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Are Afghanistan, Iraq And Pakistan Hopeless, And Is The Spread Of Radical Islam Inevitable, And Is Barack Obama Finished As America's President?

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By [Timothy D. Naegele\[1\]](#)

Arnaud de Borchgrave—editor at large of The Washington Times and of United Press International—has written another brilliant and very sobering article entitled, “Playing with fire,” which is worth reading and reflecting on.[\[2\]](#) In it, he states:

Unless [Gainesville, Florida Pastor Terry Jones, who decided to mark the ninth anniversary of 9/11 by proclaiming "International Burn a Koran Day,"] canceled his Koran book burning . . . , Christians throughout the world's 1.2 billion-strong Muslim nations and Muslim communities would suddenly feel threatened. Those who converted from Islam to Christianity would be prime targets.

I will always remember the senseless killing of film director Theo van Gogh, who was the great-grandson of Theo van Gogh, the brother of the famous painter Vincent van Gogh.[\[3\]](#) I vehemently disagree with a burning of the Koran or the Bible. However, is the Western world and culture going to be intimidated by and held hostage to the radical followers of Islam? Is this “The Clash of Civilizations” that political scientist Samuel P. Huntington and former President Richard M. Nixon were concerned about?[\[4\]](#) Will Westerners be forced to subjugate their beliefs on the subject of Islam and Islamic terrorists, to the will of Islamic fanatics? I think not.

Arnaud de Borchgrave adds:

Even if a superannuated preacher canceled the public burning of the Koran, the damage had already been done.

Yes, it would appear so. Humpty Dumpty has fallen off the wall already.

Next, de Borchgrave notes:

NATO members pledged 2,796 trainers [to Afghanistan] but only 500 showed up. The NATO bureaucracy in Brussels couldn't make it happen, according to one U.S. officer involved in the program. Most NATO countries are steadily reducing their defense budgets.

This is ominous. Among other things, Germany's "vaulted" military has been a paper tiger for years, in actuality. Also, it seems that all of Europe will be weak, which might foretell America's military future too—certainly if Obama were to get a second term in office, which is unlikely.

Lastly, de Borchgrave compares the collapse of the South Vietnamese army with that of the Afghan army, and describes the hopelessness of America's Afghan adventure. While there are certainly parallels between Vietnam and Afghanistan, the stakes are even higher now with a nuclearized Pakistan next door.

If Obama cuts and runs from Afghanistan, the war's failure will be hung around his neck politically like Vietnam was hung around Lyndon Johnson's neck. It prevented Johnson from running for reelection in 1968; and the same thing might be true of Obama as the presidential election of 2012 approaches. The foremost concern, however, is America's position in the world and that of our military, which has been so brilliant in recent years.

Enormous amounts of money are being spent on the Afghan war—while the country's GDP is a mere fraction of that amount—which seems absurd. Also, there is no al Qaeda presence worth mentioning in

Afghanistan today. And even if the Taliban were to return to power, it is not likely to invite al Qaeda back to its former safe havens. After all, the Taliban lost Afghanistan because of al Qaeda and 9/11. Thus, why should anyone care whether the Afghans' future is led by *men* who feel more comfortable living in prior centuries? The answers are complex but clear.

Afghan *women* and their supporters around the world care deeply. Afghan women will suffer greatly if the Taliban return to power. Americans and our NATO allies would become parties to the process of turning back the clock once again, and subjugating Afghan women and destroying their lives and any hopes for the future. The plight of women in Afghanistan is something that America has been addressing, with the help of former First Lady Laura Bush and others.

Also, a Taliban takeover of Afghanistan would be another step in the process of spreading Islam beyond the region, and destabilizing Pakistan, thereby potentially unleashing its nuclear arsenal on the world (e.g., for terrorists to buy and sell weapons-grade materials, at the very least).

Some Americans argue that Iraq is hardly a U.S. geopolitical success story, because it cost America enormous monetary and human treasures to get rid of Saddam Hussein, who—it is argued—was our best defense against Iran; and that Baghdad today has less electricity, among other services. I was against our Iraqi “adventure,” primarily because I believed Saddam had WMDs, which he would not hesitate to use against our military, just as he had used them against the Iranians and the Kurds.

Also, I believed we were “fronting” for Israel, and doing its dirty work, which some people (such as former UN Ambassador John Bolton) are arguing we should be doing right now vis-à-vis Iran, which is madness.

However, the “surge” worked, which George W. Bush, General David Petraeus and Senator John McCain championed; and at least Iraqis have a real chance to build a viable and stable democracy. I agree with the Wall Street Journal's assessment that was contained in an editorial prior to Barack Obama's recent speech to the American people concerning Iraq:

The U.S. kept hundreds of thousands of troops in Germany for decades after World War II, and it still has tens of thousands in South Korea and Japan. It would be a tragedy if after seven years of sacrifice, the U.S. now failed to assist Iraqis as they try to build a federal, democratic state in an often hostile neighborhood.[\[5\]](#)

I agree too with the assessment that Iraq and Afghanistan together will probably be Obama's undoing unless the American economy does it first. They are all running neck and neck, but my betting is on the economy. It will be sinking even farther during the balance of this decade, despite occasional "green shoots" appearing—which is similar to what happened during the last Great Depression.

The economy and the wars will be Barack Obama's undoing, if something more tragic does not define his presidency (e.g., assassination, an EMP Attack), which I hope and pray never happens.[\[6\]](#)

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where he received the Joint Service Commendation Medal. Mr. Naegele is an Independent politically; and he is listed in Who's Who in America, Who's Who in American Law, and Who's Who in Finance and Business. He has written extensively over the years (see, e.g., http://www.naegele.com/whats_new.html#articles), and can be contacted directly at tdnaegele.associates@gmail.com

[2] See http://www.upi.com/Top_News/Analysis/2010/09/08/Commentary-Playing-with-fire/UPI-32611283952855/

[3] See, e.g., [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theo_van_Gogh_\(film_director\)#Assassination](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theo_van_Gogh_(film_director)#Assassination)

[4] See, e.g., http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Clash_of_Civilizations

[5] See <http://www.naegele.com/documents/ThePresidentonIraq-Wsj.com.pdf> and <http://naegeleblog.wordpress.com/2010/09/01/the-speech-is-barack-obama-smoking-pot-again/>

[6] See also <http://naegeleblog.wordpress.com/2010/01/20/the-end-of-barack-obama/> and <http://naegeleblog.wordpress.com/2010/01/19/emp-attack-only-30-million-americans-survive/>

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