

Prior to 2001, the United States was critical of Russia in this conflict. After 9/11 the U.S. agreed, in exchange for President Putin's support for our war on Al Qaeda (the perpetrators of the 9/11 tragedy) to call the Chechnyans "terrorists," instead of "freedom fighters." The Bush Administration has broadened the "war on terrorism" to include all groups fighting a legitimate government even though in the past the U.S. has supported the overthrow of elected governments (in Chili and Nicaragua). The Bush definition includes Palestinian groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah, the Chechnyans, the Basques of Spain, and the "insurgents" in Iraq which, like the others, were *not* involved in the 9/11 World Trade Center destruction. The Palestinians, like the Chechnyans, have been fighting for their own state—for independence, at least since 1948 when Israel was created, and many Palestinians lost their homes and land.

One fundamental disagreement about the so-called "War on Terrorism" is whether the enemy is Al Qaeda or *all* of these groups. The overwhelming European opinion is that Al Qaeda is the target,

thus fueling huge disagreement with the American approach. Those who tend to see anti-American terrorism as primarily coming from Al Qaeda (think Bin Laden, World Trade Center 9/11) support the war in Afghanistan, where Al Qaeda was backed by the Taliban government. Most of the world overwhelmingly supports that effort. For example, at this writing, the French hold the NATO command in Afghanistan which was Germany's responsibility last year. That struggle is clearly targeted at Al Qaeda. In contrast, the war in Iraq is opposed by the overwhelming majority of nations, including some of our major traditional allies (the French, Canadian, Mexican and German governments, for example).

From the European view (and a view held by many conservative and liberal Americans) the war in Iraq and the war on terror are very different wars. It was Brent Scowcroft, National Security Advisor for George H. B. Bush (the father of our current President) who said recently, "Iraq is a serious and divisive diversion from the war on terror."<sup>42</sup>

Also referring to Iraq, Paul Weyrich, founder of the (conservative) Heritage Foundation said, "America is stuck in a guerrilla war with no end in sight... our real enemies... such as Al Qaeda, are benefiting from the Arab and Islamic backlash against our occupation of an Islamic country."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Brent Scowcroft, Former National Security Advisor for George W. Bush (the father).

<sup>43</sup> From "The Antiwar Right is Ready to Rumble," appearing in *The New York Times* on November 7, 2004.