
My Blog: War Department/Peace Department
http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/

My Newsletters:
http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/

Index:
http://www.omnicenter.org/omni-newsletter-general-index/


PERMANENT WAR

“When the plans for a new office building for the military, which came to be known as The Pentagon, were brought before the Senate on August 14, 1941, Senator Arthur Vandenberg of Michigan was puzzled. ‘Unless the war is to be permanent, why must we have permanent accommodations for war facilities of such size?’ he asked. ‘Or is the war to be permanent?’” Blum, America’s Deadliest Export (2013, 3). --Dick

With an annual budget of over $600 billion supporting one illegal, unnecessary war after another amounting to permanent war (the War Department), the expansion of empire of over a thousand bases throughout the world, secrecy, surveillance, and repression increasing at home (Homeland Security a domestic Pentagon), our representatives, the Congress, not only giving the military all they request but more (the military-industrial complex in every congressional district), and all of US massive terrorism motivating violent (actually peanuts) counter-terrorism throughout the world against which the US
has declared a “War Against Terrorism,” we the people can be thankful for the many independent, sustained organizations resisting the combined violence. In my Peace Movement Directory (2001), I described over a thousand peace and justice organizations in North America. This “Pentagon” newsletter and our several closely related newsletters are meant to support the nonviolent movement. Consider these newsletters and Blog as a collecting station to encourage the building of an even more concerted scrutiny of the Pentagon. I have also started a Hagel Watch; send items for that too. (Always include complete source, and I will cite you with thanks.) Let’s see what ordinary citizens can put together. --Dick

CONTENTS OF NO. 6, NO. 7, AND NO. 8 AT END

Contents #9

This newsletter has always functioned as a heuristic, but in this number that approach is made explicit for a steadier and deeper focus on the Pentagon.

POGO: Project on Government Oversight
Whistleblowers
Google “Pentagon Watch”
Bolger, VFP: Appeal to Sec’t. Hagel
Peace Action: Move the Money

Contents #10

Bruce Gagnon: Militarism USA
Jeremy Scahill, Dirty Wars (via VFP)
Dick: New US Cyber Command
Pentagon Cyber Planning (Google)
Center for Defense Information Watching the Pentagon (Google)
Street: Military Keynesianism, Sequestration Doesn’t Affect Military-Corporate Complex
(with note by Dick)
INVESTIGATIVE REPORTERS AND EDITORS JOURNAL (Fall 2014), “Investigating the Military.” Six articles. Because such a look into the Pentagon is so rare, especially given the size and cost of the military, this collection of articles and the IRE Journal deserve high praise and thanks from us all. The budget of the military establishment exceeds all others together, yet watchers are few (War Resisters League), and only one magazine is devoted to examining its expenditures (Center for Defense Information), and that one is not opposed to the National Security State in favor of a UN-oriented, cooperative world, but only criticizes unnecessary expenditures and waste. One might think at least a hundred critical organizations and journals would exist in the US whose sole purpose was to watch, investigate, and oppose the Pentagon. This extraordinary acceptance of the military is one of the strongest foundations of US militarism and empire. --Dick

These are articles not only about the military but about the methods and the social value of investigative journalism, so they are very useful and interesting on two levels. Paragraph after paragraph is packed with information about the many aspects and contexts of each story. Of course, if you took five minutes to consider the highly important subjects omitted, the list would be long.
Mike Fabey. “Ship Shape? Investigation finds major flaws in new Navy ships.” The Navy tried to silence the investigation, threatening to bring charges against Fabey. Fabey also includes a full page on “Tips for Covering the Big Military Story.” For more go to: aviationweek.com/lcs

Karisa King. “Abuses of Power: Air Force trainees sexually assaulted, given psychiatric discharges.” “After reporting assaults, victims said they were mistakenly diagnosed with psychological disorders and ousted from military service.” View the sources and video at mysanantonio.com/twice-betrayed.

Jacquee Petchel. “Friendly Fire: Post-9/11 veterans fight on new fronts at home.” For example, Petchel found that of the charities which proliferated from 2001-2011 and raised $12 billion ostensibly to assist disabled vets some “spent much of their money—sometimes most of it—on the organization’s overhead expenses.”

Aaron Glantz. “No Relief: Long waits for disability benefits, faulty health care, leave wounded veterans struggling to get by.”

Tony Capaccio and Kathleen Miller. “Targeting Military Contracts: Powerful accountability journalism can come from examining the billions the military spends on weapons programs.” One illustrated page analyzes one weapons system, the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, which “may top $1.5 trillion.” Read the investigation of military spending at bit.ly/liBysp2.

“IRE Resources.” The IRE Resource Center with more than 25,000 investigative stories and about 4,000 tipsheets. See ire.org/resource-center.

GOOGLE SEARCH, Investigative Reporters and Editors, Investigating the Military, Jan. 14, 2014 [No ref. to because not time yet for the 6 articles discussed above to reach Google. –Dick]

Military Records - Investigative Reporters and Editors
www.ire.org › Resource Center › Tipsheets
Fabey discusses how to approach military investigations, how to work around common Defense Department excuses, how to find military records and how to ...

1. Investigative Reporters and Editors | Investigation reveals role of ...
www.ire.org › Extra Extra
Dec 19, 2013 - Investigation reveals role of amateurs in China’s military buildup ...series focused on China's military buildup reveals that the US government ...

2. Investigative Reporters and Editors | Behind the Story: Investigating ...
https://ire.org/blog/ire-news/2012/11/27/investigating-lost-war-records/
Nov 27, 2012 - Home » IRE News » Behind the Story: Investigating lost war records ... The problem, U.S. Army historians told him, was that the Army was ...

3. **Pentagon unit held 'phony' ceremonies for MIAs ...** - Investigations
   [nbcnews.com/20889368-pentagon-unit-held-phony-ce...]

Oct 10, 2013 - By Bill Dedman Investigative Reporter, NBC News ... The solemn ceremonies at a military base in Hawaii are a sign of the nation's commitment to returning and ..... Mike Brunker is the investigations editor at NBCNews.com.

4. **Ex-Pentagon general target of leak investigation, sources say ...**
   [nbcnews.com/19174350-ex-pentagon-general-target-o...]

Jun 27, 2013 - By Michael Isikoff National Investigative Correspondent, NBC News ... in the U.S. military is now the target of a Justice Department investigation into a politically ... resorting to a secret subpoena of the phone records of New York Times reporters. ..... Mike Brunker is the investigations editor at NBCNews.com.

5. **Exclusive: How the SEAL raid on Somalia went bad ...**
   [nbcnews.com/20856248-exclusive-how-the-seal-raid-...]

Oct 7, 2013 - The team of less than two dozen Navy SEALs from Seal Team 6 huddled in one ... Investigative reporting from NBC News, with your story ideas and documents. ..... Mike Brunker is the investigations editor at NBCNews.com.

6. **Drone worth millions crashes into Lake Ontario ...**
   [nbcnews.com/21426738-drone-worth-million...]

by Gil Aegerter

Nov 12, 2013 - Investigative reporting from NBC News, with your story ideas and documents. ... The MQ-9 Reaper took off from Wheeler Sack Army Airfield at Fort Drum, N.Y., ..... Mike Brunker is the investigations editor at NBCNews.com.

7. **US kills two top leaders of terror group that attacked ...**
   [nbcnews.com/21213615-us-kills-two-top-leaders-of-te...]

Oct 28, 2013 - A senior U.S. military official has confirmed that a military drone attack Monday ... Investigative reporting from NBC News, with your story ideas and documents. ..... Mike Brunker is the investigations editor at NBCNews.com.

8. **General in leak probe quit Pentagon post suddenly ...**
   [nbcnews.com/19191717-general-in-leak-probe-quit-p...]

Jun 28, 2013 - The four-star general who is the target of a leak investigation suddenly resigned from his ... Investigative reporting from NBC News, with your story ideas and documents. ..... military official, when he retired from the military in August 2011. ..... Mike Brunker is the investigations editor at NBCNews.com.

9. **Accusers: Head of Pentagon's anti-sex abuse effort ...**
   [nbcnews.com/21462193-accusers-head-of-pentagons-...]

by Gil Aegerter

Nov 12, 2013 - Investigative reporting from NBC News, with your story ideas and documents. ... The MQ-9 Reaper took off from Wheeler Sack Army Airfield at Fort Drum, N.Y., ..... Mike Brunker is the investigations editor at NBCNews.com.
A blistering critique of the gulf between America’s soldiers and the society that sends them off to war, from the bestselling author of The Limits of Power and Washington Rules

The United States has been “at war” for more than a decade. Yet as war has become normalized, a yawning gap has opened between America’s soldiers and the society in whose name they fight. For ordinary citizens, as former secretary of defense Robert Gates has acknowledged, armed conflict has become an “abstraction” and military service “something for other people to do.”

In Breach of Trust, bestselling author Andrew Bacevich takes stock of the separation between Americans and their military, tracing its origins to the Vietnam era and exploring its pernicious implications: a nation with an abiding appetite for war waged at enormous expense by a standing army demonstrably unable to achieve victory. Among the collateral casualties are values once considered central to democratic practice, including the principle that responsibility for defending the country should rest with its citizens.

Citing figures as diverse as the martyr-theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the marine-turned-anti-warrior Smedley Butler, Breach of Trust summons Americans to restore that principle. Rather than something for “other people” to do, national defense should become the business of “we the people.” Should Americans refuse to shoulder this responsibility, Bacevich warns, the prospect of endless war, waged by a “foreign legion” of professionals and contractor-mercenaries, beckons. So too does bankruptcy—moral as well as
DAVE GILSON, “DON’T TREAD ON ME,” *MOTHER JONES* (Jan/Feb. 2013). The battle over sequestration’s trillion $ budget cut over 10 years sees congressional hawks, Pentagon officials, and weapons contractors swarming over White House, Congress, and the media. Dramatic visuals and statistics divided into 10 topics.

--Dick

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Until Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) and Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) rode to the rescue this week, Pentagon brass and their allies had been issuing dire warnings about the nation's military readiness: The armed services were being decimated, they said, by sequestration—the automatic budget cuts that were set to trim $1 trillion from the Pentagon budget over the next decade. "It's one thing for the Pentagon to go on a diet. It's another for the Pentagon to wear a straitjacket while dieting," grumbled Rep. Jim Cooper (D-Tenn.). The message got through: The House overwhelmingly approved the Ryan-Murray plan just two days after it was introduced.

But now, the Pentagon has once more gotten a reprieve from the budget ax: Under Murray and Ryan's congressional budget deal, the Pentagon will get an additional $32 billion, or 4.4 percent, in 2014, leaving its base budget at a higher level than in 2005 and 2006. (The Department of Defense expects its total 2014 budget, including supplemental war funding, to be more than $600 billion.)

Before the budget deal, some critics of defense spending had been ready to accept sequestration as the blunt, imperfect tool that might force the military to shed some of the bulk it acquired while fighting two of the longest and most expensive wars in our history. Even with the sequester in place, the Pentagon's
base budget was set to remain well above pre-9/11 levels for the next decade, and the military would have taken a far smaller haircut than it did after Vietnam and the Cold War wound down.

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan cost $1.5 trillion, about twice the cost of the Vietnam War when adjusted for inflation. Those funds came entirely from borrowing, contributing nearly 20 percent to the national debt accrued between 2001 and 2012. And that's just the "supplemental" military spending passed by Congress for the wars—the regular Pentagon budget also grew nearly 45 percent between 2001 and 2010.

No wonder, perhaps, that defense watchdogs found the Pentagon's wailing about the sequester less than convincing. "These 'terrible' cuts would return us to
historically high levels of spending," snapped Winslow Wheeler of the Project on Government Oversight. According to Lawrence J. Korb, a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress, the Pentagon could reduce its budget by $100 billion a year without undermining its readiness. The sequestration cuts for 2013 amounted to $37 billion.

Not so long ago, a hawkish GOP politician called for the "bloated" defense establishment to "be pared down" and retooled for the 21st century. The new budget deal doesn't reissue the blank check the Pentagon received during the past decade, but it may have removed the incentive to pare down. Below, a field guide to just how big the Pentagon budget is—and why it's so hard to trim. (That GOP politician? Former Sen. Chuck Hagel, now the secretary of defense.)
Our military is mind-bogglingly big.

- The Pentagon employs 3 million people, 800,000 more than Walmart.
- The Pentagon's 2012 budget was 47 percent bigger than Walmart's.
- Serving 9.6 million people, the Pentagon and Veterans Administration together constitute the nation's largest healthcare provider.
- 70 percent of the value of the federal government's $1.8 trillion in property, land, and equipment belongs to the Pentagon.
- Los Angeles could fit into the land managed by the Pentagon 93 times. The Army uses more than twice as much building space as all the offices in New York City.
- The Pentagon holds more than 80 percent of the federal government's inventories, including $6.8 billion of excess, obsolete, or unserviceable stuff.
- The Pentagon operates more than more than 170 golf courses worldwide.
One out of every five tax dollars is spent on defense.

The $3.7 trillion federal budget breaks down into mandatory spending—benefits guaranteed the American people, such as Social Security and Medicare—and discretionary spending—programs that, at least in theory, can be cut. In 2013, more than half of all discretionary spending (and one-fifth of total spending) went to defense, including the Pentagon, veterans' benefits, and the nuclear weapons arsenal.
We're still the world's 800-pound gorilla.

When it comes to defense spending, no country can compete directly with the United States, which spends more than the next 10 countries combined—including potential rivals Russia and China, as well as allies such as England, Japan, and France. Altogether, the Pentagon accounts for nearly 40 percent of global military spending. In 2012, 4.4 percent of our GDP went to defense. That's in line with how much Russia spends; China spends 2 percent of its GDP on its military.
Too big to audit

Where does the Pentagon's money go? The exact answer is a mystery. That's because the Pentagon's books are a complete mess. They're so bad that they can't even be officially inspected, despite a 1997 requirement that federal agencies submit to annual audits—just like every other business or organization.

The Defense Department is one of just two agencies (Homeland Security is the other) that are keeping the bean counters waiting: As the Government Accountability Office dryly notes, the Pentagon has "serious financial management problems" that make its financial statements "inauditable." Pentagon financial operations occupy one-fifth of the GAO's list of federal programs with a high risk of waste, fraud, or inefficiency.

Critics also contend that the Pentagon cooks its books by using unorthodox accounting methods that make its budgetary needs seem more urgent. The agency insists it will "achieve audit readiness" by 2017.
Anatomy of a budget buster

In the early 2000s, the Pentagon began developing a new generation of stealthy, high-tech fighter jets that were supposed to do everything from landing on aircraft carriers and taking off vertically to dogfighting and dropping bombs. The result is the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, whose three models (one each for the Navy, Air Force, and Marines) are years behind schedule, hugely over budget, and plagued with problems that have earned them a reputation as the biggest defense boondoggle in history.

- Rolling out the F-35 originally was expected to cost $233 billion, but now it's expected to cost nearly **$400 billion**. The time needed to develop the plane has gone from 10 years to 18.
• Lockheed says the final cost per plane will be about $75 million. However, according to the Government Accountability Office, the actual cost has jumped to $137 million.

• It was initially estimated that it could cost another $1 trillion or more to keep the new F-35s flying for 30 years. Pentagon officials called this "unaffordable"—and now say it will cost only $857 million. "This is no longer the trillion-dollar [aircraft]," boasts a Lockheed Martin executive.

• Planes started rolling off the assembly line before development and testing were finished, which could result in $8 billion worth of retrofits.

• A 2013 report by the Pentagon inspector general identified 719 problems with the F-35 program. Some of the issues with the first batch of planes delivered to the Marines:

  • Pilots are not allowed to fly these test planes at night, within 25 miles of lightning, faster than the speed of sound, or with real or simulated weapons.

  • Pilots say cockpit visibility is worse than in existing fighters.

  • Special high-tech helmets have "frequent problems" and are "badly performing."

  • Takeoffs may be postponed when the temperature is below 60°F.
The F-35 program has 1,400 suppliers in 46 states. Lockheed Martin gave money to 425 members of Congress in 2012 and has spent $159 million on lobbying since 2000.

Ways to save a few billion

There are savings to be had within the Pentagon's massive budget—if politicians can weather the storm that kicks up whenever a pet project is targeted. Here are 10 ideas for major cuts from an array of defense wonks, from the libertarian Cato Institute and the liberal Center for American Progress to the conservative American Enterprise Institute.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>PROPOSAL</th>
<th>ESTIMATED SAVINGS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Get rid of all ICMBs and nuclear bombers (but keep nuclear-armed subs).</td>
<td>$20 billion/year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retire 2 of the Navy's 11 aircraft carrier groups.</td>
<td>$50 billion through 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut the size of the Army and Marines to pre-9/11 levels.</td>
<td>At least $80 billion over 10 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slow down or cancel the pricey F-35 fighter jet program.</td>
<td>At least $4 billion/year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Downsize military headquarters that grew after 9/11.</td>
<td>$8 billion/year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cancel the troubled V-22 Osprey tiltrotor and use helicopters instead.</td>
<td>At least $1.2 billion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Modify supplemental Medicare benefits for veterans.</td>
<td>$40 billion over 10 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale back purchases of littoral combat ships.</td>
<td>$2 billion in 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cap spending on military contractors below 2012 levels.</td>
<td>$2.9 billion/year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retire the Cold War-era B-1 bomber.</td>
<td>$3.7 billion over 5 years</td>
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**Why Congress spared the Pentagon**

A few weeks ago, an agreement to end the cycle of budget crises and fiscal hostage-taking seemed distant. Sequestration had few friends on the Hill, but the parties could not agree on how to ditch the automatic budget cuts to defense and domestic spending. Republicans had proposed increasing defense spending while taking more money from Obamacare and othersocial programs, while Democrats said they’d scale back the defense cuts in exchange for
additional tax revenue. Those ideas were nonstarters: Following the government shutdown in October, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) called the idea of trading Social Security cuts for bigger defense budgets "stupid."

Which explains why Rep. Ryan and Sen. Murray’s deal craftily dodged taxes and entitlements while focusing on the one thing most Republicans and Democrats could agree upon: saving the Pentagon budget. This chart shows why military spending is the glue holding the budget deal together.

Guns and butter

A closer look at the $361 billion handed to military contractors in 2012 reveals
the enormous amount of stuff the modern military consumes. Some of the items on the shopping list:
Sources: Office of Management and Budget (historic Pentagon budget chart); Department of Defense (PDF), Congressional Research Service, OMB, House Budget Committee (PDF) (recent/proposed Pentagon budget chart); DoD (PDF), Government Accountability Office (size of Pentagon stats); OMB, Washington Post (federal budget chart); Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (international military spending chart); GAO (F-35 cost chart); GAO, Kara’s Cupcakes (cupcake chart); USASpending.gov (contracts list). Research by AJ Vicens and Eric Wuestwald. Top illustration: Guyco; Top photograph: Gregg Segal; Cupcake image: Edward Boatman/The Noun Project. Charts by Carolyn Perot. Support for this story was provided by a grant from the Puffin Foundation Investigative Journalism Project.

Dave Gilson is a senior editor at Mother Jones. Read more of his stories, follow him on Twitter, or contact him at dgilson(at)motherjones(dot)com.
[The budget was passed and the Pentagon is bursting with money, but HAW's opposition is an important part of the national opposition to US militarism and empire. --Dick]

HISTORIANS AGAINST WAR

[haw-info] Speak Up Now! $638 Billion for Pentagon in 2014 NDAA-
Please circulate quickly

.haw-info-bounces@stopthewars.org on behalf of Hiscze@aol.com

To: haw-info@stopthewars.org

Attachments: ATT00001.txt (571 B)

Please Forward Widely and Quickly

The House of Representative is poised to vote on HR 1960, FY 2014 National Defense Authorization Act, containing another $638 billion for the Pentagon (including $85.8 billion for the "winding down" war in Afghanistan). Isn't this just the same bad bill, Historians Against the War opposes every year? No its much worse!

Here's why: by busting through the sequester limits on the military, the House leadership aims to double the cuts on domestic discretionary spending. Across the country states and cities are already struggling with painful reductions in unemployment benefits, meals for the elderly, public housing, job training and Head Start. This bill compounds the damage.

Can we count on President Obama to veto this legislation, as he just warned? Not if past experience is any guide.

Elected Representatives need to hear from us today!
Call Capitol Switchboard: 202-224-3121

Let them know that you are opposed to spending $638 billion for unnecessary wars and weapons systems. Tell them to support Lee/ McGovern amendment to
accelerate US withdrawal from Afghanistan

Most Important: Urge your member of Congress to vote "No" on the 2014 Defense Authorization bill (HR 1960) and to restore the domestic cuts, which are damaging our communities.

Carolyn Rusti Eisenberg
for HAW Steering Committee

PS Let us know if you made the call
Carolyn.Eisenberg@hofstra.edu

[GvlVetsForPeace] Democrat for military rape

Wed Jun 12, 2013 8:11 pm (PDT). Posted by:
"Bill Warrick" jedi.knight8
From: Pierce R. Butler <pbutler@igc.org>
Date: Wed, Jun 12, 2013 at 7:48 PM
Subject: [GvlVetsForPeace] Democrat for military rape
To: gvlvetsForPeace@yahoogroups.com
http://fdlaction.firedoglake.com/2013/06/12/carl-levin-is-a-truly-horrible-person/

Carl Levin is a Truly Horrible Person  
* By: Jon Walker
<http://fdlaction.firedoglake.com/author/jon-walker/>
Wednesday June 12, 2013 9:34 am
*
*http://static1.firedoglake.com/30/files/2013/06/carl-levin-214x300.jpg<http://static1.firedoglake.com/30/files/2013/06/carl-levin.jpg>*
*
*Senator Carl Levin (D-MI)*

:*In a striking showdown between Senator Carl
Levin, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, and a member of his own party, Mr. Levin said on Tuesday that he would remove a measure aimed at curbing sexual assault in the military from a defense spending bill.*

*Senator Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Democrat of New York, offered a measure that would give military prosecutors rather than commanders the power to decide which sexual assault crimes to try, with the goal of increasing the number of people who report crimes without fear of retaliation. Mr. Levin, Democrat of Michigan, said he would replace Ms. Gillibrand’s measure — which has 27 co-sponsors, including four Republicans — with one that would require a senior military officer to review decisions by commanders who decline to prosecute sexual assault cases. Although Mr. Levin’s measure would change the current system, it would keep prosecution of sexual assault cases within the chain of command, as the military wants.*

*There is simply no good justification for keeping in place what is literally a feudal system of military justice that is clearly broken. Our main allies from Israel to Australia have long ago adopted this change and managed to still have perfectly functioning armies. The claims from top commanders the changing the system would undermine military trust, morale or discipline are frankly laughable given that we have ample examples proving it works well in other countries.*

*There is no level of public shaming that is too great for Levin.

The War Crimes Times

WarCrimesTimes.org

A publication “Exposing the true costs of war”

American Exceptionalism

Image by Mark Runge
The leaders of imperial powers have traditionally told themselves and their citizens that their country was exceptional and that their subjugation of a particular foreign land should be seen as a “civilizing mission,” a “liberation,” “God’s will,” and of course bringing “freedom and democracy” to the benighted and downtrodden. It is difficult to kill large numbers of people without a claim to virtue. I wonder if this sense of exceptionalism has been embedded anywhere more deeply than in the United States, where it is drilled into every cell and ganglion of American consciousness from kindergarten on. If we measure the degree of indoctrination (I’ll resist the temptation to use the word “brainwashing”) of a population as the gap between what the people believe their government has done in the world and what the actual (very sordid) facts are, the American people are clearly the most indoctrinated people on the planet. The role of the American media is of course indispensable to this process—try naming a single American daily newspaper or TV network that was unequivocally against the U.S. attacks on Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan, Yugoslavia, Panama, Grenada, and Vietnam. Or even against any two of them. How about one? Which of the mainstream media expressed real skepticism of The War on Terror in its early years? Overloaded with a sense of America’s moral superiority, each year the State Department judges the world, issuing reports evaluating the behavior of all other nations, often accompanied by sanctions of one kind or another. There are different reports rating how each lesser nation has performed in the previous year in the areas of religious freedom, human rights, the war on drugs, trafficking in persons, and counterterrorism, as well as maintaining a list of international “terrorist” groups. The criteria used in these reports are mainly political, wherever applicable; Cuba, for example, is always listed as a supporter of terrorism whereas anti-Castro exile groups in Florida, which have committed literally hundreds of terrorist acts, are not listed as terrorist groups.

American Exceptionalism — A Survey

I wonder if this sense of exceptionalism has been embedded anywhere more deeply than in the United States, where it is drilled into every cell and ganglion of American consciousness from kindergarten on.

• “The causes of the malady are not entirely clear but its recurrence is one of the uniformities of history: power tends to confuse itself with virtue and a great nation is peculiarly susceptible to the idea that its power is a sign of God’s favor, conferring upon it a special responsibility for other nations—to make them richer and happier and wiser, to remake them, that is, in its own shining image.” — Former U.S. Senator William Fulbright,
The Arrogance of Power
(1966)
• “We Americans are the peculiar, chosen people—the Israel of our time; we bear the ark of the liberties of the world. ... God has predestined, mankind expects, great things from our race; and great things we feel in our souls.” —Herman Melville,
White-Jacket
(1850)
• “God appointed America to save the world in any way that suits America. God appointed Israel to be the nexus of America’s Middle Eastern policy and anyone who wants to mess with that idea is a) anti-Semitic, b) anti-American, c) with the enemy, and d) a terrorist.” —John le Carré,
• “Neoconservatism ... traded upon the historic American myths of innocence, exceptionalism, triumphalism and Manifest Destiny. It offered a vision of what the United States should do with its unrivaled global power. In its most rhetorically-seductive messianic versions, it conflated the expansion of American power with the dream of universal democracy. In all of this, it proclaimed that the maximal use of American power was good for both America and the world.” —Columbia University Professor Gary Dorrien,
The Christian Century magazine, January 22, 2007
• “To most of its citizens, America is exceptional, and it’s only natural that it should take exception to certain international standards.” —Michael Ignatieff,
Legal Affairs, May-June, 2002
• Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Peters, U.S. Army War College, 1997: “Our country is a force for good without precedent.”
• Thomas Barnett, U.S. Naval War College: “The U.S. military is a force for global good that ... has no equal.” —The Guardian (London), December 27, 2005
• John Bolton, future U.S. ambassador to the
United Nations, writing in 2000: Because of its unique status, the United States could not be “legally bound” or constrained in any way by its international treaty obligations. The U.S. needed to “be unashamed, unapologetic, uncompromising American constitutional hegemonists,” so that their “senior decision makers” could be free to use force unilaterally. Condoleezza Rice, future U.S. Secretary of State, writing in 2000, was equally contemptuous of international law. She claimed that in the pursuit of its national security the United States no longer needed to be guided by “notions of international law and norms” or “institutions like the United Nations” because it was “on the right side of history.” —

*Z Magazine*, July/August 2004

• “The president [George W. Bush] said he didn’t want other countries dictating terms or conditions for the war on terrorism. ‘At some point, we may be the only ones left. That’s okay with me. We are America.’” —


• “Reinhold Niebuhr got it right a half-century ago: what persists—and promises no end of grief—is our conviction that Providence has summoned America to tutor all of mankind on its pilgrimage to perfection.” —Andrew Bacevich, professor of international relations, Boston University

• In commenting on Woodrow Wilson’s moral lecturing of his European colleagues at the Versailles peace table following the First World War, Winston Churchill remarked that he found it hard to believe that the European emigrants, who brought to America the virtues of the lands from which they sprang, had left behind all their vices. —


• “Behold a republic, gradually but surely becoming the supreme moral factor to the world’s progress and the accepted arbiter of the world’s disputes.” —William Jennings Bryan, U.S. Secretary of State under Woodrow Wilson, *In His Im-age* (1922)

•

*Newsweek*

editor Michael Hirsch: “U.S. allies must accept that some U.S. unilateralism is inevitable, even desirable. This mainly involves accepting the reality of America’s supreme might—and truthfully appreciating how historically lucky they are to be protected by such a relatively benign power.” —

*Foreign Affairs*, November 2002

• Colin Powell speaking before the Republican National Convention, August 13, 1996: The United States is “a country that exists by the grace of a divine providence.”
• “The U.S. media always has an underlying acceptance of the mythology of American exceptionalism, that the U.S., in everything it does, is the last best hope of humanity.” —Rahul Mahajan, author of: The New Crusade: America's War on Terrorism, and Full Spectrum Dominance

• “The fundamental problem is that the Americans do not respect anybody except themselves,” said Col. Mir Jan, a spokesman for the Afghan Defense Ministry.

“They say, ‘We are the God of the world,’ and they don’t consult us.” —Washington Post, August 3, 2002

• “If we have to use force, it is because we are America! We are the indispensable nation. We stand tall. We see further into the future.” —Madeleine Albright, U.S. Secretary of State, 1998

William Blum is an author, historian, and U.S. foreign policy critic. This page was excerpted from “The Anti-Empire Report #100” at http://williamblum.org.

NEW BEDFORD, Mass. (Nov. 10, 2011) Specialist Alicia Parker, assigned to the Massachusetts Army Honor Guard, left, and Airman Sang Nguyen, assigned to USS Constitution, recite the Pledge of Allegiance with preschoolers to recognize and honor the symbolism of the National Ensign. Service members also talked about their experiences in the military and responded to students' questions during the visit. (U.S. Navy photo)

US MILITARISM CROSS-REFERENCE: Westward Imperialism Across Pacific. See also the newsletter Continental US Imperialism. The title for the two: From Jamestown to Jeju.

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[OMNI’s PENTAGON NEWSLETTER is part of the resistance to the dominant US war tradition inside the beast-- to reduce its reach, ferocity, and destructiveness. But we must never forget the alternative traditions available to us in the US (see the several newsletters), including the nonviolent Catholic Worker movement. –Dick]
Des Moines Catholic Worker
April 24, 2013: Author Rosalie Riegle Visits the Des Moines Catholic Worker

Rosalie Riegle
Yesterday, the Des Moines Catholic Worker was blessed by a visit from author Rosalie Riegle, the “Studs Terkel of the Catholic Worker movement.” Ms. Riegle read from two recent books: *Crossing the Line: Nonviolent Resisters Speak Out for Peace* and *Doing Time for Peace: Resistance, Family, and Community*.

Consisting of more than 150 interviews—including many Catholic Workers, several of whom were in the audience—these books explore through oral history the work of activists from the Vietnam War years up to the 2000s.

Rosalie herself has a long history of personal involvement with the Catholic Worker Movement, having started two houses of hospitality in Saginaw, Michigan, and living in these communities for 10 years.

As she related stories of nonviolent resistance, Rosalie spoke movingly of the ever-present need to “Say No” to war and empire. Mike Miles, in his book review published in the April 2013 *Via Pacis*,
described her own sense “mission,” with regards to her books:

"Her desire to collect and share these stories … is not meant to be merely an academic exercise. She admits to being on a ‘mission’ to present her findings to a broader public to test what she perceives to be the truth contained in the lives and actions of her friends and cohorts."

This truth was felt powerfully last night as we listened to excerpts from Rosalie’s books and personal stories from some of those present.

Rosalie’s previous books include Dorothy Day: Portraits by Those Who Knew Her and Voices from the Catholic Worker. To learn more about Rosalie and to purchase her books, please visit her author page on Amazon.com: http://www.amazon.com/Rosalie-G.-Riegle/e/B001K8HRB6

MIKE MILES. “REVIEWING ROSALIE RIEGLE’S TWO BOOKS—LIKE READING STORIES FROM EXTENDED FAMILY.” VIA PACIS (April 2013). [I read about Riegle in this excellent CW newspaper. – Dick]

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from HAW

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Pentagon Rx Spending

Write or Call the White House
President Obama has declared his commitment to creating the most open and accessible administration in American history. That begins with taking comments and questions from you, the public, through our website.

Call the President

PHONE NUMBERS
Comments: 202-456-1111
Switchboard: 202-456-1414

TTY/TTD
Comments: 202-456-6213
Visitor's Office: 202-456-2121

Write a letter to the President
Here are a few simple things you can do to make sure your message gets to the White House as quickly as possible.

1. If possible, email us! This is the fastest way to get your message to President Obama.

2. If you write a letter, please consider typing it on an 8 1/2 by 11 inch sheet of paper. If you hand-write your letter, please consider using pen and writing as neatly as possible.

3. Please include your return address on your letter as well as your envelope. If you have an email address, please consider including that as well.

4. And finally, be sure to include the full address of the White House to make sure your message gets to us as quickly and directly as possible:

   The White House
   1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
   Washington, DC 20500

END OMNI PENTAGON NEWSLETTER #11

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Dick Bennett
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