

The Delray Democrat

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Is It Fascism Yet?

Michael K. Cantwell

America has entered one of its periods of historical madness but this is the worst I can remember, worse than McCarthyism, worse than the Bay of Pigs, and in the long term potentially more disastrous than the Vietnam war. [John Le Carre](#), 1/15/2003.

I first encountered the provocative question in the title on a handwritten sign carried by an elderly woman at an anti-Iraq War rally in DC in September 2002. With the rise of single-party rule in Florida, led by book-banners, nativists, racists, and crypto-fascists, it's a question worth examining in the context of the events of the last 20 years. This article looks at fascism on the federal level. A follow-up article will look at how Florida does fascism.

The question posed by the elderly woman seemed rhetorical at the time. The [chickenhawks](#) in the administration of George W. Bush were on the verge of launching a war against a country that had neither attacked nor posed a threat to the United States.

The threat that worried these men was not to the United States, however. It was to the post-World War II military-industrial complex that Dwight D. Eisenhower had famously [warned](#) was encroaching on basic human needs: "Every gun that is fired, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies in the final sense a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and not clothed."

With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the United States as the sole superpower, it had become difficult to justify continuation of the massive military spending that occurred during the Cold War. The military-industrial complex needed new threats.

The Project for the New American Century ("PNAC") provided them. PNAC was a neoconservative think tank whose founders included Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, and Paul Wolfowitz, the principal architects of the illegal invasion of Iraq. In September 2000, PNAC published [Rebuilding America's Defenses](#).

The report acknowledged that the American public had little appetite for foreign wars and that it would take a "catastrophic and catalyzing event – like a new Pearl Harbor" – for Americans to support the massive increase in military spending PNAC was advocating.

The principal threats identified by the report were the three nations the puppet they were about to install in the White House would later bumptiously label "the Axis of Evil."

The report failed to identify the real threat to America, and the Bush administration paid little attention to those who repeatedly warned of the danger posed by Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda – the CIA and Richard A. Clarke, chief counter-terrorism adviser on the National Security Council. CIA analysts responsible for preparing the President's Daily Brief became so concerned with Bush's refusal to act on the threat that they included it in the title of their August 8, 2001 PDB: "[bin Laden Determined to Strike in US](#)."

One month later, the worst attack on American soil since Pearl Harbor occurred and the PNAC had the catastrophic event that would not only explode military spending but introduce another period of American madness. Civil liberties would be eroded, the media co-opted, and the [Masters of War](#) enriched.

Convincing a reluctant public to support a war against a nation that was neither involved in 9/11 nor a threat to us, the chickenhawks in the Bush administration turned to a disinformation campaign, the contours of which had already been laid out by [Herman Goering](#): "All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked, and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to greater danger."

Convincing the So-Called Liberal Media of the danger posed by Iraq proved as easy as convincing Bush he was a "War President" avenging his daddy. *The New York Times* published what turned out to be deliberate lies emanating from Dick Cheney's office about Saddam Hussein's pursuit of nuclear material, allowing administration officials to go on the Sunday morning talk shows and insist, "even *The New York Times* believes Saddam is a threat."

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A study by Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting [found](#) that only 3 of 393 guests on ABC, CBS, NBC, and PBS in the two-week period surrounding Colin Powell's shameful appearance before the UN were opposed to the war.

Phil Donahue, one of the few journalists who questioned the rush to war, was fired by MSNBC, even though his program had the [highest ratings](#) on the channel. According to published [reports](#), the firing occurred "after a study commissioned by NBC described Donahue as 'a tired, left-wing liberal out of touch with the current marketplace.'"

Interviewed shortly after 9/11, so-called liberal icon Dan Rather [stated](#), "George Bush is the President, he

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makes the decisions and as just one American, wherever he wants me to line up, just tell me where and he'll make the call."

Reporting from Baghdad, Rather openly [admitted](#) to a lack of objectivity: "when my country is at war, I want my country to win . . . Now, I can't and don't argue that that is coverage without a prejudice."

It all led the progressive journalist Amy Goodman to pointedly [ask](#), "if this were state media, how would it be any different?"

To his credit, Rather later [apologized](#):

If we journalists, including myself, had right from the get go, from the opening pop, had started asking the kind of tough, digging, aggressive questions we should have been asking and doing our reporting...if we had done our job I do think a strong argument can be made that perhaps we would not have gone to war.

But more than 4,431 American soldiers were killed and more than 31,000 were injured in that illegal war, hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians died and millions more displaced, and we are still paying for what Nobel Laureate Joseph E. Stiglitz and Harvard economist Linda J. Bilmes famously [labeled](#) the Three Trillion Dollar War.

Civil liberties were abrogated by the Patriot Act, which passed Congress by overwhelming margins (despite the fact that few members actually read the text). Torture was condoned and war crimes committed and no one was ever held accountable.

In an abdication of its role as a member of the Fourth Estate, *The New York Times* sat for a year on an

exposé that the Bush Administration was illegally wiretapping Americans. The story, by James Risen and Eric Lichtblau, was ready two weeks before the 2004 election but quashed as the managing editor deemed it a threat to national security.

The Times published the story a year later, after [Risen](#) warned his editors the details would be appearing in his upcoming book, Risen and Lichtblau later won Pulitzers for the story; if it had been timely published, John Kerry might have won the presidency.

Only the incompetence of the Bush regime saved us from full-blown fascism. After Katrina and then the subprime mortgage meltdown (in which 4 million people lost their jobs and 10 million their homes), the country and the media were ready for Obama.

The respite was brief. Democrats prevented a second Great Depression and took steps toward a humane healthcare system. Yet it was Obama's fate for his presidency to be bracketed by two murderous morons.

Trump eked out an electoral victory despite losing the popular vote by 3 million votes. He was aided by the So-Called Liberal Media, which cluelessly believed he was unelectable and shamelessly engaged in false equivalences, all while cravenly counting the dollars that flowed from treating Trump as a buffoon rather than a threat to democracy and our freedoms.

Trump would probably have been reelected if the pandemic hadn't exposed his colossal incompetence and heartlessness and punctured his barefaced lie to have created "the greatest economy in the history of our country." Having inherited the greatest post World War II economic expansion, he left office with fewer people working than when he entered.

If you worried back in 2020 about what Trump would do in a second term, don't stop. Biden has done a remarkable job as president, but you wouldn't know it from the media's all-inflation-all-the-time coverage and its Biden-will-be-86 obsessions.

That coverage helps explain a recent [poll](#) that found Americans thought Trump did a better job on the economy than Biden . . . by a 54-36 margin! The same poll reported that only one-third of Americans thought Biden was in good enough health to serve effectively as president, but nearly two-thirds thought that Trump was.

If we begin another descend into wfascism next year, the [media](#) will again have a lot to answer for.

New Voices

The Editorial Board of *The Delray Democrat* is pleased to introduce “New Voices.” We invite young people to share their opinions about government, elections, court decisions, legislation and today’s political culture. They are our future.

Articles can be submitted electronically to editor@thedelraydemocrat.com. If you are attending

a college or university, please include its name. Articles should be no longer than 750 words.

Below is the first such piece. Conor is entering his sophomore year at FIU, where he is majoring in economics. He is also a staff writer for the university’s newspaper.

President Biden Stands Strong Against Russia’s Threat to World Peace *Conor R. Moore*

In a move that would make one of our greatest presidents, Harry S. Truman, proud, the United States has sent more than \$75 billion to help Ukraine in its fight against Russia. The United States has given by far the most money, twice as much as the EU in total, in a rather embarrassing number for European countries, many of whom directly border Russia.

This enormous amount of American aid, enthusiastically supplied by Congress (mostly) has led to the continued Ukrainian success in resisting the Russian military. President Biden’s diplomacy regarding the issue has been nothing but commendable, ensuring Ukrainian independence for the time being while also spearheading the economic and diplomatic isolation of Russia.

President Biden has also condemned and criticized the Kremlin at every opportunity.

Given the huge strain put upon Russia in every way possible, it’s likely that we may soon see some sort of seismic shift for Russian authority, especially given the curiously short and nearly comical Wagner Rebellion that caused major political humiliation for Putin.

While Biden, of course, isn’t directly involved with the Wagner Group, one could easily attribute a portion of Russian instability to his diplomatic efforts.

For example, his sanctions have caused major companies, such as Exxon, Shell, large multinational

banks and other corporations to close business activities in Russia, further hamstringing their economy. Billions of dollars in Russian assets have also been frozen, too.

In addition, the US has taken in over 100,000 Ukrainian immigrants as a show of goodwill towards the Ukrainian people and government.

Biden and Zelenskyy have also spoken numerous times regarding the future of Ukraine and Russia, with the Ukrainian president going so far as to call the US’s support for Ukraine “unflagging”.

Despite this, there have been some conspiracy theories regarding President Biden’s connection with certain Ukrainian companies which have slightly damaged the president’s reputation. But none of these have gained much in the way of traction.

Overall, Ukraine has been quite a remarkably successful enterprise for the United States - and despite Biden’s lowered approval ratings, a large majority of Americans are supportive of the US’s efforts towards the country.

It’s a shame that his efforts have gone unappreciated by the American public, but the outcome will be the same. Resisting Putin’s blatant imperialism will ensure continued American efforts towards peace in the region, no matter how far away that may seem. It may be considered one of America’s finest diplomatic hours by historians.

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Editorial Board: Michael K. Cantwell (Editor), Char Lane (Managing Editor), Sandra Elaisse-Cantwell, David Kulick, and June Neal.

Thank a Democrat

1964 Civil Rights Act	Food Stamp Act	National Science Foundation Act
1965 Voting Rights Act	Freedom of Information Act	National Voter Registration Act (a.k.a) Motor Voter Act
Affordable Care Act	GI Bill of Rights	Social Security Act
AmeriCorps	Medicare and Medicaid	Unemployment Compensation Act
CDC	Minimum Wage Act	Workers Compensation Act
Family and Medical Leave Act	National Labor Relations Act	

Thank Joe Biden

American Rescue Plan Act, Signed March 11, 2021

- Provided \$1,400 to every taxpayer and each of his or her dependents
- Expanded coverage and reduced premiums under the Affordable Care Act for 9 million Americans.
- Expanded and extended unemployment benefits.
- Increased SNAP benefits
- Increased and expanded Child Tax Credit, representing the largest investment in child care assistance since World War II
- Increased the Earned Income Tax Credit for frontline workers who helped their communities through the COVID crisis
- Invested \$160 billion to provide supplies and vaccines to combat COVID's heavy toll
- Distributed \$360 billion in emergency funding for local governments to help keep front line public workers on the job and paid
- Provided emergency grants and loans to hard-hit small businesses
- Established a special sign-up period for the Affordable Care Act, adding 800,000 previously uninsured to the ranks of the insured

Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Signed November 15, 2021

- The largest federal investment in public transit
- The largest federal investment in passenger rail since the creation of Amtrak
- The single largest dedicated bridge investment since the construction of the interstate highway system
- The largest investment in clean drinking water and waste water infrastructure in American history, delivering clean water to millions of families
- Ensures every American has access to reliable high-speed internet
- Helps us tackle the climate crisis by making the largest investment in clean energy transmission and EV infrastructure in history; electrifying thousands of school and transit buses across the country; and creating a new Grid Deployment Authority to build a resilient, clean, 21st century electric grid

Inflation Reduction Act, Signed August 16, 2022

- Invests \$369 billion in energy security and fighting climate change
- Invests \$64 billion to extend Affordable Care Act subsidies
- Authorizes Medicare to negotiate with drug companies
- Provides an additional \$80 billion to the IRS for tax modernization and enforcement, which is estimated to reduce the deficit by recovering as much as \$203.7 billion from tax cheats
- Closes tax loopholes by imposing a 15% minimum tax payment on companies with over \$1 billion of income and a 1% excise tax on stock buybacks
- Expands Medicare benefits: provides free vaccines (2023), caps insulin costs at \$35/month (2023) and caps out-of-pocket drug costs to an estimated \$4,000 or less in 2024, settling at \$2,000 in 2025
- Provides \$4 billion for drought resiliency in western states