

## **OUTLINE FOR TV SHOW ON “THE NEW AMERICAN MILITARISM”**

1. As is being shown on the screen, you quote James Madison saying the following. Explain the purpose of using the quotation.

“Of all the enemies of public liberty, war is perhaps the most to be dreaded, because it comprises and develops the germ of every other. War is the parent of armies. From these proceed debts and taxes. And armies, debts and taxes are the known instruments for bringing the many under the domination of the few . . . . No nation could preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare.”

- A. Also describe other ideas held by the founders which you think we should go back to, e.g., explain your view of the meaning of the Preamble of the Constitution in contradistinction to what we are doing today, your view of the founders’ view of self defense for America, and the reasons for the declaration of war clause.
2. We will discuss your ideas about current American militarism at some length, but before we do, explain the background that you bring to your work: West Point graduate, Catholic background, cultural conservatism and, previously, political conservatism too.
  3. You say (and I personally agree strongly) that we have become a militaristic nation. Explain some of the characteristics that are hallmarks of militarism, including:
    - A. A belief in the use of force to solve problems and the view that force *will* solve problems.
      - I. In actual fact, the use of force just gives rise to new, widening, and ever more dangerous problems, doesn’t it? E.g., our use of force in the Middle East (which was incomplete in 1990 against Saddam) gave rise to Al Qaeda and terrorism, especially because Afghanistan proved a training ground, we had to keep forces in Saudi Arabia and had bases in so many

places, and we were engaged in almost daily bombing of Iraq for ten years.

- a. The only uses of force that seemed to solve anything in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century were World Wars I and II and, one could argue, the Cold War (which periodically involved major uses of force). Yet the World Wars involved horrific losses, the first led to the second and the second to the Cold War, the Cold War involved horrible loss of life when wars became hot wars (e.g., Korea, Nam), and the Cold War led to what some claim to be the clash of western and Muslim civilizations. The bottom line, isn't it, is that wars do *not* solve problems (as further illustrated by the aftermath of Israel's smashing six day victory in 1967) though we mistakenly think force does solve problems (thinking which is a hallmark of militarism). Rather than force solving problems, as a former North Viet Nameese General said to McNamara in 1990 or so, blood speaks with a terrible voice.
- B. A Wilsonian belief that American views and values are superior to all others, and are applicable (and desired) everywhere. The concomitant belief that we are destined to spread them by force of arms.
    - I. There have been other modern societies before ours that held similar views, haven't there? Unhappily, they are known as Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia. Currently, one might include, couldn't one, militant Islamism?
  - C. The enormous respect that now is almost automatically accorded to the military as being more honest, more moral, more self sacrificing, more competent than anyone else.
  - D. The belief that our military must be (as it is) and must remain larger and more powerful than -- when you get right down to it -- virtually the rest of the militaries of the world put together. Depending on whom you believe, we spend more on our military every year than the entire rest of the world put together, or the top 20 or 25 other

countries put together.

- E. The maintaining of huge standing military forces. (This is all pretty new -- a product of the post World War II Cold War and afterwards, including our failure (in reality our refusal) to stand down after the Soviet empire collapsed. At times like 1865, 1918 and 1945, we quickly demobilized, and in two of the succeeding periods -- 1865 onward and 1918 onward -- war and the military were pretty much in bad odor, weren't they (except for fighting Indians, and fighting or invading third rate powers or less like Spain, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, etc.)?)
  - F. The maintaining of bases -- literally hundreds of them -- all over the world.
  - G. The continuous attempt to expand the geographic periphery of the area in which we are able to exercise military power -- currently throughout the Middle East and, since 1945, areas such as western Europe, South East Asia and environs (Korea and Nam and using Japan and the Philippines as bases), Central America.
  - H. The use of militarily-oriented worst possible case analysis (analysis of the kind that lawyers use) in which most events, even small ones, are treated as pregnant with the possibility of growing into large problems and therefore, as a corollary, must be dealt with militarily instead of trying to work with other countries to solve things peacefully. Our mistaken views of Viet Nam, and of Iraq in 2001-2, would be major league examples of this.
  - I. Seeing the use of force as central to our identity and being in war as the normal state of affairs -- which, for most of our history, it wasn't.
4. Explain the reasons for which, and the methods by which, militarism arose in this country. Include:
- A. The disaster for the military that was Viet Nam and the army's determination to rescue its reputation, become operationally excellent, reintroduce honesty, etc.

- B. Abrams' concept of integrating the Reserve and the Guard into the service in a way that would make it impossible to fight wars without calling them up, which was designed to insure that the politicians could not again get us into wars that were not supported by the population.
  - I. This hasn't worked, has it? -- Bush II took us into a war that is reviled by much of the population, heavily using the Guard and the Reserves (both of which are suffering greatly in consequence).
- C. The revolution in military affairs arising from the development of precision weapons. These were seen as a panacea that would enable us to conduct war "surgically" -- without killing civilians, but instead hitting only military targets, and destroying command and control. They caused war to be seen as "clean," "efficient."
- D. The rise of the concept of the electronic battlefield, and the belief that this, plus precision weapons, would enable us to fight wars with only small armies (which has not worked in Iraq).
- E. The failure to take account of the minds of adversaries, who always are intent on coming up with new and different ways of doing things to thwart our high tech advantages (e.g., roadside bombs and suicide bombers, just as previously (and still) opponents would fight guerrilla wars). Correlatively, the failure to understand that having bases all over the world and continuously fighting wars and bombing people would turn much of the world against us. Given our bases, wars and bombings, we really should not expect anything but terrorism, should we?
- F. The initial rise and comeback of the defense intellectuals, who treated war as a kind of riveting, fascinating intellectual game or exercise, who wanted prominence and influence, and who came up with all kinds of theories, many of which have been shown not to work, or to work badly, or were extraordinarily dangerous to the world (like MAD).
  - I. Explain what RAND is, who Wohlsletter was, and who

Marshall is.

- G. The rise of the Neocons. Tell who they are (e.g., Wolfowitz, Perle, Elliot Abrams, Kristol, Kagan, Boot, Krauthammer), where they were trained, what jobs they have held in the Reagan and two Bush administrations, what they have believed, including their Wilsonianism, their concern that after Nam we would retreat from the world, their trait of seeing everything in stark terms, and what media they have spoken through.
  - I. Wilsonianism hides the fact that pure self interest and selfishness are in part responsible for our actions, doesn't it?
- H. The change of the evangelicals from being "outsider" and peacefully oriented religions to being a warmongering, major religious influence, with a very large representation in the military itself. Explain how and why this happened, who some of the major actors were -- Billy Graham, Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell -- and their concerns that in and after the 1960s the country was morally going to hell in a handbasket.
- I. How about the long history of the South as a militaristic part of the country with an outsized influence over the national government. It is, as well, the home of evangelicism.
- J. The fact that today, and for many years before this, most politicians have not been in the service, let alone in combat, and therefore neither know the horrors of combat nor feel able to speak with any confidence about military matters.
- K. How about the fact that there has been no war on American soil since 1865, so our people -- unlike the Germans and Japanese, who were weaned off militarism by the enormous destruction of their countries in WWII -- do not know the real meaning of war?
  - I. Relatedly, movies and television shows portray war as glorious, and neither televised nor print news in America display or discuss horrors such as the civilians we kill despite "precision" weapons, etc.

- L. Our long increasing dependence on middle eastern oil. Explain the role played in this by the rejection of Carter's call for sacrifice and by Reagan's call for ever increasing abundance (G.W. Bush did similarly, when he said we should all continue spending when we went to war).
  - M. The fact that the Democratic Party has been an unthoughtful, tagalong, me-too party when it comes to the matters constituting American militarism, from worshipping generals to allowing presidents to do what they want militarily. As well, liberals (like Albright) wanted to use our military for *their* pet projects.
    - i. Related to all this are both parties' corruption, pandering to the worst elements, and willingness to do whatever is desired by people who have money and therefore influence, in order to obtain power. Explain why you say, at page xi, that "the system itself is fundamentally corrupt."
      - a. In previous times we had great dissenters like La Follette, Taft, McCarthy. We have none such now.
  - N. The fact that it is not the politicians' sons and daughters who go to war -- it is other people's.
5. Discuss how and why elements of the military resisted the idea of America fighting wars all over the globe (the military wanted no more destructive morasses like Nam, but only wars like Israel's 6 day war (as Gulf I was)), why some generals (Clark, Franks) ultimately went along with the desire to fight all over, the generals' desire to exercise great influence over foreign policy (was Zinni in effect a proconsul? How about Schwarzkopf? Franks?). Ultimately, the generals lost their bid to influence what we do, right? Especially because of the RMA and the new preventive war doctrine.
- A. Explain the Weinberger and Powell rules.
  - B. Because of Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo, etc., the military is to some extent back in the position it was in after Viet Nam.

6. Explain why, on p. 210, you say the following, which is being shown on the screen:

In all but a very few cases, the impetus for expanding America's security perimeter has come from the executive branch. In practice, presidents in consultation with a small circle of advisers decide on the use of force; the legislative branch then either meekly bows to the wishes of the executive or provides the sort of broad authorization (such as the Tonkin Gulf Resolution of 1964) that amounts in effect to an abrogation of direct responsibility. The result, especially in evidence since the end of World War II, has been to eviscerate Article I, Section 8, Clause 11 of the Constitution, which in the plainest of language confers on the Congress the power "To declare War."

The problem is not that the presidency has become too strong. Rather, the problem is that the congress has failed -- indeed, failed egregiously -- to fulfill its constitutional responsibility for deciding when and if the United States should undertake military interventions abroad. Hiding behind an ostensible obligation to "support our commander-in-chief" or to "support the troops," the Congress has time and again shirked its duty.

An essential step toward curbing the new American militarism is to redress this imbalance in war powers and to call upon the Congress to reclaim its constitutionally mandated prerogatives.

Indeed, legislators should insist upon a strict constructionist definition of war such that any use of force other than in direct and immediate defense of the United States should require prior congressional approval.

7. Explain why, on pp. 210-211, you say the following, which is being put up on the television screen:

The Cold War is history. The United States no longer stands eyeball-to-eyeball with a hostile superpower. Ensuring our survival today does not require, if it ever did, granting to a single individual the authority to unleash the American military arsenal however the perception of threats, calculations of

interest, or flights of whimsy might seem to dictate. Indeed, given all that we have learned about the frailties, foibles, and strange obsessions besetting those who have occupied the Oval Office in recent decades -- John Kennedy's chronic drug abuse, Richard Nixon's paranoia, and Ronald Reagan's well-documented conviction that Armageddon was drawing near, to cite three examples -- it is simply absurd that elevation to the presidency should include the grant of such authority.

The decision to use armed force is freighted with implications, seen and unseen, that affect the nation's destiny. Our history has shown this time and again. Such decisions should require collective approval in advance by the people's elected representatives, as the Framers intended.

8. Explain why you see our currently prevailing ideas and system as a recipe for endless wars -- we will fight wherever we can conjure a threat -- and as being pregnant with the seeds of the destruction of democracy.
9. Our current ideas, aren't they, are a reflection of the bootless optimism in every field in the 1990s -- the new economy, the end of history, etc? All of which has been shown to be wrong, even stupid.
10. You regard the American people, not just a couple of presidents, as being largely responsible for our militarism, don't you? After all, the people do have the vote.
  - A. But while they may have the vote, they haven't got a choice, have they? Don't we in fact need a new third party if there is to truly be a choice -- a party comprised of people who will fulfill their responsibility?
  - B. We need, at minimum, to cut back our military and our foreign adventuring to what could be called reasonable levels, and to cooperate with other countries in trying to get good results, rather than trying to use force to impose our will, right? We need a Congress that will perform its constitutional function, right?
    - i. By the by, what do you think we should do, how do you think

we should proceed, with regard to Iran and North Korea?

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