

PERSONAL LIBERTY

All I want for Christmas is the end to unnecessary war

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All I want for Christmas is for the U.S. to only fight the wars it has to and to stay out of all the others. The lives of young Americans are too high a price to pay for wars driven by threat inflation, ego, or foolhardy social experiments.

First, we're Americans. Enough of the hand-wringing. Islamist-inspired terrorists do not hide around every corner. Instead, we have been and continue to be quite safe. The threat from groups operating within failed states like Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and so on pales in comparison to Hitler's armies marching across Europe and our nuclear Cold War with the Soviet Union, despite President Trump's attempts to equate the three.

Second, the unseemly traits of ego, vanity, and hubris should not push us to fight when we don't have to. Teddy Roosevelt had it right: Walk softly and carry a big stick.

Third, American lives and financial treasure should not be spent on cool-sounding social experiments like, "democracy will flourish in Muslim-majority states in response to US invasions." Since 9/11, though, all three US administrations have referred to Afghan and Iraqi leaders as "reliable partners" at one time or another, while extolling democratic progress in both countries.

The data, however, provide no support for those claims. As of today, Freedom House gives both countries its lowest rating – "not free." And, in terms of corruption, Iraq and Afghanistan's governments rank worse than 94 and 96 percent of all governments worldwide.

All war is darkness. My Opa spoke those words to me 40 years ago. I remember it vividly because as he shared that one sentence, he pointed to the bullet hole in his shoulder and the shrapnel scar on his neck. He had barely survived the war as an enlisted man in the German army; and when the war ended, he found his home country had become East Germany. Three years later, he took my Oma and (then) three-year-old dad and they escaped to the west. Eventually, they made it to America.

My war experiences have been much briefer than my Opa's, but I get his point. All war is darkness, so for the sake of those sent to do the fighting, the war has to be a necessary one. And our war on terror isn't.

Let's bring America's sons and daughters home for the holidays. We'll all be the better for it.

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