What's at stake: HH Dalai Lama on Violence: "Of course, war and the large military establishments are the greatest sources of violence in the world. Whether their purpose is defensive or offensive, these vast powerful organizations exist solely to kill human beings. We should think carefully about the reality of war. Most of us have been conditioned to regard military combat as exciting and glamorous - an opportunity for men to prove their competence and courage. Since armies are legal, we feel that war is acceptable; in general, nobody feels that war is criminal or that accepting it is criminal attitude. In fact, we have been brainwashed. War is neither glamorous nor attractive. It is monstrous. Its very nature is one of tragedy and suffering" " [The attribution to the Dalai Lama seems plausible, but I received this from a stranger via Facebook, without source citation or any attempt to verify its authenticity. –Dick]

What is the mission of OMNI?
a world free of war and the threat of war,
a society with equity and justice for all,
a community where every person’s potential may be fulfilled,
and an earth restored.

My blog:  It's the War Department
http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/

**Newsletters:**  Laying the foundation for peace, justice, and ecology in knowledge.
http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/

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

A wide-ranging source of information is the Defense News Early Bird Brief: 

Nos. 10-15 below.

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SANDERS, US GOING TO WAR

Here is an improved and expanded version of my article called "How to start a war: The American Use of War Pretext Incidents (1846-1989)" (May 2002).

This new version was published by the Coalition to Oppose the Arms Trade (COAT) in issue #50, of *Press for Conversion!* (January 2003). For information on obtaining a copy of that
issue, which contains 40 pages of articles by numerous authors on US war pretext incidents, between 1846 and the present, please see the information after this article.


"Oh what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practice to deceive!"

Sir Walter Scott, Canto vi, Stanza 17, Marmion.

**Pretext n.** [Latin praetextum, to weave before, pretend, disguise; prae-, before + texere, to weave], a false reason or motive put forth to hide the real one; excuse.

**Stratagem** [Gr. Strategema, device or act of a general; stratos, army + agein, to lead], a trick or scheme used to deceive an enemy in war.

For more than a year now the U.S. has seemed on the verge of attacking Iraq. All that is stopping them is their inability to find a credible pretext for war.

Throughout history, war planners have used many forms of deception to trick their enemies. Because public support is so crucial to the process of initiating and waging war, the home population is also subject to deceitful stratagems. Creating false pretenses to justify war is often a major step in gaining public support for such deadly ventures.

Like schoolyard bullies who shout 'He hit me first!', war planners know that it is irrelevant whether their rival really did 'throw the first punch.' As long as the attack can be made to appear unprovoked, the aggressor can 'respond' with force. Bullies and war planners are experts in the art of taunting, teasing and threatening. If enemies cannot be goaded into 'firing the first shot,' it is easy enough to fabricate lies about what happened. Such lies are used to rationalize schoolyard beatings or genocidal wars.

Such expedient artifice has no doubt been used by every military
power in history. Roman emperors had their cassus belli to conceal real reasons for waging war. Over the millenia, although weapons and battle strategies have changed greatly, the deceitful strategem of using pretext incidents to ignite war has remained remarkably consistent. In examining this history, certain patterns repeatedly emerge, a distinct modus operandi is detected, and the institutionalized, criminal ploys of war planners can be seen.

Perhaps the most commonly used war pretext device is an apparently unprovoked enemy attack. Through history, such "attacks" have been deliberately incited, completely fabricated, allowed to occur, or engineered and then blamed on the desired enemy. The event is then exploited to arouse widespread public sympathy for the victims, to demonise the attackers and to build widespread support for military "retaliation" among the general population, as well as among politicians and other leaders of public opinion.

War pretext incidents, in themselves, are not sufficient to spark wars. Rumours and allegations about the tragic events must also spread throughout the target population. Constant repetition of the official version of what happened, helps to spawn dramatic narratives that are lodged into public consciousness. The stories then become accepted without question and legends are fostered. The corporate media is central to the success of such war propaganda. Politicians rally people around the flag, lending their special oratory skills to the call for a military "response." Demands for "retaliation" then ring out across the land, war hysteria mounts and, finally, a war is born.

Every time the U.S. has gone to war, pretext incidents have been used as triggers to justify military action. Later, the conventional views of these controversial events have been challenged and exposed as untrue. Historians, investigative journalists and others, have cited
eyewitness accounts, declassified documents and statements made by the perpetrators themselves to demonstrate that provocative incidents were used to stage manage the march to war.

There are dozens of other examples from U.S. history besides those exposed in these pages. During the Cold War, dozens of covert and overt wars were promoted using specific pretext episodes. However, the crusade against communism was the generic backdrop for all rationales.

As the Cold War wound down, the "War on Drugs" was developed as a new cover story. Lurking behind U.S. lies about wanting to squash illicit drug production and trafficking, are the actual reasons for financing and training so many right-wing, military governments. The "War on Drugs" pretext has been used to boost counter-insurgency operations aimed at destroying those opposed to U.S. corporate profiteering. The CIA has not only used drugs as a pretext to arm regimes that themselves profit from illegal drug sales, it has also financed many of its own covert wars using the highly lucrative trade in heroine and cocaine.

The latest thematic pretext for war is the so-called "War Against Terrorism." It is vitally important to expose this latest attempt to fraudulently conceal the largely economic and geostrategic purposes of war. By unraveling the intricate web of pretenses woven to deceive the public, we can begin to reveal how corporations are the main benefactors of war. By throwing light on repeated historical patterns of deception, we can promote a healthy skepticism about government and corporate media yarns that are now being spun to promote wars of the future.

If asked to support wars so that wealthy elites can safely plunder the natural and human resources of foreign lands, people would likely 'just say no.' Therefore, over the millennia, war planners have developed a special martial art - the creation of war pretext incidents. These elaborate webs of deceit are woven to create the appearance that wars are
fought for just, moral and humanitarian reasons.

The knowledge of how people have been repeatedly tricked into going to war, is like a vaccine. It can be used to inoculate the public with healthy doses of distrust for official, war pretext narratives and other deceptive stratagems. Through such immunization programs we can help to counter our society's susceptibility to "war fever" and, hopefully, prevent the next bout of war from infecting us.

Press for Conversion! Issue #50 January 2003

Published quarterly by the Coalition to Oppose the Arms Trade

Theme of this issue:
"Going to War: The American use of War Pretext Incidents"

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Born at War

Review by davidswanson - Posted on 02 February 2015

Foreword to America's Oldest Professions: Warring and Spying

One of the ways in which we commonly handicap our own struggles to reform the bad practices of the U.S. government is by imagining those practices to be degenerative developments taking us away from a purer and nobler past. As Gary Brumback shows in this book, the United States grew out of the idea that (in Thomas Paine's phrase) it was "common sense" to launch a war to settle political differences, a war that in turn set the new nation free to launch a series of wars against the indigenous people of the continent, followed quickly by a ceaseless string of wars waged in near and far-flung corners of the globe.

This deeply moral, highly readable, and urgently necessary book, which provides a wealth of new information even to a reader like myself who writes on similar topics, takes us from the birth of the United States to the Barack Obama presidency. Brumback documents George Washington's role as first warrior in chief and first chief spy, and traces that legacy through some 13,000 to 14,000 U.S. military wars/interventions since, operations that have killed some 20 million to 30 million foreign civilians just in the years after World War II, and that
have killed more than two and a half million U.S. soldiers over nearly two and a half centuries. Brumback's argument is not for "just wars" or more competent spying but for a shift away from these practices. War destroys the natural environment, wastes trillions of dollars, and has no upside. All militarism and spying cost the U.S. government well over $1 trillion a year and rising. In exchange for this investment, which at least matches if it does not exceed the rest of the world combined, the United States leads wealthy nations in inequality, unemployment, food insecurity, life expectancy, prison population, homelessness, and other measures of what all the militarism is supposedly protecting: a way of life.

We've been trained to think of war preparations -- and the wars that result from being so incredibly prepared for wars -- as necessary if regrettable. What if, however, in the long view that this book allows us, war turns out to be counterproductive on its own terms? What if war endangers those who wage it rather than protecting them? Imagine, for a moment, how many countries Canada would have to invade and occupy before it could successfully generate anti-Canadian terrorist networks to rival the hatred and resentment currently organized against the United States.

Brumback goes further, documenting that spying is as useless and counterproductive on its own terms as war is. Most secrets sought and maintained by the U.S. government have literally no strategic value even in terms of the militarist thinking that drives the spying. The CIA straddles the space between keystone cop performances of handing nuclear plans to Iran or grounding flights because a con artist claims to see secret terrorist messages in television broadcasts, and the deadly anti-democratic destruction of overthrowing governments and murdering innocent people with drone strikes. In a "free market" competition, the CIA or the Pentagon would lose out to an agency that did literally nothing, much less to a department that worked toward peace, justice, and stability through nonviolent means.

So, what drives what has come to look like war for the sake of war and spying for the sake of spying? Brumback proposes the useful term "badvantages" to categorize features of U.S. society that are not necessarily "roots" or "causes" of war but which facilitate war when found in combination. This section of the book provides an excellent outline of the military industrial spying congressional complex and analysis of how it functions. Greed, obedience, and banal immorality play central roles. As I write these words, the U.S. Congress is missing in action, having fled Washington in order to allow a new war to begin without holding a vote on whether or not to authorize it. Weapons stocks are at record heights on Wall Street, and a financial
advisor on National Public Radio was just heard recommending investing in weaponry.

Banksters come in for a healthy dose of criticism as a badvantage, as do the think tanks that just can't stop thinking about tanks. Also exposed to the light in these pages are front groups for war interests, war supporters in religion and especially in education, patriotic festivals, news media, Hollywood, war toys, the domestic U.S. gun industry, academia, and -- last but not least -- people who do nothing, or "accessories after the fact." That's a lot of badvantages to be overcome.

Often, of course, it is after the fact -- after the launching of a new war -- that people come around to opposing it. For 70 years somewhere upwards of 90 percent of Americans who argue that war can be just or necessary have gone primarily to World War II as evidence for their claim. Never mind that World War II is unimaginable without World War I which nobody thinks was necessary. Never mind the support that Wall Street and the U.S. State Department gave to the Nazis for years leading up to the crisis. For 70 years people have imagined that, like World War II, some new war might be a good one. This hope has lasted for weeks or months and then faded. For most of the duration of the 2003-2011 U.S.-led war on Iraq, a U.S. majority said it should never have been started. In this sense, it is "accessories before the fact" who are hurting us the most.

Brumback envisions another way of addressing ourselves to the world, in which we would lose the idea that War #14,001 might finally be the good one that fulfills the promises of World War I and trails peace and prosperity behind its bombs and poisons. He also recommends a comprehensive series of steps to move us in that direction. This book is worth whatever you paid for it for its concluding sections alone. The creation of a Citizens Assembly is, I think, exactly the way to go, although I'm not so sure it should be national. An assembly composed of citizens of the world has potential, I believe. In either case, building such a structure is project number one. We do not need a better Obama, a change of face in a position that corrupts absolutely. We need a better Occupy, a bigger broader bolder movement that finally resorts to the most powerful tool in our arsenal: nonviolence.

David Swanson is an author, activist, journalist, and radio host. He is director of WorldBeyondWar.org and campaign coordinator for RootsAction.org. Swanson's books include War Is A Lie. He blogs at DavidSwanson.org and WarIsACrime.org. He hosts Talk Nation Radio.

- davidswanson's blog.
The United States must accept responsibility for the damage its military actions have caused and recognize there are alternatives for the future.

In the nearly decade and a half since the September 11th, 2001 attacks, the United States has invaded Afghanistan and Iraq, carried out bombing campaigns throughout the Middle East, and launched special operations strikes throughout the world.

Author: Jared Keyel

Published in: Las Vegas Informer http://lasvegas.informermg.com/2015/05/03/time-americans-accept-responsibility-military-interventions/
Huntington News http://www.huntingtonnews.net/112578
The Free Weekly http://www.freeweekly.com/2015/05/07/time-for-americans-to-accept-responsibility-for-our-military-interventions/

For the full article:

Time for Americans to Accept Responsibility for Our Military Interventions

505 Words  By Jared Keyel  [I read this in The Free Weekly (5-7-15), Fayetteville, AR. –Dick]

The United States must accept responsibility for the damage its military actions have caused and recognize there are alternatives for the future.
In the nearly decade and a half since the September 11th, 2001 attacks, the United States has invaded Afghanistan and Iraq, carried out bombing campaigns throughout the Middle East, and launched special operations strikes throughout the world.

These policies are non-partisan. Many military actions begun under George W. Bush have continued and intensified under Barack Obama. The CIA-led drone wars in Pakistan, Somalia, and Yemen are a key component of Mr. Obama’s administration and the use of U.S. Special Forces has exploded in recent years, deploying to 134 countries in 2013.

The consequences of these actions are immense. In the words of 13-year-old Yemeni, Mohammed Tuaiman, U.S. drone strikes have “turned our area into hell and continuous horror, day and night, we even dream of them in our sleep.” Mohammed, like his father and brother, was later killed by an American drone. Fourteen-year-old Zubair Ur Rehman, whose grandmother was killed by a U.S. drone strike in Pakistan, told five members of Congress in 2103, “I no longer love blue skies. In fact, I like gray skies; the drones cannot fly when the skies are gray.”

Physicians for Social Responsibility, the American affiliate of Nobel Peace Prize-winning International Physicians for Prevention of Nuclear War, recently released a report that estimates at least 1.3 million people have died as a result of the U.S. invasions and occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan and the violent spillover into Pakistan. U.S. policies have not brought stability to countries such as Afghanistan or Yemen and as the rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria has shown, U.S. military actions have fanned the flames of terrorism, not extinguished them.

There is no doubt that many Americans believe our military interventions are undertaken to help others around the world. Unfortunately, the reality is far different. From Afghanistan to Libya, our military interventions have left broken lives and nations in ruins. It may be surprising to some Americans, but a 2013 Gallup poll of 65 countries saw the United States at the top of the list of greatest threats to world peace.

We as Americans need to take that perception seriously and accept responsibility for the enormous human suffering our wars and interventions have caused.

Most Americans have a genuine desire to help and not hurt others around the world. We can work to alleviate the injury we have already caused by providing more support for emergency humanitarian aid and refugee protection and resettlement, more funding to allow the societies we have torn apart to rebuild themselves, and by engaged, multilateral, diplomacy to try to end ongoing violence. We need to push our government, no matter which party is currently in power, to live up to our obligations under international law and end the pervasive use of military force. We have relied on military means too widely and too belligerently and it is time to chart a different course.

Jared Keyel has a background in International Relations and Middle Eastern Affairs and currently works with refugees, asylum-seekers, and immigrants in Chicago, Illinois and is syndicated through PeaceVoice.

May 4, 2015 | Filed Under Home
KIRKUS REVIEW

A distinguished journalist and scholar looks at the shaping of America’s national security and foreign policy for the past decade.

We live, writes Rothkopf (Power Inc.: The Epic Rivalry Between Big Business and Government and the Reckoning That Lies Ahead, 2012, etc.), in an age of fear in which the instant delivery of horrific images ratchets up the dread of terror attack, even as the country suffers a financial meltdown. These national emotional traumas help account for the swings in our policymaking, from the George W. Bush administration’s “overheated” response to the 9/11 attacks to the consequent temporizing of the Barack Obama administration, desperate to be seen as “un-Bush.” Bringing to bear his own government experience and decades of writing about these issues, Rothkopf sympathetically examines the two presidents and their principal advisers—he’s interviewed over 100 of them—and demonstrates how the sense of threat informed so many of their decisions during this highly charged era. Focusing evenhandedly on the personalities that transformed so much of our foreign policy and national security strategies, he considers the Bush team’s second-term makeover, the surge in Iraq, his handling of the 2008 financial crisis and the role played by national security in that year’s election. The author examines the construction of the Obama foreign policy team, the failure of Richard Holbrooke’s AfPak shop within the State Department and of George Mitchell’s efforts in the Middle East, the illusory “pivot” to Asia and “reset” with Russia, the secret outreach to Iran, and the flat-footed response to the Arab Spring, the drone war, and the widespread and largely unknown (until the Snowden disclosures) cyberwar. Rothkopf emphasizes the difficulty of properly calibrating our policy amid the zeitgeist of fear, and he makes some proposals that might allow us to better adjust.

A sharp, immensely readable account of how we’ve arrived at this juncture and where matters stand as we anticipate the election of a new president.

Pub Date: Oct. 18th, 2014, 496pp, PublicAffairs

Veterans Call for Halt to Illegal Cluster Bomb Shipment

Veterans For Peace is calling on the Obama administration to discontinue the delivery of illegal cluster bombs to Saudi Arabia. Human Rights Watch provided convincing evidence this week that Saudi Arabia is dropping U.S. made cluster bombs in its aerial campaign against neighboring Yemen.

In 2008, 116 countries signed the Convention on Cluster Bombs, agreeing not to manufacture or use cluster bombs. Cluster bombs contain many small bomblets that disperse over a wide area, killing and maiming civilians, including many children. The U.S. and Saudi Arabia did not sign the Cluster Bomb Treaty. <Full Statement>

OCCUPATION OF AFGHANISTAN AND IRAQ PERMANENT

Two Articles from the Answer Coalition, Oct. 10, 2014

White House quietly sets new Afghanistan withdrawal deadline: Never

Despite "withdrawal," thousands of U.S. troops to continue occupation.

With no public discussion or explanation, the White House signed a new deal on Sept. 30 with the government of Afghanistan to keep 10,000 U.S. troops occupying the country. There is no plan or timeline for a full withdrawal of U.S. troops — ever.

Read Article
Surprise! 2,300 more Marines set for Iraq by retiring general

"No boots on the ground" a lie

Less than one week after the Pentagon generals announced new one-year deployment rotations to the resurrected U.S. war in Iraq “for 10 to 15 to 20 years,” they also created a new Marine Corps unit to fight in Iraq.

Read Article

Best of TomDispatch: Chalmers Johnson, Portrait of a Sagging Empire

Posted by TD (Tom Engelhardt), July 5, 2014. Follow TomDispatch on Twitter @TomDispatch.

Email Print

[Note for TomDispatch Readers: It’s summer and in this season my mind turns to Chalmers Johnson, "Mr. Blowback," who died in November 2010 and who, each year around this time, I like to remember at TomDispatch. Certainly, given recent events in Iraq and Syria, I have to resist the eerie urge to pick up the phone, dial his number, and get his thoughts. He was a towering figure at this site (and in my life) and recently, with that in mind, I went back and looked at the last piece he wrote for TD just months before his death. “The Guns of August” he called it. [Subtitled: Lowering the Flag on the American Century. Chalmers’ last book was a collection of his essays, Dismantling the Empire: America’s Last Best Hope. –Dick]

MORE

http://www.tomdispatch.com/post/175864/best_of_tomdispatch%3A_chalmers_johnson%2C_portrait_of_a_sagging_empire___/#more

IMPERIALISM

Shrinking the Empire: A Session on the Imperial Couch

By Tom Engelhardt. Tomdispatch, Nov. 11, 2014.

[What follows is a transcript of a therapy session between the American Empire and a psychiatrist whose name we at TomDispatch have agreed not to disclose. Normally, even in
an age in which privacy means ever less to anyone, we wouldn’t consider publishing such a private encounter, but the probative news value of the exchange is so obvious that we decided to make an exception. The transcript has been edited only for obvious repetitions and the usual set of “ums” and “uhs.” Tom]

Doctor: Would you like to tell me why you’re here?

American Empire: Well, Doc, I’m feeling a little off. To tell you the truth, I’m kind of confused, even a little dizzy some of the time.

Doctor: When did you first experience symptoms of dizziness?

AE: I think it was all the pivoting that did it. First I was pivoting out of Iraq. Then I was pivoting out of Afghanistan. Then I was pivoting to Asia. Then I was secretly pivoting to Africa. Then all of a sudden I was pivoting into Iraq again, and Syria, and Afghanistan, and... well, you get the picture.

Doctor: And this left you...?

AE: Depressed. But Doc, there’s a little background you need to know about the dizzying nature of my life. For almost 50 years -- this was in the last century -- I was in the marriage from hell. My partner, the Soviet Union, was a nightmare. I mean, we had a brief sunny courtship when we were more or less in love, but that only lasted the length of World War II. The minute I got home from the front, it was hell, and I’m hardly exaggerating if I tell you that, when we got to fighting, it was scorched Earth all the way. We regularly threatened to annihilate each other. It was one of those stormy relationships you could never predict in advance where this planet just isn’t big enough for the two of you.

Click here to read more of this dispatch.

Grinding the Propaganda Mill of Empire

CINDY SHEEHAN’S Soapbox People’s Network (SPN), 9/17/2014

A note from Cindy

So, the Empire is ginng up some more anti-Peace rhetoric to get the US into more wars. Cindy Sheehan’s Soapbox has exposed the lies over and over again for almost six years! Particularly with the current anti-Peace rhetoric spewing forth from the White House and its propaganda arm of the Media Industrial Complex, the Soapbox continues to provide the facts: like ISIS/ISIL was armed and trained by the US Deep State creepers and the US is partnering with neo-Nazi fascists in Kiev to isolate Russia and both misadventures are for corporate profit and Imperial power. Every Soapbox podcast from when we premiered in January of 2009 is archived, and it’s quite a chronicle of Lie-Busting!

Recently, Cindy Sheehan’s Soapbox has transformed to the Soapbox People’s Network
where we post news items to grind to extinction the propaganda mill of Empire and we have added three new podcasts (one active and two still in production) and a list of featured bloggers to go along with Cindy Sheehan's insightful and heartfelt analysis of Imperial hanky-panky.

Read More...

World War Forever  SPN  by Cindy Sheehan  09/19/2014

[THE WAR OF TERROR]

A good friend of mine Jon Gold has taken to calling the US wars against the planet, “World War Forever.” So, I’d like to thank him for the sadly relevant title of this piece.

Today, a friend of mine named Jacob George killed himself. Jacob George Jacob was a young vet who performed three tours of duty in Afghanistan and I met him last year when I was in the middle of riding my bike across from California to Washington DC for Tour de Peace. We met Jacob in the middle of the country: Oklahoma City. I can’t begin to say what the death of such a gentle and sweet human means. The loss is horrible and not just for Jacob’s friends and family, but for all of us.

Not only is the Empire deadly to the people who live far away in foreign countries, but also to the people it recruits with lies and dangling “benefits” to lure our young people into its bloody maw and then casually tosses them to the garbage pile when they are “lucky” enough to come home from the wars for profit.

I know many colleagues and friends, as well as myself, who are beyond frustrated and devastated with World War Forever, but I also used to be friends and connected to far more people who are now saying that they are “disappointed” in Obama. My question to these people is, “just what the hell did you all expect would happen when you sat on your collective and hypocritical asses for over six year?” Where were these people when Obama sent more troops to Afghanistan, killed people in ½ dozen countries with his damned drones, supported neo-Nazis in Ukraine, destroyed Libya, supported violent rebels in Syria (which many analysts say have blossomed” into ISIS/ISIL) and all the other evil things the Peace Laureate has done in his tenure as Managing War Monger for the 1%?

I am convinced these same people who are just NOW regaining consciousness will soon go back into an ethics-coma and vigorously support the next Dem warmonger would have never left the streets if a Republican were in the Oval Office.

I don’t know which group of people gets under my skin more, the Google-challenged rightwing who constantly accuse ME of being a hypocrite for not “opposing Obama,” or the ethically and morally challenged “liberals” who deserted the peace movement like the rats they are because they support Democrats over peace and justice.
I don’t know what the solution is because I don’t see anything changing as long as We the People keep allowing ourselves to be caught up into this never-ending death-cult spiral of partisan politics which has led to the death-cult of World War Forever.

While you Republicans and Democrats are waiting for the perfect president (who doesn’t exist) or the next Congressional Super Majority (that doesn’t help), our young people like Jacob and our brothers and sisters around this planet are suffering.

How can you live with yourselves?

THE EMPIRE AT HOME

Vote all you want. The secret government won’t change. The people we elect aren’t the ones calling the shots, says Tufts University’s Michael Glennon

Vote all you want. The secret government won’t change. The people we elect aren’t the ones calling the shots, says Tufts University’s Michael Glennon

Boston Globe, October 19, 2014

"...In a new book, “National Security and Double Government,” he catalogs the ways that the
defense and national security apparatus is effectively self-governing, with virtually no accountability, transparency, or checks and balances of any kind. He uses the term “double government”: There’s the one we elect, and then there’s the one behind it, steering huge swaths of policy almost unchecked. Elected officials end up serving as mere cover for the real decisions made by the bureaucracy.

“Glennon cites the example of Obama and his team being shocked and angry to discover upon taking office that the military gave them only two options for the war in Afghanistan: The United States could add more troops, or the United States could add a lot more troops. Hemmed in, Obama added 30,000 more troops.

We Were Lied To About 9/11 - Episode 5 – FBI WHISTLEBLOWER
Coleen Rowley

Coleen Rowley grew up in a small town in northeast Iowa. She obtained a B.A. degree in French from Wartburg College, Waverly, Iowa and then attended the College of Law at the University of Iowa and graduated with honors in 1980 also passing the Iowa Bar Exam that summer.

In January of 1981, Rowley was appointed a Special Agent with the FBI and initially served in the Omaha, Nebraska and Jackson, Mississippi Divisions. In 1984 she was assigned to the New York Office and for over 6 years worked on Italian organized crime and Sicilian heroin drug investigations. During this time Rowley also served three separate temporary duty assignments in the Paris, France Embassy and Montreal Consulate.

In 1990 Rowley was transferred to Minneapolis where she assumed the duties of “Chief Division Counsel” which entailed oversight of the Freedom of Information, Forfeiture, Victim-Witness and Community Outreach Programs as well as providing regular legal and ethics training to FBI Agents of the Division and some outside police training.

In May of 2002 Rowley brought some of the pre 9-11 lapses to light and testified to the Senate Judiciary Committee about some of the endemic problems facing the FBI and the intelligence community. Rowley’s memo to FBI Director Robert Mueller in connection with the Joint Intelligence Committee’s Inquiry led to a two year long Department of Justice Inspector General investigation. She was one of three whistleblowers chosen as persons of the year by TIME magazine.

In April 2003, following an unsuccessful and highly criticized attempt to warn the Director and other administration officials about the dangers of launching the invasion of Iraq, Rowley stepped down from her (GS-14) legal position to go back to being a (GS-13) FBI Special Agent. She retired from the FBI at the end of 2004 and now speaks publicly to various
groups, ranging from school children to business/professional/civic groups, on two different topics: ethical decision-making and "civil liberties and effective investigation."

From Cindy Sheehan's Soapbox, 9/14/2014.

MILITARISM, EMPIRE AND 2016: HILLARY CLINTON OR JIM WEBB (OR BERNIE SANDERS)? Who Can Lead Us Away from Endless War?

Jim Webb raises deep questions about US militarism.

William Greider

October 22, 2014 | This article appeared in the November 10, 2014 edition of
Jim Webb raises deep questions about US militarism.

When Jim Webb announced that he is thinking seriously about running for president in 2016, it didn’t exactly excite hearts and minds in the Beltway. The former senator from Virginia is widely regarded as an odd duck who stubbornly goes his own way. He dropped out of electoral politics after one term in the Senate and resumed his successful career as a writer. Webb’s bestselling novel *Fields of Fire* captured the reality of the Vietnam War, in which he had fought as a Marine platoon leader.

Wounded twice in battle, Webb was awarded the Navy Cross for extraordinary heroism. After the war, he wrote scholarly studies on war and national defense. Ronald Reagan appointed him secretary of the Navy, though Webb is a working-class Democrat, descended from hardscrabble country people in Arkansas.

Instead of becoming more hawkish, as defense intellectuals often do when they acquire status and influence, Webb has become increasingly critical of how US military force is used and misused. His biography is what gives his candidacy potential significance. It is not that he has much likelihood of winning the nomination, but Webb has a chance to do something far greater for the country. Given his résumé and valor in war, Webb has the authority (and the guts) to provoke a profound national debate about the nature of US militarism.

Webb’s unique perspective may be familiar to political insiders or readers of his books, but they probably aren’t to the broad public. Six months before George W. Bush’s invasion of Iraq, Webb prophetically warned against it. “Those who are pushing for a unilateral war in Iraq know full well that there is no exit strategy if we invade,” Webb wrote in *The Washington Post*. In 2004, Webb called Bush’s war “the greatest strategic blunder in modern memory.” Ten years later, he is still right.

In 2007, Chris Matthews dubbed him “the antiwar warrior.” That’s a clever label, but it fundamentally misconstrues Webb’s position. He is not a pacifist—that is, he is not against wars fought to defend against real threats to the nation. What Webb opposes are the reckless and limitless interventions that the United States has initiated during the Cold War and post–Cold War era of the past decades.

Presidents of both parties, including Barack Obama, have strayed from the old principles. “It
is not a healthy thing when the world’s dominant military and economic power has a foreign policy based on vagueness,” Webb observed. He had in mind Bush, but also Obama’s vague purpose in entering the bloody civil war in Syria. “There is no such thing,” Webb has asserted, as “humanitarian war,” a feel-good concept popularized by some of Obama’s national security advisers. Webb has not challenged the president’s authority to bomb Syria, but says “the question of [Obama’s] judgment will remain to be seen.”

Webb has laid down principles for foreign interventions that probably would have kept the United States out of some wars if political and military leaders had listened to him. “An important caveat on how our country should fight the terrorists if they are a direct threat to our national security is: do not occupy foreign territory.” Another Webb warning: “Never get involved in a five-sided argument.” Obama has stumbled into one in the Middle East, unable to state firmly who is our ally and who is our enemy.

A glimpse of Webb’s broader intellectual framework can be found online in the stirring book review he wrote for The American Scholar in praise of historian Andrew Bacevich’s seminal work The New American Militarism: How Americans Are Seduced by War. Bacevich and Webb disagree on some points, but they are kindred spirits. Both served in Vietnam, and both have sons who went to war in Iraq (Bacevich’s son was killed there).

Webb saluted Bacevich’s book for describing the confusion and corruption of military values that followed Vietnam and for revealing the profound confrontation within the military institution itself. “One side,” Webb explained, “is represented heavily by those with a classical training in America’s past wars (and frequently with experience in having fought them), who would send American forces into harm’s way only if the nation is directly threatened. The other side is dominated by a group of theorists, most of whom have never seen the inside of a military uniform, who adhere to an essentially Trotskyite notion that America should be exporting its ideology around the world at the point of a gun.”

This buried conflict in national purpose is the essence of America’s dilemma in the world—a self-made trap in which the nation can neither win the endless, borderless conflicts nor get free of the impossible obligations claimed for the US military. As a presidential candidate, Webb would be uniquely positioned to bring this confrontation out of the shadows. He could teach people how to understand the real choices America faces in its foreign policy and national defense.

Webb’s ideas may sound old-fashioned, but they are actually about changing the future. In the broad sweep of American history, this is often how fundamental change has occurred. Disruptive new thinking does not usually come from the top down, but more often is put in play by fearless individuals like Webb who think for themselves and are sure the people will be with them once they understand what’s at stake. This requires political skills that Webb may or may not have. How does he make himself heard if big media ignores his message?

Jim Webb is probably not going to become our next president. But he has the possibility of
becoming a pivotal messenger. I think of him as a vanguard politician—that rare type who is way out ahead of conventional wisdom and free to express big ideas the media herd regards as taboo. With luck, the country might have two such characters in the 2016 primaries: Jim Webb and Bernie Sanders. In different ways, both are expressing unsanctioned ideas that Americans need to hear.

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If you follow media chatter, the 2016 contest is already decided for Democrats. The people are ready for Hillary, we are told repeatedly. She has staked out a pro-war position more hawkish than the president’s but smartly aligned with the public’s current enthusiasm for continued bombing in the Middle East. But how might folks feel two years from now? Will they turn against war and warrior politicians if this new war also begins to seem interminable?

Albert Hunt of Bloomberg, a wise old head in the Washington press corps, offered this forecast: “Jim Webb could be Hillary Clinton’s worst nightmare.” William Greider

October 22, 2014 | This article appeared in the November 10, 2014 edition of The Nation.

TWO ARTICLES ON MILITARIZING US PUBLIC HEALTH, SUSTAINING THE MILITARY BUDGET BY ASSIGNING HUMANITARIAN CIVILIAN JOBS TO THE ARMY. [I stumbled upon the first in Bing, which gave no author or publisher. The second comes via Truthout. –Dick]

3000 TROOPS AND $750 MILLION TO AFRICA FOR EBOLA[DB1]

Write your Congressmen and the President to stop this underhanded funding of US militarism and imperialism. This is a good occasion for converting funds from the military to a civilian economy. And a good opportunity to look to the organization established specifically for global cooperation to solve global problems—the United Nations.

President Obama will announce Tuesday that the U.S. military will take the lead in overseeing what has been a chaotic and widely criticized response to the worst Ebola outbreak in history, dispatching up to 3,000 military personnel to West Africa in an effort that could cost up to $750 million over the next six months, according to senior
administration officials.

By the end of the week, a general sent by U.S. Africa Command will be in place in Monrovia, Liberia — the country where transmission rates are increasing exponentially — to lead the effort called **Operation United Assistance**. The command will help oversee and coordinate U.S. and international relief efforts while a new, separate regional staging base will help accelerate transportation of urgently needed equipment, supplies and personnel.

In addition, the Pentagon will send engineers to set up 17 treatment centers in Liberia — each with a 100-bed capacity — as well as medical personnel to train up to 500 health-care workers a week in the region.

The president’s decision to enlist the U.S. military, whose resources are already under strain as it responds to conflicts in the Middle East, reflects the growing concern of U.S. officials that, unless greater force is brought to bear, the epidemic could wreak havoc on the continent.

“It’s this broad range of capabilities together that will turn the tide of this epidemic,” said one senior administration official, who along with others spoke on the condition of anonymity in order to discuss the president’s plan in advance of Obama’s trip to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta on Tuesday.

Global health experts and international aid groups who have been urging the White House to dramatically scale up its response praised the plan as described. They have said charities and West African governments alone do not have the capacity to stem the epidemic.

The U.S. military, with its enormous logistical capability, extensive air operations, and highly skilled medical corps, could address gaps in the response quickly.

“This is a really significant response on the military side,” said Laurie Garrett, senior fellow for global health at the Council on Foreign Relations and author of a book about the first Ebola outbreak in 1976 and another on the global public-health system. “This is really beginning to seem like a game-changer.”

But much depends on how quickly personnel and supplies can get there.

“The problem is, for every single thing we’re doing, we’re racing against the virus, and the virus has the high ground right now,” she said. “I would hope this would reduce transmission, but it’s all about how fast people can get there and get the job done. If it takes weeks to mobilize, the strategy won’t even be within reach.”
Although the official death toll is at least 2,400 people in five African countries, officials say it vastly underestimates the true caseload. Garrett, who has been talking to health-care workers in the region, said the cumulative total, including deaths, could reach 250,000 by Christmas.

A senior official cautioned that the efforts “won’t happen overnight.” It will be several weeks before training of health-care workers can be up and running.

At a briefing Monday, White House press secretary Josh Earnest said Obama is visiting the CDC to get an update from the experts there “about the success of their efforts so far to try to confront this problem. . . . And that is the strategy that we’re implementing here, is to try to invest early to prevent this from becoming much more serious.”

Washington has come under fire from African officials — especially in the hardest-hit countries of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea — and on Capitol Hill for not marshaling more of its resources to combat the epidemic.

The United States has already spent $175 million responding to the outbreak and has dispatched 100 CDC experts, among the largest deployments of agency personnel in its history. The administration has sought an additional $88 million and may ask for more, according to a senior administration official. “I don’t want to close the door to potential additional funding,” the official said. Separately, the Pentagon wants to take up to $500 million from existing funds within the Pentagon’s budget that have not yet been spent and use it for the plan to fight Ebola.

The Pentagon announced last week that it would send a 25-bed hospital to Liberia. The hospital is designed to care for health-care workers who become ill, and eventually will be turned over to the Liberian government. It will be at least a month before the hospital is up and running. The United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps is preparing to deploy 65 Commissioned Corps officers to Liberia to manage and staff the hospital.

The United States has already set up one mobile laboratory, and another two are on the way.

In addition to expanding treatment and training facilities, the United States will send enough basic Ebola response kits to supply 400,000 households in Liberia, according to a senior administration official. That is intended to address an increasingly common phenomenon in which sick patients are being denied access to overflowing treatment centers and being sent home.

The packages, which include sanitizers, will help curb transmission of the disease among
family members and expand access to ambulances and treatment centers so those infected can be isolated. As part of this effort, the U.S. Agency for International Development this week will airlift 50,000 home health-care kits from Denmark to Liberia to be hand-delivered to distant communities by trained youth volunteers.

The administration’s decision to involve the military in providing equipment and other assistance for international health workers in Africa comes after mounting calls from some unlikely groups — most prominently the international medical organization Doctors Without Borders — pressed the urgency of the issue.

While the world’s largest international health organizations, several governments and many nonprofits have already devoted significant resources to addressing the virus outbreak, administration officials said Monday that they had concluded that the United States would have to lead more aggressively in order to check Ebola’s spread. In Liberia’s capital, patients are dying on the street because there aren’t enough beds in treatment centers.

“Our concern is if we do not arrest that growth, and we don’t arrest that growth now, we could be looking at hundreds of thousands of cases” in Africa, the official said, noting that it will still take “months” to reduce the numbers of illnesses and deaths from the disease.

Even as officials emphasized the need for bolder action and said they were bolstering defenses within the United States, they said the chance of an Ebola outbreak here was “a very low probability.”

Public health experts in America “know how to contain this virus,” one official said. “If there is a case that appears in the United States, that person would be isolated [and] the appropriate protocols would be put in place such that it would contain that.”

To some extent, the measures that the president is now adopting have been called for by some of his critics. On Friday, Sen. Rob Portman (R-Ohio) called on Obama to appoint a “central coordinator” to oversee the federal government’s response to the disease.

Sen. Lamar Alexander (Tenn.), the top Republican on the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, said in a statement Monday, “This is an instance where we should be running toward the burning flames with our fireproof suits on.”

High-level planning by top officials from the CDC, the Pentagon, the State Department, USAID and the National Institutes of Health has been taking place for some time about options for a U.S. response, according to a senior administration official who spoke on background because planning was underway. The most recent high-level meeting was convened by Gen. Martin Dempsey, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, at the Pentagon.
last Wednesday.

Speaking on NBC’s “Meet The Press” on Sept. 7, Obama said that if the United States and other countries did not send equipment, health workers and other supplies to the region, the virus could mutate to become more transmissible.

“And then it could be a serious danger to the United States,” Obama said on the show.

**Militarizing the Ebola Crisis** by Joeva Rock


Militarizing the Ebola Crisis


A C-17 U.S. military aircraft arrived in Liberia with the first shipment of increased U.S. military equipment and personnel for the anti-Ebola fight. The cargo included a heavy duty forklift, a drill set and generator and a team of seven military personnel, including engineers and airfield specialists. Monrovia, Liberia, September 23, 2014. (Photo: U.S. Embassy) [See the article on C-130s and Arkansas. Production of the Boeing C-17 is being ended. –Dick.] Last of the Globemasters: The USAF's Final C-17 Orders. [www.defenseindustrydaily.com/last-of-the-globe](http://www.defenseindustrydaily.com/last-of-the-globe).. Defense Industry Daily

Sep 19, 2013 - The C-17 has had more money-driven last hurrahs than The Who. Even so, FY 2010 featured the USAF's last planned orders of C-17 ...

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Six months into West Africa's Ebola crisis, the international community is finally heading calls for substantial intervention in the region.

On September 16, President Obama announced a multimillion-dollar U.S. response to the spreading contagion. The crisis, which began in March 2014, has killed over 2,600 people, an alarming figure that experts say will rise quickly if the disease is not contained. Obama’s announcement comes on the heels of growing international impatience with what critics have called the U.S. government's "infuriatingly" slow response to the outbreak.

Assistance efforts have already stoked controversy, with a noticeable privilege of care being afforded to foreign healthcare workers over Africans.

After two infected American missionaries were administered Zmapp, a life-saving
experimental drug, controversy exploded when reports emerged that Doctors Without Borders had previously decided not to administer it to the Sierra Leonean doctor Sheik Umar Khan, who succumbed to Ebola after helping to lead the country's fight against the disease. The World Health Organization similarly refused to evacuate the prominent Sierra Leonean doctor Olivet Buck, who later died of the disease as well. The Pentagon provoked its own controversy when it announced plans to deploy a $22 million, 25-bed U.S. military field hospital—reportedly for foreign health workers only.

One particular component of the latest assistance package promises to be controversial as well: namely, the deployment of 3,000 U.S. troops to Liberia, where the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) will establish a joint command operations base to serve as a logistics and training center for medical responders.

According to Think Progress, this number represents "nearly two-thirds of AFRICOM's 4,800 assigned personnel" who will coordinate with civilian organizations to distribute supplies and construct up to 17 treatment centers. It's unclear whether any U.S. healthcare personnel will actually treat patients, but according to the White House, "the U.S. Government will help recruit and organize medical personnel to staff" the centers and "establish a site to train up to 500 health care providers per week." The latter begs the question of practicality, and where these would-be health workers will be recruited from.

According to the Obama administration, the package was requested directly by Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. (Notably, Liberia was the only African nation to offer to host AFRICOM's headquarters in 2008, an offer AFRICOM declined and decided to set up in Germany instead). But in a country still recovering from decades of civil war, this move was not welcomed by all. "Every Liberian I speak with is having acute anxiety attacks," said Liberian writer Stephanie C. Horton. "We knew this was coming but the sense of mounting doom is emotional devastation."

Few would oppose a robust U.S. response to the Ebola crisis, but the militarized nature of the White House plan comes in the context of a broader U.S.-led militarization of the region. The soldiers in Liberia, after all, will not be the only American troops on the African continent. In the six years of AFRICOM's existence, the U.S. military has steadily and quietly been building its presence on the continent through drone bases and partnerships with local militaries. This is what's known as the "new normal": drone strikes, partnerships to train and equip African troops (including those with troubled human rights records), reconnaissance missions, and multinational training operations.

To build PR for its military exercises, AFRICOM relies on soft-power tactics: vibrant social media pages, academic symposia, and humanitarian programming. But such militarized humanitarianism—such as building schools and hospitals and responding to disease outbreaks—also plays more strategic, practical purpose: it allows military personnel to train in new environments, gather local experience and tactical data, and build diplomatic relations with host countries and communities.

TomDispatch's Nick Turse, one of the foremost reporters on the militarization of Africa, noted that a recent report from the U.S. Department of Defense "found failures in planning, executing, tracking, and documenting such projects," leaving big questions about their efficacy.

Perhaps more importantly, experts have warned that the provision of humanitarian assistance by uniformed soldiers could have dangerous, destabilizing effects, especially in countries with
long histories of civil conflict, such as Liberia and Sierra Leone. At the outset of the crisis, for example, efforts by Liberian troops to force-quarantine the residents of West Point, a community in the capital of Monrovia, led to deadly clashes. Some public health advocates worry that the presence of armed troops could provoke similar incidents.

The U.S. operation in Liberia warrants many questions. Will military contractors be used in the construction of facilities and execution of programs? Will the U.S.-built treatment centers be temporary or permanent? Will the treatment centers double as research labs? What is the timeline for exiting the country? And perhaps most significantly for the long term, will the Liberian operation base serve as a staging ground for non-Ebola related military operations?

The use of the U.S. military in this operation should raise red flags for the American public as well. After all, if the military truly is the governmental institution best equipped to handle this outbreak, it speaks worlds about the neglect of civilian programs at home as well as abroad.

JOEVA ROCK

Joeva Rock is a graduate student in the Department of Anthropology at American University in Washington, DC focusing on colonial legacies in West Africa. Follow her on Twitter: @southsidetrees.

ARKANSAS AT CENTER OF EMPIRE: C-130s in LITTLE ROCK, DRONES in FT. SMITH, ROCKETS in MALVERN

Arkansas at Center of Growing Empire: the C-130

Air base births new airlift unit By Nikki Wentling

The activation of a unit at the Little Rock Air Force Base today [the 913th Airlift Group] will bolster the presence of the Air Force Reserve on base and draw more airmen and aircraft to central Arkansas, according to Reserve officials. Arkansas Democrat-Gazette (July 13, 2013) 12A.

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“As an aircraft-equipped combat airlift group, the unit will add to the base’s classification as home to the largest fleet of tactical transport aircraft in the Air force.” And the group (composed of six squadrons) “is expected to grow by 70 percent in the next two years.” Big deal? Yes, because LRAFB flies the C-130, not only the C-130H, but the newest model, the C-130J, and these planes are the Pentagon’s flying boxcars. Without the C-130, the US would be unable to attack and threaten around the world thanks also to its more than 1000 military bases abroad and its many military alliances. President Obama’s proposed military budget for 2015 includes 10 C-130J aircraft for the 913th, that “has the ability to climb higher and faster and take off and land on shorter runways.” --Dick
Drones at Ft. Smith

See OMNI’s Drone Watch Newsletter:
http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/2015/03/drones-newsletter-16.html

MQ-9 Reaper
Published August 18, 2010

MQ-9 Reaper

The Reaper is larger and more heavily-armed than the MQ-1 Predator and attacks time-sensitive targets with persistence and precision, to destroy or disable those targets.


Machineries of Death

On January 15, Warren Weinstein, an American aid worker, and Giovanni Lo Porto, an
Italian citizen, were killed by a US drone strike at an Al Qaeda compound in Pakistan, where the two were being held…

MISSILES AT MALVERN, AR

Lockheed Martin has received a $174 million…contract to produce the Army Tactical Missile system for the US. Army and the United Arab emirates. LM “has produced more than 3,700 of the missile systems.” In addition, “Gov. Asa Hutchinson called this week for a special legislative session to help strengthen a bid from Lockheed Martin to win a contract for the Camden facility to build the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle for the U.S. Army and Marine Corps.” *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* (May 14, 2015).

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[DB1]
Dick Bennett

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jbennet@uark.edu

Blog: http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/

Facebook: www.facebook.com/OMNIPeaceDept

j.dick.bennett@gmail.com

(479) 442-4600

2582 Jimmie Ave.

Fayetteville, AR 72703