

clusive duel with the Queen of Spain. Millard Fillmore's off-code installation of a bathtub in the White House. Richard Nixon's carpet-bombing of Cambodia. Bill Clinton's midnight appropriation of the White House silverware at the end of his second term.

It is to be wondered how these presidents could have achieved any of this had they succumbed to the crippling decentralization of Congress.

In sum, our greatest chief executives have all vigorously exercised the powers of their office to the benefit of the nation—establishing the independence of the executive branch, purchasing Louisiana, winning the Civil War, waterboarding individuals whom mid-price Uzbek bounty hunters have assured us were terrorists—but always under a strict rule of law framework.

As for Barack Obama, he may have learned the lessons of history. In the course of his campaign, he condemned his predecessor's use of enhanced-interrogation procedures and vowed to close the facilities at Guantanamo. Now in office, however, many of his national security policies and his takeover of GM indicate that he too favors expansive presidential powers.

But does Obama truly have what it takes to be an effective chief executive in such parlous times as ours?

Unless he shows that he can discipline the legislative branch, perhaps by waterboarding John Boehner on national television or by forcing recalcitrant members of his own party like Ben Nelson to wear women's undergarments in stress positions, it is clear that America's prestige will erode badly, emboldening terrorists and causing allies to question our commitment to freedom, democracy, and the rule of law. ■

This column was coauthored by Chase Madar, a lawyer in New York.

Even in World War II, the United States did not attempt to assassinate U.S. citizens who went over to the enemy, but that has now changed with President Obama's overseas contingency operations. On Feb. 3, Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair told the House Intelligence Committee that the United States government has developed procedures for killing American citizens abroad who are "involved" with groups threatening to carry out terrorist acts directed against other Americans. Three U.S. citizens have already been approved by the White House for summary execution as soon as actionable intelligence is developed to enable a pilotless drone's hellfire missiles to do the killing. One is Yemeni cleric Anwar al-Aulaqi; the second is American al-Qaeda member Adam Perlman, who goes under the name Adam Yahiye Gadahn; and the third is believed to be a Somali from Minnesota who has joined the al-Qaeda affiliate al-Shabab in the Horn of Africa. Anwar al-Aulaqi, linked in the media to the Christmas underwear bombing and with Major Malik Nadal Hasan, the Fort Hood shooter, has denied any involvement in either incident. Perlman, a propagandist for al-Qaeda, is in Waziristan. Killing these men would involve using military drones to attack targets in three countries with which the United States is not at war.

The Fifth and Sixth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution guarantee a citizen due process and a public trial, as well as the right to confront his accuser. The Obama administration is arguing that these American turncoats do not have constitutional rights because they are not physically in the United States and are actively engaged in planning terrorist acts that the government has the right to disrupt by killing them preemptively. Blair has also explained that there are "defined policies and legal procedures," but as the criteria for inclusion on the kill list are secret, due process is likely limited to the ruminations of a senior bureaucrat and a government lawyer, neither of whom has a mandate to protect the rights of the suspect. Furthermore, Blair's use of the word "involved" suggests that the definition of terrorist activity might be somewhat elastic. The result is that secret information used to make a secret decision can very definitely get you killed in the Obama White House's Brave New World. It will also kill many of your friends and family, as the hellfire missiles are notorious for their infliction of collateral damage.

Killing dissident citizens without due process is not a unique practice. Libyans, Iranians, and Soviets all did it in the 1980s and 1990s. But it is unusual in a liberal democracy where there are restraints on depriving a citizen of his life. The odd thing is that no one who matters seems too disturbed. No congressional committee protested, the *New York Times* only ran a short discussion thread on its online opinion page, and the *Washington Post* relegated the story to page 3 without any follow-up.

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Third World War

The real showdown between Christians and Muslims isn't in the Mideast.

By Philip Jenkins

NOBODY IS SURE how it started. Perhaps Christian activists sent text messages warning that Muslims were trying to poison them. Maybe Muslims tried to storm a church. Whatever the cause, the consequence this past January was mayhem for the Nigerian city of Jos. Muslim-Christian rioting killed up to 500 people before the government intervened with its customary heavy hand.

The most striking point about these battles was that nobody found them striking. In Jos, as in countless other regions across Africa and Asia, violence between Christians and Muslims can erupt at any time, with the potential to detonate riots, civil wars, and persecutions. While these events are poorly reported in the West, they matter profoundly. All the attention in the Global War on Terror focuses on regions in which the U.S. is engaged militarily, but another war is raging across whole continents, one that will ultimately shape the strategic future. Uncomfortably for American policymakers, it is a war of religions and beliefs—a battle not for hearts and minds but for souls.

This is not to argue for an irreconcilable Clash of Civilizations, still less a struggle between Christian good and Muslim evil. In any African country divided between the two faiths—and that includes most lands south of the Sahara—day-to-day interfaith relations are remarkably good. Many families are amicably divided between Christians and Muslims and take great care to avoid sources of conflict. Business or political meetings commonly begin with prayers,

and it is no great matter whether a pastor or a *mullah* leads them.

Yet over the past century, the spread of new religious forms worldwide has created the potential for violence wherever a surging Christianity meets an unyielding Islam. Riots such as those in Jos are one result; terrorism is another. Generally, Muslims have been the aggressors in recent conflicts, but Christians have their own sectarian mobs and militias.

However blame is apportioned, the two faiths have been at daggers drawn, often literally, for decades. As Eliza Griswold discusses in her forthcoming book, *The Tenth Parallel*, you can trace the fault by following the latitude line of ten degrees North. (Jos, conveniently, stands almost exactly at ten degrees.) A tectonic plate of religious and cultural confrontation runs across West and Northwest Africa, through Southeast Asia, Indonesia, and the Philippines. A decade ago, Indonesia witnessed some of the worst fighting, as Muslim militias launched bloody assaults on that nation's Christian minority, some 25 million strong. For decades, the overwhelmingly Christian Philippines has suffered constant insurgency from a ruthless armed movement concentrated in the Muslim south. Mob attacks and pogroms have raged in Malaysia. In Africa, the Sudan is probably the best-known theater of mass martyrdom, while Nigeria remains deeply polarized. And that is not to mention ongoing killings in countries like Uganda and Kenya.

Humanitarian concerns apart, there are plenty of reasons for the West to be deeply worried about these conflicts. Nigeria has almost 160 million people and by 2050 is expected to have 300 million, making it one of the world's most populous nations. If it ever escapes from its present political horrors, it will be the obvious leader of sub-Saharan Africa. Nigeria also matters enormously in terms of natural resources. It is the third largest source of U.S. crude-oil imports, ahead of Saudi Arabia. Other up-and-coming oil suppliers in West and Central Africa are also among the religiously divided nations. Meanwhile Indonesia, with 240 million people, is already a population giant, and unlike Nigeria, it seems set for serious economic development in the coming decade.

If such massive countries ever became monolithically Muslim, that would be significant enough for the West, especially because these states wield such cultural influence over their neighbors. But if they fell into the hands of a radical form of Wahhabi or Salafist Islam, that would be an epochal catastrophe. Conversely, imagine a world in which Christians predominated in these influential Global South nations. That would decisively shift the world's balance of forces in pro-Western directions.

The relationship between Christianity and Islam poses a challenge for at least half of the 20 nations expected to have the world's largest populations by 2050. By present projections, three of these future mega-states—Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Tanzania—will be almost equally