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Afghanistan Surge

- In February 2009, newly-elected President Barack Obama ordered a “surge” of 17,000 US troops. This increased U.S. numbers in Afghanistan from 36,000 to 53,000 troops. This surge was meant to help stabilize Afghanistan and suppress terrorist groups.
- In December 2009, Obama announced the deployment of 30,000 more troops to Afghanistan and revealed plans to begin withdrawing troops in July 2011. While he saw "no imminent threat of the government being overthrown," U.S. forces worried that, “the Taliban has gained momentum.”

President Obama’s Nobel Peace Prize

- The Nobel Peace Prize is awarded each year to an individual who has "done the most or the best work for fraternity between nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses." Past recipients include Mikhail Gorbachev, Al Gore, Martin Luther King Jr., and Mother Teresa.
- In May 2009, it was announced that Barack Obama would receive the Nobel Peace Prize for “his extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples. The Committee has attached special importance to Obama’s vision of and work for a world without nuclear weapons.” Although Obama had been president for only 8 months, the Committee felt his diplomatic actions were an international source of hope and important moves towards international peace and cooperation.
- The prize came with an award of over \$1 million, which Obama donated to various charities.

U.S. TROOPS WILL STAY IN AFGHANISTAN UNTIL AT LEAST 2024

SOMEDAY THIS WILL ALL BE YOURS



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War in Afghanistan Under President Obama

- When he took office in 2009, Barack Obama inherited the War in Afghanistan, started by his predecessor George W. Bush in 2003. In February 2009, Obama ordered a “surge” of 17,000 US troops. This increased U.S. numbers in Afghanistan from 36,000 to 53,000 troops. This surge was meant to help stabilize Afghanistan and suppress terrorist groups
- In December 2009, Obama announced the deployment of 30,000 more troops to Afghanistan and revealed plans to begin withdrawing troops in July 2011. Troops began withdrawing in 2011, and numbers dropped below 10,000 by 2016. Although he planned to fully withdraw by 2014, further destabilization in the region led him to keep troops in Afghanistan through the end of his presidency.
- Obama also increased the use of drone strikes in the Middle East. While he hoped to reduce the number of U.S. casualties, the drone program has been widely criticized for its lack of transparency, civilian casualties, and creating resentment in the Middle East. Many have argued that resentment created by the program has increased extremism, thus increasing support for terrorist organizations.
- The war is now in its 18th year and has cost the U.S. more than \$780 billion. The Afghanistan government controls territory with 63.7% of the population, but the Taliban has had a resurgence in recent years. Currently, the U.S. is participating in peace talks with the Taliban,



WAIT...

IS THAT...

AN AMERICAN?

INNOCENT
DRONE STRIKE
VICTIMS

Nick Anderson
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HERBOT PARTERS

U.S. Drone Program

In 2015, the U.S. Air Force had 150 Predator, 93 Reaper, and 33 Global Hawk drones that carry weapons. U.S. drones in the Middle East are currently in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen, and Somalia.. These drones are used in targeted killings, to access remote areas, and monitor both troops and civilians. Supporters of the program suggest that the use of drones allows us to target specific terrorists, reduce U.S. casualties, and reduce costs.

The drone program is currently operated by the CIA, so many records and statistics are difficult to obtain. By many estimates, between 2009–2016, around 1,000 civilians were killed, accounting for about 15% of deaths. According to the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, as many as 253-397 children have died as the result of drone strikes.

In 2014, there was public outrage as the U.S. Justice Department confirmed that four U.S. citizens had been killed by U.S. drone strikes since 2009. While several U.S. citizens are known to have been targeted by drone strikes for links to terrorism, an unknown number of Americans have been killed inadvertently. There was particular controversy over the assassination of an American citizen in Yemen, Anwar al-Awlaki, in 2011. The ACLU and other civil rights organizations were outraged at the lack of trial and due process for any crimes.

AXES of EVIL



“Axis of Evil”

- President George W. Bush first used the phrase “axis of evil” in his State of the Union address on January 29, 2002. Although Bush initially was referring to Iraq, Iran, and North Korea, he later applied the phrase to many countries who he opposed in the War on Terror. Bush said that these countries were a dire international threat, stating, “States like these and their terrorist allies constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world.”

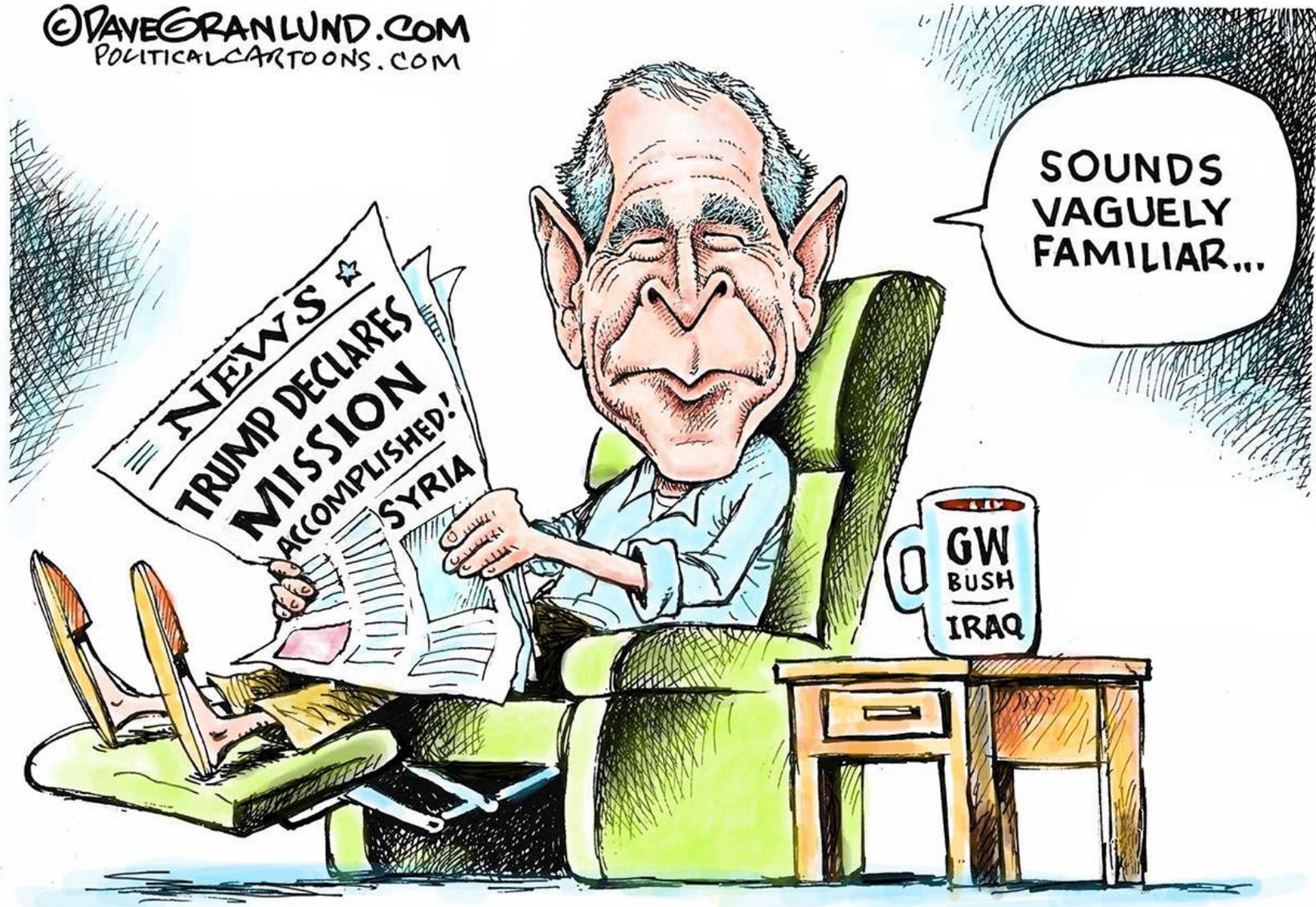
PATRIOT ACT

- Passed just 45 days after 9/11, the USA-PATRIOT ACT was a long and sweeping piece of legislation which aimed to give the government more tools and access to prevent terrorism. The act has been widely criticized for its allowance of “sneak and peek” searches, which are often said to violate 4th amendment protections. The act also increased government access to third party documents (phone records, internet search history, and more), increased ability to conduct surveillance, and created a definition for “domestic terrorism.”

Homeland Security Act

- In response to the 9/11 Attacks, the 2002 Homeland Security Act created the United States Department of Homeland Security and the new cabinet-level position of Secretary of Homeland Security. This agency was meant to oversee many of the new expansions of power under the PATRIOT Act. In 2017, the department had a budget of \$40.6 billion and 229,000 employees.

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George W. Bush + The Iraq War

- In 2003, President Bush declared war on Iraq. At the time, Bush and other officials claimed they had intelligence that Iraq was creating weapons of mass destructions, although these claims are now believed to be inaccurate. Bush also cited Saddam Hussein's cruel regime, use of chemical weapons against in his own people, and Iraq's harbouring of AL Qaeda and other terrorists in his declaration. The war lasted for over 8 years, March 2003 to December 2011.

Trump + Syria

- Since 2011, Syria has experienced a civil war inspired by the events of the Arab Spring revolutions. In April 2018, the United States and allies launched a series of military strikes against Syria. In a statement, Trump announced that the strikes were meant for, "targets associated with the chemical weapons capabilities of Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad." There are currently about 2,000 U.S. troops in Syria, with aims to protect Syria's Kurdish people. Trump has made conflicting comments about his future policy in Syria, indicating both plans to fully withdraw troops and plans to remain in the region.