NEWSLETTER #2 ON MILITARISM IN ARKANSAS for a CULTURE OF PEACE. By Dick Bennett.
October 10, 2012

Contents of #1
WAR
MEDIA: Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, The Morning News
Reporting the Empire:
C-130 AT LRAFB
US Senate Passes War Bill
War Cemeteries
Warriors
Surveillance
RESISTANCE
Representative Snyder?
Real Heroes: Peace

Contents of #2
Dick Bennett: Call for Officials’ Candidness
Dick: Call for Economic Conversion
Dick: Grassroots Militarism
Johnson: Pentagon Arms Police
Ledbetter, Hartung: US Military-Industrial Complex
Dick: Give Us a Military Base
MILITARY IN EDUCATION
Recommended: National Coalition to Protect Student Privacy (StudentPrivacy.org)
Dick: Resisting Military Recruiting in the Schools
Swanson Interviews Pat Elder on Student Privacy
Giroux: Against Militarizing Higher Education

Officials: Why Shortage of Money for Public Services?
The Northwest Arkansas Times of Oct. 7, 2012 led with this page one banner headline: “Finances Rule Politics.” Although the article focuses on county government, the headline describes city and state government as well. What’s the problem? Not enough money not only for all the hopes but for all the needs. Why? Several reasons—insufficient taxes, price inflation, population growth.

But one cause is never mentioned, despite its powerful influence over all others; I refer to the US empire and permanent war. Since the beginning of WWII, the US has spent many trillions on wars, even though few of these wars were needed, useful, or legal in defending US security (Blum). Probably most of the population affirm the need for WWII, but they are
correct in doubting the necessity of the over forty invasions and interventions since 1945. And the expense is breaking our knees. During the past decade, next to the Bush tax cuts the single greatest contributor to the drastic swing from surplus to deficit has been the Pentagon budget: since 2001, if you include debt service the wars alone have cost about $3 trillion (Lofgren, 107).

Some might argue that Pentagon spending (now $600 billion not including the wars) supports the economy. But that is true in only a few localities. The Pentagon and its wars generate "comparatively few jobs per dollar spent," whereas money appropriated for highways, trails, mass transportation, health care, or education creates "many more jobs" than the same amount spent on weapons. A Univ. of Massachusetts study shows how several alternative ways of spending money would produce "from 35% to 138% more jobs than spending the same amount on the military. "The jobs argument is thoroughly specious." (Lofgren 88).

So when city, county, and state officials try to explain to the public why they cannot accomplish the renovation of the ancient sewer pipes or fill all the pot holes or retrofit all the public buildings for energy efficiency, why do they not explain that the money has gone into the unbridled militarism of fiscally disastrous, bloody, and futile foreign wars?

Are our state, county, and local officials predisposed toward war and militarism? Surely not. Do they need, as apparently do our national leaders, to demonstrate toughness, despite abundant evidence of that policy’s countless harms—killing hundreds of thousands of innocent people, squandering our citizens’ treasures in life and income, our security decreased by increasing opponents and poverty? I hope not.

So let our officials speak the truth against imagined fears and for a more caring society, speak out against empire, which is to say—for our towns, cities, and state.

References
Bennett, Dick. Militarism USA: Washington County, Ark.
Lofgren, Mike. The Party Is Over.

RESISTANCE: CONVERSION TO CIVILIAN INDUSTRY
JOB CREATION: AN ARGUMENT AGAINST INVESTING IN MILITARY INDUSTRY
Investing in education and mass transit creates twice as many jobs as investing in the military. Investing in other areas such as health care and home weatherization creates significantly more jobs than investing the same amount in the military. Conclusion: The US should convert from a military to a civil economy. WAND Bulletin Fall 2008 Vol. 26 No. 2 (Dick)

GRASSROOTS MILITARISM BIT BY BIT
Whereas with opposing climate change we go from small to large
footprint, with militarism it has been the opposite. Militarism pervades the US corporate-Pentagon-Congressional-Mainstream Media Complex to dominate the consciousness of the populace, producing popular support and fodder for the wars. A tiny example of militarism as the capillaries of the body politic is this support of an Arkansas Guard event by the Democratic Party in Washington County:

FROM WASHINGTON COUNTY DEMOCRATS
At the last county committee meeting we voted to pay for a booth at the 2012 National Guard Champions Cup Soccer Tournament at Springdale High School on March 16-18. We are going to do voter registration and talk to voters about our Democratic candidates and we need your help. The tournament begins on Friday and ends late Sunday evening and we would like to staff the booth for as much of the tournament's play time as possible. Follow this link to http://tiny.cc/nzwyaw to sign up to volunteer.

“Pentagon Offers US Police Full Military Hardware”
Robert Johnson, Business Insider, Dec. 6, 2011, RSN
Intro: "The US military has some of the most advanced killing equipment in the world that allows it to invade almost wherever it likes at will. We produce so much military equipment that inventories of military robots, M-16 assault rifles, helicopters, armored vehicles, and grenade launchers eventually start to pile up and it turns out a lot of these weapons are going straight to American police forces to be used against US citizens."
READ MORE http://readersupportednews.org/news-section2/323-95/8758-focus-pentagon-offers-us-police-full-military-hardware

US CORPORATE-MILITARY-CONGRESSIONAL-MAINSTREAM MEDIA COMPLEX

The biggest C-130 base (essential to US imperial might) is at Jacksonville. Any hint of its reduction produces howls from the Ark. Congressional delegation. Do we need a Stryker Force in Ft Smith? The corporations and Pentagon pit one city or state against another; Congressmen fight for bases. Sounds like our congressional delegation is trying to keep the base from getting sent someplace else. http://www.swtimes.com/sections/news/arkansas-delegation-questions-plan-188th-drones.html-0
Resisting Military Recruiting in the Schools via Testing

By Dick Bennett, 11-19-08

OPTION 8 Access to student test information is not provided to recruiting services: READ MORE

The original regulations can be found here:


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: Access to student test information is not provided to recruiting services

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:

The NNOMY (National Network Opposing the Militarization of Youth) website at www.nnomy.org has an excellent ASVAB section.

Talk Nation Radio: 3-Hour Military Test Secretly Administered in Thousands of High Schools  http://www.nnomy.org/
Pat Elder of the National Coalition to Protect Student Privacy (StudentPrivacy.org) explains how the U.S. military gets away with requiring students in thousands of U.S. high schools to take a 3-hour career inventory test with the results going straight to recruiters without students' or parents' knowledge.

Total run time: 29:00

Host: David Swanson.

Producer: David Swanson.

Engineer: Christiane Brown.

Music by Duke Ellington.

Syndicated by Pacifica Network.

Against the Militarized Academy
Thursday 20 November 2008
by: Henry A. Giroux, t r u t h o u t | Perspective

Defense Secretary Robert Gates has announced an effort to increase the militarization of higher education.

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.
--
Dick Bennett
My blog:
War Department/Peace Department
http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/
Newsletters
http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/
Index:
http://www.omnicenter.org/omni-newsletter-general-index/
National/International Days
See Newsletters
Peace, Justice, Ecology Birthdays
See INMOtion
jbennet@uark.edu
(479) 442-4600
2582 Jimmie Ave.
Fayetteville, AR 72703