

PEACE AND SOLIDARITY TODAY

A Journal of the Peace and Solidarity Committee Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism (CCDS)

Editors Note: *Peace and Solidarity* is a new quarterly journal designed to provide information, stimulate discussion, and support the revitalization of the peace movement. This journal will include materials prepared by CCDS members and current articles of particular interest to the peace movement from activists, educators, and academics. The materials are designed to draw connections between global political economy, militarism, and the ideological justification for war and violence in the world. In addition, it will suggest connections between what traditionally has been called "international relations" and "domestic politics." It also draws upon analyses that prioritize class, race, and gender, and will give voice to global rebellion.

Contents

<u>The Foreign Policy of President Donald Trump</u>	P. 3
Peace and Solidarity Committee CCDS	
<u>Learning to Love a Multipolar World</u>	P. 7
Jeffrey D. Sachs Project Syndicate	
<u>Break Up The Military/Industrial Complex!</u>	P.11
Harry Targ	
<u>There's No Business Like the U.S. Global Arms Business</u>	P.15
William D. Hartung Tuesday, July 26, 2016 TomDispatch	
<u>War and Warming: Can We Save the Planet Without Taking on the Pentagon?</u>	P.22
Portside Date: January 28, 2017 H Patricia Hynes	
<u>Empowering the "Deep State" to Undermine Trump is Prescription for Destroying Democracy</u>	P. 29
Interview with Glenn Greenwald February 16, 2017 (Democracy NOW)	
<u>Military power in Asia 'shifting against' the US, major report warns</u>	p.34

The Guardian
David Smith in Washington
Tuesday 19 January 2016

- The Age of Disintegration:
Our Endless Cycle of Indecisive Wars** p.37
Patrick Cockburn
- Syria and the Antiwar Movement** p.44
Judith Deutsch, December 26, 2016
- What were the Top 10 BDS victories in 2016?** P.49
Nora Barrows Friedman
Electronic Intifada
- America's Empire of African Bases** p.54
Nick Turse
Posted on November 17, 2015, Printed on June 4, 2016
- The United States Supports Counter-Revolution in Latin America:
Seeks to Roll Back the Bolivarian Revolution** p.64
Harry Targ
- Responding to Imperialist Plans for a Twenty-first Century 'New
World Order' of More Violence, Destruction of the Environment, and
Human Suffering** p.70
CCDS Resolution, July 2016

THE FOREIGN POLICY OF PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP

Peace and Solidarity Committee CCDS

We post a statement recently prepared by the Peace and Solidarity Committee of the Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism that reflects our thinking about the peace movement and where we think it should be moving. We hope it is a useful contribution to a broader conversation that the peace movement needs to have in this difficulty period. We include as the last item in this new journal a resolution that was passed at the 2016 CCDS national convention on peace and solidarity. The general commitments remain relevant today but some of the analysis has been superseded by rapidly unfolding events. The essay below addresses these unfolding policy issues.

What is President Trump's foreign policy? Does he really want better relations with Russia? What about relations with China? The Global South in general? The Middle East, Latin America? Africa? Will he follow through on increasing military spending and building up the US nuclear arsenal? Will Trump abandon the treaty with Iran and the Paris agreement on climate change? Most importantly, how can the peace movement respond to his initiatives and build resistance to United States imperialism? In short, what should the peace movement do? These are questions that antiwar activists are discussing.

Candidate Trump on United States Foreign Policy

During the election campaign, Trump made various statements (often brief tweets) that were contradictory. They embraced militarism, increased military spending, more nuclear weapons and wiping out ISIS. On the other hand, he advocated dialogue with Russia, skepticism towards NATO and at least a rhetorical disinclination to new foreign interventions, "humanitarian" or otherwise. In general, Trump's positions on many international issues were unknown and seemed poorly thought through.

Russia

Early in the administration, the question of US-Russia relations emerged as central. By the end of the Obama administration, foreign policy elites had reached consensus (including both neocons and liberal humanitarians) to

prioritize stepping up pressure on Russia as central to asserting US hegemony. This was manifested in support for the coup in the Ukraine, increased NATO forces in East Europe, and a near universal anti-Russia campaign in the mainstream media which demonized Putin.

Trump's rhetoric and personnel choices challenged this priority and a major contradiction developed with the "deep state" institutions which includes the Central Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, and other sectors of the non-transparent foreign policy establishment. The ruling elites further saw Trump's potential vulnerability on his Russia connections as an opportunity to clip his wings and contain his maverick, loose-cannon approach. Some argued that former supporters of the Clinton candidacy and an expansive neoliberal interventionist foreign policy adopted the Russia issue to weaken the new president or perhaps make him vulnerable to impeachment. A power struggle emerged. The press exposed illicit communications with Russia to bring down national security advisor Flynn and multiple investigations continue.

How should the peace movement respond? More dialogue with Russia and lessening the prospect of conflict and a New Cold War is a good thing; however, the movement is also part of the anti-Trump resistance. But opposition to Trump should not be construed as embracing policies hostile to Russia. There needs to be recognition that the US/NATO push east to Russia's borders is threatening Russian core national security concerns and is a major cause of tension. The peace movement should call for US/NATO to pull back its military forces, support a neutral Ukraine as suggested in the Minsk agreement, dismantle the anti-ballistic missile system in East Europe and terminate the trillion dollar nuclear weapons modernization program. These actions would greatly relax the situation and reduce the danger of war. Care should be taken to articulate these demands in a way independent of Trump's policies.

The peace movement needs to focus its efforts on changing US policy. While learning about Russia is of great interest, the movement should avoid taking political positions on Russian policies and Putin's role. Very few activists or commentators have the knowledge to do so and it is not the role of the grassroots US peace movement to either oppose or support Russia's foreign policy. Putin should be neither demonized nor aggrandized. Regarding Syria, there should have been a united effort to oppose US intervention, but debates about Assad split the peace movement and weakened its voice. Focusing on US policy facilitates a unified, coherent message and avoids counter-productive disputes. The peace movement should applaud the Russian, Iranian, Turkish, Syrian agreement which might end a brutal civil

war that has led to the massacre of hundreds of thousands of Syrian victims of all political positions.

China

Trump's campaign featured harsh anti-China rhetoric, blasting China for unfairly stealing American jobs. His conversation with Taiwan President Tsai seemed to herald a possible break with the one-China policy (no full diplomatic recognition of Taiwan as an independent country) established by Nixon and Zhou Enlai. This break would lead to a major deterioration in US/China relations. However, soon after taking office, the Trump administration affirmed the one-China policy publicly after a phone conversation with Chinese President Xi Jinping. While US military maneuvers continue in the South China Sea, Trump has yet to fulfill his campaign pledge to declare China a currency manipulator and has done nothing to implement a 45% tariff on Chinese goods shipping to the US. Possibly major US corporations, already unhappy with the cancelling of the Transpacific Partnership, lobbied that a trade war with China could have disastrous effects on the economy. It seems that the Deep State may have influence on US-China relations as well.

Other issues

Trump has made a number of bad moves. He appointed a hard core, right-wing Zionist to be ambassador to Israel and talks of moving the US embassy to Jerusalem. Vague talk about pursuing a new approach to peace will not ameliorate these harsh, anti-Palestinian actions. There is continued rhetoric against Iran and the "worst deal" ever -- Obama's agreement on the nuclear program and lifting sanctions. There have been numerous protests in Mexico against building the wall on the border and repression of immigrants in the US. The principle of a strong NATO has been reaffirmed with the issue reduced to who pays for it. The US seems prepared to pull out of efforts to control global warming, a major blow to the environment.

The peace movement

Where were peace/antiwar issues in the Women's March on Washington? The peace movement has been mostly silent in the years since the Iran peace deal, organizationally fragmented and politically divided over Syria. The Trump administration affords a new opportunity. The movement needs to expand from Middle East politics and ending nuclear weapons to grasp the big picture of global politics: oppose US hegemony, dominance and exceptionalism, and support the democratization of international relations as

manifested in the trend towards a multi-polar world. This basic orientation is presented in the next article by Jeffrey Sachs.

The peace movement needs to connect to domestic issues by calling for an end to the military-industrial complex, not just a modest reduction in the military budget. The movement should oppose militarism at home, such as the whipping up of fear of terrorism to justify violations of civil liberties and militarization of local police forces. This will connect to movements supporting immigrant rights and opposing police repression especially in Muslim and African American communities. The movement needs to learn from youth, who are taking leadership in Black Lives Matter, prison abolition, immigrant rights, resistance to a fossil fuel economy, and are instrumental in an increasingly effective campaign to support Palestinian rights and promoting boycott, divestment and sanctions of Israel. The peace movement needs to take its place in the anti-Trump resistance and restore important foreign policy issues as a critical part of the progressive agenda.

[\(Back to Top\)](#)

Learning to Love a Multipolar World

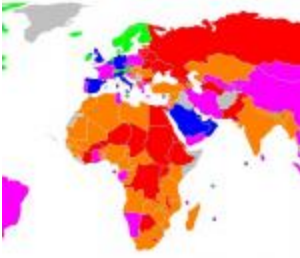
<https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/multipolar-world-faces-american-resistance-by-jeffrey-d-sachs-2016-12>

Jeffrey D. Sachs
Project Syndicate

Published on *Portside* (<https://portside.org>)

Editors: A central cause of militarism and war comes from the normal workings of the capitalist system, an economic system that has dominated the global economy since the fifteenth century. Capitalism requires a continual accumulation of more and more capital. This generates a worldwide process of occupation, expropriation of natural resources, the exploitation of labor, and kidnapping millions to serve as slaves. As capitalism grows it experiences competition, resistance, wars, and revolutions. It changes and resistance grows.

Beginning in the 1970s, capitalism became global in a way that it had never before. Capitalist processes began to dramatically shift from manufacturing to finance. A new age, one of neoliberal globalization, emerged. Neoliberal institutions and policies were promoted. A centerpiece of neoliberalism was economic austerity; shifting wealth and income from the many to the few. Structural adjustment programs imposed by the International Monetary Fund on poor countries—cutting government programs, privatizing public institutions, reducing taxes on the rich, eliminating regulations of economies, and shifting from domestic production to manufacturing for export, generated growing opposition. These neoliberal policies spread to the former Socialist countries, developed capitalist countries, and the United States. While specific United States foreign policies are changing with the ascendancy of a new Trump administration, there is no indication that the historical goal of United States policy-makers to secure global capitalist hegemony will change. But what is new in 2017 is the depth of the crisis of capitalism and the dangers to the survival of humankind. We hope to participate in the building of a new peace movement, one that continues to address war and violence: climate change; increasingly grotesque inequalities in wealth, income, and well-being; and racial supremacy. The statement by Jeffrey Sachs describes the choices the world faces today in a way that is vital to the peace movement going forward.



NEW YORK – American foreign policy is at a crossroads. The United States has been an expanding power since its start in 1789. It battled its way across North America in the nineteenth century and gained global dominance in the second half of the twentieth. But now, facing China's rise, India's dynamism, Africa's soaring populations and economic stirrings, Russia's refusal to bend to its will, its own inability to control events in the Middle East, and Latin America's

determination to be free of its de facto hegemony, US power has reached its limits.

One path for the US is global cooperation. The other is a burst of militarism in response to frustrated ambitions. The future of the US, and of the world, hangs on this choice.

Global cooperation is doubly vital. Only cooperation can deliver peace and the escape from a useless, dangerous, and ultimately bankrupting new arms race, this time including cyber-weapons, space weapons, and next-generation nuclear weapons. And only cooperation can enable humanity to face up to urgent planetary challenges, including the destruction of biodiversity, the poisoning of the oceans, and the threat posed by global warming to the world's food supply, vast drylands, and heavily populated coastal regions.

Yet global cooperation means the willingness to reach agreements with other countries, not simply to make unilateral demands of them. And the US is in the habit of making demands, not making compromises. When a state feels destined to rule – as with ancient Rome, the Chinese "Middle Kingdom" centuries ago, the British Empire from 1750 to 1950, and the US since World War II – compromise is hardly a part of its political vocabulary. As former US President George W. Bush succinctly put it, "You're either with us or against us."

Not surprisingly, then, the US is finding it hard to accept the clear global limits that it is confronting. In the wake of the Cold War, Russia was supposed to fall in line; but President Vladimir Putin did not oblige. Likewise, rather than bringing stability on US terms, America's covert and overt wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, South Sudan, and elsewhere created a firestorm stretching across the greater Middle East.

China was supposed to show gratitude and deference to the US for the right to catch up from 150 years of abuse by Western imperial powers and Japan. Instead, China has the audacity to think that it is an Asian power with responsibilities of its own.

There is a fundamental reason, of course, for these limits. At WWII's end, the US was the only major power not destroyed by the war. It led the world in

science, technology, and infrastructure. It constituted perhaps 30% of the world economy and formed the cutting edge of every high-tech sector. It organized the postwar international order: the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions, the Marshall Plan, the reconstruction of Japan, and more.

Under that order, the rest of the world has closed much of the vast technological, educational, and infrastructural gap with the US. As economists say, global growth has been "convergent," meaning that poorer countries have been catching up. The share of the world economy represented by the US has declined by roughly half (to around 16% currently). China now has a larger economy in absolute terms than the US, though still only around one-fourth the size in per capita terms.

None of this catching up was a perfidious trick against the US or at its expense. It was a matter of basic economics: given peace, trade, and a global flow of ideas, poorer countries can get ahead. This tendency is to be welcomed, not shunned.

But if the global leader's mindset is one of domination, the results of catch-up growth will look threatening, which is how many US "security strategists" view them. Suddenly, open trade, long championed by the US, looks like a dire threat to its continued dominance. Fear-mongers are calling for the US to close itself off to Chinese goods and Chinese companies, claiming that global trade itself undermines American supremacy.

My former Harvard colleague and leading US diplomat Robert Blackwill and former State Department adviser Ashley Tellis expressed their unease in a report published last year. The US has consistently pursued a grand strategy "focused on acquiring and maintaining preeminent power over various rivals," they wrote, and "primacy ought to remain the central objective of US grand strategy in the twenty-first century." But "China's rise thus far has already bred geopolitical, military, economic, and ideological challenges to US power, US allies, and the US-dominated international order," Blackwill and Tellis noted. "Its continued, even if uneven, success in the future would further undermine US national interests."

US President-elect Donald Trump's newly named trade adviser Peter Navarro agrees. "Whenever we buy products made in China," he wrote last year of the US and its allies, "we as consumers are helping to finance a Chinese military buildup that may well mean to do us and our countries harm."

With just 4.4% of the world's population and a falling share of world output, the US might try to hang on to its delusion of global dominance through a new arms race and protectionist trade policies. Doing so would unite the world against US arrogance and the new US military threat. The US would sooner rather than later bankrupt itself in a classic case of "imperial overreach."

The only sane way forward for the US is vigorous and open global cooperation to realize the potential of twenty-first-century science and technology to slash poverty, disease, and environmental threats. A multipolar world can be stable, prosperous, and secure. The rise of many regional powers is not a threat to the US, but an opportunity for a new era of prosperity and constructive problem solving.

Jeffrey D. Sachs, Professor of Sustainable Development, Professor of Health Policy and Management, and Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, is also Director of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network.

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([Back to Top](#))

BREAK UP THE MILITARY/INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX!

Harry Targ

Editors: The military/industrial complex serves multiple purposes. Central to its functions are maintenance of United States imperial domination of the world and stimulating perpetual economic growth. Another byproduct of militarism is the use of societal resources to develop new technologies, such as drones, and social relations of military production, such as private contractors, to adapt to twenty-first century challenges. Even though candidate Trump indicated he would rigorously examine military spending, few expect a reversal of the war system that was created after World War II. Targ describes below some of the dimensions of the war system and Hartung provides data on the global arms industry, both subjects that should be central to a renewed peace movement. The connection between the war system and climate change is vividly demonstrated by H. Patricia Hynes.

During the recently concluded presidential race Hillary Clinton declared that she was the only candidate who had the knowledge and experience to preserve the national security of the United States. However, Senator and former Secretary of State Clinton, voted for Iraq war authorization, advocated war on Libya, warned against significantly improving relations with Iran, and recommended establishing a so-called "no-fly zone" in Syria. She initiated and supported the so-called "Asian Pivot;" developing a greater political, economic, and military presence in Asia. In addition, during her term as Secretary of State, Clinton defended the overthrow of the elected president of Honduras, Manuel Zelaya, in 2009 and challenged other Latin American leaders to support a new election that would give legitimacy to his ouster.

In a 2014 review of Henry Kissinger's latest book, *World Order*, Clinton mused about the many problems the world faced, including Russia's presence in Ukraine, extremism in Syria and Iraq, and "escalating tensions in the East and South China Seas." She said that while she occasionally differed with his policies, she believed that former Secretary of State Kissinger played a significant role in making the world a better place. According to her, during the Cold War there existed a bipartisan commitment to promote freedom, market economies, and cooperation among nations. And, she declared, it worked.

"This system, advanced by U.S. military and diplomatic power and our alliances with like-minded nations, helped us defeat fascism and communism and brought enormous benefits to Americans and billions of others. Nonetheless, many people around the world today--especially millions of young people--don't know these success stories, so it becomes our responsibility to show as well as tell what American leadership looks like." ("Hillary Clinton Reviews Henry Kissinger's 'World Order,'" *The Washington Post*, September 4, 2014).

In the review, Hillary Clinton elaborated on the U.S. commitment to human rights and democratic values, declaring that the U.S stood for more than just military power and political influence around the world. Indeed, she wrote, "...the United States is uniquely positioned to lead in the 21st century" to help build "...a future in which the forces of freedom and cooperation prevail over those of division, dictatorship and destruction."

Secretaries Kissinger and Clinton did not initiate the American hegemonic economic and military institutions that have dominated the world since World War II but they have participated in its perpetuation. Data on military adventures, casualties and deaths, and the magnitude of expenditures for war and subversion suggest a different United States role in the world than the one Clinton wrote about in her book review and spoke of in her more recent campaign for the presidency.

Marc Pilisuk and Jennifer Achord Rountree, report in their new book, *The Hidden Structure of Violence: Who Benefits from Global Violence and War*, Monthly Review, 2015, that between the Second World War and 2008, the United States participated in 390 military interventions involving 20 million deaths. In 2014, the United States had military personnel in 130 countries and over 900 overseas bases. In the first decade of the 21st century the United States spent over seven trillion dollars on the military.

The Council on Foreign Relations recently issued a report by resident scholar Micah Zenko, indicating that the United States in 2015 dropped 23,144 bombs on Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia. The largest number of bombs were dropped over Iraq and Syria (22,110), followed by Afghanistan (947), and Yemen (58). Ironically, Defense Department reports indicated that only six civilians died in all this bombing. Adam Johnson ("U.S. Dropped 23,144 Bombs on Muslim-Majority Countries in 2015," *Alternet*, January 8, 2016) points out that despite the bombing of Afghanistan, the Taliban control more territory in that country today than at any time since the war started in 2001. The spread of ISIS across the Middle

East and North Africa also has occurred during the period of escalated U.S. bombing.

There are other indicators to suggest that the instrumentalities of what Secretary Clinton calls "American leadership" is more about militarism than statesmanship and humanitarianism. David Isenberg ("Private Military Contractors and U.S. Grand Strategy," PRIO, Oslo, 2009) refers to "...the U.S. government's huge and growing reliance on private contractors [which] constitutes an attempt to circumvent or evade public skepticism about the United States' self-appointed role as global policemen."

Washington Post investigators compiled a data base, "Top Secret America," that found 1,931 intelligence contracting firms doing top secret work for 1,271 government organizations at over 10,000 sites. TSA indicates that 90 percent of the intelligence work is done by 110 contractors. Defense Department spokespersons and legislators claimed that the United States needs to continue allocating billions of dollars to private contractors to maintain military performance levels that are minimally acceptable.

Nick Turse (*The Complex: How the Military Invades Our Everyday Lives*) described the introduction of unmanned aerial weapons in the 1990s and their current weaponry of choice for the White House and others who prefer antiseptic and bloodless (on the U.S. side) technologies to eliminate enemies. New predator drones can be programmed to fly over distant lands and target enemies for air strikes. Drones have been increasingly popular as weapons in fighting enemies in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, and Yemen.

Connecting drone strikes to assassination teams and other war-making techniques, Shane, Mazzetti, and Worth, ("Secret Assault on Terrorism Widens on Two Continents," *The New York Times*, August 16, 2010) refer to shadow wars against terrorist targets. "In roughly a dozen countries -- from the deserts of North Africa, to the mountains of Pakistan, to former Soviet republics crippled by ethnic and religious strife -- the United States has significantly increased military and intelligence operations, pursuing the enemy using robotic drones and commando teams, paying contractors to spy and training local operatives to chase terrorists."

The United States has initiated campaigns to identify and assassinate presumed enemies. CIA operatives and private contractors join teams of army specialists under the Joint Special Operations Command (13,000 assassination commandos around the world) to kill foreigners alleged to be affiliated with terrorist groups. These targets also can include U.S. citizens living abroad who have been defined as terrorist collaborators. In the

Western Hemisphere, the United States, through Latin American military personnel trained at the School of the Americas, has long supported assassination programs that now seem to be “globalized,” that is administered everywhere.

A careful reading of the United States global military presence suggests the enormity of its violence which explains the growing resistance to the American presence from the Middle East and Persian Gulf to Asia and Africa to Latin America. Contrary to the pontification of Secretaries of State Kissinger and Clinton, the U.S. role in the world has been an imperial one. And along with the pursuit of power and resources, global militarization is intimately connected to what President Eisenhower called the Military/Industrial Complex. Over one-half of federal government expenditures each year are for current or past military operations. And as Seymour Melman demonstrated years ago in *Pentagon Capitalism* and Nick Turse has found in recent years, military contracts permeate the investments in virtually every large United States corporation. Therefore global violence becomes the rationale for bloated military expenditures.

Jonathan Turley recently wrote:

"While few politicians are willing to admit it, we don't just endure wars we seem to need war—at least for some people. A study showed that roughly 75 percent of the fallen in these wars come from working class families. They do not need war. They pay the cost of the war. Eisenhower would likely be appalled by the size of the industrial and governmental workforce committed to war or counter-terrorism activities. Military and homeland budgets now support millions of people in an otherwise declining economy. Hundreds of billions of dollars flow each year from the public coffers to agencies and contractors who have an incentive to keep the country on a war-footing-and footing the bill for war." (Jonathan Turley, "Big Money Behind War: The Military-Industrial Complex," *Aljazeera*, January 11, 2014).

Reviewing United States military and diplomatic policy since the end of World War II suggests the need for a comprehensive debate on the role of the United States in the world. This requires a structural critique of United States foreign policy just as radical as has been raised about domestic policy. A discussion that appropriately condemns the inordinate wealth and power of finance capital at the expense of the health and wellbeing of the many should also condemn the combination of corporations, banks, and military institutions which rob from people at home and kill and maim people overseas.

[\(Back to Top\)](#)

There's No Business Like the U.S. Global Arms Business

William D. Hartung

Tuesday, July 26, 2016

TomDispatch, <http://portside.org/2016-07-30/there%e2%80%99s-no-business-us-global-arms-business>



When American firms dominate a global market worth more than [\\$70 billion a year](#) [1], you'd expect to hear about it. Not so with the global arms trade. It's good for one or two [stories](#) [2] a year in the mainstream media, usually when the annual statistics on the state of the business come out.

It's not that no one writes about aspects of the arms trade. There are occasional pieces that, for example, take note of the impact of U.S. [weapons transfers](#) [3], including [cluster bombs](#) [4], to Saudi Arabia, or of the [disastrous](#) [5] dispensation of weaponry to [U.S. allies in Syria](#) [6], or of foreign sales of the costly, controversial [F-35 combat aircraft](#) [7]. And once in a while, if a foreign leader meets with the president, U.S. arms sales to his or her country might generate an [article](#) [8] or two. But the sheer size of the American arms trade, the politics that drive it, the companies that profit from it, and its devastating global impacts are rarely discussed, much less analyzed in any depth.

So here's a question that's puzzled me for years (and I'm something of an arms wonk): Why do other major U.S. exports -- from [Hollywood movies](#) [9] to [Midwestern grain shipments](#) [10] to [Boeing airliners](#) [11] -- garner regular coverage while trends in weapons exports remain in relative obscurity? Are we ashamed of standing essentially alone as the world's number one arms dealer, or is our Weapons "R" Us role such a commonplace that we take it for granted, like death or taxes?

The numbers should stagger anyone. According to the latest figures available from the Congressional Research Service, the United States was credited with [more than half](#) [1] the value of all global arms transfer agreements in 2014, the most recent year for which full statistics are available. At 14%, the world's second largest supplier, Russia, lagged far behind. Washington's "leadership" in this field has never truly been challenged. The U.S. share has fluctuated between one-third and one-half of the global market for the past two decades, peaking at an almost monopolistic 70% of all weapons sold in 2011. And the gold rush continues. Vice Admiral Joe Rixey, who heads the

Pentagon's arms sales agency, euphemistically known as the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, [estimates](#) [12] that arms deals facilitated by the Pentagon topped \$46 billion in 2015, and are on track to hit \$40 billion in 2016.

To be completely accurate, there is one group of people who pay remarkably close attention to these trends -- executives of the defense contractors that are cashing in on this growth market. With the Pentagon and related agencies taking in "only" about [\\$600 billion a year](#) [13] -- high by historical standards but tens of billions of dollars less than hoped for by the defense industry -- companies like Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, and General Dynamics have been looking to global markets as their major source of new revenue.

In a January 2015 investor call, for example, Lockheed Martin CEO Marillyn Hewson was asked whether the Iran nuclear deal brokered by the Obama administration and five other powers might reduce tensions in the Middle East, undermining the company's strategy of increasing its arms exports to the region. She [responded](#) [14] that continuing "volatility" in both the Middle East and Asia would make them "growth areas" for the foreseeable future. In other words, no worries. As long as the world stays at war or on the verge of it, Lockheed Martin's profits won't suffer -- and, of course, its products will help ensure that any such "volatility" will prove lethal indeed.

Under Hewson, Lockheed has set a goal of getting at [least 25%](#) [15] of its revenues from weapons exports, and Boeing has done that company one better. It's seeking to make overseas arms sales [30%](#) [16] of its business.

Good News From the Middle East (If You're an Arms Maker)

Arms deals are a way of life in Washington. From the president on down, significant parts of the government are intent on ensuring that American arms will flood the global market and companies like Lockheed and Boeing will live the good life. From the president on his trips abroad to visit allied world leaders to the secretaries of state and defense to the staffs of U.S. embassies, American officials regularly act as salespeople for the arms firms. And the Pentagon is their enabler. From brokering, facilitating, and literally banking the money from arms deals to transferring weapons to favored allies on the taxpayers' dime, it is in essence the world's largest arms dealer.

In a typical sale, the U.S. government is [involved](#) [17] every step of the way. The Pentagon often does assessments of an allied nation's armed forces in order to tell them what they "need" -- and of course what they always need is billions of dollars in new U.S.-supplied equipment. Then the Pentagon helps negotiate the terms of the deal, [notifies Congress](#) [18] of its details, and collects the funds from the foreign buyer, which it then gives to the U.S. supplier in the form of a defense contract. In most deals, the Pentagon is also the point of contact for maintenance and spare parts for any U.S.-supplied system. The bureaucracy that helps make all of this happen, the

Defense Security Cooperation Agency, is funded from a 3.5% surcharge on the deals it negotiates. This gives it all the more incentive to sell, sell, sell.

And the pressure for yet more of the same is always intense, in part because the weapons makers are careful to spread their production facilities to as many states and localities as possible. In this way, they ensure that endless support for government promotion of major arms sales becomes part and parcel of domestic politics.

General Dynamics, for instance, has managed to keep its tank plants in Ohio and Michigan running through a combination of [add-ons](#) [19] to the Army budget -- funds inserted into that budget by Congress even though the Pentagon didn't request them -- and [exports to Saudi Arabia](#) [20]. Boeing is banking on a proposed deal to sell [40 F-18s to Kuwait](#) [21] to keep its St. Louis production line open, and is currently jousting with the Obama administration to get it to move more quickly on the deal. Not surprisingly, members of Congress and local business leaders in such states become strong supporters of weapons exports.

Though seldom thought of this way, the U.S. political system is also a global arms distribution system of the first order. In this context, the Obama administration has proven itself a good friend to arms exporting firms. During President Obama's first six years in office, Washington entered into agreements to sell more than [\\$190 billion](#) [22] in weaponry worldwide -- more, that is, than any U.S. administration since World War II. In addition, Team Obama has [loosened restrictions](#) [23] on arms exports, making it possible to send abroad a whole new range of weapons and weapons components -- including Black Hawk and Huey helicopters and engines for C-17 transport planes -- with far less scrutiny than was previously required.

The most damaging deals, if not the most lucrative, have been the sales of bombs and missiles to the Saudis for their [brutal war in Yemen](#) [25], where thousands of civilians have been killed and millions of people are going hungry. Members of Congress like Michigan Representative John Conyers and Connecticut Senator Chris Murphy have pressed for [legislation](#) [26] that would at least stem the flow of the most deadly of the weaponry being sent for use there, but they have yet to overcome the considerable clout of the Saudis in Washington (and, of course, that of the arms industry as well).

When it comes to the arms business, however, there's no end to the good news from the Middle East. Take the administration's proposed new [10-year aid deal](#) [27] with Israel. If enacted as currently planned, it would boost U.S. military assistance to that country by up to 25% -- to roughly \$4 billion per year. At the same time, it would phase out a provision that had allowed Israel to spend one-quarter of Washington's aid developing its own defense industry. In other words, all that money, the full \$4 billion in taxpayer dollars, will now flow directly into the coffers of companies like Lockheed

Martin, which is in the midst of completing a [multi-billion-dollar deal](#) [28] to sell the Israelis F-35s.

“Volatility” in Asia and Europe

As Lockheed Martin’s Marillyn Hewson noted, however, the Middle East is hardly the only growth area for that firm or others like it. The dispute between China and its neighbors over the control of the South China Sea (which is in many ways an incipient conflict over whether that country or the United States will control that part of the Pacific Ocean) has opened up new vistas when it comes to the sale of American warships and other military equipment to Washington’s East Asian allies. The recent [Hague court decision](#) [29] rejecting Chinese claims to those waters (and the Chinese [rejection](#) [30] of it) is only likely to increase the pace of arms buying in the region.

At the same time, in the good-news-never-ends department, growing fears of North Korea’s nuclear program have stoked a demand for U.S.-supplied missile defense systems. The South Koreans have, in fact, just agreed to deploy Lockheed Martin’s THAAD anti-missile system. In addition, the Obama administration’s decision to end the longstanding [embargo](#) [31] on U.S. arms sales to Vietnam is likely to open yet another significant market for U.S. firms. In the past two years alone, the U.S. has offered [more than \\$15 billion](#) [18] worth of weaponry to allies in East Asia, with Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea accounting for the bulk of the sales.

In addition, the Obama administration has gone to great lengths to build a defense relationship with India, a development guaranteed to benefit U.S. arms exporters. Last year, Washington and New Delhi signed a 10-year defense [agreement](#) [32] that included pledges of future joint work on aircraft engines and aircraft carrier designs. In these years, the U.S. has made significant inroads into the Indian arms market, which had traditionally been dominated by the Soviet Union and then Russia. Recent deals include a \$5.8 billion sale of Boeing C-17 transport aircraft and a \$1.4 billion agreement to provide support services related to a planned purchase of Apache attack helicopters.

And don’t forget “volatile” Europe. Great Britain’s recent Brexit vote introduced an uncertainty factor into American arms exports to that country. The United Kingdom has been by far the [biggest purchaser](#) [33] of U.S. weapons in Europe of late, with more than \$6 billion in deals struck over the past two years alone -- more, that is, than the U.S. has sold to all other European countries combined.

The British defense behemoth BAE is Lockheed Martin’s [principal foreign partner](#) [34] on the F-35 combat aircraft, which at a projected cost of \$1.4 trillion over its lifetime already qualifies as the most expensive weapons program in history. If Brexit-driven austerity were to lead to a delay in, or the cancellation of, the F-35 deal (or any other major weapons shipments), it

would be a blow to American arms makers. But count on one thing: were there to be even a hint that this might happen to the F-35, lobbyists for BAE will mobilize to get the deal privileged status, whatever other budget cuts may be in the works.

On the bright side (if you happen to be a weapons maker), any British reductions will certainly be more than offset by opportunities in Eastern and Central Europe, where a [new Cold War](#) [35] seems to be gaining traction. Between 2014 and 2015, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, military spending [increased by 13%](#) [36] in the region in response to the Russian intervention in Ukraine. The rise in Poland's outlays, at 22%, was particularly steep.

Under the circumstances, it should be obvious that trends in the global arms trade are a major news story and should be dealt with as such in the country most responsible for putting more weapons of a more powerful nature into the hands of those living in "volatile" regions. It's a monster business (in every sense of the word) and certainly has far more dangerous consequences than licensing a Hollywood blockbuster or selling another Boeing airliner.

Historically, there have been rare occasions of public protest against unbridled arms trafficking, as with the backlash against "the merchants of death" after World War I, or the controversy over who armed Saddam Hussein that followed the 1991 Persian Gulf War. Even now, small numbers of congressional representatives, including John Conyers, Chris Murphy, and Kentucky Senator Rand Paul, continue to try to halt the sale of cluster munitions, bombs, and missiles to Saudi Arabia.

There is, however, unlikely to be a genuine public debate about the value of the arms business and Washington's place in it if it isn't even considered a subject worthy of more than an occasional media story. In the meantime, the United States continues to hold onto the number one role in the global arms trade, the White House does its part, the Pentagon greases the wheels, and the dollars roll in to profit-hungry U.S. weapons contractors.

[William D. Hartung, a [TomDispatch](#) [37] regular, is the director of the Arms and Security Project at the Center for International Policy and a senior advisor to the Security Assistance Monitor. He is the author of [Prophets of War: Lockheed Martin and the Making of the Military-Industrial Complex](#) [38]. Copyright 2016 William D. Hartung. Reprinted with permission. May not be reprinted without permission from TomDispatch. Portside thanks TomDispatch for send this article to us.]

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([Back to Top](#))

War and Warming: Can We Save the Planet Without Taking on the Pentagon?

H Patricia Hynes

<https://portside.org/2017-01-28/war-and-warming-can-we-save-planet-without-taking-pentagon>

If we are not united in peace, we cannot save the planet.

Thich Nhat Hanh

Looking out to my audience of young climate change activists and older peace activists gathered for a talk and discussion on "war and warming," I see in the generational difference what many peace activists perceive. Peace, war, militarism, and nuclear weapons are an agenda of another era—an earlier era, while progressive political energy today is galvanized by climate change. (One climate activist explained that in his lifetime, no nuclear weapons had been used while climate change had worsened.) Thus, our movements largely work in silos, despite the actuality that war and fossil fuels have been fatally co-dependent since the Second World War.



Oil is indispensable for war and militarism. Think of it as the lifeblood coursing through our foreign policy, a policy based on maintaining superpower status and confronting those whom we perceive as challenging us. The 1980 Carter Doctrine, which stated that the United States would use military force if necessary to defend its national interests in the Persian Gulf, formalized the toxic nexus between access to oil and war. Since the late 1970s, the United States has spent \$8 trillion protecting oil cargoes in the Persian Gulf region through ongoing naval patrols. Keeping oil and gas supply sea lanes in the South China Sea open, in the face of China's expansionism there, is also a factor in the US pivot to Asia.

This foreign policy pivot has involved engaging Australia and Southeast Asian allies in military training exercises, opening new and previously closed bases to the US military, and sales of new weapons systems. Further, the Obama administration prioritized a military "triangular alliance" with Japan, pressuring them to abandon their peace constitution, and South Korea, where the US has a military foothold on the Asian continent, for countering North Korea and the rising power of China. This ratcheting up of military dominance is reliant on oil, the lifeline of weaponry, military exercises and war.

War for oil has come home. Militarized North Dakota police attacked non-violent water protectors protesting the Dakota Access oil pipeline with rubber bullets, tear gas, concussion grenades, and water cannons in sub-freezing temperatures. One medic treating injuries described it as a "low grade war." (1)

A thumbnail sketch of recent US spending confirms the axiom that *war culture is a defining feature of US politics.* In 2016, as in previous years, an estimated \$1 trillion was allocated to military defense, militarized national security, veterans, and debt from recent wars. In that same year a few billion dollars-crumbs from the master's table-were allocated to research and development for energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies. Between 2010-2015, the federal government invested \$56 billion in clean energy internationally, while it recently committed to \$1 trillion for modernizing nuclear weapons, their infrastructure and their delivery systems by 2030.

What's clear from US spending priorities is that access to oil and military dominance has governed US policy in the world. Add to this a thin-skinned bully as president surrounding himself with generals and we will likely get into deeper displays of male dominance. Foreign policy advisor to both Presidents Bush, Philip Zelikow, put it bluntly. With President Trump's "ambient prickliness, we could end up picking a fight with three quarters of the world." (2) The immense policy and spending inequality between military and renewable energy (one that mirrors our society's massive economic inequality) retards sustainable energy research and development and accelerates the perilously trending climate change.

Militarism: An Engine of Climate Change

In 1940 the United States military consumed one percent of the country's total fossil fuel energy usage; by the end of the World War II the military's share rose to 29 percent. Militarism is the most oil-intensive activity on the planet, growing more so with faster, bigger, more fuel guzzling planes, tanks, and naval vessels. At the outset of the Iraq War in March 2003, the Army estimated it would need more than 40 million gallons of gasoline for three weeks of combat, exceeding the total quantity used by all Allied forces in the four years of World War I. (3)

The frequency and prevalence of US armed conflict since World War II is another factor in the combustible mix of war and warming. One count has documented 153 instances of US armed forces engaged in conflict abroad from 1945 through 2004, a number consistent with other estimates. (4) This count, though, does not include covert military missions in which US Special Operations Forces (larger in number than the active-duty militaries of many countries) operate in 135 countries. Nor do the 153 military conflicts since 1945 include US occupation forces stationed abroad since World War II, military participation in mutual security organizations such as NATO, military

base agreements for the estimated 1000 US military bases across the planet, and routine oil-intensive military training exercises around the globe.

In 2003, the Carter Doctrine was implemented with "shock and awe," in what was the most intensive and profligate use of fossil fuel the world has ever witnessed. The projected full costs of the Iraq War (estimated \$3 trillion) could have covered all global investments in renewable energy needed between now and 2030 to reverse global warming trends.

Between 2003 and 2007, the Iraq war generated more carbon dioxide equivalent in greenhouse gas emissions each year of the war than 139 of the world's countries release annually. Re-building Iraqi (and Syrian and Yemeni) schools, homes, businesses, bridges, roads, and hospitals pulverized by the war will require millions of tons of cement, the most fossil fuel intensive of all manufacturing industries.

After an unprecedented investigation into military use of fossil fuels, the Barry Sander, author of *The Green Zone*, calculates that the US military consumes as much as one million barrels of oil per day and contributes 5 percent of current global warming emissions. Few whole countries use more oil than Pentagon. Yet, this comparison understates the extreme military impact on climate change. Military fuel is more polluting because of the fuel type used for aviation. Carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from jet fuel are larger - possibly triple - per gallon than those from diesel and oil. Further, aircraft exhaust has unique polluting effects that result in greater warming effect by per unit of fuel used. Radiative effects from jet exhaust, including nitrous oxide, sulphur dioxide, soot, and water vapor exacerbate the warming effect of the CO₂ exhaust emissions.

Nor does this calculation include the fossil fuels used by civilian weapons makers. Their greenhouse gas emissions comprise both those from manufacturing and testing weapons and also the intensive cleanup of hazardous waste produced by them. Nearly 900 of the US Environmental Protection Agency's approximately 1,300 Superfund sites are abandoned military bases/facilities or manufacturing and testing sites that produced conventional weapons and other military related products and services, according to the 2008-2009 Annual Report of the President's Cancer Panel.

Climate Change in a Militarizing World

Climate change is inevitably an issue of peace because the Pentagon is the single largest contributor of climate change emissions in the world. And as the Pentagon goes, so go the military budgets of other major powers. "We are not your enemy," a Chinese strategist told journalist John Pilger, " but if you [in the West] decide we are, we must prepare without delay." (5)

According to some security analysts, talk of fighting terrorism fills the media but is secondary in the talk of US and NATO generals, admirals and defense

ministers. Many politicians of West and NATO believe that war between Great Powers (Russia and/or China) is not only possible but may break out at any time. Therefore, bigger spending in all involved countries on high-tech weapons, deploying more forces, and more military joint exercises will exacerbate climate change emissions and heighten the potential for nuclear war, risking another kind of climate change-nuclear winter.

Others point to the elevation of generals by President-elect Trump to positions historically held by civilians in order to maintain civilian control of the military, namely Department of Defense, National Security Advisor and Department of Homeland Security. They are "enablers" and "accelerants to military action," warns retired Colonel William Astore. ".[t]he future of U.S. foreign policy seems increasingly clear: more violent interventionism against what these men see as the existential threat of radical Islam. Both [the United States and radical Islam] embrace their own exceptionalism, both see themselves as righteous warriors, both represent ways of thinking steeped in patriarchy and saturated with violence, and both are remarkably resistant to any thought of compromise." (6)

Growing global militarization portends greater military build up in Russia, China, NATO and the Middle East and greater climate change emissions. The United States expends 37 percent of the global military budget and its military is estimated to contribute 5 percent of climate change emissions. Can we not, then, assume that the rest of world's military spending, weapons manufacturing, military exercises, and conflict combine to bring military-related fossil fuel emissions to near 15 percent of global climate change pollution? Intensifying military tensions will drive it higher and could vitiate country commitments to the Paris climate agreement.

Climate Change, Water Shortage and Conflict: Syria

Climate change is necessarily an issue of peace given the potential conflicts over the remaining oil as we near peak oil and given diminishing potable water supply and arable land. The UN panel that analyses climate science <<http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/technical-papers/ccw/chapter1.pdf>>, [1] the IPCC, concludes: "Water and its availability and quality will be the main pressure on and [critical] issue for societies and the environment under climate change." Within little more than a decade, nearly one-half of the world's people will be living in areas of high water shortage. (7)

The worst Syrian drought on record, from 2006 to 2011, caused agriculture to collapse; food prices to rise, thus aggravating poverty; and drove more 1.5 million farm workers and families to cities for survival. Simultaneously hundreds of thousands of Iraqi refugees from the US-led war in their country fled to Syrian cities. The extreme and rapid swelling in urban population from war and climate change-related water scarcity, combined with the lack of support from the Assad government for basic needs and services, added fuel to the fire of civil conflict and the current war in Syria. The Syrian scholar

Suzanne Saleeby notes that "escalating pressures on urban areas due to internal migration, increasing food insecurity, and resultant high rates of unemployment have spurred many Syrians to make their political grievances publicly known. in popular uprisings..." (8)

While it is evident from history that the source of violence in societies suffering scarce resources is fundamentally inequality, injustice, poor economic and resource management, and lack of democracy, the stress of climate change on the Syrian society is neither isolated nor temporary; and it is worsening. The entire Middle East inexorably faces a hotter, drier climate from climate change that will further stress water resources, agriculture, food prices and existing conflicts. Thus, the seeds of future conflicts in authoritarian and unequal societies may also include scarce water resources as farmers and thirsty people, opportunistic politicians and powerful corporations contend for that diminishing resource.

Conclusion

War mirrors the culture of a country. US militarism-from its training, tactics, and logistics to its reasons for going to war and its weapons of war-is distinctly shaped by core elements of American identity. These determining cultural forces are, according to military historian Victor Hanson [\[2\]](http://www.thenewatlantis.com/publications/military-technology-and-american-culture): manifest destiny; frontier mentality; rugged individualism; unfettered market capitalism; and what he calls a "muscular independence" (power projection in Pentagon-speak). (9) These eminently masculinist qualities converge to generate bigger, better and more destructive war technology. And they have delivered up a bullying, white nationalist, law-breaking billionaire and sexual predator as president.

The US habit and competence for war, with its origins in the past annihilation of Native Americans, may be our society's nemesis unless we do critical soul-searching about our cultural and personal values [\[3\]](http://www.thesolutionsjournal.com/node/969) and actively engage in transforming them. Let us remember and honor the plentitude of activist, non-violent movements in our society that have profoundly challenged the dominant patriarchal profile of our culture described by Hanson. These are the feminist violence against women and equal rights for women movement; the civil rights, immigrant and indigenous rights movements; the anti-war and peace movements; Black Lives Matter and Standing Rock water protectors; progressive media, peace and justice studies; progressive labor and health workers; the coop, sustainable agriculture, and Transition Town movements; and the pervasive climate change activism and victories against fracking and oil pipelines.

The challenge is how to build voice, social cohesion and public influence for our shared values of a sense of human community, our core connection as

humans with nature, our empathy with the exploited and our thirst for equality and justice for all.

In these times of overt authoritarian and corporate control, our hope for turning the tide will come from local, community-based campaigns and actions. These comprise anti-fracking ordinances, town by town; the fight for \$15 minimum wage city by city; churches and cities providing sanctuary for undocumented workers; children suing their government for their right to clean energy and a livable future; campaigns against all forms of violence against girls and women; using community media to promote equal rights for all; and electing people to local and regional office who champion these issues and campaigns.

Working together, we must turn the tide on these destructive forces and seek enduring peace *on* earth and enduring peace *with* earth.

[This piece originated in talks given to 350.org CT and Promoting Enduring Peace, New Haven; Women's International League for Peace and Justice, Boston branch; and the Women's Pentagon Action 2016 Forum.]

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[Pat Hynes, a retired environmental engineer and professor of environmental health, directs the Traprock Center for Peace and Justice in western Massachusetts.]

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([Back to Top](#))

Greenwald: Empowering the “Deep State” to Undermine Trump is Prescription for Destroying Democracy

Editors: In recent years some foreign policy elites, neoconservatives, have lobbied decision-makers to mobilize NATO members to expand the West’s geopolitical presence further East into the countries formerly associated with the Soviet Bloc. Recently at a NATO summit, it was decided that about 1,000 troops would be deployed in Poland and the Baltic states, a kind of trip wire. The United States sent 3,500 troops and tanks to Poland. NATO countries have agreed to allocate two percent of their budgets each year to the military. And anti-ballistic missile installations will be constructed in Eastern Europe. The NATO moves come in the wake of the US/European role in the overthrow of the Ukraine government and support for the Kiev governments efforts to crush forces in the eastern part of that country which prefer maintaining historic ties with Russia. The demonization of Vladimir Putin and Russia by most mainstream US politicians gives ideological fuel to those who seek to go to war with Russia.

Post-election anti- Russian fervor has been stirred even more since the November elections. It is possible that the new Trump Administration will challenge the pressure from think tanks, centrist Democrats, “deep state” institutions such as the CIA and Department of Defense to increase political and military pressure on Russia. The recent interview with Intercept editor Glenn Greenwald on Democracy Now illustrates the ways in which the Russia story is being used to generate support for the maintenance of the neoliberal global agenda, which might involve creating a New Cold War with Russia.

February 16, 2017 (Democracy NOW)

https://www.democracynow.org/2017/2/16/greenwald_empowering_the_deep_state_to

Guests

Glenn Greenwald

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and one of the founding editors of The Intercept. His recent piece for The Intercept is headlined "The Leakers Who Exposed Gen. Flynn’s Lie Committed Serious—and Wholly Justified—Felonies."

Some supporters of Trump, including Breitbart News, have accused the intelligence agencies of attempting to wage a deep state coup against the president. Meanwhile, some critics of Trump are openly embracing such activity. Bill Kristol, the prominent Republican analyst who founded The Weekly Standard, wrote on Twitter, "Obviously strongly prefer normal democratic and constitutional politics. But if it comes to it, prefer the deep state to the Trump state." We talk about the deep state with Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Glenn Greenwald, co-founder of The Intercept.

TRANSCRIPT

This is a rush transcript. Copy may not be in its final form.

NERMEEN SHAIKH: We're looking at the growing scandal over the Trump administration's alleged dealings with Russia before and after the November election. In early January, Democratic Senator Chuck Schumer appeared on *The Rachel Maddow Show* and suggested the intelligence community may try to get back at Donald Trump.

SEN. CHUCK SCHUMER: Let me tell you, you take on the intelligence community, they have six ways from Sunday at getting back at you. So, even for a practical, supposedly, hard-nosed businessman, he's being really dumb to do this.

AMY GOODMAN: That was the Senate minority leader, Chuck Schumer, in January.

Some supporters of Trump, including Breitbart News, are now accusing the intelligence agencies of attempting to wage a "deep state coup" against the president. Meanwhile, some critics of Trump are openly embracing such activity, like Bill Kristol, the prominent Republican analyst who founded *The Weekly Standard*. He [wrote](#) on Twitter, "Obviously strongly prefer normal democratic and constitutional politics. But if it comes to it, prefer the deep state to the Trump state."

So, still with us, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Glenn Greenwald of *The Intercept*, speaking to us from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Glenn, explain what the deep state is, and respond.

GLENN GREENWALD: The deep state, although there's no precise or scientific definition, generally refers to the agencies in Washington that are permanent power factions. They stay and exercise power even as presidents who are elected come and go. They typically exercise their power in secret, in the dark, and so they're barely subject to democratic accountability, if they're subject to it at all. It's agencies like the CIA, the NSA and the other intelligence agencies, that are essentially designed to disseminate

disinformation and deceit and propaganda, and have a long history of doing not only that, but also have a long history of the world's worst war crimes, atrocities and death squads. This is who not just people like Bill Kristol, but lots of Democrats are placing their faith in, are trying to empower, are cheering for as they exert power separate and apart from—in fact, in opposition to—the political officials to whom they're supposed to be subordinate.

And you go—this is not just about Russia. You go all the way back to the campaign, and what you saw was that leading members of the intelligence community, including Mike Morell, who was the acting CIA chief under President Obama, and Michael Hayden, who ran both the CIA and the NSA under George W. Bush, were very outspoken supporters of Hillary Clinton. In fact, Michael Morell went to *The New York Times*, and Michael Hayden went to *The Washington Post*, during the campaign to praise Hillary Clinton and to say that Donald Trump had become a recruit of Russia. The CIA and the intelligence community were vehemently in support of Clinton and vehemently opposed to Trump, from the beginning. And the reason was, was because they liked Hillary Clinton's policies better than they liked Donald Trump's. One of the main priorities of the CIA for the last five years has been a proxy war in Syria, designed to achieve regime change with the Assad regime. Hillary Clinton was not only for that, she was critical of Obama for not allowing it to go further, and wanted to impose a no-fly zone in Syria and confront the Russians. Donald Trump took exactly the opposite view. He said we shouldn't care who rules Syria; we should allow the Russians, and even help the Russians, kill ISIS and al-Qaeda and other people in Syria. So, Trump's agenda that he ran on was completely antithetical to what the CIA wanted. Clinton's was exactly what the CIA wanted, and so they were behind her. And so, they've been trying to undermine Trump for many months throughout the election. And now that he won, they are not just undermining him with leaks, but actively subverting him. There's claims that they're withholding information from him, on the grounds that they don't think he should have it and can be trusted with it. They are empowering themselves to enact policy.

Now, I happen to think that the Trump presidency is extremely dangerous. You just listed off in your news—in your newscast that led the show, many reasons. They want to dismantle the environment. They want to eliminate the safety net. They want to empower billionaires. They want to enact bigoted policies against Muslims and immigrants and so many others. And it is important to resist them. And there are lots of really great ways to resist them, such as getting courts to restrain them, citizen activism and, most important of all, having the Democratic Party engage in self-critique to ask itself how it can be a more effective political force in the United States after it has collapsed on all levels. That isn't what this resistance is now doing. What they're doing instead is trying to take maybe the only faction worse than Donald Trump, which is the deep state, the CIA, with its histories of atrocities, and say they ought to almost engage in like a soft coup, where

they take the elected president and prevent him from enacting his policies. And I think it is extremely dangerous to do that. Even if you're somebody who believes that both the CIA and the deep state, on the one hand, and the Trump presidency, on the other, are extremely dangerous, as I do, there's a huge difference between the two, which is that Trump was democratically elected and is subject to democratic controls, as these courts just demonstrated and as the media is showing, as citizens are proving. But on the other hand, the CIA was elected by nobody. They're barely subject to democratic controls at all. And so, to urge that the CIA and the intelligence community empower itself to undermine the elected branches of government is insanity. That is a prescription for destroying democracy overnight in the name of saving it. And yet that's what so many, not just neocons, but the neocons' allies in the Democratic Party, are now urging and cheering. And it's incredibly warped and dangerous to watch them do that.

AMY GOODMAN: And *The Wall Street Journal's* [report](#) that says now intelligence officials are not giving President Trump all the information because they're concerned about what he'll do with it, not to mention intelligence agencies of other countries deeply concerned about what Trump will do with it, and particularly concerned about what he might share with Russia?

GLENN GREENWALD: Well, so, first of all, there's a media issue here, which is that if you look at *The Wall Street Journal* report, it's pretty much exactly the same as every other significant report about Russia over the last six months, many of which have proven to be completely false. It's based on anonymous officials making extremely vague claims. Even *The Wall Street Journal* says, "We don't know who's doing this, withholding information. We don't know how much information is being withheld."

Secondly, the idea that Donald Trump is some kind of an agent or a spy of Russia, or that he is being blackmailed by Russia and is going to pass secret information to the Kremlin and endanger American agents on purpose, is an incredibly crazy claim that has been nowhere proven to be true. It reminds me of the kind of things Glenn Beck used to say about Obama while he stood at his chalkboard and drew those—those unstable charts that he drew, these wild conspiracy theories that are without evidence.

We ought to have a serious, sober, structured investigation of the claims that Russia hacked the DNC and John Podesta's emails and that there were improper ties between Donald Trump and the Russians, and that ought to be made public so that we can see the information. But this constant media obsession of leaking whatever someone whispers to them about Donald Trump and Russia, because they know it will get their reporters huge numbers of retweets on Twitter and tons of traffic by people who are being fed what they want to hear, is really feeding into the worst kind of hysteria and even fake news that the media says they're trying to combat. These are

really serious claims that merit serious investigation, and that's exactly what we're not getting.

NERMEEN SHAIKH: Well, in a recent [piece](#) in *The Intercept* by one of your colleagues, they write, "If in fact all of this is 'non-sense,' Trump has the power as president to make that clear immediately—by declassifying all government intercepts of communications between Russian nationals and anyone in his orbit." So, do you think, Glenn, that Trump ought to be doing that?

GLENN GREENWALD: I mean, it's an interesting point, because, for example, there have been lots of claims made about the communications that General Flynn had with Russian diplomats and what these transcripts supposedly reflect, and yet nobody has seen the transcripts. We've seen little bits and pieces of them. We haven't seen the whole transcript. We ought to see that whole transcript. And my colleague, Jon Schwarz, who wrote that piece, is absolutely right that it's within President Trump's power to order it instantly declassified. There's no review of that decision, and then it could be made public.

On the other hand, it is really bizarre, just as a reporter who has been in the middle of a controversy for the last four years about the leaking of classified information, to hear people suggest that the president now ought to take the most sensitive intercepts that the government is capable of obtaining, which is how they eavesdrop on Russian officials inside the Kremlin, and just toss them to the public like there's no problem at all with doing that. I think that what you're seeing here is this really disturbing double standard, that all we've heard since the war on terror is that classified information is sacred and anybody who leaks it is treasonous and satanic and belongs in jail for a really long time, and now classified information seems to be something that's just a plaything, like something that we just toss around for fun if it serves a certain agenda. And I think that that's one of the issues that's bothering me about the way this discourse is unfolding.

AMY GOODMAN: Glenn, we're going to break, then come back and ask you about the Trump-Netanyahu news conference yesterday. We're also going to want to talk about Yemen and the news that the Pentagon is considering U.S. ground troops in Syria. This is *Democracy Now!* We're talking to Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Glenn Greenwald. Stay with us.

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([Back to Top](#))

Military power in Asia ‘shifting against’ the US, major report warns

The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/19/obama-us-military-power-pivot-to-asia>
[David Smith](#) in Washington
Tuesday 19 January 2016

Editors: Along with the drive to rollback Russia’s alleged aggression in Europe, the United States is expanding its military presence in Asia. In 2011 President Obama declared the US commitment to pivot resources from the Middle East to the Asia-Pacific region. President Trump, during his campaign, has targeted China for economic warfare. As the new administration assumed office the media dramatized the North Korean military “threat” to the United States. President Trump also indicated his rejection of the “one China” policy shortly before assuming office, angering the Chinese government. However, he recently reversed his initial position. The following article, based on the standard narrative on an aggressive China, cites a report authoritative in mainstream circles about the need for a further US military buildup to oppose Chinese power. This would greatly increase tensions and the possibility of war. The question remains as to what China policy will be in the new administration.

The balance of military power in Asia is shifting against the US as China makes aggressive territorial moves, [a major independent report](#) will warn on Wednesday.

Barack Obama’s “pivot to Asia”, a major policy shift first outlined in 2011, is mired in confusion against a backdrop of a “significantly more complicated” international security picture, the researchers argue.

The study by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), a leading Washington think tank, calls for America to flex its military muscle in the region by deploying extra nuclear attack submarines and developing advanced long-range missiles.

The report was commissioned by the Department of Defense at the behest of Congress and is set to be discussed at a hearing of the Senate armed services committee. It is likely to be seized on by Republican presidential candidates who accuse Obama of weak leadership in the face of a rising China, resurgent Russia and nuclear-armed North Korea.

“Chinese and North Korean actions are routinely challenging the credibility of US security commitments, and at the current rate of US capability

development, the balance of military power in the region is shifting against the United States," the report states. "Robust funding is needed to implement the rebalance."

Obama had hoped his foreign policy shift towards Asia would renew alliances, capitalise on economic opportunities and allow him to escape the gravitational pull of the strife-torn Middle East. But it has [proved to be a difficult balancing act](#), for example when frostiness between China and Japan makes it clear that Washington remains on the latter's side. Former defense secretary Chuck Hagel, a champion of the strategy, resigned just over a year ago.

The CSIS's follow-up to a 2012 study says the US should continue its three historically interrelated interests in Asia and the Pacific: protecting America and its allies; promoting trade; and supporting democracy.

Then it outlines four areas to build upon. First, it argues, Washington needs to continue aligning Asia strategy within the US government and with allies and partners. "The study finds that although the Obama administration has issued a series of speeches and documents on the rebalance, there remains no central statement of the US government's rebalance strategy."

During interviews with leaders throughout the Department of Defense, in other US departments and agencies, on Capitol Hill and across the Asia-Pacific, the study team "consistently heard confusion about the rebalance strategy and concern about its implementation".

Second, the authors say, US leaders should accelerate efforts to strengthen ally and partner capability, capacity, resilience and interoperability. Third, the US should sustain and expand its military presence in the Asia-Pacific.

"China has accelerated its coercive activities and the pace of its island-building in the East and South China Seas, and North Korea has continued developing its nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities," it warns.

"The Chinese People's Liberation Army's anti-access/area denial capabilities that many once viewed as Taiwan-specific are rapidly expanding to the Second Island Chain and beyond, affecting not only an increasing number of US allies and partners, but also US territories such as Guam."

The authors recommend increasing surface fleet presence, increasing the number of nuclear attack submarines in Guam from four to six, continuing to diversify air operating locations, bolstering regional missile defenses, stockpiling critical precision munitions and enhancing intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance cooperation with allies within the region.

Fourth is a call for the US to innovate to plug "critical capability gaps in two areas": defending against emerging risks to US forces, such as the growing

ballistic missile risk to American ships and forward bases, and gaining an “asymmetric, cost-imposing counter” to potential regional competitors.

“We recommend institutionalizing a culture of experimentation; encouraging rapid platform evolution; developing advanced long-range missiles; funding innovative missile defense concepts; fielding additional air combat systems; exploiting the US undersea advantage; and augmenting space, cyber, and electronic warfare capabilities.”

The report also calls for the formation of a standing US joint taskforce for the western Pacific, based on the advice of numerous military and civilian leaders. “The risks associated with major combat operations in the Asia-Pacific theater place a premium on preexisting command relationships.”

Japan, the world’s third biggest economy, is cited as a critical US ally in the region, but the report finds that the countries lack coordination to respond to a fast-moving crisis. “The authors encountered concern in both Tokyo and Washington that the command and control arrangements are not sufficient for the type of complex, high-intensity warfare that the allies must be prepared to conduct.”

The study also notes the geopolitical implications of China’s economic growth. “The course charted by China’s reemergence as a great power over the next few decades represents the primary strategic challenge for the United States and for the Asian security landscape writ large.

“If China’s economic, military, and geopolitical influence continues to rise at even a modest pace during this period, the world will witness the largest shift in the global distribution of power since the rise of the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries ... Moreover, if China surpasses the United States as the world’s largest economy in the next 10 to 15 years, it will mark the first time in centuries that the world’s economic leader will be non-English speaking, non-Western, and non-democratic.

“Of course, these are some major `ifs’.”

The study, called Asia-Pacific Rebalance 2025: Capabilities, Presence, and Partnerships, was led by the CSIS’s Mike Green, Kath Hicks and Mark Cancian.

[\(Back to Top\)](#)

The Age of Disintegration: Our Endless Cycle of Indecisive Wars

 www.commondreams.org/views/2016/06/28/age-disintegration-our-endless-cycle-indecisive-wars

Patrick Cockburn

Editors note: While a New Cold War has simmered in Eastern Europe and Asia over the last few years, the Middle East is burning. The historic divisions of the region after World War One between France and Britain supplemented by the United States/Saudi Arabian arrangement just before the end of World War Two (the promise of oil for Saudi security) ensured recurring violence in the region. During the Cold War, the United States opposed secular Arab socialist regimes and tilted toward Israel as war after war against Arab state and the Palestinian people occurred. Gulf War One and the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 were major causes of almost total disintegration of the region. Patrick Cockburn describes the impacts of regional strife today. Judy Deutsch discusses competing inside and outside forces that have shaped the tragic civil war in Syria. To some extent, the Syrian civil war might be seen as a proxy war between the US, Saudi Arabia, and Israel versus Russia and Iran for regional influence. The Syrian people are the victims. Again, the new Trump Administration has sent mixed signals about his foreign policy toward the region: on the one hand pledging to stamp out ISIS and on the other preferring to withdraw United States forces from the region.

The conflict between the state of Israel and the Palestinian people remains the "elephant in the room," that is the fundamental conflict in the region that has exacerbated all the others. Norma Barrows Friedman describes some of the recent successes of the Palestine solidarity movement in supporting the boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign. This has helped change US public opinion towards more questioning of Israel; this is one issue where the US peace and solidarity movement has made impressive gains

We live in an age of disintegration. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Greater Middle East and Africa. Across the vast swath of territory between Pakistan and Nigeria, there are at least seven ongoing wars -- in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Libya, Somalia, and South Sudan. These conflicts are extraordinarily destructive. They are tearing apart the countries in which they are taking place in ways that make it doubtful they will ever recover. Cities like Aleppo in Syria, Ramadi in Iraq, Taiz in Yemen, and Benghazi in Libya have been partly or entirely [reduced to ruins](#). There are also at least three other serious insurgencies: in southeast Turkey, where Kurdish guerrillas are fighting the Turkish army, in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula where a little-reported but ferocious guerrilla conflict is underway, and in

northeast Nigeria and neighboring countries where Boko Haram continues to launch murderous attacks.

All of these have a number of things in common: they are endless and seem never to produce definitive winners or losers. (Afghanistan has effectively been at war since 1979, Somalia since 1991.) They involve the destruction or dismemberment of unified nations, their *de facto* partition amid mass population movements and upheavals -- well publicized in the case of Syria and Iraq, less so in places like South Sudan where more than [2.4 million people](#) have been displaced in recent years.

"Though the invasion of Iraq in 2003 is now widely admitted to have been a mistake... no real lessons have been learned about why direct or indirect military interventions by the U.S. and its allies in the Middle East over the last quarter century have all only exacerbated violence and accelerated state failure."

Add in one more similarity, no less crucial for being obvious: in most of these countries, where Islam is the dominant religion, extreme Salafi-Jihadi movements, including the Islamic State (IS), al-Qaeda, and the Taliban are essentially the only available vehicles for protest and rebellion. By now, they have completely replaced the socialist and nationalist movements that predominated in the twentieth century; these years have, that is, seen a remarkable reversion to religious, ethnic, and tribal identity, to movements that seek to establish their own exclusive territory by the persecution and expulsion of minorities.

In the process and under the pressure of outside military intervention, a vast region of the planet seems to be cracking open. Yet there is very little understanding of these processes in Washington. This was recently well illustrated by the [protest](#) of 51 State Department diplomats against President Obama's Syrian policy and their suggestion that air strikes be launched targeting Syrian regime forces in the belief that President Bashar al-Assad would then abide by a ceasefire. The diplomats' approach remains typically simpleminded in this most complex of conflicts, assuming as it does that the Syrian government's barrel-bombing of civilians and other grim acts are the "root cause of the instability that continues to grip Syria and the broader region."

It is as if the minds of these diplomats were still in the Cold War era, as if they were still fighting the Soviet Union and its allies. Against all the evidence of the last five years, there is an assumption that a barely extant moderate Syrian opposition would benefit from the fall of Assad, and a lack of understanding that the armed opposition in Syria is entirely [dominated](#) by the Islamic State and al-Qaeda clones.

Though the invasion of Iraq in 2003 is now widely admitted to have been a mistake (even by those who supported it at the time), no real lessons have

been learned about why direct or indirect military interventions by the U.S. and its allies in the Middle East over the last quarter century have all only exacerbated violence and accelerated state failure.

A Mass Extinction of Independent States

The Islamic State, just celebrating its second anniversary, is the grotesque outcome of this era of chaos and conflict. That such a monstrous cult exists at all is a symptom of the deep dislocation societies throughout that region, ruled by corrupt and discredited elites, have suffered. Its rise -- and that of various Taliban and al-Qaeda-style clones -- is a measure of the weakness of its opponents.

The Iraqi army and security forces, for example, had 350,000 soldiers and 660,000 police [on the books](#) in June 2014 when a few thousand Islamic State fighters [captured Mosul](#), the country's second largest city, which they still hold. Today the Iraqi army, security services, and about 20,000 Shia paramilitaries backed by the massive firepower of the United States and allied air forces have [fought their way](#) into the city of Fallujah, 40 miles west of Baghdad, against the resistance of IS fighters who may have numbered as few as [900](#). In Afghanistan, the [resurgence](#) of the Taliban, supposedly decisively defeated in 2001, came about less because of the popularity of that movement than the contempt with which Afghans came to regard their corrupt government in Kabul.

Everywhere nation states are enfeebled or collapsing, as authoritarian leaders battle for survival in the face of mounting external and internal pressures. This is hardly the way the region was expected to develop. Countries that had escaped from colonial rule in the second half of the twentieth century were supposed to become more, not less, unified as time passed.

Between 1950 and 1975, nationalist leaders came to power in much of the previously colonized world. They promised to achieve national self-determination by creating powerful independent states through the concentration of whatever political, military, and economic resources were at hand. Instead, over the decades, many of these regimes transmuted into police states controlled by small numbers of staggeringly wealthy families and a coterie of businessmen dependent on their connections to such leaders as Hosni Mubarak in Egypt or Bashar al-Assad in Syria.

In recent years, such countries were also opened up to the economic whirlwind of neoliberalism, which destroyed any crude social contract that existed between rulers and ruled. Take Syria. There, rural towns and villages that had once supported the Baathist regime of the al-Assad family because it provided jobs and kept the prices of necessities low were, after 2000, abandoned to market forces skewed in favor of those in power. These places would become the backbone of the post-2011 uprising. At the same time,

institutions like the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) that had done so much to enhance the wealth and power of regional oil producers in the 1970s have lost their capacity for united action.

The question for our moment: Why is a “mass extinction” of independent states taking place in the Middle East, North Africa, and beyond? Western politicians and media often refer to such countries as “failed states.” The implication embedded in that term is that the process is a self-destructive one. But several of the states now labeled “failed” like Libya only became so after Western-backed opposition movements seized power with the support and military intervention of Washington and NATO, and proved too weak to impose their own central governments and so a monopoly of violence within the national territory.

In many ways, this process began with the intervention of a U.S.-led coalition in Iraq in 2003 leading to the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, the shutting down of his Baathist Party, and the disbanding of his military. Whatever their faults, Saddam and Libya’s autocratic ruler Muammar Gaddafi were clearly demonized and blamed for all ethnic, sectarian, and regional differences in the countries they ruled, forces that were, in fact, set loose in grim ways upon their deaths.

A question remains, however: Why did the opposition to autocracy and to Western intervention take on an Islamic form and why were the Islamic movements that came to dominate the armed resistance in Iraq and Syria in particular so violent, regressive, and sectarian? Put another way, how could such groups find so many people willing to die for their causes, while their opponents found so few? When IS battle groups were sweeping through northern Iraq in the summer of 2014, soldiers who had thrown aside their uniforms and weapons and deserted that country’s northern cities would justify their flight by [saying derisively](#): “Die for [then-Prime Minister Nouri] al-Maliki? Never!”

A common explanation for the rise of Islamic resistance movements is that the socialist, secularist, and nationalist opposition had been crushed by the old regimes’ security forces, while the Islamists were not. In countries like Libya and Syria, however, Islamists were savagely persecuted, too, and they still came to dominate the opposition. And yet, while these religious movements were strong enough to oppose governments, they generally have not proven strong enough to replace them.

Too Weak to Win, But Too Strong to Lose

Though there are clearly many reasons for the present disintegration of states and they differ somewhat from place to place, one thing is beyond question: the phenomenon itself is becoming the norm across vast reaches of the planet.

If you're looking for the causes of state failure in our time, the place to start is undoubtedly with the end of the Cold War a quarter-century ago. Once it was over, neither the U.S. nor the new Russia that emerged from the Soviet Union's implosion had a significant interest in continuing to prop up "failed states," as each had for so long, fearing that the rival superpower and its local proxies would otherwise take over. Previously, national leaders in places like the Greater Middle East had been able to maintain a degree of independence for their countries by balancing between Moscow and Washington. With the break-up of the Soviet Union, this was no longer feasible.

In addition, the triumph of neoliberal free-market economics in the wake of the Soviet Union's collapse added a critical element to the mix. It would prove far more destabilizing than it looked at the time.

Again, consider Syria. The expansion of the free market in a country where there was neither democratic accountability nor the rule of law meant one thing above all: plutocrats linked to the nation's ruling family took anything that seemed potentially profitable. In the process, they grew staggeringly wealthy, while the denizens of Syria's impoverished villages, country towns, and city slums, who had once looked to the state for jobs and cheap food, suffered. It should have surprised no one that those places became the strongholds of the Syrian uprising after 2011. In the capital, Damascus, as the reign of neoliberalism spread, even the lesser members of the *mukhabarat*, or secret police, found themselves living on only \$200 to \$300 a month, while the state became a machine for thievery.

This sort of thievery and the auctioning off of the nation's patrimony spread across the region in these years. The new Egyptian ruler, General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, merciless toward any sign of domestic dissent, was typical. In a country that once had been a standard bearer for nationalist regimes the world over, he didn't hesitate this April to try to [hand over](#) two islands in the Red Sea to Saudi Arabia on whose funding and aid his regime is dependent. (To the surprise of everyone, an Egyptian court recently [overruled](#) Sisi's decision.)

That gesture, deeply unpopular among increasingly impoverished Egyptians, was symbolic of a larger change in the balance of power in the Middle East: once the most powerful states in the region -- Egypt, Syria, and Iraq -- had been secular nationalists and a genuine counterbalance to Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf monarchies. As those secular autocracies weakened, however, the power and influence of the Sunni fundamentalist monarchies only increased. If 2011 saw rebellion and revolution spread across the Greater Middle East as the Arab Spring briefly blossomed, it also saw counterrevolution spread, funded by those oil-rich absolute Gulf monarchies, which were never going to tolerate democratic secular regime change in Syria or Libya.

Add in one more process at work making such states ever more fragile: the production and sale of natural resources -- oil, gas, and minerals -- and the kleptomania that goes with it. Such countries often suffer from what has become known as "the resources curse": states increasingly dependent for revenues on the sale of their natural resources -- enough to theoretically provide the whole population with a reasonably decent standard of living -- turn instead into grotesquely corrupt dictatorships. In them, the yachts of local billionaires with crucial connections to the regime of the moment bob in harbors surrounded by slums running with raw sewage. In such nations, politics tends to focus on elites battling and maneuvering to steal state revenues and transfer them as rapidly as possible out of the country.

This has been the pattern of economic and political life in much of sub-Saharan Africa from Angola to Nigeria. In the Middle East and North Africa, however, a somewhat different system exists, one usually misunderstood by the outside world. There is similarly great inequality in Iraq or Saudi Arabia with similarly kleptocratic elites. They have, however, ruled over patronage states in which a significant part of the population is offered jobs in the public sector in return for political passivity or support for the kleptocrats.

In Iraq with a population of 33 million people, for instance, no less than [seven million](#) of them are on the government payroll, thanks to salaries or pensions that cost the government \$4 billion a month. This crude way of distributing oil revenues to the people has often been denounced by Western commentators and economists as corruption. They, in turn, generally recommend cutting the number of these jobs, but this would mean that all, rather than just part, of the state's resource revenues would be stolen by the elite. This, in fact, is increasingly the case in such lands as oil prices [bottom out](#) and even the Saudi royals begin to [cut back](#) on state support for the populace.

Neoliberalism was once believed to be the path to secular democracy and free-market economies. In practice, it has been anything but. Instead, in conjunction with the resource curse, as well as repeated military interventions by Washington and its allies, free-market economics has profoundly destabilized the Greater Middle East. Encouraged by Washington and Brussels, twenty-first-century neoliberalism has made unequal societies ever more unequal and helped transform already corrupt regimes into looting machines. This is also, of course, a formula for the success of the Islamic State or any other radical alternative to the status quo. Such movements are bound to find support in impoverished or neglected regions like eastern Syria or eastern Libya.

Note, however, that this process of destabilization is by no means confined to the Greater Middle East and North Africa. We are indeed in the age of destabilization, a phenomenon that is on the rise globally and at present spreading into the Balkans and Eastern Europe (with the European Union ever less able to influence events there). People no longer speak of European

integration, but of how to prevent the complete break-up of the European Union in the wake of the British [vote to leave](#).

The reasons why a narrow majority of Britons voted for Brexit have parallels with the Middle East: the free-market economic policies pursued by governments since Margaret Thatcher was prime minister have widened the gap between rich and poor and between wealthy cities and much of the rest of the country. Britain might be doing well, but millions of Britons did not share in the prosperity. The referendum about continued membership in the European Union, the option almost universally advocated by the British establishment, became the catalyst for protest against the status quo. The anger of the "Leave" voters has much in common with that of Donald Trump supporters in the United States.

The U.S. remains a superpower, but is no longer as powerful as it once was. It, too, is feeling the strains of this global moment, in which it and its local allies are powerful enough to imagine they can get rid of regimes they do not like, but either they do not quite succeed, as in Syria, or succeed but cannot replace what they have destroyed, as in Libya. An Iraqi politician [once said](#) that the problem in his country was that parties and movements were "too weak to win, but too strong to lose." This is increasingly the pattern for the whole region and is spreading elsewhere. It carries with it the possibility of an endless cycle of indecisive wars and an era of instability that has already begun.

([Back to Top](#))

Syria and the Antiwar Movement

Posted By *Judith Deutsch* On December 26, 2016

<http://www.counterpunch.org/2016/12/26/syria-and-the-antiwar-movement/>

The continued slaughter of people in Syria poses urgent questions for the fragmented Left. What really needs to be done to end post Cold War escalating violence against civilians? Current events in Aleppo highlight the unreliable information and proliferation of political positions contributing to obstruction and paralysis. Conflicting reports obscure the number of civilians and fighters who have evacuated or remain in Aleppo, their condition, their political beliefs, their situation as refugees, the civilian toll, and the perpetrators. What is to be done when there are so many contradictory versions of this war: that of a civil war, a proxy war with international players, or multiple wars with fluid coalitions and divergent aims?

Perhaps one significant difference in this current assault on Aleppo, as of December 20th, is that Russia and China have not vetoed UN Security Council Resolution 2328 (2016) demanding immediate, unhindered access for UN observation and monitoring of civilian evacuations from Aleppo. Since the onset of the war, Russia vetoed six and China vetoed five Security Council resolutions. Iran, Russia, and Turkey have agreed to guarantee Syrian peace talks but are unwilling to include other parties in their planning.

Not being a journalist with any direct Syrian connections, I am here commenting on both the framing of this war and of the role of the Left. There is a paucity of verifiable facts and pertinent history. Last October Bassam Haddad wrote in *The Nation* "The Debate over Syria has Reached a Dead End: Two warring narratives now dominate discussions – and neither is sufficient." He wrote of "two mutually exclusive narratives: (a) that of 'pure and consistent revolution,' [that this is fundamentally a civil war] and (b) that of 'external conspiracy' [a proxy war]. Both narratives carry grains of truth, but both are encumbered by maximalist claims and fundamental blind spots that forfeit any common ground necessary for enduring cease-fires or potential transitions, as well as postwar reconciliation." He writes that "the heart-wrenching news from Syria has been saturated with data, analysis, information, and misinformation on developments" and that both sides have adopted hypocritical stances regarding outside intervention. Achcar writes of this same hypocrisy and narrowness in Arab political opinion with no third side condemning bombing in itself as criminal. One side condemns the Syrian/Russian bombing of Syrian cities but keeps silent about the Saudi bombing of Yemeni cities and rural areas, and vice versa. He writes that both these powers and their allies aim to crush the revolutionary process.

The U.S. United National Antiwar Coalition's narrative frames the Syrian war as a new Cold War with Assad and his Russian/Iran/Hezbollah allies standing for Syrian self-determination, in battle with U.S. imperialism. Richard Fidler describes socialist Left positions here here : one side maintaining that this is a civil war, while another side sees it as a proxy war and targeting "your own government's drive to war". Fidler writes that as a socialist, the fight is to support people against the forces of imperialism and authoritarianism at a global scale. The range of positions are abstract with fundamental blind spots about the urgency of saving lives, about the history of Syria, and about the complicated geopolitical context.

Below, I summarize often neglected points about Syria's recent history from Samer Abboud's Syria (Polity, 2016). I will then summarize Phyllis Bennis' proposals for ending the war and then comment on the antiwar movement and international institutions underlying perpetual war and neoliberal restructuring.

- Abboud traces the history from the Ottoman governance through the French mandate, the Ba'ath era socialist policies, and the severe effects of neoliberal reorganization up to the uprising. Neoliberal restructuring led to mass internal migration from farms to rural slums: from the 1990s on, the Syrian government withdrew seed and fertilizer subsidies, shifted from cooperative models to implementing new land laws "that reoriented ownership and usage rights away from the cooperative models of the previous two decades", and encouraged strategic crops over subsidized diverse production. By the late 2000s, around 20% of the total Syrian population lived in some sort of slum village (p. 38).
- Throughout the Arab world, neoliberal restructuring led to a more militarized, sectarian, and repressive authoritarianism. (p. 78)
- The Bashar al-Assad regime tolerated some civil society groups during the period of marketization as a means of alleviating some of the social hardships. The 2005 Damascus Declaration was a product of highly diverse individuals and groups who were committed to nonviolence, democracy, oppositional unity, and democratic change. However, the Syrian regime suffocated political activity and the signatories "were never able to translate their cooperation into sustained pressure against the regime or into an institutional arrangement that could take collective leadership of the opposition." Currently, civil society groups are not yet cohesive at a national level and are caught between the violent opposition rebel forces and the brutal government alignment. Moreover, these civil society groups are dependent on armed groups to procure goods through the war economy. "Perhaps the largest challenge facing Syrian civil society is in being taken seriously as a political actor in the uprising. The militarization of the uprising has deflected attention away from civil initiatives and the resiliency of nonviolence in Syria." (P 72)

- Abboud covers the failure of UN negotiators Kofi Annan, Lakhdar Brahimi, and de Mistura to bring about a political settlement. 4.8 million Syrians have fled, and 6.1 million are internally displaced.
- Abboud reviews the failures to deal with the continued use of chemical weapons. Following the agreement between Russia and the US on Syria's chemical weapons, there were as many as 78 documented breaches. Barrel bombs deliver chlorine gas and are randomly tossed on populated areas. "Without any significant political pressure exerted by the UN on any of the warring sides, the security and political elements of the resolutions rang hollow." (p 149)
- Armed factions include the Free Syrian Army, networked rebel groups, Islamist groups, and the regime coalition: "The question of whether to arm rebels has been in the West a question of ensuring that weapons are controlled by 'moderate' rather than 'extremist' forces. Yet, as the rebel landscape beyond ISIS demonstrates, such distinctions are false ones and do not accurately reflect realities and the fluidity of alliances on the ground and the levels of cooperation between rebel groups. The dispersed and fragmented structure of the armed opposition is such that no brigades or unit exercise autonomy from one another... unraveling their ideological and political affinities and interests [is] virtually impossible." The external alliances are equally fluid and, many of the more hardline groups have received their support from private donors (p. 120-161).

Phyllis Bennis calls for stopping the Global War on Terror. The following summarizes the main recommendations in her October, 2016 article "The left is profoundly divided over the [Syrian] conflict, but we should at least agree on a set of principles to end it." She writes that you can't stop terrorism with war, that killing people doesn't stop others from killing people. She calls for a full arms embargo on all sides. "Stop allowing US allies to send weapons into Syria, making clear that if they continue they will lose all access to US arms sales." She also calls for diplomatic partnerships and local ceasefires and for making good on pledges to UN funds for refugees and humanitarian needs.

The geopolitical situation is set-up for perpetual war. To "lose access to US arms sales" seems Orwellian in that it still legitimizes US arms sales. SIPRI's figure for overall 2016 military spending is over \$1,200b (\$1.2tn), while the Global Peace Index' more comprehensive estimates the economic impact of violence at \$13.6tn in 2015. Pertinent to Syria, the arms trade includes the black market with its ties to offshore banking, arms captured from government supplies or left over by the U.S. in Iraq and Libya, and arms provided by Saudi Arabia. Andrew Feinstein documents the constant flux of arms networks in which the constant availability of small arms and mobile weapons systems "...is undoubtedly a consequence of some of this violence, it is also a precipitating cause...." (p. 435).

Pledges to UN funds are risible. Total donations from member states to the UN World Food Program fell by 96% in 2014. Donations in 2016 were approximately \$5b. Total pledged donations to the UN refugee agency covering Gaza and Syria (UNRWA) amounted to \$1.2b in 2015; total 2016 pledged donations to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is \$6.7b. Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey have taken in millions of Syrian refugees while liberal democracies incarcerate refugees in detention centers and send many back to violent regimes. Russia has taken in only 5,000 Syrian refugees. At present, there are seventy walled borders worldwide and 65.3 million refugees. More than 5,000 refugees drowned in the Mediterranean this year. .

Lawfare allows authoritarian regimes and national security elites to use the cover of humanitarian principles to perpetrate illegal interventions and war crimes: the Responsibility to Protect, and the Least Possible Evil. Human rights and social justice rulings are often more symbolic and politicized than real.

At the international level, there are no consequences or enforcement mechanisms for war crimes such as the US, Israeli, Saudi, Syrian/Russian bombing of hospitals. The UN Security Council is legally the ultimate arbiter of war and peace and is tasked with ending the scourge of war, but the five permanent members are nuclear-armed states, with Russia and the U.S. bound up in a new nuclear arms race. "Nine of the world's top ten arms exporters will sit on the

UN Security Council between mid-2016 and mid-2018." Saudi Arabia chairs the UN Human Rights Council.

The Vietnam antiwar movement differed significantly in its breadth and persistence from current single-focus, intermittent antiwar efforts. Eventually it linked together opposition to war, racism, poverty, and nuclear and biological/chemical weapons. A massive education and research component exposed colluding corporations, universities, and often — humanitarian aid. Not known then was the extent of government deception which led to millions of deaths. The complexity of the Syria war and global change requires simultaneously addressing many new fronts.

It is also urgent that an effective antiwar movement finally engage with climate change. The military is exempt under the Kyoto Protocol, and it is the single largest emitter of greenhouse gases. But beyond that, the Pentagon and NATO define climate change as a "threat multiplier" and have assumed responsibility for climate security. This must be vigorously challenged. An incorrect and dangerous assumption is that climate disasters cause violence. One common interpretation of the Syrian uprising is that it was propelled by massive migrations to urban slums because of drought. But Abboud shows that the large migrations occurred before the drought and were brought about by neoliberal policies. There is a long history of environmental

disasters leading to cooperation and not to violent eruptions, and a long history of militaries protecting the powerful and not the victims.

Syria will likely not disrupt holiday cheer in the West, while ominous dark clouds blow in with the new year. Putin and Trump pledge to enlarge nuclear arsenals, and Fallujah murderer and Haditha apologist James Mattis is putative US Secretary of Defence. Total wars against civilians fought with increasingly horrific technology demand an antiwar movement that aims to end the scourge of war: unrelenting opposition to the global arms trade, to militarization and austerity regimes, to resurgent racialized nationalism and closed borders, to all carbon emissions and nuclear weapons, and to colluding international institutions.

[\(Back to Top\)](#)

What Were the Top 10 BDS Victories in 2016?

Nora Barrows Friedman

Electronic Intifada, <https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/nora-barrows-friedman/what-were-top-10-bds-victories-2016>

Editors note: A broad range of Palestinian civil society institutions issued a call ten years ago for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions to apply economic and political pressure on Israel through an international non-governmental, people's campaign. BDS is human rights based demanding equal rights for Palestinians. (A full description is given by the Palestinian leader Omar Barghouti in his book Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions; the Global Struggle for Palestinian Rights.) The article below documents the continued BDS victories which Israel has responded to by sponsoring legislation in many states and in congress to declare boycotts illegal. Students and youth activists have been especially prominent in the struggle for Palestinian rights.

2016 began with a bang: French telecommunications giant [Orange announced](#) in early January it was dumping its Israel affiliate.

This came just months after boycott activists renewed their campaign against the company over its support for Israel's 2014 assault on Gaza and its complicity in Israel's colonization of the occupied West Bank.

The same week, a major Irish corporation yanked its cement contracts with Israel following boycott pressure.

Meanwhile, churches, student unions and local activists continued to organize strong boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) campaigns that caused panic among Israeli leaders.

Embarrassed by these significant victories, Israel spent 2016 waging "an all-out war" on the global BDS campaign, "in a desperate attempt to crush it," [according](#) to the Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC).

Bullying

Israel resorted to threatening and bullying individuals, [adopting policies](#) to expel suspected boycott activists and to bar others from entering.

This followed [last year's](#) naming by Israel's leading financial daily of [Omar Barghouti](#), a co-founder of the BDS movement, among 100 people most likely to influence Israel's economy in 2016.

Israel [imposed an effective travel ban on Barghouti](#), following threats against him and other Palestinian human rights defenders by top Israeli government ministers in March.

Amnesty International [condemned](#) the threats, which included a call by intelligence minister Yisrael Katz for "targeted civil eliminations" of BDS leaders with the help of Israeli intelligence.

"Israel has attempted to stigmatize, demonize and in some cases delegitimize BDS from above, after failing to crush the movement at the global grassroots and civil society levels," [notes](#) the BNC.

But throughout 2016, BDS has only grown stronger, the group adds.

"The logic of appeasing Israel's regime of oppression has started giving way to the logic of sustained international pressure, which proved instrumental in ending apartheid in South Africa," it says.

With that spirit in mind, here are the top 10 BDS successes of 2016, as covered by The Electronic Intifada.

10. Activists rose up against Hewlett Packard. Campaigners in [dozens of cities across six continents](#) participated in an international week of action against Hewlett-Packard, bringing attention to the company's role in enabling Israel's rights violations.

9. Irish company divested from Israel's cement industry. One of Ireland's largest companies, CRH, [announced in January](#) that it was chucking Israeli assets after sustained grassroots boycott pressure. CRH held 25 percent of the shares in Mashav, owner of Israel's top cement manufacturer Neshar.

Neshar cement has been [used](#) in constructing Israel's wall and settlements in the West Bank and in the light rail network serving Israeli settlements in occupied East Jerusalem.

8. Spanish municipalities declared themselves "apartheid-free zones." More than 50 cities across Spain [now declare themselves](#) free of

Israeli products in a campaign that began in July 2014, at the height of Israel's attack against Gaza.

With more than 120,000 residents, Cádiz, in Andalusia, is one of the largest cities to support the campaign.

7. Norwegians ditched Israeli products. [Two major](#) cities in Norway voted to boycott Israeli goods and services produced in settlements inside occupied Palestinian territory.

6. Churches continued to mobilize for Palestinian rights.

Denominations voted in 2016 to boycott [Israeli financial institutions](#), and to [dump](#) or [bar](#) investments in corporations that profit from Israel's occupation.

A church in California [vowed not to purchase supplies](#) from Hewlett-Packard, a company that provides equipment to Israel's military and settlements.

Presbyterians [reaffirmed their previous commitments](#) to divestment, while 24 denominations together [called for "economic leverage"](#) against businesses or governments that violate human rights.

Lutherans voted [to call for an end to US aid to Israel](#).

5. Governments and political parties stood up to anti-BDS bullies.

[Sweden](#), followed by the [Netherlands](#) and [Ireland](#), publicly upheld the right of citizens to work for BDS.

Meanwhile, the [European Union](#) and the [US State Department](#) admitted that boycott advocacy is a protected free speech right.

The [Canadian Green Party](#) and the [Dutch government](#) rejected pressure by right-wing Israel lobby groups.

4. Activists helped defeat anti-BDS legislation. Grassroots campaigners fought back against a growing wave of legislation promoted by US state and federal lawmakers – and [encouraged](#) by Israel lobby groups and the Israeli government – to suppress BDS activism.

In Massachusetts, an anti-boycott amendment [was withdrawn](#) in the state senate in July following a campaign by Palestine solidarity groups.

The amendment, which was tacked onto an unrelated economic bill, would have blacklisted individuals and businesses that engage with the Palestinian-

led boycott of Israel. Organizers said that in order to successfully counter the imminent anti-boycott legislation there, they knew they had to engage directly with lawmakers over a sustained period.

In the UK, a test case for banning BDS campaigning [failed in the high court](#).

And in France, [a court overturned a government ban](#) on a meeting to support individuals facing trial for their Palestine solidarity activism. The BDS campaign in France [continued to flourish](#) despite the government's crackdown.

In May, lawmakers in Ontario, Canada's most populous province, made history: theirs was the world's first full legislature to [vote down](#) an anti-BDS law.

3. G4S was forced to buckle under BDS pressure. Under years-long pressure by grassroots campaigns, the world's largest private security firm, G4S, [ditched most of its Israeli businesses](#).

Four UN agencies [in Jordan](#) and [one in Lebanon](#) ended their contracts with the corporation.

The city of Berkeley, California, also [voted to divest](#) from private prison corporations, including G4S, for its role in human rights abuses against undocumented persons in the US and Palestinians under occupation.

2. Telecom giant Orange quit Israel. The French telecommunications company [Orange announced it was quitting Israel](#) in January, following sustained international boycott pressure.

The campaign calling on Orange to cut ties with Israel's Partner Communications began in 2010 and involved unions and groups in France, Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt, countries where Orange or its affiliates have tens of millions of mobile phone subscribers.

The campaign received a major boost in May 2015 when BDS Egypt called for a boycott of Orange subsidiary Mobinil, which has 33 million customers. This came after The Electronic Intifada revealed the extent of [Orange's complicity in Israel's 2014 assault on Gaza](#).

"Orange had no choice but to realize that investing in occupation, profiteering from Israel's colonization of Palestinian land and involvement in violations against Palestinian rights is a commercially bad investment," said

Abdulrahman Abou Salem of BDS Egypt, a coalition of trade unions, political parties and campaign groups.

Partner Communications, which operated under the Orange Israel brand, built and operated extensive mobile telephone infrastructure in Israel's settlements built on Palestinian land in the occupied West Bank in violation of international law.

1. Students stood strong. Students in the US, [Canada](#) and the [UK passed strong divestment measures](#) in their [student governments](#) and [trade unions](#), amidst intensifying smear campaigns by outside Israel advocacy groups and [shady websites](#).

Students "are eventually going to be members of the public in various capacities after they graduate. And the rapidly shifting politics around Israel-Palestine on campuses is something that we should really take heart in," Rahim Kurwa, a graduate student at UCLA, [told](#) The Electronic Intifada in August.

Since the beginning of 2016 alone, [more than a dozen campuses](#) around the US passed some form of divestment resolution or boycott measure, Kurwa, a member of Students for Justice in Palestine, said.

"People now realize that it doesn't make any sense to claim that you're a progressive or that you care about basic principles of equality and human rights if you can't apply those principles to the question of Palestine ... and a freedom struggle that has gone on for decades now."

([Back to Top](#))

America's Empire of African Bases

By Nick Turse

Posted on November 17, 2015, Printed on June 4, 2016

<http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/176070/>

Editors note: Although peace activists have been engaged in anti-war, anti-imperialist, and solidarity work around a variety of issues and in response to many challenges resulting from United States expansion, little attention in the peace movement or the public has been given to the African continent. This relative lack of attention to Africa has occurred over a decade when the United States established a particular African military command structure (AFRICOM) and has sent military aid, attaches, and private contractors and has established mini-bases in 38 countries on the continent. Part of this has to do with the growing Chinese economic presence in Africa. The following articles by Nick Turse describe some of this activity.

As I've written [elsewhere](#), what Chalmers Johnson called America's "empire of bases" was "not so much our little secret as a secret we kept even from ourselves" -- at least until Johnson broke the silence and his book [Blowback](#) became a bestseller in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. In those years, however, if (like Johnson) you actually wanted to know about the way the U.S. garrisoned the world, you could profitably start simply by reading the Pentagon's tabulations of its global garrisons, ranging from military bases the size of [small American towns](#) to what were then starting to be called "lily pads," which were small sites in potential global hot spots stocked with pre-positioned materiel and ready for instant occupation. It was all there on the record for those who cared to know. Well, perhaps not quite *all* there, but enough of it certainly to get a sense of what the "American Raj" (as Johnson called it) looked like from Europe to Asia, Latin America to the Persian Gulf.

And it was impressive, that empire of bases, once you took it in. It represented a garrisoning of the globe unprecedented in the history of empires. That we Americans didn't generally know much about it was, in a sense, a matter of choice, a matter, you might say, of self-blinding behavior. To hazard a guess: as a people, we were uncomfortable enough with the idea of ourselves as a global imperial power that we preferred not to know what "we" were doing, or at least not to acknowledge what we had become, even though every year hundreds of thousands of Americans, military personnel and civilians alike, lived on, worked on, or cycled through those bases. In this context, it was startling how seldom they were part of our everyday news cycle. For those in other countries, they often [loomed large](#) indeed as the local face of the United States, but you'd never know that if your source of news was the mainstream media here.

That, of course, hasn't changed. What has changed is Washington's attitude toward the public record. Its latest basing moves are taking place enveloped in a blanket of secrecy, which means that even if you want to know, it's increasingly tough to find out. Washington's latest garrisoning strategy is based on a new premise: a "[small footprint](#)," meaning a tiny-bases, rapid-deployment, special-ops and drone-heavy way of war that's being put into place across Africa in the twenty-first century....While the U.S. has always pursued parts of its imperial strategy in "the shadows," to use a phrase from my Cold War childhood, in this new strategy everyday basing, too, is disappearing into those shadows....

Does Eleven Plus One Equal Sixty? AFRICOM's New Math, the U.S. Base Bonanza, and "Scarier" Times Ahead in Africa

In the shadows of what was once called the "dark continent," a scramble has come and gone. If you heard nothing about it, that was by design. But look hard enough and -- north to south, east to west -- you'll find the fruits of that effort: a network of bases, compounds, and other sites whose sum total exceeds the number of nations on the continent. For a military that has stumbled from Iraq to Afghanistan and suffered setbacks from Libya to Syria, it's a rare can-do triumph. In remote locales, behind fences and beyond the gaze of prying eyes, the U.S. military has built an extensive archipelago of African outposts, transforming the continent, experts say, into a laboratory for a new kind of war.

So how many U.S. military bases are there in Africa? It's a simple question with a simple answer. For years, U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) gave a [stock response](#): one. Camp Lemonnier in the tiny, sun-bleached nation of Djibouti was America's only acknowledged "base" on the continent. It wasn't true, of course, because there were camps, compounds, installations, and facilities elsewhere, but the military leaned hard on semantics.

Take a look at the Pentagon's official list of bases, however, and the number grows. The 2015 report on the Department of Defense's global property portfolio lists Camp Lemonnier and three other deep-rooted sites on or near the continent: [U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit No. 3](#), a medical research facility in Cairo, Egypt, that was established in 1946; Ascension Auxiliary Airfield, a spacecraft tracking station and airfield located 1,000 miles off the coast of West Africa that has been used by the U.S. since 1957; and warehouses at the airport and seaport in Mombasa, Kenya, that were built in the 1980s.

That's only the beginning, not the end of the matter. For years, various [reporters](#) have shed light on hush-hush [outposts](#) -- most of them built, upgraded, or expanded since 9/11 -- dotting the continent, including so-called [cooperative security locations](#) (CSLs). Earlier this year, AFRICOM commander General David Rodriguez [disclosed](#) that there were actually 11

such sites. Again, devoted AFRICOM-watchers knew that this, too, was just the start of a larger story, but when I asked Africa Command for a list of bases, camps and other sites, as I periodically have done, I was treated like a sap.

"In all, AFRICOM has access to 11 CSLs across Africa. Of course, we have one major military facility on the continent: Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti," Anthony Falvo, AFRICOM's Public Affairs chief, told me. Falvo was peddling numbers that both he and I know perfectly well are, at best, misleading. "It's one of the most troubling aspects of our military policy in Africa, and overseas generally, that the military can't be, and seems totally resistant to being, honest and transparent about what it's doing," says David Vine, author of [Base Nation: How U.S. Military Bases Abroad Harm America and the World](#).

Research by *TomDispatch* indicates that in recent years the U.S. military has, in fact, developed a remarkably extensive network of more than 60 outposts and access points in Africa. Some are currently being utilized, some are held in reserve, and some may be shuttered. These bases, camps, compounds, port facilities, fuel bunkers, and other sites can be found in at least 34 countries -- more than 60% of the nations on the continent -- many of them [corrupt](#), [repressive states](#) with [poor human rights](#) records. The U.S. also operates "Offices of Security Cooperation and Defense Attaché Offices in approximately 38 [African] nations," according to Falvo, and has struck close to 30 agreements to use international airports in Africa as refueling centers.

There is no reason to believe that even this represents a complete accounting of America's growing archipelago of African outposts. Although it's possible that a few sites are being counted twice due to AFRICOM's failure to provide basic information or clarification, the list *TomDispatch* has developed indicates that the U.S. military has created a network of bases that goes far beyond what AFRICOM has disclosed to the American public, let alone to Africans.

AFRICOM's Base Bonanza

When AFRICOM became an independent command in 2008, Camp Lemonnier was reportedly still one of the few American outposts on the continent. In the years since, the U.S. has embarked on nothing short of a building boom -- even if the command is loath to refer to it in those terms. As a result, it's now able to carry out increasing numbers of overt and covert missions, from training exercises to drone assassinations.

"AFRICOM, as a new command, is basically a laboratory for a different kind of warfare and a different way of posturing forces," says Richard Reeve, the director of the [Sustainable Security Programme](#) at the [Oxford Research Group](#), a London-based think tank. "Apart from Djibouti, there's no significant stockpiling of troops, equipment, or even aircraft. There are a

myriad of 'lily pads' or small forward operating bases... so you can spread out even a small number of forces over a very large area and concentrate those forces quite quickly when necessary."

Indeed, U.S. staging areas, cooperative security locations, forward operating locations (FOLs), and other outposts -- many of them involved in intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance activities and Special Operations missions -- have been built (or built up) in [Burkina Faso](#), [Cameroon](#), the [Central African Republic](#), [Chad](#), [Djibouti](#), [Ethiopia](#), [Gabon](#), [Ghana](#), [Kenya](#), [Mali](#), [Niger](#), [Senegal](#), [the Seychelles](#), [Somalia](#), [South Sudan](#), and [Uganda](#). A 2011 report by Lauren Ploch, an analyst in African affairs with the Congressional Research Service, also mentioned U.S. military access to locations in Algeria, Botswana, Namibia, São Tomé and Príncipe, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, and Zambia. AFRICOM failed to respond to scores of requests by this reporter for further information about its outposts and related matters, but an analysis of open source information, documents obtained through the Freedom of Information Act, and other records show a persistent, enduring, and growing U.S. presence on the continent.

"A cooperative security location is just a small location where we can come in... It would be what you would call a very austere location with a couple of warehouses that has things like: tents, water, and things like that," explained AFRICOM's Rodriguez. As he implies, the military doesn't consider CSLs to be "bases," but whatever they might be called, they are more than merely a few tents and cases of bottled water.

Designed to accommodate about 200 personnel, with runways suitable for C-130 transport aircraft, the sites are primed for conversion from temporary, bare-bones facilities into something more enduring. At least three of them in Senegal, Ghana, and Gabon are apparently designed to facilitate faster deployment for a rapid reaction unit with a mouthful of a moniker: Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force Crisis Response-Africa ([SPMAGTF-CR-AF](#)). Its forces are [based](#) in [Morón](#), Spain, and Sigonella, Italy, but are focused on Africa. They rely heavily on MV-22 Ospreys, [tilt-rotor](#) aircraft that can take-off, land, and hover like helicopters, but fly with the speed and fuel efficiency of a turboprop plane.

This combination of manpower, access, and technology has come to be known in the military by the moniker "[New Normal](#)." [Birthed](#) in the wake of the September 2012 attack in Benghazi, Libya, that killed U.S. Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens and three other Americans, the New Normal effectively allows the U.S. military quick access 400 miles inland from any CSL or, as Richard Reeve notes, gives it "a reach that extends to just about every country in West and Central Africa."

The concept was [field-tested](#) as South Sudan plunged into civil war and 160 Marines and sailors from Morón were forward deployed to Djibouti in late 2013. Within hours, a contingent from that force was sent to Uganda and, in

early 2014, in conjunction with another rapid reaction unit, dispatched to South Sudan to evacuate 20 people from the American embassy in Juba. Earlier this year, SPMAGTF-CR-AF ran trials at its African staging areas including the CSL in Libreville, Gabon, deploying nearly 200 Marines and sailors along with four Ospreys, two C-130s, and more than 150,000 pounds of materiel.

A similar test run was carried out at the Senegal CSL located at Dakar-Ouakam Air Base, which can also host 200 Marines and the support personnel necessary to sustain and transport them. "What the CSL offers is the ability to forward-stage our forces to respond to any type of crisis," Lorenzo Armijo, an operations officer with SPMAGTF-CR-AF, told a military reporter. "That crisis can range in the scope of military operations from embassy reinforcement to providing humanitarian assistance."

Another CSL, mentioned in a July 2012 briefing by U.S. Army Africa, is located in [Entebbe](#), Uganda. From there, according to a *Washington Post* investigation, U.S. contractors have flown surveillance missions using innocuous-looking turboprop airplanes. "The AFRICOM strategy is to have a very light touch, a light footprint, but nevertheless facilitate special forces operations or ISR [intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance] detachments over a very wide area," Reeve says. "To do that they don't need very much basing infrastructure, they need an agreement to use a location, basic facilities on the ground, a stockpile of fuel, but they also can rely on private contractors to maintain a number of facilities so there aren't U.S. troops on the ground."

The Outpost Archipelago

AFRICOM ignored my requests for further information on CSLs and for the designations of other outposts on the continent, but [according](#) to a 2014 article in *Army Sustainment* on "Overcoming Logistics Challenges in East Africa," there are also "at least nine forward operating locations, or FOLs." A 2007 Defense Department news release referred to an FOL in Charichcho, Ethiopia. The U.S. military also utilizes "Forward Operating Location Kasenyi" in Kampala, Uganda. A 2010 report by the Government Accountability Office [mentioned forward operating locations](#) in Isiolo and Manda Bay, both in Kenya.

Camp Simba in Manda Bay has, in fact, seen significant expansion in recent years. In 2013, Navy Seabees, for example, [worked](#) 24-hour shifts to extend its runway to enable larger [aircraft](#) like C-130s to land there, while other projects were initiated to accommodate greater numbers of troops in the future, including increased fuel and potable water storage, and more latrines. The base serves as a home away from home for Navy personnel and Army Green Berets among other U.S. troops and, as recently [revealed](#) at the *Intercept*, plays an integral role in the secret [drone assassination](#) program aimed at militants in neighboring Somalia as well as in Yemen.

Drones have played an increasingly large role in this post-9/11 build-up in Africa. MQ-1 Predators have, for instance, been based in Chad's capital, [N'Djamena](#), while their newer, larger, more far-ranging cousins, [MQ-9 Reapers](#), have been [flown](#) out of Seychelles International Airport. As of June 2012, [according](#) to the *Intercept*, two contractor-operated drones, one Predator and one Reaper, were based in [Arba Minch](#), Ethiopia, while a detachment with one [Scan Eagle](#) (a low-cost drone used by the Navy) and a remotely piloted helicopter known as an [MQ-8 Fire Scout](#) operated off the coast of East Africa. The U.S. also recently began setting up a [base](#) in Cameroon for unarmed Predators to be used in the battle against Boko Haram militants.

In February 2013, the U.S. also began [flying](#) Predator drones out of Niger's capital, [Niamey](#). A year later, Captain Rick Cook, then chief of U.S. Africa Command's Engineer Division, [mentioned](#) the potential for a new "base-like facility" that would be "semi-permanent" and "capable of air operations" in that country. That September, the *Washington Post's* Craig Whitlock [exposed](#) plans to base drones at a second location there, Agadez. Within days, the U.S. Embassy in Niamey [announced](#) that AFRICOM was, indeed, "assessing the possibility of establishing a temporary, expeditionary contingency support location in Agadez, Niger."

Earlier this year, Captain Rodney Worden of AFRICOM's Logistics and Support Division mentioned "a partnering and capacity-building project... for the Niger Air Force and Armed Forces in concert with USAFRICOM and [U.S.] Air Forces Africa to construct a runway and associated work/life support area for airfield operations." And when the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016 was [introduced](#) in April, embedded in it was a \$50 million [request](#) for the construction of an "airfield and base camp at Agadez, Niger... to support operations in western Africa." When Congress recently passed the annual defense policy bill, that sum was authorized.

According to Brigadier General Donald Bolduc, the head of U.S. Special Operations Command Africa, there is also a team of Special Operations forces currently "living right next to" local troops in Diffa, Niger. A 2013 military briefing slide, obtained by *TomDispatch* via the Freedom of Information Act, indicates a "U.S. presence" as well in Ouallam, Niger, and at both Bamako and Kidal in neighboring Mali. Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso, a country that borders both of those nations, plays host to a Special Operations Forces Liaison Element Team, a Joint Special Operations Air Detachment, and the Trans-Sahara Short Take-Off and Landing Airlift Support initiative which, according to official documents, facilitates "high-risk activities" carried out by elite forces from Joint Special Operations Task Force-Trans Sahara.

On the other side of the continent in Somalia, elite U.S. forces are [operating](#) from small compounds in Kismayo and Baledogle, according to reporting by *Foreign Policy*. Neighboring Ethiopia has similarly been a prime locale for

American outposts, [including Camp Gilbert](#) in [Dire Dawa](#), contingency operating locations at both Hurso and Bilate, and facilities used by a 40-man team [based](#) in Bara. So-called Combined Operations Fusion Centers were set up in the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan as part of an effort to destroy Joseph Kony and his murderous Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). *Washington Post* investigations have revealed that U.S. forces have also been based in [Djema](#), [Sam Ouandja](#), and [Obo](#), in the Central African Republic as part of that effort. There has recently been new construction by Navy Seabees at Obo to increase the camp's capacity as well as to install the infrastructure for a satellite dish.

There are other locations that, while not necessarily outposts, nonetheless form critical nodes in the U.S. base network on the continent. These include 10 marine gas and oil bunkers located at ports in eight African nations. Additionally, AFRICOM acknowledges an agreement to use Léopold Sédar Senghor International Airport in Senegal for refueling as well as for the "transportation of teams participating in security cooperation activities." A similar deal is in place for the use of Kitgum Airport in Kitgum, Uganda, and Addis Ababa Bole International Airport in Ethiopia. All told, according to the Defense Logistics Agency, the U.S. military has struck 29 agreements to use airports as refueling centers in 27 African countries.

Not all U.S. bases in Africa have seen continuous use in these years. After the American-backed military [overthrew](#) the government of Mauritania in 2008, for example, the U.S. [suspended](#) an airborne surveillance program based in its capital, Nouakchott. Following a coup in Mali by a U.S.-trained officer, the United States suspended military relations with the government and a spartan U.S. compound near the town of Gao was apparently [overrun](#) by rebel forces.

Most of the new outposts on that continent, however, seem to be putting down roots. As [TomDispatch regular](#) and [basing expert](#) David Vine suggests, "The danger of the strategy in which you see U.S. bases popping up increasingly around the continent is that once bases get established they become very difficult to close. Once they generate momentum, within Congress and in terms of funding, they have a tendency to expand."

To supply its troops in East Africa, AFRICOM has also built a sophisticated logistics system. It's officially known as the Surface Distribution Network, but colloquially [referred](#) to as the "new spice route." It connects Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Djibouti. These hubs are, in turn, part of a transportation and logistics network that includes bases located in Rota, Spain; Aruba in the Lesser Antilles; Souda Bay, Greece; and a [forward operating site](#) on Britain's Ascension Island in the South Atlantic.

Germany's Ramstein Air Base, headquarters of U.S. Air Forces Europe and one of the largest American military bases outside the United States, is another key site. As the *Intercept* [reported](#) earlier this year, it serves as "the

high-tech heart of America's drone program" for the Greater Middle East and Africa. Germany is also host to AFRICOM's headquarters, located at Kelley Barracks in Stuttgart-Moehringen, itself a site reportedly [integral](#) to drone operations in Africa.

In addition to hosting a contingent of the Marines and sailors of Special-Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force Crisis Response-Africa, Sigonella Naval Air Station in Sicily, Italy, is another [important logistics](#) facility for African operations. The [second-busiest](#) military air station in Europe, Sigonella is a key hub for drones covering Africa, serving as a [base](#) for [MQ-1 Predators](#) and [RQ-4B Global Hawk surveillance drones](#).

The Crown Jewels

Back on the continent, the undisputed crown jewel in the U.S. archipelago of bases is indeed still Camp Lemonnier. To [quote](#) Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter, it is "a hub with lots of spokes out there on the continent and in the region." Sharing a runway with Djibouti's [Ambouli International Airport](#), the sprawling compound is the headquarters of Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa and is [home](#) to the East Africa Response Force, another regional quick-reaction unit. The camp, which also serves as the forward headquarters for [Task Force 48-4](#), a hush-hush counterterrorism unit targeting militants in East Africa and Yemen, has seen personnel stationed there jump by more than 400% since [2002](#).

In the same period, Camp Lemonnier has [expanded](#) from 88 acres to nearly 600 acres and is in the midst of a years-long [building boom](#) for which more than \$600 million has already been awarded or allocated. In late 2013, for example, B.L. Harbert International, an Alabama-based construction company, was [awarded](#) a \$150 million contract by the Navy for "the P-688 Forward Operating Base at Camp Lemonnier." According to a corporate press release, "the site is approximately 20 acres in size, and will contain 11 primary structures and ancillary facilities required to support current and emerging operational missions throughout the region."

In 2014, the Navy [completed](#) construction of a \$750,000 secure facility for Special Operations Command Forward-East Africa (SOCFWD-EA). It is one of three similar teams on the continent -- the others being [SOCFWD-Central Africa](#) and SOCFWD-North and West Africa -- which, [according](#) to the military, "shape and coordinate special operations forces security cooperation and engagement in support of theater special operations command, geographic combatant command, and country team goals and objectives."

In 2012, according to secret documents recently [revealed](#) by the *Intercept*, 10 Predator drones and four Reaper drones were [based](#) at Camp Lemonnier, along with six [U-28As](#) (a single-engine aircraft that conducts surveillance for special operations forces) and two [P-3 Orions](#) (a four-engine turboprop surveillance aircraft). There were also eight F-15E Strike Eagles, heavily

armed, manned fighter jets. By August 2012, an average of 16 drones and four fighters were [taking off](#) or landing at the base each day.

The next year, in the wake of a number of drone crashes and turmoil involving Djiboutian air traffic controllers, drone operations were moved to a more remote site located about six miles away. Djibouti's [Chabelley Airfield](#), which has seen significant construction of late and has a much lower profile than Camp Lemonnier, now serves as a key base for America's regional drone campaign. Dan Gettinger, the co-founder and co-director of the Center for the Study of the Drone at Bard College, recently [told](#) the *Intercept* that the operations run from the site were "JSOC [Joint Special Operations Command] and CIA-led missions for the most part," explaining that they were likely focused on counterterrorism strikes in Somalia and Yemen, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance activities, as well as support for the Saudi-led air campaign in Yemen.

A Scarier Future

Over many months, AFRICOM repeatedly ignored even basic questions from this reporter about America's sweeping archipelago of bases. In practical terms, that means there is no way to know with complete certainty how many of the more than 60 bases, bunkers, outposts, and areas of access are currently being used by U.S. forces or how many additional sites may exist. What does seem clear is that the number of bases and other sites, however defined, is increasing, mirroring [the rise](#) in the [number](#) of U.S. troops, [special operations deployments](#), and [missions](#) in Africa.

"There's going to be a network of small bases with maybe a couple of medium-altitude, long-endurance drones at each one, so that anywhere on the continent is always within range," says the Oxford Research Group's Richard Reeve when I ask him for a forecast of the future. In many ways, he notes, this has already begun everywhere but in southern Africa, not currently seen by the U.S. military as a high-risk area.

The Obama administration, Reeve explains, has made use of humanitarian rhetoric as a cover for expansion on the continent. He points in particular to the deployment of forces against the Lord's Resistance Army in Central Africa, the build-up of forces near Lake Chad in the effort against Boko Haram, and the post-Benghazi [New Normal](#) concept as examples. "But, in practice, what is all of this going to be used for?" he wonders. After all, the enhanced infrastructure and increased capabilities that today may be viewed by the White House as an insurance policy against another Benghazi can easily be repurposed in the future for different types of military interventions.

"Where does this go post-Obama?" Reeve asks rhetorically, noting that the rise of AFRICOM and the proliferation of small outposts have been "in line with the Obama doctrine." He draws attention to the president's embrace of a lighter-footprint brand of warfare, specifically a reliance on Special

Operations forces and drones. This may, Reeve adds, just be a prelude to something larger and potentially more dangerous.

“Where would Hillary take this?” he asks, referencing the [hawkish](#) Democratic primary [frontrunner](#), Hillary Clinton. “Or any of the Republican potentials?” He points to the George W. Bush administration as an example and raises the question of what it might have done back in the early 2000s if AFRICOM’s infrastructure had already been in place. Such a thought experiment, he suggests, could offer clues to what the future might hold now that the continent is dotted with American outposts, drone bases, and compounds for elite teams of Special Operations forces. “I think,” Reeve says, “that we could be looking at something a bit scarier in Africa.”

Nick Turse is the managing editor of TomDispatch and a fellow at the [Nation Institute](#). A 2014 Izzy Award and [American Book Award](#) winner for his book Kill Anything That Moves, his pieces have appeared in the [New York Times](#), the [Intercept](#), the Los Angeles Times, the Nation, and regularly at [TomDispatch](#). His latest book is [Tomorrow's Battlefield: U.S. Proxy Wars and Secret Ops in Africa](#).

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[\(Back to Top\)](#)

The United States Supports Counter-Revolution in Latin America: Seeks to Roll Back the Bolivarian Revolution.

Harry Targ

Editors Note: The most significant challenge to United States empire over the last decade has occurred in Latin America. Hugo Chavez, former President of Venezuela launched the Bolivarian Revolution, named after the great nineteenth century Colombian hero, Simon Bolivar, who called for a United States of Latin America to counter the influence of British and US imperialism. Driven by the passion for economic populism reformist regimes came into office in Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, and for a time Paraguay, Honduras, and Uruguay. Supporters of much of the new politics in the region also have been Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Nicaragua. Of course, the Cuban Revolution has been much of the inspiration for this historic shift in the region. In response, the United States has supported conservative politicians in several of the Bolivarian states, participated in some old-fashioned coup plots, and has encouraged impeachment campaigns in Brazil and Venezuela. The stakes in the region are high and the maintenance of the Bolivarian Revolution is at risk. Candidate Donald Trump threatened to reverse the Obama policy of opening relations with Cuba "to get a better deal." What that means in 2017 remains unclear.

*But we cannot, and should not, ignore the very real differences that we have -- about how we organize our governments, our economies, and our societies. Cuba has a one-party system; the United States is a multi-party democracy. Cuba has a socialist economic model; the United States is an open market. Cuba has emphasized the role and rights of the state; the United States is founded upon the rights of the individual....It's time to lift the embargo. But even if we lifted the embargo tomorrow, Cubans would not realize their potential without continued change here in Cuba....It should be easier to open a business here in Cuba. A worker should be able to get a job directly with companies who invest here in Cuba. Two currencies shouldn't separate the type of salaries (from President Barack Obama, "Remarks by President Obama to the People of Cuba," *The White House, Office of the Press Secretary*, March 22, 2016.).*

*Mr. Obama's decision to come to Argentina now — straight after his visit to Cuba, where the Communist government is slowly opening to market forces — signals Washington's backing for a shift to the center, foreign policy analysts say. He may also be seeking to firm up the United States' position in the region, where China has been establishing a foothold (Jonathan Gilbert, "Obama Visit Affirms Argentina's Shift Toward Center." *New York Times*, March 23, 2016).*

The Bolivarian Revolution, the formation of intergovernmental organizations in the Global South, buoyant economic growth among some of the poorer countries, and the spread of anti-austerity grassroots social movements everywhere have sent shock waves across the international system. The world is experiencing a global transformation potentially as great as when the nation-state system was constructed out of feudalism in the seventeenth century or the multipolar world was transformed into a bipolar one after World War II. Similar dramatic changes resulted from the collapse of the bipolar Cold War world to a unipolar one after the collapse of the Socialist Bloc. This time countries of the Global South and mass movements of workers, youth, indigenous people, and people of color are taking center stage.

However, these twenty-first century tectonic shifts occurring in world affairs have not been occurring automatically. Keepers of the old order, the rich and powerful states of the Global North, continue to promote their hegemonic project particularly when resistance shows its internal weaknesses. The effort to maintain control amid faltering resistance is displayed in recent United States foreign policy toward Latin America.

The Bolivarian Revolution Spreads Across Latin America

The Bolivarian Revolution was the name given by former Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez to the populist revolution he initiated in his country. Elected in 1998, he embarked on policies to empower the poor, spread literacy, expand access to health care, build worker cooperatives, and modestly redistribute wealth and power from the rich to the poor. His vision was to constitute an economic and political program designed to reverse the neoliberal policy agenda embraced by his predecessors. The oil-rich country, collaborating with revolutionary Cuba, initiated a campaign to make real the nineteenth century dream of Simon Bolivar to create a united and sovereign South America, free from imperial rule. Inspired by grassroots movements, populist governments came to power in Bolivia, Ecuador, Uruguay, Paraguay, Honduras, and Nicaragua. More cautious but left-of-center governments emerged in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile.

Venezuela and Cuba established the eleven nation Bolivarian Alternatives for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) in 2004; Venezuela, Cuba and several other Caribbean countries created, in 2005, Petrocaribe, a trade organization, primarily dealing with oil. In the Hemisphere, twelve South American countries constructed the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) in 2008 and the 33 nation Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) was established in 2011. All of these organizations were inspired by the vision of expanding regional economic and political sovereignty as opposed to the traditional United States hegemony in the region. Primarily they challenged the neoliberal model of economic development.

Setbacks

The successes of the spreading popular movements of the first decade of the twenty-first century were paralleled by buoyant economic growth throughout Latin America. Moises Naim, ("The Coming Turmoil in Latin America," *The Atlantic*, October 9, 2015) pointed out that all of Latin America experienced economic growth from 2004 to 2013 due to expanding commodity trade with Asia and increased foreign investments in the region. The major economic player in the region was China. However, comparing 2003-2010 growth rates with 2010-2015, the author reported that rates of growth during the second period were only forty percent of what they were in the first.

With slower growth, declining currency values, higher unemployment and declining social benefits, the narrowing of economic inequality in the region and rising benefits for the poor have been reversed. As *The Economist* put it in June 27, 2015, "Latin America's economy is screeching to a halt; it managed growth of just 1.3% last year. This year's figure will be only 0.9%, reckons the IMF, which would mark the fifth successive year of deceleration...Many reckon it now faces a 'new normal' of growth of just-2-3% a year. That would jeopardize recent social gains; already the fall in poverty has halted."

In 2007, Naomi Klein published a fascinating book called **The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism**. In it she develops the idea of the shock doctrine, paying homage to the source of the concept, Milton Friedman, the renowned free market economist. From one of his essays she quotes the following: "...only a crisis--actual or perceived--produces real change. When the crisis occurs, the actions that are taken depend on the ideas that are lying around. That I believe, is our basic function: to develop alternatives to existing policies, to keep them alive and available until the politically impossible becomes politically inevitable." The shock doctrine is illustrated by the fact that the declining growth rates in Latin America have

been coupled with reactionary political forces in Latin America (and their US friends) becoming re-energized to stifle and dismantle the gains of the Bolivarian revolution and to reverse the gains made by the popular classes.

On June 28, 2009 there was a military coup in Honduras, ousting democratically-elected Manuel Zelaya from office. Zelaya, who sympathized with the Bolivarian Revolution, was formally replaced in a November, 2009 election that was designed to give legitimacy to the coup. The Honduran coup, in retrospect, signaled a return to destabilization by the wealthy classes of the popular currents represented by the Bolivarian Revolution everywhere.

While Brazil's Workers Party candidate Dilma Rousseff won reelection as president in October 2014, her victory margin was the narrowest (51.6 percent to 48.4 percent) of the four races in which the center/left Workers Party was victorious. The split between the left/center and right wing forces set the stage for the 2016 campaign by the wealthy to impeach Rousseff for corruption.

Further, in what was called by the New York Times a "transformative election," the Argentinian people elected as president right-wing advocate of the disastrous neoliberal economic agenda, Mauricio Macri, the mayor of Buenos Aires. Despite the success of prior governments in resisting destructive IMF demands for debt restructuring, Macri promises to return to the policies of the 1990s that led to economic crisis. As the Macri-sympathetic Times editorial put it: "Reforming the stagnant economy will be painful in the short run, but could make Argentina more attractive to foreign investors" (November 26, 2015).

Nicolas Maduro won a narrow presidential victory over a rightwing candidate in Venezuela's April 14, 2013 election to replace his deceased popular predecessor, Hugo Chavez. Over the next two years, opposition forces engaged in periodic street protests, many in wealthier parts of Venezuelan cities. Coupled with growing economic problems and domestic violence, leaders of the major opposition political party have sought to mobilize support to overthrow the Maduro government and the reforms put in place by Hugo Chavez. In a March 27, 2014 account of anti-government protests, the BBC reported that; "The government's popularity remains high amid its working-class voters, who gave it a further boost in local elections in December." However, in December, 2015, an anti-government coalition took two-thirds of the parliamentary seats in the most recent election. Almost immediately, opposition politicians began efforts to overturn the popular

reforms of the Chavez era and to launch a campaign to impeach Maduro from the presidency.

The United States Role

Throughout the period since the political arrival of Hugo Chavez on the scene in Latin America, the United States has stood in opposition to the Bolivarian Revolution. The United States gave at least tacit support to the failed military coup in Venezuela in 2002. Neighboring Colombia received funds to continue the "war on drugs" while the United States built seven military installations around that country to "protect" Colombia from an "aggressive" Venezuela. In subsequent years, the U.S. Congress has imposed partial embargoes on the visitation rights of selected Venezuelan government officials. Also, the United States has provided funding, training, and educational opportunities to Venezuelans who have played prominent roles in opposition to the Chavez government. It continues to condemn Venezuela's policies at home, projecting the image that it represents the same kind of threat to the hemisphere that the Cuban revolutionary government represented in the 1960s.

The U.S. government mildly condemned the Honduran coup (compared with statements from the Organization of American States and other nations in the hemisphere). Subsequently it endorsed the November, 2009 election in that country, as presidential candidate Hillary Clinton suggested, to give legitimacy to the coup. Since then, the United States has ignored the grotesque human rights violations and assassinations of opponents of the Honduran government.

And very recently a politician in the impeachment bloc in Brazil visited Washington, meeting foreign policy officials who deal with Latin America and members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Given the twenty-first century challenges the Bolivarian Revolution represent to the Washington Consensus and the neoliberal agenda in the Western Hemisphere, the recent visits by President Obama to Cuba and Argentina represent metaphorically imperialism's response. The President on the one hand is dramatically reordering the US/Cuba relationship, but is doing so in a way to pressure the Cubans to adopt a US/style political system and a market-based open capitalist economic system.

And his visit to Argentina, just after the Cuba visit, was designed to signal to Argentina and the entire Hemisphere that the United States is committed to a return to neoliberal economic policies. These policies, as always, benefit the rich at the expense of the popular classes. Concretely they include;

- reversing the Cuban revolutionary model
- reinforcing Argentina's return to dependency on the international financial system
- encouraging impeachments of Dilma Rousseff in Brazil and Nicolas Maduro in Venezuela
- weakening emerging regional organizations such as UNASUR and CELAC
- replacing China's rising presence in the Latin America with a revitalized US economic hegemony in trade, finance, and investment

As Eric Draitser ("Hillary Clinton and Wall Street's Neoliberal War on Latin America," Telesur, April 29, 2016) suggests: "Since the rise of Hugo Chavez Latin America has gone its own way, democratizing and moving away from its former status as a 'American Backyard.' With Hillary Clinton and Wall Street working hand in hand with their right wing proxies in Latin America, Washington looks to reassert its control. And it is the people of the region who will pay the price."

However, it may be the case that the popular classes, tasting some of the benefits of the transition to socialism in the twenty-first century, will resist the attempts in the region to reestablish US hegemony and the neoliberal agenda. The outcome is yet to be determined.

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([Back to Top](#))

Responding to Imperialist Plans for a Twenty-first Century ‘New World Order’ of More Violence, Destruction of the Environment, and Human Suffering

CCDS Resolution, July 2016

Editors note: These readings begin with a general statement about the world of imperialism and resistance, economic and politics, war and peace and then address some of the issues raised in regional contexts: Eastern Europe, Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America. We believe that the world is at a critical juncture particularly with the transfer of power to a Trump administration that has sent competing signals about relations with Russia, China, and NATO countries, and streamlining or expanding military spending. As the CCDS resolution endorsed at its 2016 national convention suggested, the mobilization against US imperialism and militarism should remain central to movements for peace and solidarity. The more recent statement from the Peace and Solidarity Committee opening suggests ways in which the character of the international system in 2017 has changed. However, we believe Jeffrey Sachs is correct to suggest that the globe is at a critical juncture: will there be more violence between and within states or not, will peoples and newly powerful nations have a greater voice in world affairs or not, and will the reduction of imperial violence and militarism increase reducing the prospects for environmental and social justice or not.

For a look at the current justification of US foreign policy, we quote the Washington Post editorial of May 21, 2016:

HARDLY A day goes by without evidence that the liberal international order of the past seven decades is being eroded. China and Russia are attempting to fashion a world in their own illiberal image...This poses an enormous trial for the next U.S. president. We say trial because no matter who takes the Oval Office, it will demand courage and difficult decisions to save the liberal international order. As a new report from the Center for a New American Security points out, this order is worth saving, and it is worth reminding ourselves why: It generated unprecedented global prosperity, lifting billions of people out of poverty; democratic government, once rare, spread to more than 100 nations; and for seven decades there has been no cataclysmic war among the great powers. No wonder U.S. engagement with the world enjoyed a bipartisan consensus.

US imperialist policy elites have been divided between the pragmatists, who recognize some limitations to US power, and the hard right, who want to assert hegemony through military force. Pragmatists had some influence in the Obama administration, with reluctance to attack Syria and desire to deal with Iran and Cuba. However, the 2016 elections clearly show a consensus moving towards the hard right in foreign policy.

The *Washington Post* editorial quoted above clearly articulates the dominant view envisioned by US foreign policy elites for the years ahead. It in effect constitutes a synthesis of the "neocon" and the "liberal interventionist" wings of the ruling class. In our judgment, with all our attention on primaries and elections, and different diversions, a New Cold War has started. Only this time it may have even greater consequences for global violence and devastation of the environment than the first one.

The *Post* vision of a New World Order built upon a reconstituted United States military and economic hegemony has been a central feature of policy-making at least since the end of World War II even though time after time it has suffered setbacks: from defeat in Vietnam, to radical decolonization across the Global South, and to the rise of new poles of power in Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, and Europe. And grassroots mass mobilizations against neo-liberal globalization and austerity policies have risen everywhere, including in the United States. *The Washington Post* calls for the mobilization of the same constellation of political forces, military resources, and concentrated wealth, that, if anything, is greater than at any time since the establishment of the US "permanent war economy" after the last World War.

Recent US diplomacy illustrates the application of the vision. President Obama remains committed to trade agreements that will open the doors in every country to penetration by the 200 corporations and banks that dominate the global economy. He continues to expand military expenditures and to authorize the development of new generations of nuclear weapons (at the same time as he visits the site of the dropping of the first atomic bomb at Hiroshima). He engages aggressively in words, deeds, and provocative military moves against Russia and China.

Also, he recently visited Cuba, proclaiming the willingness of the United States to help that country shift its economic model to "free market" capitalism and "democracy." He then traveled to Argentina to give legitimacy to President Macri, recently elected advocate of that country's return to the neo-liberal agenda. Meanwhile the United States encourages those who promote instability in Brazil, Venezuela, Bolivia, and Honduras and offers continuing support to the long-term violent politics of Colombia.

During the President's visit to Vietnam, he declared an end to the longstanding US arms embargo against that country and warmly supports that country's incorporation into the Trans Pacific Partnership. He hopes to construct a military coalition against China, even while criticizing Vietnam's

record on human rights. After Vietnam, Obama traveled to Hiroshima at a time when new militarist currents have become more popular in Japan and while US troops continue to engage in violent behavior against citizens of Okinawa, where the US has a military base. In addition, US naval vessels patrol the South China Sea.

These trips have been paralleled by the President's historic trip to the Persian Gulf earlier this year, shoring up the ties with Saudi Arabia which have been a centerpiece of Middle East/Persian Gulf policy since President Roosevelt negotiated a permanent partnership with that country in the spring of 1945. President Obama has resumed a slow but steady escalation of "boots on the ground" in Iraq, continued support for rebels fighting ISIS and at the same time the government of Syria. And to carry out the mission of reconstituting US hegemony drone strikes and bombing missions target enemies in multiple countries in the Middle East and North Africa.

The increasing contradictions of finance and industrial capital grow on a worldwide basis and masses of people in many countries are standing up against the imposition of austerity policies. Also it is becoming clear that the natural environment is in peril. Powerful sectors of the economic and foreign policy establishment agree with the *Washington Post* calls for a return to the US global hegemonic policy of the last seventy years. The pursuit of global hegemony has benefited banks, multinational corporations, and the military-industrial complex while millions of people have died in wars.

Therefore, CCDS will work with the peace movement to *oppose*:

1. the renewal of an even more aggressive US imperial policy supported by an ever-expanding, huge military budget,
2. the expansion of new strategies and tactics of high-tech, covert warfare: deep-state decision-making and fomenting color revolutions, assassination by drones and special operations teams, economic sanctions and destabilization, electronic surveillance, cyberwar, full-spectrum dominance coordinated through joint operations command and space technology,
3. policies that escalate tensions with Russia and China including a trillion dollar nuclear weapons modernization program, the TPP and the TTIP,
4. efforts to undermine the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela, Bolivia, Argentina, Brazil and Ecuador and support for repression in Honduras,
5. US military penetration of Africa,
6. continued collaboration with Saudi Arabia and Israel, the main instruments of violence in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East.

CCDS also declares its continued *support* for:

1. the trend towards a multi-polar world and international institutions that support economic development, real democracy and human rights,

2. grassroots movements in the Global South and in Europe, including socialism,
3. solidarity with the struggles of the Palestinian people for equal rights, self-determination and Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions,
4. legislation to end the embargo of Cuba, and the return of Guantanamo to the Cuban people,
5. breaking up the military/industrial complex and building a movement of the progressive majority that connects peace with movements concerning climate change globally, for economic and social justice, and programs for a just transition to a green economy in the US.



The future, as always is in our hands. Hopefully this quarterly electronic publication will facilitate discussions about these issues.

We thank the authors of all the articles for posting their insights on the internet.

[\(Back to Top\)](#)