
To Students: Here are materials for many research papers and short papers.

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WESTWARD CONQUEST
MAY 13 (1607) English Colony at Jamestown, Va., settled, westward conquest of indigenous peoples begins.
MAY 14 (1804) 200 years after Jamestown, Lewis and Clark expedition leaves St. Louis to explore the Louisiana Territory, the beginning of the end of the western Native Americans.

NATIONAL SECURITY MYTHS
"10 National Security Myths Debunked!" The Nation (Oct. 6, 2008).
3. We cannot allow Afghanistan to become a sage have for terroritsts. We therefore must redouble our military efforts there....
4. Iran is responsible for much of the violence against US forces in Iraq; by using its proxies in
Lebanon and Gaza, it threatens to dominate the Middle East.

5. To talk to the leaders of "rogue" states like Iran and Cuba without conditions legitimizes their position and weakens American leverage.

SOUTHWARD: PENTAGON IN LATIN AMERICA
To the West: Native Americans, Hawaii, Philippines, Japan, Korea, Vietnam. Another of the vast network of imperial US overseas military bases extends to the South. For example, the Navy has reestablished its Fourth Fleet to patrol Latin American and Caribbean waters. Ref: Greg Grandin, *Empire's Workshop: Latin America, the U.S. and the Rise of New Imperialism.*

Animated video of People's History of American Empire (voiceover by Viggo Mortensen) HowardZinn.org
Howard Zinn.org is the web site of historian, author, and playwright Howard Zinn. View Zinn's latest articles, interviews, speeches, and latest tour ...www.howardzinn.org/ -

Mother Jones interactive military presence map
http://www.motherjones.com/military-maps/
Mother Jones launched an interactive map that shows US military presence around the world from 1950 to 2007. It's based on worldwide troop data from the Pentagon. From Mother Jones: These numbers are often fuzzy: Some deployments are classified, others are temporary, and just because the Defense Department claims 30 US troops in Indonesia last year doesn't mean 1,500 didn't pass through on training missions. Even so, the map, and the associated research, should give you a good feel for what the Pentagon is up to around the world.
Mission Creep: US Military Presence Worldwide (Mother Jones)

MILITARY BUDGET SEPTEMBER 2008

Date: Monday, September 29, 2008, 1:43 PM

*Tom Dispatch*
posted 2008-09-28 19:33:23

*We Have the Money*
If Only We Didn't Waste It on the Defense Budget
By Chalmers Johnson
There has been much moaning, air-sucking, and outrage about the $700 billion that the U.S. government is thinking of throwing away on rich New York bankers who have been ripping us off for the past few years and then letting greed drive their businesses into a variety of ditches. In fact, we dole
out similar amounts of money every year in the form of payoffs to the armed services, the military-
industrial complex, and powerful senators and representatives allied with the Pentagon.
On Wednesday, September 24th, right in the middle of the fight over billions of taxpayer dollars slated
to bail out Wall Street, the House of Representatives passed a $612 billion defense authorization bill for
2009 without a murmur of public protest or any meaningful press comment at all. (The New York Times
gave the matter only three short paragraphs buried in a story about another appropriations measure.)
The defense bill includes $68.6 billion to pursue the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, which is only a
down-payment on the full yearly cost of these wars. (The rest will be raised through future
supplementary bills.) It also included a 3.9% pay raise for military personnel, and $5 billion in pork-
barrel projects not even requested by the administration or the secretary of defense. It also fully funds
the Pentagon's request for a radar site in the Czech Republic, a hare-brained scheme sure to infuriate
the Russians just as much as a Russian missile base in Cuba once infuriated us. The whole bill passed
by a vote of 392-39 and will fly through the Senate, where a similar bill has already been approved.
And no one will even think to mention it in the same breath with the discussion of bailout funds for
dying investment banks and the like.
This is pure waste. Our annual spending on "national security" -- meaning the defense budget plus all
military expenditures hidden in the budgets for the departments of Energy, State, Treasury, Veterans
Affairs, the CIA, and numerous other places in the executive branch -- already exceeds a trillion
dollars, an amount larger than that of all other national defense budgets combined. Not only was there
no significant media coverage of this latest appropriation, there have been no signs of even the slightest
urge to inquire into the relationship between our bloated military, our staggering weapons expenditures,
our extravagantly expensive failed wars abroad, and the financial catastrophe on Wall Street.
The only Congressional "commentary" on the size of our military outlay was the usual pompous drivel
about how a failure to vote for the defense authorization bill would betray our troops. The aged Senator
John Warner (R-Va), former chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, implored his
Republican colleagues to vote for the bill "out of respect for military personnel." He seems to be
unaware that these troops are actually volunteers, not draftees, and that they joined the armed forces as
a matter of career choice, rather than because the nation demanded such a sacrifice from them.
We would better respect our armed forces by bringing the futile and misbegotten wars in Iraq and
Afghanistan to an end. A relative degree of peace and order has returned to Iraq not because of
President Bush's belated reinforcement of our expeditionary army there (the so-called surge), but
thanks to shifting internal dynamics within Iraq and in the Middle East region generally. Such shifts
include a growing awareness among Iraq's Sunni population of the need to restore law and order, a
growing confidence among Iraqi Shiites of their nearly unassailable position of political influence in
the country, and a growing awareness among Sunni nations that the ill-informed war of aggression the
Bush administration waged against Iraq has vastly increased the influence of Shiism and Iran in the
region.
The continued presence of American troops and their heavily reinforced bases in Iraq threaten this
return to relative stability. The refusal of the Shia government of Iraq to agree to an American Status of
Forces Agreement -- much desired by the Bush administration -- that would exempt off-duty American
troops from Iraqi law is actually a good sign for the future of Iraq.
In Afghanistan, our historically deaf generals and civilian strategists do not seem to understand that our
defeat by the Afghan insurgents is inevitable. Since the time of Alexander the Great, no foreign intruder
has ever prevailed over Afghan guerrillas defending their home turf. The first Anglo-Afghan War
(1838-1842) marked a particularly humiliating defeat of British imperialism at the very height of
English military power in the Victorian era. The Soviet-Afghan War (1979-1989) resulted in a Russian
defeat so demoralizing that it contributed significantly to the disintegration of the former Soviet Union
in 1991. We are now on track to repeat virtually all the errors committed by previous invaders of
Afghanistan over the centuries.
In the past year, perhaps most disastrously, we have carried our Afghan war into Pakistan, a relatively wealthy and sophisticated nuclear power that has long cooperated with us militarily. Our recent bungling brutality along the Afghan-Pakistan border threatens to radicalize the Pashtuns in both countries and advance the interests of radical Islam throughout the region. The United States is now identified in each country mainly with Hellfire missiles, unmanned drones, special operations raids, and repeated incidents of the killing of innocent bystanders. The brutal bombing of the Marriott Hotel in Pakistan's capital, Islamabad, on September 20, 2008, was a powerful indicator of the spreading strength of virulent anti-American sentiment in the area. The hotel was a well-known watering hole for American Marines, Special Forces troops, and CIA agents. Our military activities in Pakistan have been as misguided as the Nixon-Kissinger invasion of Cambodia in 1970. The end result will almost surely be the same.

We should begin our disengagement from Afghanistan at once. We dislike the Taliban's fundamentalist religious values, but the Afghan public, with its desperate desire for a return of law and order and the curbing of corruption, knows that the Taliban is the only political force in the country that has ever brought the opium trade under control. The Pakistanis and their effective army can defend their country from Taliban domination so long as we abandon the activities that are causing both Afghans and Pakistanis to see the Taliban as a lesser evil.

One of America's greatest authorities on the defense budget, Winslow Wheeler, worked for 31 years for Republican members of the Senate and for the General Accounting Office on military expenditures. His conclusion, when it comes to the fiscal sanity of our military spending, is devastating:

"America's defense budget is now larger in inflation-adjusted dollars than at any point since the end of World War II, and yet our Army has fewer combat brigades than at any point in that period; our Navy has fewer combat ships; and the Air Force has fewer combat aircraft. Our major equipment inventories for these major forces are older on average than any point since 1946 -- or in some cases, in our entire history."

This in itself is a national disgrace. Spending hundreds of billions of dollars on present and future wars that have nothing to do with our national security is simply obscene. And yet Congress has been corrupted by the military-industrial complex into believing that, by voting for more defense spending, they are supplying "jobs" for the economy. In fact, they are only diverting scarce resources from the desperately needed rebuilding of the American infrastructure and other crucial spending necessities into utterly wasteful munitions. If we cannot cut back our longstanding, ever increasing military spending in a major way, then the bankruptcy of the United States is inevitable. As the current Wall Street meltdown has demonstrated, that is no longer an abstract possibility but a growing likelihood. We do not have much time left.


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LARRY'S COMMENT ON JOHNSON'S REPORT
Oh yes, the old "our troops" cliche’ has been used over and over to justify cost-plus over runs on useless military-war systems. It's been used so much one has no choice but to assume they joke about it in the backrooms of Senators and Representatives. Since it's become a standard revolving door between military service (high officer level) and the Pentagon bureaucracy the system becomes self-perpetuating. That, coupled with what you pointed out a few years ago that they put military installations in each state, guarantees continued funding and huge excess spending. You know military contractors had the scheme in post WWII and use "our troops" to perpetuate the myth year after year. Disgusting that so many
people are so easily fooled. LW

MCCAIN AND OBAMA
Yes the military-war system is so entrenched, so self-perpetuating that neither McCain nor Obama can break out of it even if they wanted to, and there's no indication that either does. No matter who wins this November, We, the People will suffer the same oppression. Only We, the People can make the change. (Dick)

PERMANENT RESOURCE WARS
http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/opinion/2008/0922/1221998220381.html
Monday, September 22, 2008
US generals planning for resource wars
ANALYSIS: The US military sees the next 30 to 40 years as involving a state of continuous war against ideologically-motivated terrorists and competing with Russia and China for natural resources and markets, writes Tom Clonan. To continue click on website.

DEPARTMENT OF WAR TO DEPARTMENT OF "DEFENSE"
Ever since OMNI began, we have distributed bumper stickers reminding the public that the Department of Defense was the Department of War until 1947, when the US National Security State was inaugurated. Recently the author of The Limits of Power, Andrew Bacevich, argued on Democracy Now that the name Dept. of War should be resumed. The Pentagon is a Dept. of "power projection" not protection. Also, in reply to Amy Goodman's question, "Who benefits from US wars?" Bacevitch replied: business as usual, 1) the culture of war, composed of the military industrial complex and the national security apparatuses, and 2) the culture of capitalism through acquisition, consumption, and resource waste [my expression—Dick][.

IMPEACHMENT
From Shakespeare's Julius Caesar:
Crown him?
And then we put a sting in him,
That at his will he may do danger with.
The abuse of greatness is when it disjoins
Remorse from power.

A popular government without an informed public will not last long as a democracy. The power of the House to declare war requires fully informed members. President Bush repeatedly deceived the Congress. It is a felony for the President to withhold information from Congress, and that crime is impeachable. OK, it's too late, but PROSECUTION is still possible.

SENATOR LINCOLN (202) 224-4843 Fax: (202) 228-1371.
Fayetteville office: 251-1380
Senator Mark Pryor: Phone: (202) 224-2353 Fax: (202) 228-0908
CONGRESSMAN Boozman: Lowell office: 479-725-0400.
Governor Beebe

KING'S APRIL 3, 1967 "A TIME TO BREAK SILENCE"
Denounces U.S. materialism, militarism, and racism.
American Rhetoric: Martin Luther King, Jr: A Time to Break Silence...
Complete text and audio of Martin Luther King's Declaration Against the Vietnam War.
www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mikatimetobreaksilence.htm - 57k - Cached - Similar pages - Note this

A Time to Break Silence: By Rev. Martin Luther King
Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence By Rev. Martin Luther King 4 April 1967 Speech delivered by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., on April 4, 1967, ...
www.informationclearinghouse.info/article2564.htm - 55k - Cached - Similar pages - Note this

Rev. Martin Luther King, Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence
www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/45a/058.html - 41k - Cached - Similar pages - Note this

Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence
Rev. Martin Luther King's April 1967 speech on Vietnam.
www.serendipity.li/wot/beyond_vietnam.htm - 42k - Cached - Similar pages - Note this

WILLIAM BLUM, Anti-Empire Report,
BBlum6@aol.com

May 1, 2008
http://killinghope.org/aer57.htm

Anti-Empire Report, June 6, 2008
http://killinghope.org/aer58.htm

Anti-Empire Report, July 4, 2008
http://killinghope.org/aer59.htm

Anti-Empire Report, August 5, 2008
http://killinghope.org/aer60.htm

Anti-Empire Report, September 5, 2008
http://killinghope.org/aer61.htm

Anti-Empire Report, October 1, 2008
http://killinghope.org/aer62.htm

Anti-Empire Report, October 30, 2008
http://www.killinghope.org/bblum6/aer63.html
Resisting Military Recruiting in the Schools via Testing

By Dick Bennett, 11-19-08

The eight recruiter release options for providing access to student test information to recruiting services are:

1. Provide student test information to recruiting services no sooner than 7 days after mailed to school
2. Provide student test information to recruiting services no sooner than 60 days after mailed to school
3. Provide student test information to recruiting services no sooner than 90 days after mailed to school
4. Provide student test information to recruiting services no sooner than 120 days after mailed to school
5. Provide student test information to recruiting services no sooner than the end of the SY for that specific school or 30 June
6. Provide student test information to recruiting services no sooner than 7 days after mailed to school with instruction that no telephone solicitation by recruiters will be conducted as a result of test information provided
7. Invalid test results. Student test information is not provided to recruiting services
8. Access to student test information is not provided to recruiting services


Every year, hundreds of thousands of high school students take the basic entrance test for the U.S. military—the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). Administered free by the Pentagon in partnership with local high schools, the ASVAB is billed as part of a "career exploration program." The military grades the test and reports are sent to students, school counselors, and to military recruiters—and recorded in the Pentagon's Joint Advertising Market Research and Studies Program, a computerized database tracking potential recruits.

The ASVAB was not designed to help students explore careers in general. The US Army's School Recruiting Program Handbook states that a main purpose of the ASVAB is to provide military recruiters "with a source of leads of high school seniors and juniors qualified through the ASVAB for enlistment." Its information about each test taker's skills, graduation plans, and contact information enable recruiters to tailor their sales pitch to each student.
Here's the problem with the test: Schools can block the release of this information to recruiters by choosing Option 8 of the ASVAB, which allows the ASVAB to be administered but prevents data from being forwarded to recruiters, but only if the school chooses release option 8 universally. Also, schools can universally choose Option 8 but arrange to have the scores released for students who request that their scores are forwarded to the military. Even if students or parents decide to opt out from their school's release of student contact information to recruiters under No Child Left Behind, that opt-out decision is overridden if students then take the ASVAB. Students cannot individually elect option 8. The school can regulate its own release of information from pupil records, but it cannot regulate the military's access to ASVAB test data, except by declaring that all students must be tested under ASVAB release option 8.

Montgomery County, Maryland, is a large district that adopted such a policy in 2006, on the grounds of privacy. Also, all students in Montgomery County under eighteen years old must have parental consent prior to taking the ASVAB. In 2007 the largest school district in the country, Los Angeles Unified School District selected Option 8 for its students, and in early 2008 Prince George's County, MD followed suit. Also this year, the District of Columbia public school system banned the ASVAB, deciding to pursue alternative career assessment testing, an option open to all schools.

What can be done?

**Access under NCLB:** Parents who do not wish recruiters to have access to their children's private information should write the Principal of the school.

Build community support for reversing the NCLB requirement that schools must provide contact information about students to recruiters unless parents object. Ask your congressional representatives to advocate changing the requirement to read that schools must not provide private information to recruiters unless the parents request them to.

**Access via the ASVAB test:** The best way of avoiding dissemination of the test and contact information is to not take the test. The test is not mandatory, a fact many high schools fail to disclose. Ensure all students are aware that taking the test is voluntary. Call for the school to make this announcement to students prior to the administration of the test.

Urge school administrators to offer students who choose not to take the ASVAB an alternative place to go. Suggest that administrators offer the test on a weekend so as not to take up valuable school time.

Build community support for banning the ASVAB. Speak and leaflet at school board meetings.

Encourage support for alternative career assessment options.

Request that counter-recruitment literature be present in school guidance counseling offices, libraries, and career centers.

**Access via Option 8:** Ask the school to choose Option 8.
These efforts are part of a broad movement to reduce the military's presence in our schools. Much more is necessary. We must question all the ways that the military insinuates itself into schools to condition our youth for war—visits to schools by recruiters, programs like JROTC, Young Marines, Army's Adventure Van, Air Force's Raptor Trailer. Military propaganda begins so early in U. S. schools that we can identify them as the military's predominant recruitment venue. Let's pursue all options for reducing military recruitment in our schools, expose the military's agenda for our schools, and challenge the embrace most schools have long given to all branches of the armed forces.

Reference:

Counter-recruiting expert rec. by Janine: Pat Elder, agentforchange@comcast.net

MILITARIZED HIGHER EDUCATION
"Against the Militarized Academy" Thursday 20 November 2008
by: Henry A. Giroux, truthout | Perspective

Defense Secretary Robert Gates has announced an effort to increase the militarization of higher education. (Photo: FilmMaker Magazine)

While there is an ongoing discussion about what shape the military-industrial complex will take under an Obama presidency, what is often left out of this analysis is the intrusion of the military into higher education. One example of the increasingly intensified and expansive symbiosis between the military-industrial complex and academia was on full display when Robert Gates, the secretary of defense, announced the creation of what he calls a new "Minerva Consortium," ironically named after the goddess of wisdom, whose purpose is to fund various universities to "carry out social-sciences research relevant to national security."(1) Gates's desire to turn universities into militarized knowledge factories producing knowledge, research and personnel in the interest of the Homeland (In)Security State should be of special concern for intellectuals, artists, academics and others who believe that the university should oppose such interests and alignments. At the very least, the emergence of the Minerva Consortium raises a larger set of concerns about the ongoing militarization of higher education in the United States.

In a post-9/11 world, with its all-embracing war on terror and a culture of fear, the increasing spread of the discourse and values of militarization throughout the social order is intensifying the shift from the promise of a liberal democracy to the reality of a militarized society. Militarization suggests more than simply a militaristic ideal - with its celebration of war as the truest measure of the health of the nation and the soldier-warrior as the most noble expression of the merging of masculinity and unquestioning patriotism - but an intensification and expansion of the underlying values, practices, ideologies, social relations and cultural representations associated with military culture. What appears new about the amplified militarization of the post-9/11 world is that it has become normalized, serving as a powerful educational force that shapes our lives, memories and daily experiences. As an
educational force, military power produces identities, goods, institutions, knowledge, modes of communication and affective investments - in short, it now bears down on all aspects of social life and the social order. As Michael Geyer points out, what is distinctive about the militarization of the social order is that civil society not only "organizes itself for the production of violence,"(2) but increasingly spurs a gradual erosion of civil liberties. Military power and policies are expanded to address not only matters of defense and security, but also problems associated with the entire health and social life of the nation, which are now measured by military spending, discipline and loyalty, as well as hierarchical modes of authority.

As citizens increasingly assume the roles of informer, soldier and consumer willing to enlist in or be conscripted by the totalizing war on terror, we see the very idea of the university as a site of critical thinking, public service and socially responsible research being usurped by a manic jingoism and a market-driven fundamentalism that enshrine the entrepreneurial spirit and military aggression as means to dominate and control society. This should not surprise us, since, as William G. Martin, a professor of sociology at Binghamton University, indicates, "universities, colleges and schools have been targeted precisely because they are charged with both socializing youth and producing knowledge of peoples and cultures beyond the borders of Anglo-America."(3) But rather than be lulled into complacency by the insidious spread of corporate and military power, we need to be prepared to reclaim institutions such as the university that have historically served as vital democratic spheres protecting and serving the interests of social justice and equality. What I want to suggest is that such a struggle is not only political, but also pedagogical in nature.

Over 17 million students pass through the hallowed halls of academe, and it is crucial that they be educated in ways that enable them to recognize creeping militarization and its effects throughout American society, particularly in terms of how these effects threaten "democratic government at home just as they menace the independence and sovereignty of other countries."(4) But students must also recognize how such anti-democratic forces work in attempting to dismantle the university itself as a place to learn how to think critically and participate in public debate and civic engagement.(5) In part, this means giving them the tools to fight for the demilitarization of knowledge on college campuses - to resist complicity with the production of knowledge, information and technologies in classrooms and research labs that contribute to militarized goals and violence.

Even so, there is more at stake than simply educating students to be alert to the dangers of militarization and the way in which it is redefining the very mission of higher education. Chalmers Johnson, in his continuing critique of the threat that the politics of empire presents to democracy at home and abroad, argues that if the United States is not to degenerate into a military dictatorship, in spite of Obama's election, a grass-roots movement will have to occupy center stage in opposing militarization, government secrecy and imperial power, while reclaiming the basic principles of democracy.(6) Such a task may seem daunting, but there is a crucial need for faculty, students, administrators and concerned citizens to develop alliances for long-term organizations and social movements to resist the growing ties among higher education, on the one hand, and the armed forces, intelligence agencies and war industries on the other - ties that play a crucial role in reproducing militarized knowledge.

Opposing militarization as part of a broader pedagogical strategy in and out of the classroom also raises the question of what kinds of competencies, skills and knowledge might be crucial to such a task. One possibility is to develop critical educational theories and practices that define the space of learning not only through the critical consumption of knowledge but also through its production for peaceful and socially just ends. In the fight against militarization and "armed intellectuals," educators need a language of critique, but they also need a language that embraces a sense of hope and collective struggle. This means elaborating the meaning of politics through a concerted effort to expand the space of politics by reclaiming "the public character of spaces, relations, and institutions regarded as private" on the other.(7) We live at a time when matters of life and death are central to political governance.
While registering the shift in power toward the large-scale production of death, disposability and exclusion, a new understanding of the meaning and purpose of higher education must also point to notions of agency, power and responsibility that operate in the service of life, democratic struggles and the expansion of human rights.

Finally, if higher education is to come to grips with the multilayered pathologies produced by militarization, it will have to rethink not merely the space of the university as a democratic public sphere, but also the global space in which intellectuals, educators, students, artists, labor unions and other social actors and movements can form transnational alliances to oppose the death-dealing ideology of militarization and its effects on the world - including violence, pollution, massive poverty, racism, the arms trade, growth of privatized armies, civil conflict, child slavery and the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. As the Bush regime comes to an end, it is time for educators and students to take a stand and develop global organizations that can be mobilized in the effort to supplant a culture of war with a culture of peace, whose elemental principles must be grounded in relations of economic, political, cultural and social democracy and the desire to sustain human life.


Henry A. Giroux currently holds the Global TV Network Chair Professorship at McMaster University in the English and Cultural Studies Department. His most recent books include "The University in Chains: Confronting the Military-Industrial-Academic Complex" (2007) and "Against the Terror of Neoliberalism" (2008). His primary research areas are: cultural studies, youth studies, critical pedagogy, popular culture, media studies, social theory, and the politics of higher and public education.

BEGINNING OF US NATIONAL SECURITY STATE

Read "The Origins of International Law: World War II and Citizen Responsibility" by Sister Jackie Hudson, OP. Group Zero (July 2008) p. 6. In one page Sister Hudson gives a one-page truthful history of post-WWII USA of which most US citizens including alleged Christians are ignorant or, more plausibly, they deny, or rationalize. Her key date, the true key to subsequent US arrogance, militarism, and imperialism, is June, 1948, and the creation of the National Security Council Directive 10/2 and the US National Security State, which began our 60 years of assassinations of national leaders, overthrowing governments, and lying to cover up accountability. See James Douglass, JFK and the Unspeakable. In contrast, the Nuremberg Tribunal defined all of these behaviors as war crimes.

(Dick) Suggestion: If you cannot resist traveling, despite the CO2 you cause, and if you travel to Washington State, visit the Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor and the Ground Zero permanent protesting group, and send a report to our Newsletter. Or any of the thousands of military
THREE BOOKS ON CIVIL LIBERTIES USA

The Arkansas Democrat/Gazette (3-25-07) reported a "Russian Crackdown on Activists" in Nizhny Novgorod, reportedly with "hundreds of protesters" arrested, the "third major crackdown on a demonstration in recent months." Marchers dubbed "Those Who Disagree" "accused the Kremlin of stifling free speech, silencing dissent and depriving them of free and fair elections."

In Egypt, "officials are hoping to add powers to the constitution that would allow the president to more easily dissolve Parliament and give the president free rein to suspend civil liberties and imprison anyone deemed a terrorist threat" (ADG 3-25).

And how fares the U. S. constitutional republic? Three books help us reflect on the question.

It Can Happen Here: Authoritarian Peril in the Age of Bush by Joe Conason describes the constitutional crisis which has engulfed us. Big business, big government, and big, nationalized religion have produced perpetual war, which with their partners corruption and fear have led to shrinking liberties.

Nemesis: The Last Days of the American Republic by Chalmers Johnson opens with Chapter 1 on "Militarism and the Breakdown of Constitutional Government," then in subsequent chapters examines the CIA as the president's private army, the imperialism of over 700 US military bases around the world and the domination of outer space as the ultimate imperial project.

And Blackwater: The Rise of the World's Most Powerful Mercenary Army by Jeremy Scahill describes the rise of the Blackwater USA, the presidency's second private army to arise out of the corporate, White House, Pentagon, mainstream media complex.

Call your bookstore today.

FACTS ABOUT US IMPERIALISM, MILITARISM, AND CONSEQUENCES.

Some friends of mine who live in Northern Wisconsin distribute this newsletter. I thought you might want to see it.

INTERESTING FACTS

There are 737 US military bases worldwide. - OpEd News [now probably over 900—Dick]

Not all Pentagon funds are used for weapons and salaries. Today the number of corporations contracted by the Dept. of Defense tops 47,000 with subcontractors reaching well over the 100,000 mark, making for one massive conglomerate touching nearly every sector of society, from top computer manufacturer Dell to oil giant ExxonMobil to package-shipping titan FedEx.

Not all Pentagon funds are for weapons and salaries. Danskin Co. received $780,000 of DoD funds in 2004 and
another $456,000 in 2005. Hines Her Way, made by defense contractor and cake seller Sara Lee Corp., took in more than $68 million from the DoD in 2006. New Balance and True Fitness Technology got monies for sneakers and fitness equipment for the military. Bausch and Lomb, Zantac, GlaxoSmithKline, Thomasville Furniture, Sears, Harris Pillow Supply, Kohler, Home Depot, Charmin, Crest toothpaste, Noxzema, Zest soap, Herbal essences are all products of Proctor and Gamble, which is among the top 100 defense contractors that raked in a cool $362,461,808 from the Pentagon in 2006.

In 2005, more than $38 million taxpayer money was spent on US armed forces’ racecars, National Football League jerseys and baseball caps, which may be one of the reasons why the armed forces is advertised so much during these sports events. In 2006 ExxonMobil got military contracts totaling $1.7 billion. Shell got $1.15 billion in contracts. GM got $1.5 billion in contracts in 2005. ADT got more than $16 million from the Pentagon in 2006, while its parent company, Tyco International, got over $187 million. -from The Complex: How the Military Invades Our Everyday Live by Nick Turse

In an attempt to disguise the true size of the US military empire, the government has often hidden major military-related expenditures in departments other than the Dept. of Defense (DoD). For example, $23.4 billion for the Dept. of Energy goes towards developing and maintaining nuclear warheads; and $25.3 billion in the Dept. of State budget is spent on foreign military assistance (primarily for Israel, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, the United Arab Republic, Egypt and Pakistan). Another $1.03 billion outside the official DoD budget is now needed for recruitment and re-enlistment incentives for the overstretched US military, up from a mere $174 million in 2003, when the invasion of Iraq began. The Dept. of Veteran Affairs gets at least $75.7 billion for the wounded soldiers. The Dept. of Homeland Security gets $46.4 billion. The Dept. of Justice gets $1.9 billion for the paramilitary activities of the FBI. NASA gets $7.6 billion for military-related activities, and well over $200 billion in interest for past defense outlays are not considered part of the DoD budget. - by Chalmers Johnson in Le Monde diplomatique

Some 30-40% of the defense budget is "black," meaning that these sections contain hidden expenditures for classified projects. There is no possible way to know what they include or whether their total amounts are accurate. America's huge debt of $9 trillion can be largely explained by its defense spending. Military spending diverts resources from productive uses, such as consumption and investment, and ultimately slows economic growth and reduces employment. US defense-related spending for fiscal 2008 will exceed $1 trillion for the first time in history. -The Center for Economic and Policy Research of Washington DC

Congress wants to spend $172 billion more in Iraq from supplemental funds separate from the Defense budget. In 2006, the US spent more on the occupation of Iraq than the whole world spent on investment in renewable energy. The war is responsible for at least 141 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent since March 2003. Just the $600 billion that Congress has allocated for military operations in Iraq to date could have built over 9,000 wind farms, with the overall capacity to meet a quarter of the country's current electricity demand. - Oil Change International report, "A Climate of War."

A billion people in 33 countries live on $1 a day. Some Haitians are eating dirt mixed in their food to avoid starving. There is enough food, but they cannot afford to buy it. Rice is a major part of their diet. In the US, rice farmers are subsidized by the government making it easier for them to sell their rice at a cheaper price than the farmers of other countries. Therefore, rice farmers of other countries go broke; and their people starve. Food, water and oil are all needed by so many people, but they cannot afford them. -Counterpunch, 4-1-08

As many as 18 US veterans kill themselves each day. -Veterans Administration

There has been a 600% increase in terrorism since the US invaded Iraq in 2003. - Democracy Now, 2-22-08

In 2004 a GAO study found that 61% of US corporations, including 39% of the large companies, paid no corporate income taxes between 1996 and 2000. Last year, corporations shouldered just 14.4% of the total US tax burden, compared with about 50% in 1940. - Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Parade, 4-13-08

In Sept. 2007, the Kurdish Regional Government in Iraq announced that it had signed a production-sharing deal with Texas-based Hunt Oil. The move is an indication that Western oil companies are moving to make deals with regional bodies to get access to Iraq's vast oil reserves. Ray Hunt, CEO and president of Hunt Oil is a close friend of President Bush. - World Socialist Web Site, 7-15-07
Five states in the US have more gun dealers than they do gas stations. - Violence Policy Center

Some 13 people under the age of 19 are killed daily by guns, and a gun in the home is 43% more likely to be used in suicides, unintentional shootings or to commit murder, than it is to be used in self-defense. - The Christian Citizen

The estimated value of the market for wildlife trafficking, the second largest illegal trade in the world, after drugs, is $10 billion. - State Dept.

Chance that an Iraqi has fled his or her home since the beginning of the war: 1 in 8

Number of Iraqis who have been given refugee status in the US since 2003: 764

Percentage of US military who said that success in Iraq was "not very likely" or "not at all likely": 41

Number of consecutive months that the American workforce has spent more than its take-home pay: 20

Estimated amount that Americans lose each year by buying overheated gas, which has less energy per gallon: $959,000,000

Year by which the world's seafood will run out, at current rates of decline: 2048

Number of US states where marijuana is the top cash crop: 12

Percentage change since 2002 in the number of US teens using illegal drugs: -15

Percentage change in the number of adults in their fifties doing so: +63 Harper's Index, April 2008

The oldest living tree is a Norway Spruce in Sweden estimated to be 8,000 years old. - Reuters, 4-11-08

The Exxon Mobil CEO Tillerson got a $21.7 million pay package after the company's record $40 billion profit last year, the highest profit ever made by a US company. - Care2 News Network, 4-13-08

Many of our US legislators are involved in crime: 100 Republicans and 1 Democrat were convicted of a crime, 4 Republicans and 0 Democrats were indicted for crimes; 14 Republicans and 1 Democrat are under investigation; 75 Republicans and 0 Democrats were implicated in crimes. - Diane’s Private List, 4-12-08

However, almost all are breaking international law with the Iraq occupation and support for countries violating international law.

More than ¼ of Congress members or 151 of them have invested between $78.7 million and $195.5 million in companies that received defense contracts of at least $5.0 million. These companies received more than $275.6 billion from the government in 2006 or $755 million per day. - Inter Press Service, 4-7-08

The Israeli military is closing down schools and orphanages run by the Islamic Charitable Society (ICS) in the West Bank city of Hebron. The Israeli military has already seized $157,000 worth of goods including rice, oil, sugar, clothing and first aid kits, from the ICS. - Middle East Children's Alliance

Only 30% of children nationwide have access to safe drinking water in Iraq. - Iraqi & American Reconciliation Project and UN Children’s Fund

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US IMPERIAL WAR CRIMES
Former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic was found dead in his jail cell at The Hague Saturday. Since 2001, he had been on trial for genocide in Bosnia, and war crimes and crimes against humanity in Bosnia, Croatia and Kosovo. Although many have already adjudged him guilty, we will never hear the official verdict of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

We will also never see a trial in the ICTY for Bill Clinton, Madeleine Albright or Wesley Clark for the 1999 US-led NATO bombing of Yugoslavia. Nor will George W. Bush, Dick Cheney or Donald Rumsfeld be prosecuted by an international tribunal for their war crimes in Iraq.

NATO's invasion of Yugoslavia was a war of aggression that violated the United Nations Charter. It was not undertaken in self-defense nor did it carry the approval of the Security Council. Between 1500 and 2000 civilians were killed and many thousands injured. When I visited Belgrade a year after the NATO bombing, I saw schools, hospitals, bridges, libraries and homes reduced to rubble. The ICTY statute prohibits the targeting of civilians. And even though it also forbids the use of poisonous weapons calculated to cause unnecessary suffering, NATO used depleted uranium and cluster bombs, whose devastating character is widely known. NATO also targeted a petrochemical complex, releasing carcinogens into the air that reached 10,600 times the acceptable safety level.

The American Association of Jurists and a group of Canadian lawyers and law professors filed a war crimes complaint against NATO leaders in the ICTY. Yet that tribunal conducted only a perfunctory investigation of the serious charges. Both Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch criticized the ICTY for failing to thoroughly investigate.

By denouncing the International Criminal Court, Team Bush has ensured that US leaders will never be held to account for war crimes. Although virtually every Western democracy has ratified the statute under which the Court operates, the United States has thumbed its nose at this monumental international justice system.

Bush has reason to fear prosecution. He has used cluster bombs, depleted uranium, white phosphorous and napalm. And the torture of
prisoners in US custody also constitutes a war crime. His war on Iraq is a war of aggression.

After the Holocaust, the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg called the waging of aggressive war "essentially an evil thing ... to initiate a war of aggression ... is not only an international crime; it is the supreme international crime differing only from other war crimes in that it contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole." Associate United States Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson, one of the prosecutors at the Nuremberg Tribunal, labeled the crime of aggression "the greatest menace of our times."

For the first time, at Nuremberg, individuals were held criminally accountable for war crimes and waging a war of aggression. Japanese leaders were also tried for atrocities committed during World War II, in the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal.

Yet US leaders who were responsible for some of the most heinous war crimes ever committed - the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the fire bombings of Dresden, Tokyo and 66 other Japanese cities - were never brought to justice.

Only the vanquished Germans and Japanese were put on trial. Justice Radhabinod Pal of India, dissenting at the Tokyo Tribunal, called this "victor's justice."

Indeed, Robert McNamara, who participated in the bombing of Japan during World War II, admitted in the film Fog of War that he and General Curtis LeMay would have been tried for war crimes if the US had lost the war. He said, "LeMay said if we lost the war that we would have all been prosecuted as war criminals. And I think he's right. He ... and I'd say I ... were behaving as war criminals."

It is no accident that the Iraqi Special Tribunal where Saddam Hussein is currently on trial only has jurisdiction over Iraqi citizens for acts committed prior to May 1, 2003, the day the US-UK occupation of Iraq began. The United States opposed sending Hussein to an international tribunal, and manipulated the Iraqi tribunal to prevent any US leaders from being tried for their war crimes in Iraq.

What's good for the goose is good for the gander. But the leaders of the world's most powerful country continue to enjoy "victor's justice."

Marjorie Cohn is a professor at Thomas Jefferson School of Law, President-elect of the National Lawyers Guild, and the US representative to the executive committee of the American Association of Jurists. She writes a weekly column for truthout.
RAND CORPORATION
Review of Alex Abella, *Soldiers of Reason* by Chalmers Johnson. To send this to a friend, or to read more dispatches, go to tomdispatch.com

Tomgram: Chalmers Johnson, Teaching Imperialism 101 The RAND Corporation was the ur-think tank, the Cold War granddaddy of them all, and it's still with us.

In the 1950s, nuclear war-gaming a conflagration for which the usual war games would have been ludicrous, it took the U.S. military into virtuality and science fiction long before there was an Internet to play with. (And it had a hand in creating the Internet, too!) In the 1960s, it helped several administrations plan and fight the Vietnam War, making antiseptic theory into an all-too-grim reality. And that's just the beginning of the work RAND did on a range of hot-button imperial issues.

For a brief period in the 1960s, Chalmers Johnson was a RAND consultant. Now, the author of the prophetic pre-9/11 book *Blowback* and, most recently, of *Nemesis, The Last Days of the Republic*, which every news day seems to make more relevant, turns to the think tank that did it all. Tom

"A Litany of Horrors: America's University of Imperialism," By Chalmers Johnson

This essay is a review of *Soldiers of Reason: The RAND Corporation and the Rise of the American Empire* by Alex Abella (Harcourt, 2008,

The RAND Corporation of Santa Monica, California, was set up immediately after World War II by the U.S. Army Air Corps (soon to become the U.S. Air Force). The Air Force generals who had the idea were trying to perpetuate the wartime relationship that had developed between the scientific and intellectual communities and the American military, as exemplified by the Manhattan Project to develop and build the atomic bomb.

Soon enough, however, RAND became a key institutional building block of the Cold War American empire. As the premier think tank for the U.S.'s role as hegemon of the Western world, RAND was instrumental in giving that empire the militaristic cast it retains to this day and in hugely enlarging official demands for atomic bombs, nuclear submarines, intercontinental ballistic missiles, and long-range bombers. Without RAND, our military-industrial complex, as well as our democracy, would look quite different.

Alex Abella, the author of *Soldiers of Reason*, is a Cuban-American living in Los Angeles who has written several well-received action
and adventure novels set in Cuba and a less successful nonfiction account of attempted Nazi sabotage within the United States during World War II. The publisher of his latest book claims that it is "the first history of the shadowy think tank that reshaped the modern world." Such a history is long overdue. Unfortunately, this book does not exhaust the demand. We still need a less hagiographic, more critical, more penetrating analysis of RAND's peculiar contributions to the modern world.

"Swelling Budget Deficit up 62% for fiscal 2008" by Jeannine Aversa (AP) (ADG, 3-13-2008). The "federal deficit swelled to $263.3 billion in the first five months of this budget year as record spending...outpaced record revenue." "Spending totaled a record $1.23 trillion." No mention of the militarism and wars!

The Pentagon Strangles Our Economy: Why the U.S. Has Gone Broke
By Chalmers Johnson, Le Monde diplomatique
Posted on April 26, 2008, Printed on April 26, 2008
http://www.alternet.org/story/83555/

The military adventurers in the Bush administration have much in common with the corporate leaders of the defunct energy company Enron. Both groups thought that they were the "smartest guys in the room" -- the title of Alex Gibney's prize-winning film on what went wrong at Enron. The neoconservatives in the White House and the Pentagon outsmarted themselves. They failed even to address the problem of how to finance their schemes of imperialist wars and global domination.

As a result, going into 2008, the United States finds itself in the anomalous position of being unable to pay for its own elevated living standards or its wasteful, overly large military establishment. Its government no longer even attempts to reduce the ruinous expenses of maintaining huge standing armies, replacing the equipment that seven years of wars have destroyed or worn out, or preparing for a war in outer space against unknown adversaries. Instead, the Bush administration puts off these costs for future generations to pay or repudiate. This fiscal irresponsibility has been disguised through many manipulative financial schemes (causing poorer countries to lend us unprecedented sums of money), but the time of reckoning is fast approaching.

There are three broad aspects to the U.S. debt crisis. First, in the current fiscal year (2008) we are spending insane amounts of money on "defense" projects that bear no relation to the national security of the U.S. We are also keeping the income tax burdens on the richest segment of the population at strikingly low levels.

Second, we continue to believe that we can compensate for the accelerating erosion of our base and our loss of jobs to foreign countries through massive military expenditures -- "military Keynesianism" (which I discuss in detail in my book Nemesis: The Last Days of the American Republic). By that, I mean the mistaken belief that public policies focused on frequent wars, huge expenditures on weapons and munitions, and large standing armies can indefinitely sustain a wealthy capitalist economy. The opposite is actually true.

Third, in our devotion to militarism (despite our limited resources), we are failing to invest in our social infrastructure and other requirements for the long-term health of the U.S. These are what economists call opportunity costs, things not done because we spent our money on something else. Our public education system has deteriorated alarmingly. We have failed to provide health care to all our citizens and neglected our responsibilities as the world's number one polluter. Most important, we have lost our competitiveness as a manufacturer for civilian needs, an infinitely more efficient use of scarce resources than arms manufacturing.

Fiscal disaster
It is virtually impossible to overstate the profligacy of what our government spends on the military. The
Department of Defense's planned expenditures for the fiscal year 2008 are larger than all other nations' military budgets combined. The supplementary budget to pay for the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, not part of the official defense budget, is itself larger than the combined military budgets of Russia and China. Defense-related spending for fiscal 2008 will exceed $1 trillion for the first time in history. The U.S. has become the largest single seller of arms and munitions to other nations on Earth. Leaving out President Bush's two on-going wars, defense spending has doubled since the mid-1990s. The defense budget for fiscal 2008 is the largest since the second world war.

Before we try to break down and analyze this gargantuan sum, there is one important caveat. Figures on defense spending are notoriously unreliable. The numbers released by the Congressional Reference Service and the Congressional Budget Office do not agree with each other. Robert Higgs, senior fellow for political economy at the Independent Institute, says: "A well-founded rule of thumb is to take the Pentagon's (always well publicized) basic budget total and double it." Even a cursory reading of newspaper articles about the Department of Defense will turn up major differences in statistics about its expenses. Some 30-40% of the defense budget is "black," meaning that these sections contain hidden expenditures for classified projects. There is no possible way to know what they include or whether their total amounts are accurate.

There are many reasons for this budgetary sleight-of-hand -- including a desire for secrecy on the part of the president, the secretary of defense, and the military-industrial complex -- but the chief one is that members of Congress, who profit enormously from defense jobs and pork-barrel projects in their districts, have a political interest in supporting the Department of Defense. In 1996, in an attempt to bring accounting standards within the executive branch closer to those of the civilian economy, Congress passed the Federal Financial Management Improvement Act. It required all federal agencies to hire outside auditors to review their books and release the results to the public. Neither the Department of Defense, nor the Department of Homeland Security, has ever complied. Congress has complained, but not penalized either department for ignoring the law. All numbers released by the Pentagon should be regarded as suspect.

In discussing the fiscal 2008 defense budget, as released on 7 February 2007, I have been guided by two experienced and reliable analysts: William D Hartung of the New America Foundation's Arms and Security Initiative and Fred Kaplan, defense correspondent for Slate.org. They agree that the Department of Defense requested $481.4bn for salaries, operations (except in Iraq and Afghanistan), and equipment. They also agree on a figure of $141.7bn for the " supplemental" budget to fight the global war on terrorism -- that is, the two ongoing wars that the general public may think are actually covered by the basic Pentagon budget. The Department of Defense also asked for an extra $93.4bn to pay for hitherto unmentioned war costs in the remainder of 2007 and, most creatively, an additional "allowance" (a new term in defense budget documents) of $50bn to be charged to fiscal year 2009. This makes a total spending request by the Department of Defense of $766.5bn.

But there is much more. In an attempt to disguise the true size of the U.S. military empire, the government has long hidden major military-related expenditures in departments other than Defense. For example, $23.4bn for the Department of Energy goes towards developing and maintaining nuclear warheads; and $25.3bn in the Department of State budget is spent on foreign military assistance (primarily for Israel, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, the United Arab Republic, Egypt and Pakistan). Another $1.03bn outside the official Department of Defense budget is now needed for recruitment and re-enlistment incentives for the overstretched U.S. military, up from a mere $174m in 2003, when the war in Iraq began. The Department of Veterans Affairs currently gets at least $75.7bn, 50% of it for the long-term care of the most seriously injured among the 28,870 soldiers so far wounded in Iraq and 1,708 in Afghanistan. The amount is universally derided as inadequate. Another $46.4bn goes to the Department of Homeland Security.

Missing from this compilation is $1.9bn to the Department of Justice for the paramilitary activities of the FBI; $38.5bn to the Department of the Treasury for the Military Retirement Fund; $7.6bn for the military-related activities of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration; and well over $200bn in interest for past debt-financed defense outlays. This brings U.S. spending for its military establishment during the current fiscal year, conservatively calculated, to at least $1.1 trillion.

Military Keynesianism

Such expenditures are not only morally obscene, they are fiscally unsustainable. Many neo-conservatives and poorly informed patriotic Americans believe that, even though our defense budget is huge, we can afford it because we are the richest country on Earth. That statement is no longer true. The world's richest political entity, according to the CIA's World Factbook, is the European Union. The E.U.'s 2006 GDP was estimated to be slightly larger than that of the U.S. Moreover, China's 2006 GDP was only slightly smaller than that of the U.S., and Japan was the world's fourth richest nation.

A more telling comparison that reveals just how much worse we're doing can be found among the current accounts of various nations. The current account measures the net trade surplus or deficit of a country plus cross-border payments of interest, royalties, dividends, capital gains, foreign aid, and other income. In order for
Japan to manufacture anything, it must import all required raw materials. Even after this incredible expense is met, it still has an $88bn per year trade surplus with the U.S. and enjoys the world's second highest current account balance (China is number one). The U.S. is number 163 -- last on the list, worse than countries such as Australia and the U.K. that also have large trade deficits. Its 2006 current account deficit was $811.5bn; second worst was Spain at $106.4bn. This is unsustainable.

It's not just that our tastes for foreign goods, including imported oil, vastly exceed our ability to pay for them. We are financing them through massive borrowing. On 7 November 2007, the U.S. Treasury announced that the national debt had breached $9 trillion for the first time. This was just five weeks after Congress raised the "debt ceiling" to $9.815 trillion. If you begin in 1789, at the moment the constitution became the supreme law of the land, the debt accumulated by the federal government did not top $1 trillion until 1981. When George Bush became president in January 2001, it stood at approximately $5.7 trillion. Since then, it has increased by 45%. This huge debt can be largely explained by our defense expenditures.

The top spenders
The world's top 10 military spenders and the approximate amounts each currently budgets for its military establishment are:

Note: If your e-mail program doesn't display this table, please go to the original at http://www.alternet.org/story/83555/

Our excessive military expenditures did not occur over just a few short years or simply because of the Bush administration's policies. They have been going on for a very long time in accordance with a superficially plausible ideology, and have now become so entrenched in our democratic political system that they are starting to wreak havoc. This is military Keynesianism -- the determination to maintain a permanent war economy and to treat military output as an ordinary economic product, even though it makes no contribution to either production or consumption.

This ideology goes back to the first years of the cold war. During the late 1940s, the U.S. was haunted by economic anxieties. The great depression of the 1930s had been overcome only by the war production boom of the second world war. With peace and demobilization, there was a pervasive fear that the depression would return. During 1949, alarmed by the Soviet Union's detonation of an atomic bomb, the looming Communist victory in the Chinese civil war, a domestic recession, and the lowering of the Iron Curtain around the USSR's European satellites, the U.S. sought to draft basic strategy for the emerging cold war. The result was the militaristic National Security Council Report 68 (NSC-68) drafted under the supervision of Paul Nitze, then head of the Policy Planning Staff in the State Department. Dated 14 April 1950 and signed by President Harry S. Truman on 30 September 1950, it laid out the basic public economic policies that the U.S. pursues to the present day.

In its conclusions, NSC-68 asserted: "One of the most significant lessons of our World War II experience was that the American economy, when it operates at a level approaching full efficiency, can provide enormous resources for purposes other than civilian consumption while simultaneously providing a high standard of living." With this understanding, U.S. strategists began to build up a massive munitions industry, both to counter the military might of the Soviet Union (which they consistently overstated) and also to maintain full employment, as well as ward off a possible return of the depression. The result was that, under Pentagon leadership, entire new industries were created to manufacture large aircraft, nuclear-powered submarines, nuclear warheads, intercontinental ballistic missiles, and surveillance and communications satellites. This led to what President Eisenhower warned against in his farewell address of 6 February 1961: "The conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience" -- the military-industrial complex. By 1990 the value of the weapons, equipment and factories devoted to the Department of Defense was 83% of the value of all plants and equipment in U.S. manufacturing. From 1947 to 1990, the combined U.S. military budgets amounted to $8.7 trillion. Even though the Soviet Union no longer exists, U.S. reliance on military Keynesianism has, if anything, ratcheted up, thanks to the massive vested interests that have become entrenched around the military establishment. Over time, a commitment to both guns and butter has proven an unstable configuration. Military industries crowd out the civilian economy and lead to severe economic weaknesses. Devotion to military Keynesianism is a form of slow economic suicide.

Higher spending, fewer jobs
On 1 May 2007, the Center for Economic and Policy Research of Washington, DC, released a study prepared by the economic and political forecasting company Global Insight on the long-term economic impact of increased military spending. Guided by economist Dean Baker, this research showed that, after an initial demand stimulus, by about the sixth year the effect of increased military spending turns negative. The U.S. economy has had to cope with growing defense spending for more than 60 years. Baker found that, after 10 years of higher defense spending, there would be 464,000 fewer jobs than in a scenario that involved lower defense spending. Baker concluded: "It is often believed that wars and military spending increases are good for the economy. In fact, most economic models show that military spending diverts resources from productive uses, such as..."
consumption and investment, and ultimately slows economic growth and reduces employment."

These are only some of the many deleterious effects of military Keynesianism. It was believed that the U.S. could afford both a massive military establishment and a high standard of living, and that it needed both to maintain full employment. But it did not work out that way. By the 1960s it was becoming apparent that turning over the nation's largest manufacturing enterprises to the Department of Defense and producing goods without any investment or consumption value was starting to crowd out civilian economic activities. The historian Thomas E Woods Jr. observes that, during the 1950s and 1960s, between one-third and two-thirds of all U.S. research talent was siphoned off into the military sector. It is, of course, impossible to know what innovations never appeared as a result of this diversion of resources and brain power into the service of the military, but it was during the 1960s that we first began to notice Japan was outpacing us in the design and quality of a range of consumer goods, including household electronics and automobiles.

**Can we reverse the trend?**

Nuclear weapons furnish a striking illustration of these anomalies. Between the 1940s and 1996, the U.S. spent at least $5.8 trillion on the development, testing and construction of nuclear bombs. By 1967, the peak year of its nuclear stockpile, the U.S. possessed some 32,500 deliverable atomic and hydrogen bombs, none of which, thankfully, was ever used. They perfectly illustrate the Keynesian principle that the government can provide make-work jobs to keep people employed. Nuclear weapons were not just America's secret weapon, but also its secret economic weapon. As of 2006, we still had 9,960 of them. There is today no sane use for them, while the trillions spent on them could have been used to solve the problems of social security and health care, quality education and access to higher education for all, not to speak of the retention of highly-skilled jobs within the economy.

The pioneer in analyzing what has been lost as a result of military Keynesianism was the late Seymour Melman (1917-2004), a professor of industrial engineering and operations research at Columbia University. His 1970 book, *Pentagon Capitalism: The Political Economy of War*, was a prescient analysis of the unintended consequences of the U.S. preoccupation with its armed forces and their weaponry since the onset of the cold war. Melman wrote: "From 1946 to 1969, the United States government spent over $1,000bn on the military, more than half of this under the Kennedy and Johnson administrations -- the period during which the [Pentagon-dominated] state management was established as a formal institution. This sum of staggering size (try to visualize a billion of something) does not express the cost of the military establishment to the nation as a whole. The true cost is measured by what has been foregone, by the accumulated deterioration in many facets of life, by the inability to alleviate human wretchedness of long duration."

In an important exegesis on Melman’s relevance to the current American economic situation, Thomas Woods writes: "According to the U.S. Department of Defense, during the four decades from 1947 through 1987 it used (in 1982 dollars) $7.62 trillion in capital resources. In 1985, the Department of Commerce estimated the value of the nation's plant and equipment, and infrastructure, at just over $7.29 trillion ... The amount spent over that period could have doubled the American capital stock or modernized and replaced its existing stock."

The fact that we did not modernize or replace our capital assets is one of the main reasons why, by the turn of the 21st century, our manufacturing base had all but evaporated. Machine tools, an industry on which Melman was an authority, are a particularly important symptom. In November 1968, a five-year inventory disclosed "that 64% of the metalworking machine tools used in U.S. industry were 10 years old or older. The age of this industrial equipment (drills, lathes, etc.) marks the United States’ machine tool stock as the oldest among all major industrial nations, and it marks the continuation of a deterioration process that began with the end of the second world war. This deterioration at the base of the industrial system certifies to the continuous debilitating and depleting effect that the military use of capital and research and development talent has had on American industry."

Nothing has been done since 1968 to reverse these trends and it shows today in our massive imports of equipment — from medical machines like proton accelerators for radiological therapy (made primarily in Belgium, Germany, and Japan) to cars and trucks.

Our short tenure as the world's lone superpower has come to an end. As Harvard economics professor Benjamin Friedman has written: "Again and again it has always been the world's leading lending country that has been the premier country in terms of political influence, diplomatic influence and cultural influence. It's no accident that we took over the role from the British at the same time that we took over the job of being the world's leading lending country. Today we are no longer the world's leading lending country. In fact we are now the world's biggest debtor country, and we are continuing to wield influence on the basis of military prowess alone."

Some of the damage can never be rectified. There are, however, some steps that the U.S. urgently needs to take. These include reversing Bush's 2001 and 2003 tax cuts for the wealthy, beginning to liquidate our global empire of over 800 military bases, cutting from the defense budget all projects that bear no relationship to national security and ceasing to use the defense budget as a Keynesian jobs program.

If we do these things we have a chance of squeaking by. If we don't, we face probable national insolvency and a
long depression.

Chalmers Johnson is a retired professor of Asian Studies at the University of California, San Diego. From 1968 until 1972 he served as a consultant to the Office of National Estimates of the Central Intelligence Agency. Nemesis: The Last Days of the American Republic, the final volume in his Blowback Trilogy, is now out in paper. In 2006 he appeared in the prizewinning documentary film Why We Fight.

FURTHER DOMESTIC CONSEQUENCES OF MILITARISM AND IMPERIALISM

NEW ARMY UNIT VS POSSE COMITATUS PROTECTION

For the first time the Pentagon has assigned an Army unit—a combat brigade—to domestic "crisis" control. This is expressly prohibited by the Posse Comitatus Act. By one of his "signing statements" Pres. Bush and future presidents can declare a catastrophe and deploy federal troops, bypassing states' national guards.

Date: Thursday, October 9, 2008, 1:59 PM

Is Posse Comitatus Dead?

By Amy Goodman, Democracy Now!

Posted on October 8, 2008, Printed on October 9, 2008
http://www.alternet.org/story/102220/

Amy Goodman: In a barely noticed development last week, the Army stationed an active unit inside the United States. The Infantry Division's 1st Brigade Team is back from Iraq, now training for domestic operations under the control of U.S. Army North, the Army service component of Northern Command. The unit will serve as an on-call federal response for large-scale emergencies and disasters. It's being called the Consequence Management Response Force, CCMRF, or "seasmurf" for short.

It's the first time an active unit has been given a dedicated assignment to USNORTHCOM, which was itself formed in October 2002 to "provide command and control of Department of Defense homeland defense efforts."

An initial news report in the Army Times newspaper last month noted, in addition to emergency response, the force "may be called upon to help with civil unrest and crowd control." The Army Times has since appended a clarification, and a September 30th press release from the Northern Command states: "This response force will not be called upon to help with law enforcement, civil disturbance or crowd control."

When Democracy Now! spoke to Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Jamie Goodpaster, a public affairs
officer for NORTHCOM, she said the force would have weapons stored in containers on site, as well as access to tanks, but the decision to use weapons would be made at a far higher level, perhaps by Secretary of Defense, SECDEF.

I'm joined now by two guests. Army Colonel Michael Boatner is future operations division chief of USNORTHCOM. He joins me on the phone from Colorado Springs. We're also joined from Madison, Wisconsin by journalist and editor of The Progressive magazine, Matthew Rothschild. [For the interviews google Democracy Now]

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**Leahy Concerned about NorthCom's New Army Unit**

By Matthew Rothschild, October 7, 2008

Senator Patrick Leahy is concerned about the Pentagon's decision to designate an Army unit to Northern Command.

On October 1, the Pentagon, for the first time ever, dedicated an Army force specifically to NorthCom, which is in charge of securing not some foreign region but the United States of America.

The unit it assigned is the 3rd Infantry, First Brigade Combat Team, which has spent three of the last five years in Iraq. It was one of the first units to get to Baghdad, and it was active in retaking and patrolling Fallujah. One of its specialties is counterinsurgency.

This marks a change for NorthCom, which was established on October 1, 2002. Its website still says it "has few permanently assigned forces," and that "the command is assigned forces whenever necessary to execute missions, as ordered by the President and the Secretary of Defense."

Leahy "asked for a briefing from his staff" on this development and "wants to monitor the situation," an aide to Leahy said.

Leahy was instrumental in getting Congress to repeal the "Insurrection Act Rider" in the 2006 defense appropriations bill. That rider had given the President sweeping power to use military troops in ways contrary to the Insurrection Act and Posse Comitatus Act. The rider authorized the President to have troops patrol our streets in response to disasters, epidemics, and any "condition" he might cite.

Leahy said last December that this rider "made it easier for the President to take over the Guard and to declare martial law." In a Senate statement on April 24, 2007, he cautioned against inserting the military "into domestic situations." As he put it: "One of the distinguishing characteristics of the United States is that we do not use the military to patrol our communities and neighborhoods." A few months before that, he warned that we must ensure that "the military is not used in a way that offends and endangers some of our most cherished values and liberties."

The repeal of the rider was signed by Bush on January 28, though Amy Goodman reports that "Bush
attached a signing statement that he did not feel bound by the repeal."

The roles the 1st Brigade Combat Team will take on at NorthCom are a bit unclear.

"They may be called upon to help with civil unrest and crowd control," said the Army Times when it first reported on it. These duties would be in addition to dealing with "potentially horrific scenarios such as massive poisoning and chaos in response to a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear or high-yield explosive, or CBRNE, attack."

Soldiers in the unit "also will learn how to use 'the first ever nonlethal package that the Army has field,' 1st BCT commander Col. Roger Cloutier said, referring to crowd and traffic control equipment and nonlethal weapons designed to subdue unruly or dangerous individuals without killing them," the article noted.

Cloutier even bragged to the Army Times: "I was the first guy in the brigade to get Tasered."

The Army Times has since issued a correction, stating that the "non-lethal crowd control package" is "intended for use on deployments to the war zone, not in the U.S."

NorthCom's own press release of September 30 says, "This response force will not be called upon to help with law enforcement, civil disturbance, or crowd control."

The unit will have its regular weapons, however. It will store other weapons in "containers," and will have access to tanks, as Amy Goodman has reported and the Pentagon has confirmed.

The Army is taking a strong interest in this deployment.

Army Chief of Staff Gen. George Casey personally observed the combat team's training exercise, entitled "Vibrant Response," which was held at Fort Stewart, Georgia, last month. According to NorthCom's public affairs department, Gen. Casey "pointed out that being part of the new force requires a shift in thinking for soldiers who are accustomed to taking charge."

One soldier in the exercise said he learned that the troops should "preposition containers and equipment."

NorthCom's website, in a section on frequently asked questions about Joint Task Forces—Civil Support, cites "DoD Directive 3025.1" as laying out the criteria for how the Pentagon will respond in domestic situations.

That directive talks about "military support in dealing with the actual or anticipated consequences of civil emergencies." Those civil emergencies could be "arising during peace, war, or transition to war."

While it states that such support "does not include military support to local law enforcement," there is a provision in the directive for the military to take over functions of the civilian government.

Military personnel "shall not perform any function of civil government unless absolutely necessary on a temporary basis under conditions of Immediate Response. Any commander who is directed, or undertakes, to perform such functions shall facilitate the reestablishment of civil responsibility at the
earliest possible time," the document states.

Under this "Immediate Response" exception, local military commanders can even act without prior approval from their superiors. "Imminently serious conditions resulting from any civil emergency or attack may require immediate action by military commanders, or by responsible officials of other DoD agencies, to save lives, prevent human suffering, or mitigate great property damage," it says. "When such conditions exist and time does not permit prior approval from higher headquarters, local military commanders and responsible officials of other DoD Components are authorized by this Directive, subject to any supplemental direction that may be provide by their DoD Component, to take necessary action to respond to requests of civil authorities."

The Pentagon's decision to dedicate the First Brigade Combat Team to NorthCom has raised alarms, especially in the context of the current economic crisis. In Bush's National Security Presidential Directive 51, he lays out his authority in the event of a catastrophic emergency. In such an emergency, "the President shall lead the activities of the Federal Government for ensuring constitutional government" and will coordinate with state, local, and tribal governments, along with private sector owners of infrastructure.

NSPD 51 defines a catastrophic emergency as "any incident, regardless of location, that results in extraordinary levels of mass casualties, damage, or disruption severely affecting the U.S. population, infrastructure, environment, economy, or government function."

Notice the use of the word "or" above. In our current circumstances, it might be more relevant to read the definition this way: "any incident . . . that results in extraordinary levels of . . . disruption severely affecting the U.S. . . . economy."

President Bush could declare a catastrophic emergency today. And he'd have the 3rd Infantry, First Brigade Combat Team, well trained from its years patrolling Iraq, at his disposal here at home.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Matthew Rothschild was on Democracy Now! on October 7 debating Army Col. Michael Boatner, USNORTHCOM future operations division chief.
CONGRESS SUPPORTED BUSH IN GIVING THE TELECOM INDUSTRY IMMUNITY (supporting his financial supporters, blocking further evidence of his law-breaking). Arkansas' LIINCOLN AND PRYOR voted with Bush.

Stop the Spying!
The president is unconstitutionally wiretapping the telephone and Internet communications of millions of ordinary Americans. Telecom giants wanted to block lawsuits like EFF's case against AT&T and get immunity for their illegal collaboration with the president's program. And Congress let them get away with it. Stand with EFF by taking action at stopthespying.org.

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BUSH VS. 4TH AMENDMENT OF BILL OF RIGHTS

Administration Asserts No Fourth Amendment for Domestic Military Operations - Posted by Kurt Opsahl

What Could It Mean for Warrantless Domestic Surveillance?
Update: Click here to read the AP article on the Yoo memo and the Fourth Amendment.

Today's Washington Post reports on a newly released memo, "Memorandum for William J. Haynes II, General Counsel of the Department of Defense Re: Military Interrogation of Alien Unlawful Combatants Held Outside the United States" (March 14, 2003), which which was declassified and released publicly yesterday. Balkinization has commentary on the very troubling opinion.

While the newly released memo focuses on "asserting that federal laws prohibiting assault, maiming and other crimes did not apply to military interrogators," it contains a footnote referencing another Administration memo that caught our eye: ... our Office recently concluded that the Fourth Amendment had no application to domestic military operations. See Memorandum for Alberto R. Gonzales, Counsel to the President, and William J. Haynes, II, General Counsel, Department of Defense, from John C. Yoo, Deputy Assistant Attorney General and Robert J. Delahunty, Special Counsel, Re: Authority for Use of Military Force to Combat Terrorist Activities Within the United States at 25 (Oct 23, 2001). (emphasis added)

This earlier memo has not been publicly released, though Senator Leahy and Rep. Conyers have asked to see it. Does this mean that the Administration's lawyers believed that it could spy on Americans with impunity and face no Fourth Amendment claim? It may, and based on the thinnest of legal claims -- that Congress unintentionally allowed mass surveillance of Americans when it passed the Authorization of Use of Military Force in October 2001.
In their arguments on the warrantless surveillance program, they try to portray them as "military" in nature, even though they occurred in the United States, far from the military theater. In 2006, the Department of Justice has asserted that "that warrantless communications intelligence targeted at the enemy in time of armed conflict is a traditional and fundamental incident of the use of military force authorized by the AUMF." The DOJ also asserted that "the NSA activities fit squarely within the sweeping terms of the AUMF. The use of signals intelligence to identify and pinpoint the enemy is a traditional component of wartime military operations." As the DOJ sees it, "In the present conflict, unlike in the Korean War, the battlefield was brought to the United States ..." The NSA is part of the Department of Defense.

In short, it appears that the Administration may view NSA domestic surveillance, including the surveillance of millions of ordinary Americans detailed in EFF's Hepting case, as a "domestic military operation." If so, this Yoo memo would blow a loophole in the Fourth Amendment big enough to fit all of our everyday telephone calls, web searches, instant messages and emails through.

Of course, the DOJ's public defense of the NSA program also asserted that warrantless surveillance did not violate the Fourth Amendment. (EFF and numerous scholars disagree). But the memo referenced above raises serious questions. The public deserves to know whether the 2001 Yoo memo on domestic military operations -- issued the same month that the NSA program began -- asserted that the Fourth Amendment did not apply to domestic surveillance operations conducted by the NSA.

And of course it reinforces why granting immunity aimed at keeping the courts from ruling on the Administration's flimsy legal arguments is wrongheaded and dangerous.

Read the Interrogation Memo: Pages 1-19, 20-39, 40-59, 60-81. (thanks to Chris D)

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US BECOMING FASCIST
Author Naomi Wolf did an interview about the steps toward US dictatorship with funny Bill O'Reilly clone Stephen Colbert at the following address http://www.crooksandliars.com/2007/09/20/the-colbert-report-naomi-wolf-on-fascism-in-america/

In a recent article "Fascist America, In 10 Easy Steps", author Naomi Wolf argues that George Bush and his administration seem to be taking them all of these steps toward Fascism as did other dictators. "Fascist America, In 10 Easy Steps" article at http://www.guardian.co.uk/usa/story/0,,2064157,00.html

As nightfall does not come all at once, neither does oppression. In both instances, there is a twilight when everything remains seemingly unchanged. And it is in such a twilight that we all must be aware of change in the air—however slight—lest we become unwilling victims of the darkness.

In April, 2007 I was pleasantly surprised to find Naomi Wolf's article, "Fascist America, In 10 Easy Steps" posted in several places online. I have been a fan of Wolf for many years, greatly appreciating her works and especially her 1991 book, The Beauty Myth. I had been looking for a list-or more specifically, an encyclopedia of the losses of civil liberties in the United States that might clarify for my history students the extent to which America has become a fascist empire. Wolf's "10 Easy Steps" was perfect, but her just-published book, The End Of America: Letter Of Warning To A Young Patriot, from which the 10 easy steps was compiled, offers an even fuller picture—a succinct and engaging explanation of how our civil liberties have been hijacked in the past decade. It is the most poignant,
powerful, genuinely patriotic piece of literature I have encountered since Thomas Paine's Common Sense. No wonder then, that the book's cover greatly resembles that 46-page tract by Paine written in 1775—as it should.

One of the most frightening realities of teaching college history is that most students rarely have a clue what fascism is. They know about Hitler and the extermination of Jews, but they see little connection with Nazi rule in the 1930s and 40s and the current political milieu in the United States. Overwhelmingly, they cannot define fascism, nor can they define socialism or democracy. After all, they were pre-occupied during grammar school with becoming standardized human beings by way of taking standardized "No Child's Behind Left" tests, five hours a day, four days a week. So why would they know the definitions of fascism, socialism or democracy?

Refreshingly, Wolf is not shy about using the term fascism and lets the reader know why. "I have made a deliberate choice in using the terms fascist tactics and fascist shift when I describe some events in America now. I stand by my choice. I am not being heated or even rhetorical; I am being technical." (20) She explains that where Americans tend to see the various political "isms" as all-or-nothing, that perception is often inaccurate because of what she calls a "range of authoritarian regimes, dictatorships, and varieties of Fascist states...there are many shades of gray on the spectrum from an open to a closed society." (20)

Wolf also emphasizes that America has flirted with fascism openly in the 1930s when numerous corporations and robber barons helped finance Hitler and when as Edwin Black notes in IBM And The Holocaust, some American corporations assisted the Nazi regime in carrying out its "final solution" to the "Jewish problem." In fact, several of these corporate tycoons attempted to stage a coup d' etat to overthrow Franklin Roosevelt in 1933 and restructure the American government under fascist control. A thorough investigation of American politics and society from the end of the Civil War until the present moment reveals, as I have carefully traced in my book U.S. History Uncensored: What Your High School Textbook Didn't Tell You, that much of recent American history is replete with a preference on the part of corporations and the politicians they own for an economic and political system on the far right end of the spectrum. In fact, resistance to fascism in the United States has been an arduous and daunting struggle for those who have been able to understand and oppose the appeal that fascism has to the corporatocracy, and in fact, take seriously Mussolini's fundamental definition of fascism: "Fascism should more properly be called corporatism because it is the merger of state and corporate power."

As an historian who views American history as the complex unfolding of events that it is, I feel invigorated upon hearing someone like Wolf—especially the Wolf of feminist Beauty Myth fame—part company with the presentation of the Founders as "dead white men" inwardly tormented by various hypocrisies, such as the ownership of slaves and the subordination of women. Yes, Jefferson owned slaves and fathered six children by one of them, but what gets lost in that drama and other colorful stories of the Founders is that they were also thinking, speaking, and writing highly subversive thoughts. "You are not taught," says Wolf, that "these men and women were radicals for liberty; that they had a vision of equality that was a slap in the face of what the rest of their world understood to be the unchanging, God- given order of nations; and that they were wiling to die to make that desperate vision into a reality for people like us, whom they would never live to see." (27) I do not wish to romanticize the Founders and their generation living in a milieu replete with racism, misogyny, and classism, but neither will I throw their achievements out with the bathwater of political correctness, nor is Wolf willing to do so in her examination of them.

In the "10 easy steps" outlined by Wolf, countries move from open to closed and repressive societies by devolving past certain markers, and Wolf makes a powerful case for the way in which the United States is following a similar pattern without any significant deviation. In each instance she compares and contrasts how America's adherence to the pattern compares or contrasts with the pattern in pre-World War II Germany. The 10 steps are:
1. Invoking an external and internal threat
2. Establishing secret prisons
3. Developing a paramilitary force
4. Surveiling ordinary citizens
5. Infiltrating citizens' groups
6. Arbitrarily detaining and releasing citizens
7. Targeting key individuals
8. Restricting the press
9. Casting criticism as "espionage" and dissent as "treason"
10. Subverting the rule of law

As noted in the quote from Justice Douglas above, the fascist shift is a protracted process; it never happens overnight, and in U.S. History Uncensored, I offer an historical narrative describing exactly how we have arrived where we are-at "the end of America". Some aspects of the process were generated before the U.S. Civil War, but our recent history is nothing less than the story of the acceleration of the fascist agenda and the death of the Republic.

Frequently, books come into our lives with momentous timing. Several weeks ago a friend of mine was traveling through a small town in upstate New York looking for the location of a meeting he was scheduled to attend. Realizing that he was lost, he spotted a police officer in a marked car and waived to the officer to pull over. The officer pulled over, and my friend innocently got out of his car to walk back to the officer's car. Suddenly, the officer's voice came blasting across a loud speaker, "Get back in the car! Stop where you are! Get back in the car!" My friend returned to his vehicle and waited for the officer to approach his driver's side window. The officer, with a hand on his holstered firearm, angrily asked my friend what he wanted. When my friend asked him for directions, he replied with hostility that he didn't know the location of the place for which my friend was searching and once again repeated, "Never get out of your car when you're dealing with a police officer." So much for asking directions from a police officer these days.

On another occasion, two friends of mine returning from Canada were detained at the U.S./Canadian border, and while one of them had a U.S. passport, the other had forgotten to bring his. He produced a variety of identification but was taken aside, questioned, shouted at, and harassed in an extremely hostile manner as if he were an enemy of the state. Fortunately, after over-the-top intimidation from a couple of surly customs officers, he was allowed to enter the U.S.

About three weeks ago I was returning from a routine visit to the dentist in Mexico and had a U.S. passport with me, even though none will be required for returning from Mexico until January, 2008. I was told by a very aggressive female customs agent to pull over to the center where vehicles are detained. I was ordered in a very hostile manner to give her my driver's license and the keys to my vehicle and stay in my vehicle. When I asked what the problem was, I was told to be quiet and again, to stay in my vehicle. Having taught in Mexico for three years, returning to the U.S. every day and rarely having to show any identification whatsoever, I found this procedure to be astonishingly rigid and unnecessary. I have made many trips to Mexico in recent months and have never had any problem when the automatic photos that are taken of every license plate crossing the border appeared on U.S. Customs computer screens.

After what seemed like an eternity the female officer returned and told me that it appeared that I had had an expired vehicle registration four years ago which I had not taken care of and that I needed to do so at once. She gave me the name of the court where the offense was allegedly registered. The very next day I contacted the court and discovered that indeed I had been stopped four years ago for an expired registration for which I was given a warning. Every year since, I have purchased my annual registration well before the deadline, but the offense was never brought to my attention, and I even
acquired a new driver's license last year through the motor vehicles division and was not informed of the offense. Not wanting any further hassle regarding the "heinous crime" of having an expired registration four years ago, I agreed to pay the small fine imposed by the court.

Some readers may assume that I was harassed because of who I am and my open delivery of alternative news and opinions on this website daily. I, on the other hand, do not believe that this was "all about me." Whether or not it was, it is blatantly obvious to me that the behavior of law enforcement in the United States has shifted dramatically in recent months. Whether or not I was targeted, which I sincerely doubt, this kind of treatment is becoming standard in law enforcement procedure throughout the United States.

And now fast-forward to yesterday, September 18, 2007, at the University of Florida and the tasering of a student questioning John Kerry regarding the 2004 elections and Kerry's membership in Skull and Bones-an incident which has been viewed by millions on the internet and on mainstream TV news broadcasts. Writing of this debacle, Wolf's article "A Shocking Moment For Society" appeared on various internet sites this morning, and in it she states:

There is a chapter in my new book, The End of America, entitled "Recast Criticism as 'Espionage' and Dissent as 'Treason,'" that conveys why this moment is the horrific harbinger it is. I argue that strategists using historical models to close down an open society start by using force on 'undesirables,' 'aliens,' 'enemies of the state,' and those considered by mainstream civil society to be untouchable; in other times they were, of course, Jews, Gypsies, Communists, homosexuals. Then, once society has been acculturated to that use of force, the 'blurring of the line' begins and the parameters of criminalized speech are extended - the definition of 'terrorist' expanded - and the use of force begins to be deployed in HIGHLY VISIBLE, STRATEGIC and VISUALLY SHOCKING WAYS against people that others see and identify with as ordinary citizens. The first 'torture cells' used by the SA, in Germany between 1931 and 1933 - even before the National Socialists gained control of the state, during the years when Germany was still a parliamentary democracy - were informal and widely publicized in the mainstream media. Few German citizens objected because those abused there were seen as 'other' - even though the abuse was technically illegal. But then, after this escalation of the use of force was accepted by the population, students, journalists, opposition leaders, and clergy were similarly abused during their own arrests. Within six months dissent was stilled in Germany.

What is the lesson for us from this and from other closing societies, some of them democracies? You can have a working Congress or Parliament; newspapers; human rights groups; even elections; but when ordinary people start to be hurt by the state for speaking out, dissent closes quickly and the shock chills opposition very, very fast. Once that happens, democracy has been so weakened that major tactical and strategic incursions - greater violations of democratic process - are far more likely. If there is dissent about the vote in Florida in this next presidential election - and the police are tasering voters' rights groups - we will still have an election.

What we will not have is liberty.

We have to understand what time it is. When the state starts to hurt people for asking questions, we can no longer operate on the leisurely time of a strong democracy - the 'Oh gosh how awful!' kind of time. It is time to take to the streets. It is time to confront those committing crimes against the Constitution. The window has now dropped several precipitous inches and once it is closed there is no opening it without great and sorrowful upheaval.

As I read Wolf's latest article, I realized that despite my enormous admiration for her and The End Of America, there are a number of areas where I must disagree with her.

First, the only thing shocking to me about the University of Florida incident is that so many Americans are shocked that it happened. Last night I posted a communication to her mailing list regarding the incident from former Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney who says:

No police officer should be in the business of denying Constitutional rights to anyone; I am
particularly chagrined when it appears that a black police officer participated in this attack on an
innocent student.

What is happening to us???? How much more will the people accept?? I was outraged as early as
2000 when Florida was stolen and the Democrats said nothing!!!! Now, innocent students get tasered
just for asking questions.

What kind of US Senator do we have who can't or won't answer a question about his own election
that affects all of us???

Wolf has given us a compendium of civil and Constitutional rights stolen from us during the past eight
years of the Bush administration. If one understands this odyssey of oppression, then yesterday's
tasering of a questioning student makes perfect sense. I appreciate why Wolf used the word "shocking"
in her most recent article, but I'd be willing to bet that she isn't shocked at all-not after the extraordinary
documentation she has given us in The End Of America. What I do believe she wishes to clarify is the
intentionally traumatizing methodology of law enforcement to maintain social control.

Secondly, I must take issue with Wolf regarding her statement that "...we on the left must snap out of
our 'it's-all-the-WTO-the-two-parties-are-the-same' torpor...We have to reengage in an old-fashioned
commitment to democratic action and believe once again in an old-fashioned notion of the Republic.
We need to help lead a democracy movement in America like the ones that have toppled repressive
regimes overseas." (141)

Again, let's fast forward not to yesterday, but today and the headline "Senate bars bill to restore
detainee rights"-a decision which supports the Bush administration's denial of habeas corpus to
Guantanamo prisoners who want to challenge their imprisonment in court. Need we reiterate one more
time that since the 2006 elections, the Democrats have done virtually nothing to end the occupation of
Iraq? Need we watch the video one more time of John Kerry standing mute and statue-like on the
University of Florida auditorium stage-saying or doing nothing as a student was tasered for asking him
why he handed the 2004 election to George W. Bush? Does anyone seriously believe that in a world
where fellow students applaud as police remove and taser a questioning student and do nothing to
speak up against such an outrage that we will see a viable, effective "democracy movement in America
like the ones that have toppled repressive regimes overseas"?

As for Wolf's suggestion in today's article that we "take to the streets", the police state is preparing for
that eventuality as well by letting us know that it has developed severely injuring electromagnetic
crowd control technology that will dramatically limit how many and how often people can "take to the
streets." Welcome to full-spectrum "1984".

I repeat: the police state is right here, right now!
Moreover, some pivotal factors that Wolf has not addressed are global energy depletion, climate
change, and global economic meltdown which are exacerbating the fascist shift about which she so
brilliantly writes and which will continue to embolden that shift as energy scarcity, climate chaos, and
financial crises add fuel to the fires of terrorism that the ruling elite have so consciously and carefully
incited and fanned throughout America. As American society continues to unravel, the fascist shift will
escalate, and what is left of our civil liberties will further evaporate.

As for political parties, I prefer the definition offered by Mike Ruppert in "America: From Freedom To
Fascism" in which he explains that the two major parties are like two crime families-the Genoveses
and the Gambinos. They function like players in a crap game that feign opposition to each other, but when
the chips are down, they will always unite to serve their common interests. (If the Iraq occupation is not
a case in point, then I don't know what is.) When we vote in presidential elections for corporately-
owned candidates or "the lesser evil", we are merely choosing between the two crime families, and
even if one candidate were not a crime family member, our votes in the past two presidential elections,
as Bev Harris has so astutely demonstrated, have been hacked. In the throes of the current, and I might
add, rapidly-accelerating fascist shift, what evidence do we have for assuming that if there is an
election in 2008, anything will be different? Tell me again, what's the definition of insanity?
At this moment another Naomi comes to mind—Naomi Klein whose book Shock Doctrine I shall soon review on this site. In that work Klein documents one of the key strategies of fascist empires: shocking their citizens into submission in a variety of ways from widespread societal terrorism to the administering of electroshock therapy to individuals. What we witnessed at the University of Florida yesterday, and what we are likely to see more frequently in America, are deliberate shock tactics applied by law enforcement to citizens for the purpose of achieving massive social control. Some of my students who are criminal justice majors tell me that the latest strategies now being taught to police officers are "shock doctrine" techniques which terrorize and intimidate civilians in order to control them. Law enforcement officers are no longer encouraged to "keep a cool head" but to "follow their own instincts" (which usually means their own internal, adrenaline-charged state of terror) and react with full force because it's easier to apologize (or encounter a lawsuit) than to ask permission or risk being killed. Terrified people should not be wearing a badge and carrying a gun, and when they are, a fully terrorized society is guaranteed.

In spite of my disagreements with Naomi Wolf's suggested solutions, I cannot recommend The End Of America enthusiastically enough. It is now a permanent part of my U.S. history curriculum and is an ideal tool not only for educators, but for parents who want to teach their children where all those civil liberties we used to have actually came from as well as how and why they are disappearing in the present moment.

COUP IN THE USA? (from Sue S)


Dear Friends,

We must pass this on Immediately to everyone we know. We've said this was coming. It's here.

Naomi Wolfe talking about current events!! Takes a while to download but do not be deterred.

Upsetting but soothing in a weird way. Love, Susan
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BqzLf_P7yQ8&NR=1

Meanwhile, back in the USA, Daniel Ellsberg reports what the media has yet to: 'A Coup Has Occurred' [from Sue S]

If there's another 9/11 under this regime, it means that they switch on full extent all the apparatus of a police state that has been patiently constructed, largely secretly at first but eventually leaked out and known and accepted by the Democratic people in Congress, by the Republicans and so forth.

WE ARE ALL RESPONSIBLE


August 6, 2008

The prophetic challenge: "Few are guilty, but all are responsible"
By Robert Jensen

One of the common refrains I heard from progressive people in Pakistan and India during my month there this summer was, "We love the American people -- it's the policies of your government we don't like."

That sentiment is not unusual in the developing world, and such statements can reduce the tension with some Americans when people criticize U.S. policy, which is more common than ever after the illegal invasions and occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq.

I used to smile and nod when I heard it, but this summer I
stopped agreeing.
"You shouldn't love the American people," I started saying.
"You should hate us -- we're the enemy."
By that I don't mean that most Americans are trying to come up with new ways to attack people in the Global South. Instead, I want to challenge the notion that in a relatively open society such as the United States -- where most people can claim extensive guarantees of freedom of expression and political association -- that the problem is leaders and not ordinary citizens. Whatever the reason people in other countries repeat this statement, the stakes today are too high for those of us in the United States to accept these kinds of reassuring platitudes about hating-the-policy but loving-the-people of an imperial state. It is long past time that we the people of the United States started holding ourselves responsible for the crimes our government perpetrates around the world.

This is our prophetic challenge, in the tradition of the best of the prophets of the past, who had the courage to name the injustice in a society and demand a reckoning. In the Christian and Jewish traditions, the Old Testament offers us many models -- Amos and Hosea, Jeremiah and Isaiah. The prophets condemned corrupt leaders but also called out all those privileged people in society who had turned from the demands of justice that the faith makes central to human life. In his study of The Prophets, the scholar and activist Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel concluded:

> Above all, the prophets remind us of the moral state of a people: Few are guilty, but all are responsible. If we admit that the individual is in some measure conditioned or affected by the spirit of society, an individual's crime discloses society's corruption. In a community not indifferent to suffering, uncompromisingly impatient with cruelty and falsehood, continually concerned for God and every man, crime would be infrequent rather than common.

In our society, crimes by leaders are far too common. George W. Bush and Dick Cheney, as individuals, are guilty of their crime against peace and war crimes in Iraq that have resulted in the death of hundreds of thousands, just as Bill Clinton and Al Gore before them are guilty of the crime against humanity perpetrated through an economic embargo on Iraq that killed hundreds of thousands of innocents as well. These men are guilty, beyond any doubt, and they should be held accountable. But would those kinds of crimes be as frequent if the spirit of society were different? For that, we all are responsible.
In assessing that responsibility, we have to be careful about simplistic judgments, for the degree of responsibility depends on privilege and power. In my case, I'm white and male, educated, with easy access to information, working in a professional job with a comfortable income and considerable freedom. People such as me, with the greatest privilege, bear greatest responsibility. But no one escapes responsibility living in an imperial state with the barbaric record of the United States (in my lifetime, we could start with the list of unjust U.S. wars, direct and through proxies, against the people of Latin America, southern Africa, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, resulting in millions of victims). Bush and Clinton couldn't carry out their crimes in this relatively open and democratic society if we did not allow it.

To increase the chance that we can stop those crimes, we also have to be precise about the roadblocks that keep people from acting responsibly: A nominally democratic political system dominated by elites who serve primarily the wealthy in a predatory corporate capitalist system; which utilizes sophisticated propaganda techniques that have been effective in undermining real democracy; aided by mass-media industries dedicated to selling diversions to consumers more than to helping inform citizens in ways that encourage meaningful political action.

We must hold ourselves and each other accountable, with a realistic analysis not only of how we have ended up in this dire situation but also a reasonable assessment of how different people react to the spirit of our society. Some in the United States celebrate this unjust system and seek to enrich themselves in it; they deserve the harshest critique and condemnation. Many others simply move with the prevailing winds, taking their place in the hierarchy without much thought and little challenge; they should be challenged to rise above their willed ignorance and passivity. Some others resist, through political organizing or in quieter ways; they should be commended, with the recognition that whatever they have done it hasn't been enough to end the nation's imperial crimes. And we must remember that there are people in the United States suffering under such oppressive conditions that they constitute a kind of internal Third World, targeted as much as the most vulnerable people abroad.

Of course those are crudely drawn categories that don't capture the complexity of our lives. But we should draw them to remind ourselves: Those of us with privilege are responsible in some way. If we want to speak in a prophetic voice, as I believe we all can and should, we must start with an honest assessment of ourselves and those closest to us. For example, I consider myself part of the anti-empire/anti-war
movement, and for the past decade I have spent considerable energy on those efforts. But I can see many ways in which I could have done more, and could do more today, in more effective fashion. We need not have delusions of grandeur about what we can accomplish, but we do need to avoid a self-satisfied complacency.

kind of complacency is far too easy for those of us living in the most affluent nation in the history of the world. For those of us with privilege, political activism typically comes with very few costs. We work, and often work hard, for justice but when the day is done many of us come home to basic comforts that most people in the world can only dream of. Those comforts are made possible by the very empire we are committed to ending.

Does this seem hard to face? Does it spark a twinge of guilt in you? I hope that it does. Here we can distinguish the guilt of those committing the crimes -- the formal kind of guilt of folks such as Bush and Clinton -- from the way in which a vaguer sense of guilt reminds us that we may not be living up to our own principles. That kind of guilty feeling is not a bad thing, if we have not done things that are morally required. If there is a gap between our stated values and our actions -- as there almost surely is for all of us, in varying ways to varying degrees -- then such a feeling of guilt is an appropriate moral reaction. Guilt of that kind is healthy if we face it honestly and use it to strengthen our commitment to justice.

This is our fate living in the empire. We must hold ourselves and each other accountable, while knowing that the powerful systems in place are not going to change overnight simply because we have good arguments and are well-intentioned.

We must ask ourselves why we don't do more, while recognizing that none of us can ever do enough. We must be harsh on ourselves and each other, while retaining a loving connection to self and others, for without that love there is no hope.

People often say this kind of individual and collective self-assessment is too hard, too depressing. Perhaps, but it is the path we must walk if we wish to hold onto our humanity. As Heschel put it, "the prophets endure and can only be ignored at the risk of our own despair."[2] To contemplate these harsh realities is not to give in to despair, but to make it possible to resist.

If we wish to find our prophetic voice, we must have the courage to speak about the crimes of our leaders and also look at ourselves honestly in the mirror. That requires not just courage but humility. It is in that balance of a righteous anger and rigorous self-reflection that we find not just the strength to go on fighting but also the reason to go on living.

Ibid., p. xiii.

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**END OF NEWSLETTER #4 ON Imperialism and Militarism**

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