

Hossein-Zadeh, I. (December 17, 2010). The globalization of militarism.

***Counterpunch*. Available at:**

<http://www.counterpunch.org/zadeh12172010.html>

Of all the enemies of public liberty, war is perhaps the most to be dreaded, because it comprises and develops the germ of every other.
James Madison

The greatest purveyor of violence in the world today—my own government.
Martin Luther King Jr.

Many Americans still believe that US foreign policies are designed to maintain peace, to safeguard human rights and to spread democracy around the world. Regardless of their officially stated objectives, however, those policies often lead to opposite outcomes: war, militarism and dictatorship. Evidence of the fact that US policy makers no longer uphold the ideals they state publicly is overwhelming.

Those who continue to harbor illusions about the thrust of US policies around the world must be oblivious to the fact that the United States has been overtaken by a military-industrial-security-financial cabal whose representatives are firmly ensconced in both the White House and the US Congress. The ultimate goal of the cabal, according to their own military guidelines, is “full spectrum dominance” of the world; and they are willing to wage as many wars, to destroy as many countries and to kill as many people as necessary to achieve that goal.

The liberal hawks and petty intellectual pundits who tend to defend US foreign policies on the grounds of “human rights” or “moral obligations” are well served to pay attention (among other evidence) to the US foreign policy documents that are currently being disclosed by the Wikileaks. The documents “show all too clearly that,” as Paul Craig Roberts puts it, “the US government is a duplicitous entity whose *raison d’être* is to control every other country.” In essence, the documents show that while the US government, like a global mafia godfather, rewards the pliant ruling elites of the client states with arms, financial aid and military protections, it punishes the nations whose leaders refuse to surrender to the wishes of the bully and relinquish their national sovereignty. US foreign policies, like its domestic policies, are revealed as catering not to the broader public or national interests of the people but to the powerful special interests that are vested primarily in the military capital and the finance capital.

US foreign policy architects are clearly incapable of recognizing or acknowledging the fact that different peoples and nations may have different needs and interests. Nor are they capable of respecting other peoples’ aspirations to national sovereignty. Instead, they tend to view other peoples, just as they do the American people, through the narrow prism of their own nefarious interests. By selfishly dividing the world into “friends” and “foe,” or “vassal states,” as Zbigniew Brzezinski put it, powerful beneficiaries of war and militarism compel both groups to embark on a path of militarization, which leads inevitably to militarism and authoritarian rule.

Although militarism grows out of the military, the two are different in character. While the military is a means to meet certain ends such as maintaining national security, militarism represents a bureaucratized permanent military establishment as an end in itself. It is “a phenomenon,” as the late Chalmers Johnson put it, “by which a nation’s

armed services come to put their institutional preservation ahead of achieving national security or even a commitment to the integrity of the governmental structure of which they are a part" (*The Sorrows of Empire*, Metropolitan Books, 2004, pp. 423-24).

This explains the cancerous growth and parasitic nature of US militarism—cancerous because it is steadily expanding throughout many parts of the world, and parasitic because not only does it drain other nations resources, it also sucks US national resources out of the public purse into the coffers of the wicked interests that are vested in the military-industrial-security complex.

By creating fear and instability and embarking on unilateral military adventures, corporate militarism of the United States also fosters militarism elsewhere. A major US strategy of expanding its imperial influence and promoting militarism around the globe has been the formation of international military alliances in various parts of the world. These include not only the notorious North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which is essentially an integral part of the Pentagon's world command structure, and which was recently expanded to police the world, but also 10 other joint military commands called Unified Combatant Commands. They include Africa Command (AFRICOM), Central Command (CENTCOM), European Command (EUCOM), Northern Command (NORTHCOM), Pacific Command (PACOM), and Southern Command (SOUTHCOM).

The geographic area under the "protection" of each of these Unified Combatant Commands is called Area of Responsibility (AOR). [AFRICOM's](#) area of responsibility includes US "military operations and military relations with 53 African nations - an area of responsibility covering all of Africa except Egypt." [CENTCOM's](#) area of responsibility spans many countries in the Middle East/Near East/Persian Gulf and Central Asia. It includes Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

[EUCOM's](#) area of responsibility "covers 51 countries and territories, including Europe, Iceland, Greenland, and Israel." [NORTHCOM's](#) area of responsibility "includes air, land and sea approaches and encompasses the contiguous United States, Alaska, Canada, Mexico and the surrounding water out to approximately 500 nautical miles (930 km). It also includes the Gulf of Mexico, the Straits of Florida, portions of the Caribbean region to include The Bahamas, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands."

[PACOM's](#) area of responsibility "covers over fifty percent of the world's surface area — approximately 105 million square miles (nearly 272 million square kilometers) — nearly sixty percent of the world's population, thirty-six countries, twenty territories, and ten territories and possessions of the United States." [SOUTHCOM's](#) area of responsibility "encompasses 32 nations (19 in Central and South America and 13 in the Caribbean)...and 14 US and European territories. . . . It is responsible for providing contingency planning and operations in Central and South America, the Caribbean (except US commonwealths, territories, and possessions), Cuba, their territorial waters."

Together with over 800 military bases scattered over many parts of the world, this military colossus represents an ominous presence of the US armed forces all across our planet.

Instead of dismantling NATO as redundant in the post-Cold War era, it has been expanded (as a proxy for the US military juggernaut) to include many new countries in Eastern Europe all the way to the borders of Russia. Not only has it inserted itself into a number of new international relations and recruited many new members and partners, it has also arrogated to itself many new tasks and responsibilities in social, political, economic, environmental, transportation and communications arenas of the world.

NATO's new areas of "responsibility," as reflected in its latest [Strategic Concept](#), include "human rights"; "key environmental and resource constraints, including health

risks, climate change, water scarcity and increasing energy needs. . .”; “important means of communication, such as the internet, and scientific and technological research. . .”; “proliferation of ballistic missiles, of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction”; “threat of extremism, terrorism and trans-national illegal activities such as trafficking in arms, narcotics and people”; “vital communication, transport and transit routes on which international trade, energy security and prosperity depend”; the “ability to prevent, detect, defend against and recover from cyber-attacks”; and the need to “ensure that the Alliance is at the front edge in assessing the security impact of emerging technologies.”

Significant global issues thus claimed to be part of NATO’s expanded mission fall logically within the purview of civilian international institutions such as the United Nations. So why is the US ruling plutocracy, using NATO, now trying to supplant the United Nations and other international agencies? The reason is that due to the rise of the influence of a number of new international players such as Brazil, South Africa, Turkey, Iran, and Venezuela the UN is no longer as subservient to the global ambitions of the United States as it once was. Planning to employ the imperial military machine of NATO instead of the civilian multilateral institutions such as the UN clearly belies, once again, the self-righteous US claims of trying to spread democracy worldwide.

Furthermore, NATO’s expanded “global responsibilities” would easily provide the imperial US military machine new excuses for unilateral military interventions. By the same token, such military adventures would also provide the US military-industrial-security complex additional rationale for continued escalation of the Pentagon budget.

The expansion of NATO to include most of the Eastern Europe has led Russia, which had curtailed its military spending during the 1990s in the hope that, following the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the US would also do the same, to once again increase its military spending. In response to the escalation of US military spending, which has nearly tripled during the last 10 years (from \$295 billion when George W. Bush went to the White House in January 2001 to the current figure of nearly one trillion dollars), Russia too has drastically increased its military spending during the same time period (from about \$22 billion in 2000 to \$61 billion today).

In a similar fashion, US military encirclement of China (through a number of military alliances and partnerships that range from Pakistan, Afghanistan and India to South China Sea/Southeast Asia, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, Cambodia, Malaysia, New Zealand and most recently Vietnam) has led that country to also further strengthen its military capabilities.

Just as the US military and geopolitical ambitions have led Russia and China to reinforce their military capabilities, so have they compelled other countries such as Iran, Venezuela and North Korea to likewise strengthen their armed forces and buttress their military preparedness.

Not only does aggressive US militarism compel its “adversaries” to allocate a disproportionately large share of their precious resources to military spending, but it also coerces its “allies” to likewise embark on a path of militarization. Thus, countries like Japan and Germany, whose military capabilities were reduced to purely defensive postures following the atrocities of World War II, have once again been re-militarizing in recent years under the impetus of what US military strategists call “the need to share the burden of global security.” Thus, while Germany and Japan still operate under a “peace constitution,” their military expenditures on a global scale now rank sixth and seventh, respectively (behind the US, China, France, UK and Russia).

US militarization of the world (both directly through the spread of its own military apparatus across the globe and indirectly by compelling both “friends” and “foe” to

militarize) has a number of ominous consequences for the overwhelming majority or the population the world.

For one thing, it is the source of a largely redundant and disproportionately large allocation of the world's precious resources to war, militarism and wasteful production of the means of death and destruction. Obviously, as this inefficient, class-biased disbursement of resources drains public finance and accumulates national debt, it also brings tremendous riches and treasures to war profiteers, that is, the beneficiaries of the military capital and the finance capital.

Secondly, to justify this lopsided allocation of the lion's share of national resources to military spending, beneficiaries of war dividends tend to create fear, suspicion and hostility among peoples and nations of the world, thereby sowing the seeds of war, international conflicts and global instability.

Thirdly, by the same token that powerful beneficiaries of war and military-security capital tend to promote suspicion, to create fear and invent enemies, both at home and abroad, they also undermine democratic values and nurture authoritarian rule. As the predatory military-industrial-security-financial interests find democratic norms of openness and transparency detrimental to their nefarious objectives of limitless self-enrichment, they cleverly create pretexts for secrecy, "security," military rule and police state. Concealment of the robbery of public treasury in the name of national security requires restriction of information, obstruction of transparency, and curtailment of democracy.

It follows that under the kleptocratic influence of the powerful interests that are vested in the military-security-financial industries the US government has turned into an ominous global force of destabilization, obstruction, retrogression and authoritarianism.