

Are Americans really concern about Iran?



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Veterans protesting war, June 1, 1967. Source: Public domain.

War is not new to American society, never was. As the history of the past 65 years shows, America has been continuously, without any interruption, waging war on one country after another. This violent history is deeply intertwined with the fabric of American society. War is not a shocking event that occurs only once in a while.

Examining the history of American wars and how the American public saw those wars conducted by their democratically elected government will raise some questions.

Did the American public notice that wars were being conducted by the United States against other nations?

Did the American public know the nature of those wars and the reasons behind them? If so, did the American public understand the catastrophic humanitarian implications of those wars for the people under attack by their elected government?

The history of the United States of America points to what was perhaps the first and last time Americans truly paid attention to a war their country was waging on another nation, which was the "Vietnam War."

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, there were many protests and demonstrations. Except for a

few who were genuinely anti-war, most were protesting because of the 'body bags,' injured veterans in wheelchairs scattered across the country, and, of course, "the draft," which was a central motivation behind the "Anti-Vietnam War" protest movement.

Americans would never be truly "anti-war" as long as the United States remained on the winning side of wars, and young American soldiers could treat combat like a recreational outing, enjoying a "turkey shoot." They only awoke from a deep sleep and became aware of the reality of war when military officers knocked at their doors to deliver folded American flags.

After the end of the Vietnam War, Americans remembered it as a disastrous conflict. They remembered the 58,000 U.S. soldiers who lost their lives. But there was no remembrance for more than 2 million Vietnamese and 200,000 Laotians, 10% of the total population at the time, children making up approximately 50% of the victims.

American history witnessed a dramatic decline in "anti-war" protests after the last U.S. soldier left Vietnam in 1975. The American public did not return to the streets to protest war until 2003. Was it because the United States did not engage in war or military interventions against other nations anymore? The answer is "No."

What should happen to make Americans pay attention to the issue of war?

After the military defeat in Vietnam and the trauma of humiliation, the United States avoided large-scale wars and remained relatively silent in the eyes of its own public. Instead, clandestine operations continued, and military involvement was characterized as special operations, evacuations, and increased aid to repressive foreign governments. Some of these so-called special operations between 1975 and 1981 took place in Angola (1976-1981), Zaïre (1978), El Salvador (1981), and Nicaragua (1981).

Newspapers and weekly magazines of that era reported on these operations and military interventions. *The Washington Post* provided critical reports on the involvement of the U.S. military and the economic interests of American oil companies in Angola. *The New York Times* also closely tracked the Angolan conflict, notably breaking the story of “covert CIA operations” through investigative journalist Seymour Hersh. *Newsweek*, *The New York Times*, and many others extensively covered the conflict in Zaïre.

On U.S. military and CIA involvement in El Salvador to support repressive civil-military dictatorship, *The Wall Street Journal*, which published reports by investigative reporter Jonathan Kwitny, along with *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and many other newspapers across the nation, provided extensive coverage. In Nicaragua as well, *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and United Press International (UPI) actively reported and published a series of influential articles revealing “covert CIA” and U.S. military involvement against the Nicaraguan government.

After seven years of rehabilitation and recovery from its defeat in Vietnam in 1975, the United States entered a new phase in its military interventions.

- I. **In 1982, “Multinational Peacekeeping Force,”** the United States deployed troops to Lebanon during its civil war. This time, however, the U.S. administration gave a fabricated name to its invading forces, calling them the “Multinational Peacekeeping Force,” which, of course, included NATO nations such as France, Italy, and the United Kingdom. The primary and hidden objective of this mission was to provide support to the sectarian forces of the Maronite Christians, alongside the Israeli and Falange forces. This ultimately led to the massacres at Sabra and Shatila, carried out by the Falangist militia with Israeli support and the tacit approval of the “Multinational Peacekeeping Force.”

- II. **In 1983, "Operation Urgent Fury,"** the United States invaded the Caribbean island of Grenada. The U.S. government accused Grenada of constructing an airport to aid a Soviet and Cuban military buildup in the Caribbean. The accusation was based on the fact that the new airport's 2.7 km runway could accommodate large Soviet aircraft. In fact, the U.S. invaded this small island to topple its socialist government. A government that focused more on socio-economic development, education, and true Black liberation in Grenada. A week later the United Nations General Assembly condemned it as "a flagrant violation of international law" on 2 November 1983, by a vote of 108 to 9.
- III. **In 1986, "Operation El Dorado Canyon,"** the U.S. launched airstrikes against military and government targets across Libya. The strikes were a direct response to the bombing of the La Belle discotheque in West Berlin on April 5, 1986, which killed two U.S. servicemen. Libya reported 40 deaths, including Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi's infant daughter, Hana. Gaddafi himself survived the strike on his compound.
- IV. **In 1987, "Operation Earnest Will,"** the United States Navy attacked and destroyed Iranian oil platforms in the Persian Gulf during the Iran-Iraq War, which led to direct combat. The U.S. Navy violated Iranian territorial waters, and during one of their routine operations, they shot down Iran Air Flight 655, with 290 people on board, leaving no survivors.
- V. **In 1989, "Operation Just Cause,"** more than 27,000 U.S. troops invaded Panama to capture its military leader and de facto ruler, Manuel Noriega, on alleged drug trafficking charges. This operation resulted in more than 500 civilian casualties. In reality, the United States wanted to maintain its privileged rights over the Panama Canal regime.

While all major newspapers and weekly magazines extensively reported on U.S. military operations, invasions, interventions, and deployments against other nations, the 1980s was the decade of CNN and the emergence of 24-hour news broadcasting, which continuously bombarded the televisions in the living rooms of American individuals and families.

But despite all the reporting on the aggressive military actions the U.S. was conducting, along with their consequences on innocent people and the suffering brought upon them, the vast majority of Americans were not moved, or not moved enough to challenge their moral compass to protest the atrocities and injustices committed by

their democratically elected government. Simply because they were not affected by those military actions abroad as gravely as the Vietnam War; certainly, only a very small group of Americans were truly affected, such as the families of fallen U.S. military servicemen and servicewomen.

Anti-war activism in the United States between 1980 and 1990 shifted away from the large-scale draft resistance of the Vietnam era toward opposition against nuclear proliferation and the anti-apartheid movement. The "No to War" movement, or protests, were nonexistent in the moral agenda of the vast majority of the American people.

In the last decade of the second millennium, the world witnessed fundamental changes and groundbreaking events that permanently altered the geopolitics and even the maps of Europe, West Asia (the Middle East), and parts of Africa. The beginning of the 1990s was marked by major events in the world, and among them, the collapse of the Soviet Empire and Iraq's invasion of Kuwait stand out. The United States shifted from Cold War containment to a "unipolar" era, characterized by numerous U.S. interventions around the world, with absolutely no reservations about the Soviet Union. The occupation of Kuwait by Iraq's army led to a major war between the United States and Iraq. The victory of the United States over Iraq charged American society with dopamine, quickly scraping away the remaining psychological rust of defeat in Vietnam from its societal memory. Therefore, all other U.S. military interventions were embraced by the American people, with, of course, less anxiety about defeat and the arrival of body bags.

Iraq's invasion and occupation of Kuwait, in August 1990, revived a long-standing fact that Kuwait was historically an "artificial entity" carved out of Iraq's Basra province by British imperialists. The United States did not have a defense treaty with Kuwait and was not formally obligated to defend it. However, the U.S. entered a war of choice against Iraq, known as the Persian Gulf War (1990–1991), and launched two massive military operations.

- I. **In August 1990, "Operation Desert Shield,"** the United States deployed massive military forces began on August 7, primarily to protect Saudi Arabia against a potential Iraqi invasion. Ever since, the United States has maintained its military presence in Saudi Arabia to this day.

- II. **In January 1991, "Operation Desert Storm,"** the United States initiated the combat phase of the Persian Gulf War on January 17, which lasted until Iraq was defeated and the ruling Kuwaiti family was restored to power on February 28, 1991.
- III. **In December 1992, "Operation Restore Hope,"** the United States military entered Somalia and joined the United Nations' "Operation Restore Hope." The U.S. intervention in Somalia was primarily focused on supporting the self-declared president of Somalia, Ali Mahdi Muhammad, in his fight against the powerful warlord General Mohamed Farrah Aidid. Following the failure of U.S. military intervention forces to capture General Aidid and the heavy losses they suffered, American public opinion turned against the intervention, leading to the eventual withdrawal of U.S. troops from Somalia in March 1994.
- IV. **In September 1994, "Operation Uphold Democracy,"** a U.S. military intervention in Haiti, took place. The primary objective was to oust the military government and restore Jean-Bertrand Aristide to the presidency, who had been ousted through a military coup in 1991. This U.S. military intervention primarily focused on reinstating Aristide and maintaining his power, rather than addressing the deeper issues of corruption and governance in Haiti. The reinstatement of Aristide was viewed by many as another instance of U.S. interference in the internal politics of another country.
- V. **In August 1995, "Operation Deliberate Force,"** the United States military joined a NATO intervention in Bosnia. The U.S.-led air campaign aimed at attacking Bosnian Serb military positions and other military infrastructure. The operation was conducted in response to the Bosnian Serb forces' attacks on civilian areas and their violations of previous peace agreements. The operation concluded on September 20, 1995, after effectively degrading Bosnian Serb military forces, which pressured them into peace talks and eventually helped to end the Bosnian War.
- VI. **In December 1998, "Operation Desert Fox,"** a four-day U.S. military operation, took place from December 16 to 19. The operation involved airstrikes and missile attacks against targets in Iraq. The primary objective of this operation was to degrade Iraq's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) capabilities. However, it resulted in hundreds of civilian deaths and the destruction of civilian infrastructure, including electricity grids, power plants,

roads, bridges, and water supply facilities, making basic utilities more difficult for civilians to access, which contributed to the long-term suffering of Iraqis.

VII. **In March 1999, "Operation Allied Force,"** the United States military led a NATO air campaign against Yugoslav forces in Kosovo, an operation conducted without UN approval. The primary goal of this air intervention was to stop the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. However, this NATO operation, led by the U.S. Air Force, expanded the bombardment deeper into Yugoslavia, targeting the capital, Belgrade, along with many other cities. In reality, NATO's intervention was an act of interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign state, specifically Yugoslavia, in favor of the secessionist Kosovars. Operation Allied Force officially ended on June 10, 1999, after 78 days of airstrikes. Kosovo was placed under UN administration and, finally, declared independence in 2008.

The U.S. war on Iraq in 1991, along with other military interventions and conflicts, were extensively covered by 24-hour TV channels in the 1990s, such as CNN, CNBC, BBC World News, Fox News, and MSNBC. In addition to TV coverage, these U.S. military actions also received significant attention from prominent newspapers and weekly magazines around the world. Despite all the reporting on U.S. military activities abroad and their consequences on the lives of others, the vast majority of the American people once again passed by, seemingly unaware of the misery inflicted upon others by their democratically elected government. Very few protests took place throughout the 1990s across the United States. The number of Americans who participated in these protests highlights how insignificant these movements were relative to the total U.S. population. The average population of the United States in the 1990s was approximately 260 million.

1. **Gulf War, 1991:** Gallup poll results show that in January 1991, just before the airstrikes, about 55% supported using military force against Iraq. Right after the war began in mid-January 1991, support jumped to over 80%. During the war in February 1991, support remained very high, with 75–85% approving of the U.S. war against Iraq. After the war in March 1991, approval peaked at around 85–90%, one of the highest wartime approval ratings in U.S. polling history.
2. **War on Somalia, 1992:** A Gallup poll on December 4-6, 1992, showed very strong public support, 74% of Americans approved of sending U.S. troops to Somalia. After the Battle of Mogadishu in October 1993, in which 18 U.S. soldiers

were killed and 73 others were wounded, support dropped sharply, with only 33% approving of the U.S. military intervention in Somalia.

3. **Invasion of Haiti, 1994:** A Gallup poll in September 1994, shortly after U.S. forces were sent to Haiti, found that about 54% of American people approved of U.S. invasion.
4. **War on Serbia:** Gallup poll results show that in late March 1999, right after airstrikes began on March 24, about 60% approved of U.S. airstrikes. In early April 1999, support remained in the mid-to-high 50% range, and in May 1999, approval generally stayed around 55–60%.

All these Gallup poll results show how the American public viewed and approved of the military interventions and invasions carried out by their democratically elected government.

Here are the reactions of American people to the wars, invasion and military interventions committed by the U.S. government, again, democratically elected.

- a. **January 18, 1991**, in Washington, D.C. over ~100,000 people protested against the "Gulf War." in Washington, D.C. This number of protesters represented approximately 0.0373% of average U.S. population.*
- b. **February 16, 1991:** in New York City and San Francisco over ~30,000 people protested against the "Gulf War." This number of protesters represented approximately 0.0112% of the total U.S. population.*
- c. **October 3, 1993:** in Washington, D.C. and New York City about ~2500 people protests after the "Black Hawk Down" and the casualties U.S. military suffered, against U.S. presence in Somalia. This number of protesters represented approximately 0.000933% of the total U.S. population.*
- d. **October 10, 1994:** in Washington, D.C. and New York City about ~2000 people protests Haiti intervention. This number of protesters represented approximately 0.000747% of the total U.S. population.*
- e. **April 24, 1999:** in Washington, D.C., San Francisco, New York City, and other major U.S. cities about ~10,000 people protested against the U.S. and NATO Bombing of Serbia. This number of protesters represented approximately 0.00373% of the total U.S. population.*

At the beginning of the 3rd millennium, and following the events of September 11, 2001, the United States entered a new phase of military actions, interventions, and invasions. Some argued that “neocons” had taken over the American government and, under the pretext of the “war on terror,” were pushing for a more aggressive interventionist policy to protect U.S. interests abroad and maintain global dominance. This approach favored preemptive strikes and the reshaping of the West Asia (Middle East) to promote U.S. supremacy. In fact, throughout its history, the United States of America, with or without the “neocons,” has consistently chosen to address the challenges it faces militarily.

The neoconservative policy was based on the belief that the U.S. should proactively engage with potential threats before they ever hatched in minds. This doctrine of preemption was articulated in the 2002 *National Security Strategy* under President Bush. It called for the U.S. to take unilateral action to combat real or potential threats, with or without international approval. The policies outlined in the *National Security Strategy* marked a departure from the “containment” strategies that had characterized U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War.

Under the *National Security Strategy*, the U.S. military operations extended beyond Afghanistan and Iraq. U.S. intelligence operations expanded to various parts of the world, including places like Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia, where the U.S. engaged in covert operations, drone strikes, and special forces missions. These interventions, sometimes occurring without clear objectives and without approval from Congress or the UN, sparked debates about their implications for international law and global security.

- I. **In October 2001, “Operation Enduring Freedom,”** the U.S. military officially began bombing Afghanistan on October 7, 2001, just weeks after the 9/11 event. The primary focus was on Afghanistan, where al-Qaeda was based, and where the Taliban government had been harboring Osama bin Laden and other al-Qaeda leaders. The main objectives were to eliminate al-Qaeda organization operating in Afghanistan and to topple the Taliban regime that had been in power since 1996. Operation Enduring Freedom could not eliminate al-Qaeda, but the second objective, toppling the Taliban regime, was achieved. After years of bombings, destruction by the U.S. military, and the deaths of thousands of innocent civilians, the United States completed its withdrawal from Afghanistan

on August 30, 2021. Immediately after the U.S. withdrawal, the Taliban took over the capital, Kabul, and then the rest of Afghanistan.

II. **In March 2003, “Operation Iraqi Freedom,”** the U.S. military on the early hours of March 20, 2003, began bombing Iraqi targets and invading Iraqi territory with the combat support of some countries, such as UK, Australia, and Poland. As a matter of fact, all NATO countries were engaged, either secretly in combat or openly in logistical support. Despite the UN’s Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) inspection commission, UNMOVIC (The United Nations Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission), being unable to find any stockpiles of WMD, the United States, with the full support of the United Kingdom and under the pretext of WMD stockpiles, invaded Iraq. The U.S. officially declared the end of major combat operations on May 1, 2003, with President Bush declaring "Mission Accomplished." However, the invasion resulted in the destruction of Iraq’s infrastructure, caused a humanitarian catastrophe, and led to years of instability, ongoing violence, and bloodshed that continue to this day.

The invasion of Iraq officially ended on December 18, 2011, but the U.S. military presence has continued to the present day. Meanwhile, U.S. combat operations in Afghanistan continued for another decade till end of August 2021.

As a result of the September 11, 2001, events and the collapse of the World Trade Center twin towers in New York, an event immediately attributed to Muslims, along with the widespread anti-Islam propaganda, American public immediately rallied around “the flag” and fully supported the invasion and the “War on Afghanistan.”

One and half year after the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, the United States invaded Iraq, citing weapons of mass destruction and alleged ties to al-Qaeda as justification.

1. A Gallup poll in October 2001 found that 88% of Americans strongly approved U.S. war in Afghanistan. Gallup polling shows a clear trajectory over the course of the war. Public enthusiasm declined over the next decade, especially as body bags began returning home.
2. A Gallup poll in 2022 found that, even after the war ended in 2021, 46% of Americans still approved of the U.S. war in Afghanistan.

3. A Gallup poll conducted just before the war on Iraq began, on March 17–18, 2003, found that 66% of Americans approved of going to war with Iraq.
4. Right after the invasion, late March 2003, Gallup poll showed about 70–72% supported the war on Iraq.
5. After major combat in spring 2003, an April 22–23 Gallup poll found that about 80% approved of how the war was being handled.
6. After declaring "Mission Accomplished" body bags of American soldiers started to fly back home to the United States. From this point on, American public support for the war gradually declined.
7. A Gallup poll conducted on December 15–16, 2003, showed that about 61% still approved of the war on Iraq and the decision to go to war.

Again, these Gallup poll results show how the American public viewed and approved of the military interventions conducted by their democratically elected government.

The protests against war, particularly before the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003, along with the number of people who took part in them, clearly and overwhelmingly reflect the American people's opinion on war and its ethical implications.

- a. **September 29, 2001**, in Washington, D.C. about ~10,000 to 20,000 people protested against the "War." This number of protesters represented approximately 0.00673% of average U.S. population.*
- b. **September 29, 2001**, in San Francisco about ~10,000 people protested against the "War." This number of protesters represented approximately 0.00337% of average U.S. population.*
- c. **September 29, 2001**, in New York City about ~2,000 to 3,000 people protested against the "War." This number of protesters represented approximately 0.00101% of average U.S. population.*
- d. **October 5-6, 2001**, Nation Wide about ~20,000 to 50,000 people protested against the "War." In San Francisco: ~5,000–10,000; in Los Angeles: ~1,000–3,000; in Seattle: ~500–1,000; in Washington, D.C.: ~2,000–5,000; in New York City: ~500–2,000; in Chicago: ~1,000–2,000; smaller protests in Boston, Philadelphia, etc.: ~100–500 each. The total number of protesters represented approximately 0.0168% of average U.S. population.*

- e. **January 18, 2003**, in Washington, D.C. about ~100,000 to 200,000 people protested against the "War on Iraq." This number of protesters represented approximately 0.0673% of average U.S. population.*
- f. **February 15, 2003, Global Day of Protest**, in the U.S., New York City: ~300,000–500,000, the protest march was denied a permit, but a massive rally formed near the UN instead; San Francisco: ~150,000–200,000; Washington, D.C.: ~30,000–100,000; Los Angeles: ~50,000–100,000; Chicago: ~10,000–30,000. Estimated total U.S. turnout ~500,000 to 1 million+. The total number of protesters represented approximately 0.337% of average U.S. population.*
- g. **March 15, 2003, National Student Walkouts**, in the U.S. thousands of students walked out of high schools and colleges nationwide to protest the imminent Iraq invasion and call for peace, mainly in New York City, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco.
- h. **March 18, 2003, Major Coordinated Marches**, in Washington, D.C.: ~100,000 protesters marched along the National Mall; San Francisco: ~150,000–200,000 protesters rallied downtown; New York City: tens of thousands gathered, some participating in civil disobedience near the UN and Wall Street; Los Angeles & Chicago: tens of thousands rallied. The estimated nationwide total was ~350,000–500,000 participants. The total number of protesters represented approximately 0.168% of average U.S. population.*
- i. **March 19, 2003, Emergency Anti-War Protests**, in Washington, D.C.; NYC; San Francisco; Los Angeles; Chicago; smaller cities nationwide. The estimated nationwide total was ~50,000–100,000 protesters rallied outside government buildings, military bases, and embassies. The total number of protesters represented approximately 0.0337% of average U.S. population.*
- j. **March 20, 2003, Emergency Anti-War Protests**, in Washington, D.C., New York City, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, plus local actions in Boston, Seattle, Portland. The estimated nationwide total was ~20,000–50,000 protesters rallied, many in brief rallies or vigils. The total number of protesters represented approximately 0.0168% of average U.S. population.*

After the September 11 attacks, there was a strong sense of national unity emerged among the vast majority of Americans, driven by fear. The fear that was intensified by continuous 24/7 satellite news coverage, which repeatedly reported, analyzed, and emphasized how the danger was close to their society. Meanwhile, government officials and politicians repeatedly expressed this view that “they hate us and our way

of life; they despise our ‘civilization’ and want to destroy it.” Under such circumstances, and amid a barrage of manufactured narratives, the majority of the American people saw the invasion of Afghanistan as defensive rather than optional. At first glance, all of this made the idea of large-scale protests less likely to take hold in the minds of Americans.

Since the United States has an all-volunteer military (no draft), most Americans did not have direct personal stakes, unlike during the Vietnam War, when conscription affected millions of families and fueled large-scale protests. In Iraq and Afghanistan, the burden was concentrated among military families, reducing the broader public’s sense of urgency to protest.

The rise of cable news networks played a major role, feeding American people different narratives and reducing the unified national focus that could drive mass protest movements.

Another issue to note was the “low visibility” of these wars. Unlike the Vietnam War, there were fewer graphic images and less day-to-day coverage of casualties on mainstream cable news. The wars on Afghanistan and Iraq felt distant, both geographically and psychologically, which did not arouse strong emotions among Americans people or lead to widespread protests.

The socio-economic structure of the United States, characterized as capitalist–imperialist, is designed to rule over a pacified population by fragmenting collective unity into individuals. The greatest challenge to the survival of a capitalist–imperialist system has historically been the rise of popular unity. This helps explain why labor unions in the United States have struggled to become strong enough to effectively advocate for the rights of the working class, which constitutes the vast majority of the U.S. population, approximately 97%, who rely on wages for their livelihood. This lack of unity among workers has contributed to the absence of labor agreements, between employees and employers, that could protect employees when participating in protests against government policies. In the absence of legal and labor protections, individuals risk being laid off for participating in protests of any kind. The weakness of unions in the United States is not incidental but structurally embedded by design. Capitalist systems prioritize control over labor, enabling layoffs, denial of sick leave and other benefits, and wage reductions without accountability.

In a society ruled by capital and hidden capitalist elites, that has not developed a social safety net to adequately protect its citizens from the mercilessness of capitalism, individuals are more vulnerable to economic insecurity. A society that does not respect or value its members, and that sets low ethical standards in protecting them, has contributed significantly to the low turnout of Americans in anti-war protests in the early years of the third millennium in the United States.

Moreover, financial constraints posed significant barriers for many Americans; more importantly, limited social and financial protections reduced the capacity of American people to prioritize higher ethical and moral considerations. In relatively healthy societies, legal protections, regulatory frameworks, and social safety nets can be understood as institutional expressions of ethical respect for members of a society, contributing to the development of higher moral standards. Such conditions profoundly shape individuals, ultimately elevating collective moral values over time and, more importantly, respecting and upholding principles.

GDP growth and purchasing power of American Households, 1991-2010

Total Real GDP growth: ~65%
Bottom segment, the total growth in purchasing power: -1.5%
Median segment, the total growth in purchasing power: ~6.4%
Top 1% segment, the total growth in purchasing power: ~57% to 62%
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)

Trends in Homelessness Growth in the United States, 1991-2010

Total Homelessness Growth: ~177%
Source: Department of Housing and Urban Development (DHUD)

Economic growth in the United States over the last decade of the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century, and how that growth was distributed among different layers of society, sheds light on American hypercapitalism and its contribution to shaping the principles and morality of the Americans.

However, Americans have observed that despite economic growth, they have not received a fair share of its benefits; instead, they have witnessed a significant expansion of homelessness in their cities, particularly in areas experiencing the strongest economic growth. This trend has been driven by reductions in government funding, which, in turn, signal to the public that neglecting vulnerable segments of society is acceptable.

In early 2011, protests against Muammar Gaddafi erupted as part of the Arab Spring. These protests were encouraged and supported by Western leaders and the media. Nicolas Sarkozy, the President of France, saw the unrest as an opportunity to topple Gaddafi, who, ironically, provided him with approximately €50 million in financial

support for his presidential campaign. Sarkozy led early diplomatic recognition of the Libyan rebel group, the National Transitional Council, as the legitimate government of Libya and strongly advocated for international and NATO military intervention. He, in fact, pursued a French vendetta against Gaddafi for what he was planning to do for his country and all other African countries.

Gaddafi began advocating for a single African currency as early as 1999. He specifically called for the establishment of an African Central Bank in 2004. During the 2009 African Union summit, he detailed a plan for a gold-backed currency (the gold dinar). He urged African and Muslim nations to adopt this gold standard for international trade, particularly for oil, in order to challenge the dominance of the U.S. dollar and the euro. By 2010, the plan increasingly focused on providing Francophone African nations with an alternative to the French-backed CFA franc, and eventually eliminating "neocolonialism."

By mid-February 2011, the situation in Libya escalated into a civil war between government forces and rebels backed by France, the UK, and the U.S., and armed by France, Qatar, and the UAE.

Meanwhile, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton pushed President Obama for action alongside European allies like France and the UK, who viewed the crisis as a direct threat to their regional interests.

- I. **In March 2011, "Operation Odyssey Dawn,"** the United States started the full-scale bombardment of Libya in the afternoon hours of March 19, 2011. As usual, the United States justified its intervention under the pretext of "humanitarian" grounds. On October 20, 2011, Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi was captured, tortured, and killed by rebels. Finally, U.S. military actions ended on October 31, 2011. Libya then plunged into total chaos and fragmented among rebel groups.
- II. **2013-present, "Operation Juniper Shield,"** the United States conducts the military operation through U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM). It is an ongoing military operation in North and West Africa focused on supporting regional partners against extremist groups. The operation spans parts of the Sahel and surrounding regions, including countries such as Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Chad, and Mauritania.

- III. **2014–present, “Operation Inherent Resolve,”** fight against ISIS in Iraq and Syria. The United States military began its operations with airstrikes, special forces, and support for local allies in Iraq and Syria. Peak years: 2015–2017, including key battles such as Mosul and Raqqa.
- IV. **August–December 2016, “Operation Odyssey Lightning,”** fight against ISIS in Libya. The United States military campaign in Libya aimed at supporting one of the factions in the Second Libyan Civil War. The U.S. military operation was primarily an airstrike campaign, conducting nearly 500 precision airstrikes and drone strikes to help local militias liberate the city of Sirte from ISIS control.
- V. **In January 2020, as part of “Operation Inherent Resolve,”** the United States assassinated Qasem Soleimani on January 3, an Iranian major general and commander of the Quds Force. He was killed in a targeted drone strike authorized by the U.S. President, Donald Trump while his convoy was leaving Baghdad International Airport in Iraq.
- VI. **March–May 2025, “Operation Rough Rider,”** the United States conducted a massive and intensive military campaign of air and naval strikes against Houthi infrastructure in Yemen, including major attacks on the Ras Isa fuel port.
- VII. **On June 22, 2025, “Operation Midnight Hammer,”** the United States launched this operation in support of Israel, which, on June 13, 2025, had begun a full-scale war on Iran. This operation marked the first direct attack by the United States military on Iranian soil. U.S. aircraft and submarines targeted three primary nuclear sites: Fordow, Natanz, and Isfahan. Over 125 aircraft were involved; B-2 bombers deployed 30,000-pound GBU-57 Massive Ordnance Penetrator bombs for the first time in combat.
- VIII. **In January 2026, “Operation Absolute Resolve,”** the United States conducted a military strike in Caracas to kidnap Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, on January 3. The official U.S. objective was described as a “law-enforcement action” with military support. The mission aimed to apprehend Maduro and his wife on alleged charges of narco-terrorism and drug trafficking.

The polls and major surveys conducted before or right after the U.S. military actions, interventions, or wars under the name of “Special Operations,” found that quite large

portion of American people are supportive of their democratically elected government's military engagements in other countries.

- a. A Gallup poll conducted in March 2011 found that 47% of Americans approved of U.S. military intervention in Libya. However, as the conflict continued, opinion reversed. A poll conducted in late June showed approval had dropped to 39%.
- b. Gallup did not conduct any poll in 2013 on "Operation Juniper Shield" or U.S. military actions in Africa. Due to low American public awareness and the indirect combat role, these actions were not a subject of mainstream U.S. public opinion polling. Unlike Iraq or Syria, Operation Juniper Shield was not widely reported.
- c. Gallup did not use the official name "Operation Inherent Resolve" in its initial 2014 questions but released the results of a significant poll in September 2014 regarding U.S. military actions in Iraq and Syria. The results showed that 60% of Americans approved of such actions.
- d. Gallup did not conduct a poll specifically named after Operation Odyssey Lightning in 2016. However, other organizations, such as YouGov and Pew, polled broader themes of U.S. airstrikes and the fight against ISIS, showing 54% support for airstrikes in Libya and 76% support for anti-ISIS military actions among the American public.
- e. Gallup did not release a standalone poll specifically on the assassination of Qasem Soleimani in 2020. Nevertheless, other major polls from January 2020 provided insights into public opinion on the assassination of the Iranian top general. An ABC News and Washington Post poll reported that about 53% of Americans approved of the strike, while a Morning Consult and Politico poll found 47% approval of strike against Iran's general.
- f. The Chicago Council on Global Affairs and Ipsos conducted a major poll on the U.S. bombing campaign in Yemen, which showed that 46% of Americans supported the use of airstrikes against Houthi targets, and 62% supported direct economic sanctions on the Houthis.
- g. A Reuters and Ipsos poll conducted in June 2025, immediately following Operation Midnight Hammer strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities, Reuters/Ipsos confirmed that only 36% and CNN poll found 44% of Americans supported the military action. However, support for continuing the campaign was lower, at 32%. Multiple high-quality surveys (Marist/NPR/PBS, Reuters/Ipsos,

CNN/SSRS) revealed that approximately 75% of Americans were concerned about Iranian retaliation against the United States after the strikes.

Interestingly, Americans in 2025 consistently, and overwhelmingly supported economic sanctions on Iran and Yemen. According to major surveys by the Chicago Council–Ipsos, Reagan Institute cross-tabs, and Reuters/Ipsos, an estimated ~65% supported additional sanctions on Iran, and ~60% supported additional sanctions on Yemen.

It clearly demonstrates how Americans distinguish between “war” and “sanctions.” They do not see sanctions as acts of war, simply, because sanctions do not affect them and do not have significant consequences for them, their society, or their country. Their lives continue as they did the day before and as they will the day after.

Throughout history and the history of warfare, “sanctions” have been used as one of the most effective and deadliest instruments of warfare to defeat an enemy. In the past, this was called a “siege.” During the Siege of Jerusalem in 70 CE, Roman forces besieged the city, cutting off supplies and causing extreme starvation, including some cases of cannibalism, and the deaths of tens of thousands from famine. Yet another example among hundreds in history is the Siege of Paris (1870–1871), when German forces besieged the city for months. Food shortages became so severe that residents resorted to eating horses and even zoo animals. Thousands died from starvation and related diseases.

The United Nations Charter, Article 41 of Chapter VII, authorizes non-military enforcement measures (sanctions), such as economic restrictions, travel bans, and diplomatic cuts. However, the UN fails to prevent the humanitarian catastrophe that can be caused by such “economic restrictions.” The United Nations Charter does not fully regulate humanitarian impacts. It does not require impact assessments of civilian harm, famine risk, or access to medicine and other essential goods. The UN Charter grants the Security Council broad discretion under Chapter VII, including the sanctions powers in Article 41, but it does not establish a detailed humanitarian “code” governing how sanctions must be designed or limited.

When the United Nations Charter does not define thresholds for humanitarian harm and does not require impact assessments, and when it is structurally designed to grant the Security Council broad enforcement powers rather than function as a detailed

humanitarian regulatory framework, do the rest of the world's states—except the five permanent members with veto power—still need this United Nations and its Charter?

- a. **On March 19, 2011**, Americans took to the streets to protest U.S. airstrikes in Libya. About 4,000 people in Los Angeles protested the eighth anniversary of the Iraq War and the new intervention in Libya. In Washington, D.C., 1,500 people rallied at Lafayette Park across from the White House. In Chicago, 1,900 people marched. In Atlanta, 200 people marched. In New York City, 80 protesters gathered in Times Square. The best-supported estimate is that roughly 10,000–15,000 Americans protested nationwide on March 19, 2011. The total number of protesters represented approximately 0.00466% of average U.S. population.*
- b. **In August and September 2013**, opposition to military intervention in Syria led to protests across the United States. In New York City, approximately 1,000 people protested in Times Square. In Washington, D.C., more than 500 people from across the East Coast marched through the city. In San Diego, around 150 people gathered at Balboa Park to protest. In Los Angeles, an estimated 1,000 people protested against military intervention. The best-supported estimate is that roughly 1,500 to 2,200 Americans participated in protests in August and September 2013. The total number of protesters represented approximately 0.000684% of average U.S. population.*
- c. **In 2014**, anti-war protests in the United States against the renewed military campaign in Iraq and Syria were significantly smaller and more scattered. In Washington, D.C., approximately 20–30 activists gathered outside the White House gates. In Los Angeles, roughly 100 protesters marched through the Westwood neighborhood to oppose what they described as a “limitless” war. In San Francisco, approximately 150–200 people held a rally and march starting at Powell and Market Streets. In Boston and Philadelphia, each drew fewer than 100 protesters. The best-supported estimate is that roughly 15,000 to 20,000 Americans participated in anti-war protests across 2014. The total number of protesters represented approximately 0.00621% of average U.S. population.*
- d. **In 2016**, there were scattered anti-war protests; however, those specifically targeting U.S. military intervention in Libya were virtually non-existent in the public record. Public attention was largely focused elsewhere. During the presidential election, the primary focus was the contentious race between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton. Domestic issues also drew significant

attention, particularly the Dakota Access Pipeline protests and the Black Lives Matter movement.

- e. **On January 4, 2020**, following the targeted assassination of Qasem Soleimani, a top Iranian general, nationwide anti-war protests took place in the United States. In Washington, D.C., over 1,000 protesters gathered outside the White House. In San Francisco, approximately 2,000 people held a rally downtown. In New York City, 250+ protesters marched through Times Square. In Chicago, about 200 people demonstrated outside Trump Tower. An estimated 15,000+ people participated in the anti-war protests across the United States. The total number of protesters represented approximately 0.00466% of average U.S. population.*
- f. **March to May 2025**, there are no records of public demonstrations within the United States organized against “Operation Rough Rider” in 2025. The lack of a street protest movement in the U.S. can be attributed to several factors: public attention in early 2025 was heavily focused on the new Trump administration’s domestic policy changes, which largely overshadowed the 53-day heavy military air campaign against Yemen; and attention was also directed toward congressional debates over the administration’s “war strategy” and whether the scale of the strikes, over 1,000 targets, required new war powers authorization.
- g. **In June 2025**, protests in the United States occurred in cities such as New York City, Washington, D.C., and San Francisco, with turnout generally estimated at a few hundred to a thousand people per city. Across all reported gatherings, this suggests a combined total in the low thousands at most. No official count or confirmed nationwide total exists.
- h. **In January 2026**, “No War on Venezuela” demonstrations were part of a nationwide day of action on Saturdays, January 3, 10, and 17, and drew thousands of protesters across more than 100 U.S. cities. In New York City, approximately 1,000–3,000 people marched per rally day; in Washington, D.C., approximately 500–2,000; and in San Francisco, approximately 500–1,500. The best overall estimate of turnout across all three Saturdays combined is roughly 25,000–60,000 across those cities. The total number of protesters represented approximately 0.0179% of average U.S. population.*

In late December 2025, some Iranians, particularly *bazaaris* (Iranian merchants), took to the streets to protest inflation and economic hardship. At the beginning, the protests were peaceful, but they turned violent after armed foreign agents joined.

On December 29, 2025, the official Farsi platform for Mossad on X posted: *"Come out to the streets together. The time has come. We are with you. Not only from afar and not just in words. We are with you in the field as well."*

On January 2, 2026, Mike Pompeo posted on X: *"Happy New Year to every Iranian in the streets. Also to every Mossad agent walking beside them."*

On January 13, 2026, President Donald Trump posted on his Truth Social: *"HELP IS ON ITS WAY."*

Casualties from riot, protest and armed clashes hit a record high in recent Iranian history. The Iranian government announced that the confirmed number of casualties included 3,117 civilians and over 200 security forces, backed by names, dates of birth, and national ID numbers. However, U.S.-based HRANA reported 7,007 civilian casualties and over 200 security force casualties.

As part of a broader demonization narrative, Western media reported casualties as tenfold higher, and some news outlets even used terms such as "Iranian genocide" and "Iranian Holocaust" in their reporting on the events, with no evidence to support their claims. They platformed pro-war voices from the Iranian diaspora to create the impression that all Iranians support a war of liberation.

It was, in many ways, *déjà vu*, as some members of the Iraqi diaspora, years before Operation Iraqi Freedom in March 2003, lobbied the United States and pleaded with it to launch a war of liberation against Iraq.

The Wall Street Journal, on February 12, 2026, reported that the U.S. administration covertly smuggled roughly 6,000 Starlink terminals through Iraqi Kurdistan or via small boats from Dubai directly into the hands of CIA recruits and some dissidents in January to maintain their online presence.

It is notable that even some Western diplomats, under diplomatic immunity, were engaged in smuggling Starlink equipment and satellite communication devices into Iran. On January 28, 2026, the top Dutch diplomat André van Wiggen had his suitcase confiscated and opened in the presence of a representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; it appeared that he was smuggling three Starlink modems and seven satellite

phones. It could represent only the tip of the iceberg in the involvement of Western diplomats, under diplomatic immunity, in smuggling satellite communication devices into Iran.

- I. **February 28, 2026 – present, "Operation Epic Fury,"** the United States together with Israel started a "War on Iran." They launched full-scale, unprovoked air strikes against Iran. At the early hours of February 28th, the bombardment killed Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and many of his family members, including children. It also killed dozens of high-ranking Iranian military and civilian officials. The core objective of "Operation Epic Fury" in the first three days of the war was to assassinate as many top-ranking Iranian military and government officials as possible in order to pave the way for Iranian protesters, Mossad and CIA operatives, and U.S.-armed Kurdish separatist fighters based in Iraqi Kurdistan to deliver a final blow and topple the Iranian government in Tehran. The United States and Israel plan was to install a pro-U.S.-Israeli administration in Tehran.

However, Iran strongly defended itself against the indiscriminate bombardment carried out by the U.S. and Israeli militaries, which reportedly destroyed schools, hospitals, and residential buildings and killed hundreds of civilians, including 165 schoolgirls in a single double-tap strike on a school in Minab.

On the fourth day of the war, the United States announced its newly adjusted objectives: permanent nuclear neutralization, complete degradation of ballistic missile capabilities, the dismantling of the Iranian navy, and the disabling of Iran's ability to support Resistance Groups.

The bombardment continued more intensely than ever, as the U.S. and Israel bombed hospitals, schools, universities, research institutes, medical centers, and vaccine-producing facilities. In fact, they aimed to destroy a nation of 90 million people.

However, later, Trump revealed his intention on 1st April and stated that "We're going to send Iran back to the Stone Age — where they belong."

Throughout the second decade of the 21st century and beyond to this day, the United States has continued its military actions and interventions in countries such as

Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, Somalia, Nigeria, and finally a full-scale war on Iran. The U.S. has carried them out under various humanitarian pretexts and, by manufacturing consent, has tried to justify its military mayhem, leaving behind traces of death and destruction.

Now all eyes are on Trump, as if he were a Martian who has arrived to destroy humanity and its values. No, he is not a Martian; he is a son of America, a product of his own society. A society that has produced mass murderers in schools, offices, and canteens has also produced figures such as Donald Trump, Barack Obama, George W. Bush, and Bill Clinton. Many Americans do not associate themselves with Trump, and they are right; they have not seen an American president behave like this in recent history. They have only just woken up to the reality of their country. American presidents before Trump have always protected the public by not showing or by hiding the real face of their country. They presented a “pretty face” to keep spirits high. All of them talked about and emphasized values whose integrity they never upheld.

The American people were presented with a “Mr. Nice” image, a defender of democracy and humanity, for them to view and cherish. On the other hand, President Trump openly does and says things that other presidents did in secret and said behind closed doors.

On March 28, 2026 demonstrations across America were organized under the motto “No King,” which refers to the arrogant, king-like, tyrannical, and insulting behavior of Donald Trump. Most Americans do not approve of his administration’s domestic policies, such as unleashing ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement) into American cities, paying insufficient attention to healthcare, and failing to adequately address inflation and the declining the U.S. economy as a whole. The Trump administration’s foreign policies were largely not addressed by both the organizers and participants of the protests. A close examination of numerous photographs published by *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *The Seattle Times*, and *The Guardian* reveals that only a handful of individuals were expressing disapproval of “War on Iran” or any “War.”

Yet another fact is that an estimated 8 million Americans participated in the nationwide “No Kings” protest held on March 28, 2026, representing only 2.346% of the U.S. population.* If it can be accepted that the 2.346% of Americans constitute the

majority of the American people and all of them disapprove of the “War on Iran,” it may be not only because war itself is seen as wrong, or out of sympathy for Iran. It is also because President Trump is handling the war poorly, or because he does not have a clear plan and because the conflict has not been as quick as he promised. In fact, these are matters of concern in debates among members of Congress.

But instead, the mainstream media tried to create a narrative by headlining their report on “No King” suggesting that “the American people are concerned about Iranians” and the “war on Iran” without presenting any evidence to support their claim. They, as a unified entity, portrayed the “No King” protests in a way that “whitewashed” Americans’ views and concerns about foreign humanitarian issues such as direct wars, military actions and interventions, despite overwhelming visual evidence, like photographs of the demonstrations across the country.

The reason that most Americans cannot genuinely disapprove “war” itself rest hidden in the layers of their society, and has a direct link to the idea of “power.” Americans view power as the ability to shape decisions, lead, and influence others. They admire those who can effectively assert control through power. This obsession with power manifests as an individual fascination rooted in a culture that values intense individualism, grandiosity, and, of course, competition. Due to this obsession with power, the slang associated with it has evolved in the language of society, American English, including terms such as “power couple,” “power move,” “power hour,” “power tie,” and “power suit.”

One of the most notable pieces of evidence of an obsession with power is reflected in higher-education scholarships awarded to young Americans. Fifty percent or more of “full-ride” scholarships are athletic scholarships, which are awarded to American youth who are physically strong and highly skilled athletes.

Another way of sustaining the momentum of war is the “War Veteran” scholarship program, which is much larger than athletic scholarships. In this way, the U.S. military maintains a steady supply of manpower. There is strong public support for veteran scholarship programs overall.

The combination of strong individualism and a cultural sense of grandiosity has led American society to view its values and way of life as superior to those of others, and has even led Americans to place greater value on their own lives than on the lives of

other human beings. All of this has created a nation that strongly believes in “American exceptionalism,” focuses on its own needs, and does not lift its head to look beyond itself.

The overwhelming majority of people who took part in the “No King” demonstrations were those who did not vote for Donald Trump in the last presidential election. They were not the majority at the time, which is why they lost the presidency and both houses to Trump’s supporters. Therefore, any claim that the majority of the American people disapprove of the “War on Iran” is baseless.

“By looking at the psychological, social, economic, and historical contexts of American society, it may now be understandable why the vast majority of Americans cannot genuinely care about Iranians or any other nation suffering from the American war machine.”



By **Shapour Ghasemi**

A contributor to the Iran Chamber Society.

*Source: Average Population of the United States (source: U.S. Census Bureau)
1991 to 2000 = 267.9 million
2001 to 2010 = 297.1 million
2011 to 2020 = 321.6 million
2021 to 2024 = 334.1 million
2025 to 2026 = 341.8 million (*Available Census Bureau estimates 2025–2026*)

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