

2011: The Military Takeover of Democracy in America

by
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Now, almost two years after the military takeover, I am amazed (would disappointed be more accurate?) that I am still alive. Somehow, I'd imagined I'd be among the first to be taken away or simply shot outside the door of my home. I'd been among the first if not the first to prophesize a military take over. Spring of 2007 was the date I first posted the prediction on my blog. You may check it out—if my blog is still there on the net at <http://abetterworld.blogspot.com>. I haven't made any postings since 2011; it didn't seem prudent. But every chance I got, from the spring of 2007 on until the takeover itself, I would repeat my prediction on the bulletin boards I subscribed to.

Prior to 2011, I'd submitted frequent rants to the newspapers calling for more taxes on the wealthy to pay for our crumbling infrastructure. Yet, since the takeover I've never seen a sign of the gray-green fatigues, though tens of thousands have been disappeared, imprisoned, sent to camps. Some have been tortured then done away with. Some have been tortured, but allowed to live useless to the causes they had once represented, useless even to themselves. This is how we know. And me? I've been contacted only once and by a neighborhood patrol. The sad truth of the matter is that I am no more important after the takeover than I'd been before.

I'd imagined (assumed?) that one of my neighbors would show up at my door one day with a gun. I'd been the Democratic worker for my precinct after all, precinct Captain though I'd never been able to recruit a Lieutenant. I'd been outspoken politically, indifferent to talk of football, known at least locally, I'd thought for my progressive views. Apparently, my neighbors had thought differently. In their eyes, I was merely a harmless old coot, generous with the artichokes and tomatoes from his garden. Regardless, I kept a golf club close at hand. Golf club against gun, a guaranteed win with a pre-emptive strike. But the men who showed up at my door one day were not neighbors, merely a band of opportunists and it was my neighbors who chased them away.

One of my neighbors did disappear, about a year ago. He was a Republican actually. Perhaps Libertarian would have been a better description had he been willing to accept the label. He was very difficult to agree with; any attempt at adopting his opinions would

lead to an immediate rejection of the alliance. He was well to do, though he'd done a great deal to disguise it. Though he owned a half dozen rentals, his own home was a small one-story affair. I suspect he was not a particularly pleasant landlord and that one of his tenants had done away with them. His wife, an attractive blond woman, seemed content with his disappearance. Besides, everyone knew it would be useless to complain. The police in our town had a reputation for brutality before the takeover.

As far as my own acquaintances went, I'd had few to begin with. Most I'd known the past five or ten years only through email. None of our correspondence was interrupted, no more than usual as some acquired other interests. As far as I could tell from the communications I received, the disappearances had not affected them personally, had involved only persons they'd heard of but didn't actually know.

I'd known there were Moslems in Detroit or had been once, but I hadn't actually known any of them personally. And the use of their former Mosque as a barracks seemed a necessary cost-saving measure.

It was the spring of 2007, when I first realized that a military takeover in America was inevitable. Not that we weren't already halfway there. As early as the mid-fifties, Eisenhower had prophesized that the military-industrial complex would swallow our economy. Reading Chalmers Johnson a half-century later, I was to learn that the U.S. Air force had set up golf courses (with an adjoining air base as cover) in more than 90 countries. That the U.S. Army was Coca-Cola's biggest customer; Procter and Gamble's biggest customer, also.

The media also was the military's beneficiary. Other branches of government might have to be allotted pro bono public service announcements. The military paid for their commercials. The Marines even sponsored NBA games.

Our Defense Department purchased and used more gasoline than any other customer and was the principal source of revenue for the Saudis. Billions each day were spent in Iraq and Afghanistan and all our troop movements required huge amounts of high-grade gasoline. No wonder our recent invasion of Canada was accomplished largely on foot and bicycle. Lacking funds in our even more depressed economy, our troops have learned to live off the land.

I chose 2011 as the probably date for the putsch, figuring that a Democrat would be

elected President in 2008, but that the economy would have slid so far downhill by then that he would be unable to correct our nation's inevitable downward course. Nonetheless, despite my prediction, I thought at election time that maybe Obama could do something, could accomplish the seemingly impossible. He was young, not too set in his ways and with the nation behind him might be willing to risk the belt-tightening steps that would be necessary if we were to stay on course.

I was wrong, dead wrong about him, but so were millions of other voters. We did not get out of Iran as scheduled; instead, we invaded Afghanistan for the second time, a move which spelled disaster for our economy as it had for the lives and the livelihoods of Afghanistan's dozen and a half other invaders throughout history beginning with Tamerlane. (Genghis Khan was smart; he went around the country and captured everything else). Obama had promised we would leave Cuba, a country whose land we'd occupied as far back as the Spanish-American war—but no, we did not do that either. Had he been threatened? Or blackmailed? The first explanation seemed most reasonable; the military had thousands of trained assassins on call. To say nothing of the six years worth of torturers the Bush administration has trained at Guantanamo.

The true explanation of our successive invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq has remained elusive, though dozens of proposals abound. No weapons of mass destruction were found on invading Iraq, nor had anyone who read the newspapers (and remembered what was written there) expected to find them. Alas while I knew that the so-called justifications for our invasion of Iraq were lies, had known almost the moment they left Bush's lips, 35% of Americans still swore by their tattered legitimacy. As Robert Baer, a former CIA agent, reported in his book, *See No Evil*, Saddam had sold off all the weapons the first President Bush had given him within weeks of their receipt. As for the official pretext for invading Afghanistan to capture Osama bin Laden; somehow, despite the elderly bin Laden's being a late stage diabetic suffering from kidney failure so that he was in constant need of dialysis, we never did succeed in finding him.

The "alternative" explanations were equally suspect: We'd invaded Iraq so that Bush Jr. could rebuild Bush Sr.'s legacy and not incidentally, get his approval ratings back up. The Taliban having destroyed so many of the poppy fields, our invasion of Afghanistan was to get the heroin back on the streets. This latter rationale must also be given some

credence for indeed the heroin did return to our streets in quantity and when the Taliban needed money to finance their cause, they'd no choice but to encourage poppy cultivation.

The fact remains that whatever these wars' true rationale, their end result was to further expand the military's power and to further shift our nation's wealth from the hands of the many to the hands of the few. In the pages that follow, I shall try to trace the inevitability of the takeover and to trace its progress to date. I'll contrast the takeover with the military takeovers in the South American countries of Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay. Though the U.S. military was implicated in all three, and all were followed by mass arrests and disappearances, all three countries eventually returned to civilian rule.

Our discussion will include events that took place in the 1970s and earlier, but our main focus will be on the actions and policies of the neoconservatives during the preceding decade.

Should my samdzat treatise survive, the first questions future generations will ask of it are the first I respond to in the following chapters: What led to the military takeover? Why did a people inured to centuries of self-rule yield so readily to autocrats? Was there no resistance? And, if there was, what was its nature?