The 9/11 attacks represented a historic failure of the U.S. government in its most important duty.

Justin Logan

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In response to its failure, the government granted itself enormous new powers and used them recklessly, killing roughly a million people and wasting $8 trillion dollars.

The agglomeration of policies and powers we refer to as the "War on Terror" might never end. There are two main reasons for this. First, there is little reason to believe the public has the incentive or attention span to maintain pressure on the government to change its policies and give up its new powers. Second, the Washington foreign policy establishment is an insular clique that does not police itself and whose failures are punished by no one outside it. That is why we see David Petraeus and John Bolton, the William Westmoreland and Baghdad Bob of the war on terror, on television bitterly denouncing the withdrawal from Afghanistan.

For those of us who do not like this equilibrium, one could try to make the "War on Terror" a mass political issue or try to create a counter-establishment in foreign policy. My bet, and considerable effort at present, is on the latter.

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