

The Middle East in America's 'Global War on Terror'

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This paper will interrogate the narrative of the so-called 'Global War on Terror' (GWOT) and evaluate the Middle East's place within it. Thus far, much scholarship on the Bush administration and the 'war on terror' has been Middle East centric, focusing naturally on the invasion of Iraq and its aftermath as well as Afghanistan (with Israel being ever-present in US foreign policy). Moreover, the intellectual architects of the 'war on terror' attached great importance to the Middle East region. However, the 'war on terror' also transcended the Middle East. The paper will argue that this framework was truly international; the 'war on terror' had both 'core' (the Middle East) and 'peripheral' regions. Under the auspices of the 'war on terror', the Bush administration carried out interventions in regions including the Philippines, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and across Africa from the Horn of Africa in the East to the Gulf of Guinea in the West.

This paper will argue that a proper understanding of recent US engagement in the Middle East requires an awareness of the global nature of the 'war on terror' framework. The Bush administration did not just use that paradigm as a way to intervene in Iraq and to attempt a regional pro-American realignment in the Middle East; those events also have a broader global context: the administration's attempt to intervene in other strategically important regions, under the auspices of the 'war on terror' so as to preserve America's position as the preeminent power in *every* region of the world. Thus America's motivation for invading Iraq was a power calculus that was applied (albeit in different ways) to many other countries too.