

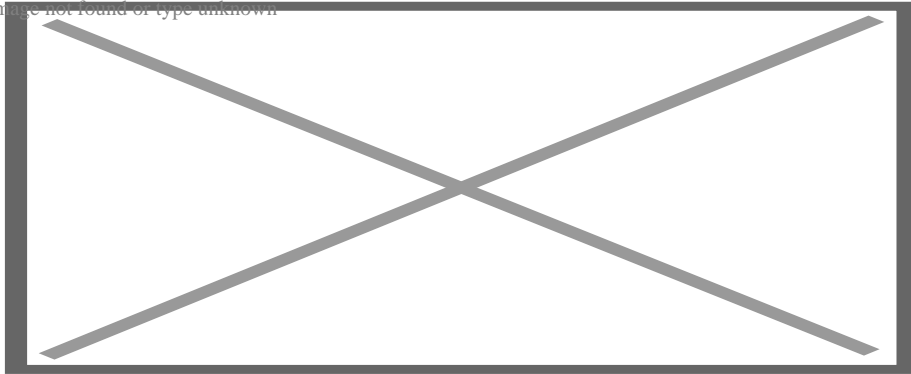
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# Will the American Empire Ever Be Great Again, or Is this All Hubris Before the Collapse?

## Description

By [Dan Cohen](#)

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Throughout his campaign, Joe Biden railed against Donald Trump's 'America First' foreign policy, claiming it weakened the United States and left the world in disarray.

He pledged to reverse this decline and recover the damage Trump did to America's reputation. While Donald Trump called to make America Great Again, Biden seeks to Make the American Empire Great Again.

Among the president-elect's pledges is to end the so-called forever wars – the decades-long imperial projects in Afghanistan and Iraq that began under the Bush administration.

Yet Biden – a fervent supporter of those wars – will task ending them to the most neoconservative elements of the Democratic party and ideologues of permanent war.

Michele Flournoy and Tony Blinken sit atop Biden's thousands-strong foreign policy brain trust and have played central roles in every U.S. war going back to the Clinton administration.

In the Trump era, they've cashed in, founding Westexec Advisors – a corporate consulting firm that has become home for Obama administration officials awaiting a return to government.

Flournoy is Biden's leading pick for secretary of defense and Blinken is expected to be national security advisor.

## **Biden's foxes guard the henhouse**

Since the 1990s, Flournoy and Blinken have steadily risen through the ranks of the military-industrial complex, shuffling back and forth between the Pentagon and hawkish think-tanks funded by the U.S. government, weapons companies, and oil giants.

Under Bill Clinton, Flournoy was the principal author of the 1996 Quadrennial Defense Review, the document that outlined the U.S. military's doctrine of permanent war – what it called “full spectrum dominance.”

Flournoy called for “unilateral use of military power” to ensure “uninhibited access to key markets, energy supplies, and strategic resources.”

As Bush administration officials lied to the world about Saddam Hussein's supposed WMD's, Flournoy remarked that “In some cases, preemptive strikes against an adversary's [weapons of mass destruction] capabilities may be the best or only option we have to avert a catastrophic attack against the United States.”

Tony Blinken was a top advisor to then-Senate foreign relations committee chair Joe Biden, who played a key role in shoring up support among the Democrat-controlled Senate for Bush's illegal invasion of Iraq.

As Iraq was plunged into chaos and bloodshed, Flournoy was among the authors of a paper titled “Progressive Internationalism” that called for a “smarter and better” style of permanent war. The paper chastised the anti-war left and stated that “Democrats will maintain the world's most capable and technologically advanced military, and we will not flinch from using it to defend our interests anywhere in the world.”

With Bush winning a second term, Flournoy advocated for more troop deployments from the sidelines.

In 2005, Flournoy [signed onto](#) a letter from the neoconservative think tank Project for a New American Century, asking Congress to “increase substantially the size of the active duty Army and Marine Corps (by) at least 25,000 troops each year over the next several years.”

In 2007, she leveraged her Pentagon experience and contacts to found what would become one of the premier Washington think tanks advocating endless war across the globe: the Center for a New American Security (CNAS).

CNAS is funded by the U.S. government, arms manufacturers, oil giants, Silicon Valley tech giants, billionaire-funded foundations, and big banks.

Flournoy joined the Obama administration and was appointed as under secretary of defense for policy, the position considered the “brains” of the Pentagon.

She was keenly aware that the public was wary of more quagmires. In the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review, she crafted a new concept of warfare that would expand the permanent war state while giving the appearance of a drawdown.

Flournoy wrote that “unmanned systems hold great promise” – a reference to the CIA’s drone assassination program.

This was the Obama-era military doctrine of hybrid war. It called for the U.S. to be able to simultaneously wage war on numerous fronts through secret warfare, clandestine weapons transfers to proxies, drone strikes, and cyber-attacks – all buttressed with propaganda campaigns targeting the American public through the internet and corporate news media.

## **Architects of America’s Hybrid wars**

Flournoy continued to champion the endless wars that began in the Bush-era and was a key architect of Obama’s disastrous troop surge in Afghanistan. As U.S. soldiers returned in body bags and insurgent attacks and suicide bombings increased some 65% from 2009 and 2010, she deceived the Senate Armed Services Committee, claiming that the U.S. was beginning to turn the tide against the Taliban.

Even with her lie that the U.S. and Afghan government were starting to beat the Taliban back, Flournoy assured the senate that the U.S. would have to remain in Afghanistan long into the future.

Ten years later – as the Afghan death toll passed 150,000 – Flournoy continued to argue against a U.S. withdrawal.

That’s the person Joe Biden has tasked with ending the forever war in Afghanistan. But in Biden’s own words, he’ll “bring the vast majority of our troops home from Afghanistan” implying some number of American troops will remain, and the forever war will be just that. Michele Flournoy explained that even if a political settlement were reached, the U.S. would maintain a presence.

In 2011, the Obama-era doctrine of smart and sophisticated warfare was unveiled in the NATO regime-change war on Libya.

Moammar Gaddafi – the former adversary who sought warm relations with the U.S. and had given up his nuclear weapons program – was deposed and sodomized with a bayonet.

Flournoy, Hillary Clinton’s State Department, and corporate media were in lockstep as they waged an extensive propaganda campaign to deceive the U.S. public that Gaddafi’s soldiers were on a Viagra-fueled rape and murder spree that demanded a U.S. intervention.

All of this was based on a report from Al Jazeera – the media outlet owned by the Qatari monarchy that was arming extremist militias to overthrow the government.

Yet an investigation by the United Nations called the rape claims “hysteria.” Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch found no credible evidence of even a single rape.

Even after Libya was descended into strife and the deception of Gaddafi’s forces committing rape was debunked, Michele Flournoy stood by her support for the war.

Tony Blinken, then Obama’s deputy national security advisor, also pushed for regime change in Libya.

He became Obama's point man on Syria, pushed to arm the so-called "moderate rebels" that fought alongside al-Qaeda and ISIS, and designed the red line strategy to trigger a full-on U.S. intervention. Syria, he told the public, wasn't anything like the other wars the U.S. had waging for more than a decade.

Despite Blinken's promises that it would be a short affair, the war on Syria is now in its ninth year. An estimated half a million people have been killed as a result and the country is facing famine,

Largely thanks to the policy of using "wheat to apply pressure" – a recommendation of Flournoy and Blinken's CNAS think tank.

When the Trump administration launched airstrikes on Syria based on mere accusations of a chemical attack, Tony Blinken praised the bombing, claiming Assad had used the weapon of mass destruction sarin. Yet there was no evidence for this claim, something even then-secretary of Defense James Mattis admitted.

While jihadist mercenaries armed with U.S.-supplied weapons took over large swaths of Syria, Tony Blinken played a central role in a coup d'etat in Ukraine that saw a pro-Russia government overthrown in a U.S.-orchestrated color revolution with neo-fascist elements agitating on the ground.

At the time, he was ambivalent about sending lethal weapons to Ukraine, instead opting for economic pressure.

Since then, fascist militias have been incorporated into Ukraine's armed forces. And Tony Blinken urged Trump to send them deadly weapons – something Obama had declined to do.

Trump obliged.

## The Third Offset

While the U.S. fuelled wars in Syria and Ukraine, the Pentagon announced a major shift called the Third Offset strategy – a reference to the cold war era strategies the U.S. used to maintain its military supremacy over the Soviet Union.

The Third Offset [strategy](#) shifted the focus from counterinsurgency and the war on terror to great power competition against China and Russia, seeking to ensure that the U.S. could win a war against China in Asia. It called for a technological revolution in warfighting capabilities, development of futuristic and autonomous weapons, swarms of undersea and airborne drones, hypersonic weapons, cyber warfare, machine-enhanced soldiers, and artificial intelligence making unimaginably complex battlefield decisions at speeds incomprehensible to the human mind. All of this would be predicated on the Pentagon deepening its relationship with Silicon Valley giants that it birthed decades before: Google and Facebook.

The author of the Third Offset, former undersecretary of defense Robert Work, is a partner of Flournoy and Blinken's at WestExec Advisors. And Flournoy has been a leading proponent of this dangerous new escalation.

In June, Flournoy published a lengthy commentary laying out her strategy called "Sharpening the U.S.

Military's Edge: Critical Steps for the Next Administration”.

She warned that the United States is losing its military technological advantage and reversing that must be the Pentagon's priority. Without it, Flournoy warned that the U.S. might not be able to defeat China in Asia.

While Flournoy has called for ramping up U.S. military presence and exercises with allied forces in the region, she went so far as to call for the U.S. to increase its destructive capabilities so much that it could launch a blitzkrieg style-attack that would wipe out the entire Chinese navy and all civilian merchant ships in the South China Sea. Not only a blatant war crime but a direct attack on a nuclear power that would spell the third world war.

At the same time, Biden has announced he'll take an even more aggressive and confrontational stance against Russia, a position Flournoy shares.

As for ending the forever wars, Tony Blinken says not so fast.

## **The end of forever wars?**

So Biden will end the forever wars, but not really end them. Secret wars that the public doesn't even know the U.S. is involved in – those are here to stay.

In fact, leaving teams of special forces in place throughout the Middle East is part and parcel of the Pentagon's shift away from counterinsurgency and towards great power competition.

The 2018 National Defense Strategy explains that “Long-term strategic competitions with China and Russia are the principal priorities” and the U.S. will “consolidate gains in Iraq and Afghanistan while moving to a more resource-sustainable approach.”

As for the catastrophic war on Yemen, Biden has said he'll end U.S. support, but in 2019, Michele Flournoy argued against ending arms sales to Saudi Arabia.

Biden pledged he will rejoin the Iran deal as a starting point for new negotiations. However, Trump's withdrawal from the deal discredited the Iranian reformists who seek engagement with the west and empowered the principlists who see the JCPOA as a deal with the devil.

In Latin America, Biden will revive the so-called anti-corruption campaigns that were used as a cover to oust the popular social democrat Brazilian president Lula da Silva.

His Venezuela policy will be almost identical to Trump's – sanctions and regime change.

In Central America, Biden has proposed a 4 billion dollar package to support corrupt right-wing governments and neoliberal privatization projects that create even more destabilization and send vulnerable masses fleeing north to the United States.

Behind their rhetoric, Biden, Flounoy, and Blinken will seek nothing less than global supremacy, escalating a new and even more dangerous arms race that risks the destruction of humanity. That's what Joe Biden calls "decency" and "normalcy."

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