historical

mistake which now requires correcting. It is of no matter to many critics of Israel that the cause of the conflicts in the Middle East are a direct result of Israel's legitimate self-defense against its Islamic jihadist neighbors (rather than the existence of a Jewish state or *any* non-Muslim state there) – what does seem to matter is the broken logic that if Israel were no more conflicts in the Middle East would end.

The abandonment of the “Never Again” ideal of international cooperation in the advancement of humanity and the protection of innocents is indicative of a more widespread shift across the world – a rejection of previous concepts of good/evil, right/wrong, truth/lies and their replacement with a cynical, morally vapid über-utopianism founded upon a false pragmatism of ignorance and fantasies.

Loss of confidence in previously sacrosanct concepts and societal institutions then allows a more radicalized perspective; a perspective of nihilism, doubt, anti-learning, anti-humanity, and deconstruction.

The Catholic Church child molestation scandal of recent decades has added yet another element to this growing cynicism and confusion in the West. Because so many in the West view the nation state, American institutions, international checks and balances, and now the Catholic Church (and, for some, *all* religions) as having failed, the time is right for radical, fantasy-oriented utopian “solutions.”

Thus, the Obama approach to the world and to governing at home comes clearer into view.

The ideological hero of the current resident of the White House and of the Secretary of State is a radical “community organizer” named [Saul Alinsky](#). Mr. Obama taught Alinsky methodology during his Chicago days, wrote a chapter in a book about Alinsky, and worked in several Alinsky organizations, most notably ACORN. Mrs. Clinton was so enamored of Mr. Alinsky that she wrote her Wellesley College