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## **Chapter 5 American Militarism and Blowback**

The suicidal assassins of September 11, 2001, did not "attack America," as United States' political leaders and news media want to maintain; they attacked American foreign policy. Employing the strategy of the weak, they killed innocent bystanders who then became enemies only because they had already become victims. It was probably the most successful instance in the history of international relations of the use of political terrorism to influence events.

### **The Nature of Political Terrorism**

Political terrorism is defined by its specific strategic objectives. The first goal is to attempt to turn domestic or international conditions that the terrorists perceive to be unjust into a revolutionary situation. They intend to demonstrate to a wavering population that the incumbent authorities' monopoly of force has been broken. The idea is to disorient the mass of the population "by demonstrating through apparently indiscriminate violence that the existing regime cannot protect the people nominally under its authority. The effect on the individual is supposedly not only anxiety, but withdrawal from the relationships making up the established order of society."<sup>1</sup> Such a strategy rarely works as intended: indeed, it usually has the opposite effect of calling people's attention to the seriousness of the situation and encouraging them to support any strong reassertion of authority. That was precisely what happened within the United States following the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, but not necessarily what followed throughout the Muslim world, where the objective of displaying the vulnerabilities of the United States was largely successful.

A second strategic objective of revolutionary terrorism is to provoke ruling elites into a disastrous overreaction, thereby creating widespread resentment against them. This is a classic strategy, and when it works its impact on a potentially revolutionary situation can be devastating. Carlos Marighella, the Brazilian guerrilla leader whose writings influenced many political terrorists of the 1960s and 1970s, explains its rationale as follows: "It is necessary to turn political crisis into armed conflict by performing violent actions that will force those in power to transform the political situation of the country into a military situation. That will alienate the masses, who, from then on, will revolt against the army and the police and blame them for this state of things."<sup>2</sup> The Israeli-Palestinian struggle during the so-called Second Intifada of 2000 and 2001 illustrates this goal: terrorist attacks elicited powerful and disproportionate Israeli military reactions that led to an escalating cycle of more attacks and more retaliation, most of it to the political advantage of the Palestinians.

The overreaction does not have to alienate only domestic "masses." The bombing of Afghanistan that the U.S. launched on September 30, 2001, is likely to inflict great misery on innocent people, which has been the pattern in recent American bombing campaigns (Iraq, Serbia), and will almost certainly produce unintended negative consequences throughout the Islamic and underdeveloped worlds. Vacillating supporters of the terrorists will be drawn into joining militant organizations. Moderate Muslim governments, especially in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, will almost certainly face growing internal dissent and may even be overthrown.

Perhaps the prime example of terrorism succeeding in its goal is the Philippeville massacre of August 20, 1955, in which Algerian revolutionaries killed a hundred and twenty-three French colonials. A conscious act of terrorism carried out by revolutionaries who until then had enjoyed only slight popular backing, the Philippeville massacre resulted in a massive and bloody retaliation by the French, as well as

in the important French reformer Jacques Soustelle, then governor-general of Algeria, becoming an advocate of suppression. The French crackdown eliminated most of the moderates on the Muslim side and caused influential French citizens back home to turn against their country's policies. This chain of events ultimately provoked a French army mutiny, brought General Charles de Gaulle back to power as the savior of the nation, and caused a French withdrawal from Algeria. Franco-Algerian relations are still strained today.<sup>3</sup>

Terrorism by definition strikes at the innocent in order to draw attention to the sins of the invulnerable.<sup>4</sup> The United States deploys such overwhelming military force globally that for its militarized opponents only an "asymmetric strategy," to use the jargon of the Pentagon—that is, a David-and-Goliath-type contest—has any chance of success. Like judo, it depends on unbalancing the enemy and using his strengths against him. When it does succeed, as it did spectacularly on September 11, it renders the massive American military machine virtually worthless: the terrorists offer no comparable targets.

On the day of the disaster, President George W. Bush told the American people that the country was attacked because it is "a beacon of freedom" and because the attackers were "evil-doers." In his address to the U.S. Congress on September 20, he said, "This is civilization's fight." The president's attempt to define difficult to grasp events as only a conflict over abstract values—as a "clash of civilizations" in current post-Cold War American jargon—is not only disingenuous, but also a way of evading responsibility for the "blowback" that America's imperial projects have generated.

## **Blowback**

"Blowback" is a CIA term first used in March 1954 in a report on the 1953 operation to overthrow the government of Mohammed Mossadegh in Iran.<sup>5</sup> It is a metaphor for the unintended consequences of covert operations against foreign nations and governments. The CIA's fears that there might ultimately be some blowback from its egregious interference in the affairs of Iran were well founded. Bringing the Shah to power brought twenty-five years of tyranny and repression to the Iranian people and ultimately elicited the Ayatollah Khomeini's revolution. "In 1979, the entire staff of the American embassy in Teheran was held hostage for over a year. This misguided "covert operation" of the U.S. government helped convince many capable people throughout the Islamic world that the United States was an implacable enemy.

Blowback became inevitable in the wake of decisions by the Carter and Reagan administrations to plunge the CIA deep into the civil war in Afghanistan. The agency secretly undertook to arm every *mujahideen* volunteer in sight, without ever considering who they were or what their politics might be—all in the name of ensuring that the Soviet Union had its own Vietnam-like experience. The American public was led to believe that the destabilization of the Soviet Union was worth the 1.8 million Afghan casualties, 2.6 million refugees, and ten million land mines left in the ground there—but it did not fully grasp all the other "blowback" its Afghan adventure unleashed.

Not so many years later, these Afghan "freedom fighters" began to turn up in unexpected places. In 1993, some of them bombed the World Trade Center in New York City. They then murdered several CIA employees on their way to work in Virginia and some American businessmen in Pakistan who just happened to become symbolic targets. On August 7, 1998, they attacked American embassies in East Africa. In 2001, they flew hijacked airliners into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, killing as many as 4000 people. "Blowback" has come to mean the unintended consequences of American policies kept secret from the American and other peoples—except, of course, for those on the receiving end.

The pattern has become all too familiar. Osama bin Laden, the leading suspect as mastermind behind the carnage of September 11, is no more (or less) "evil" than his fellow creations of the United States' Central Intelligence Agency, Manuel A. Noriega, former commander of the Panama Defense Forces until George Bush *pere* in late 1989 invaded his country and kidnapped him, or Saddam Hussein, the president of Iraq, whom Washington armed and backed so long as he was at war with Khomeini's Iran and whose people the U.S. has bombed and starved for a decade in an incompetent effort to get rid of him. All of these men were once listed as "assets" of the CIA.

Osama bin Laden joined the U.S. call for resistance to the Soviet Union's 1979 invasion of

Afghanistan and accepted its military training and equipment along with countless other *mujahideen* "freedom fighters." As with the misguided "covert" operation in Iran that was unraveling during the same year, strong evidence suggests that the U.S. was deeply involved in actually provoking the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and that what followed in Afghanistan and in the United States was "blowback" in the most direct sense. In his 1996 memoirs, former CIA director Robert Gates writes that the American intelligence services began to aid the *mujahideen* in Afghanistan six months before the Soviet invasion.<sup>6</sup> Two years later, in an interview with the French weekly magazine *Le Nouvel Observateur*, President Carter's National Security Adviser, former professor Zbigniew Brzezinski, unambiguously confirmed Gates's assertion.<sup>7</sup>

In its interview, the *Nouvel Observateur* asked Brzezinski, "Is Gates's account correct?" He replied, "Yes. According to the official version of history, CIA aid to the *mujahideen* began during 1980, that is to say, after the Soviet army invaded Afghanistan on December 24, 1979. But the reality, closely guarded until now, is completely otherwise: Indeed, it was July 3, 1979, that President Carter signed the first directive for secret aid to the opponents of the pro-Soviet regime in Kabul. And that very day, I wrote a note to the president in which I explained to him that in my opinion this aid was going to induce a Soviet military intervention." What Carter signed in July 1979 was a secret "finding," the orders that a president must approve in order to set a clandestine operation in motion.

The *Nouvel Observateur's* interview continues. "You don't regret any of this today?" Brzezinski: "Regret what? That secret operation was an excellent idea. It had the effect of drawing the Russians into the Afghan trap and you want me to regret it? The day that the Soviets officially crossed the border, I wrote to President Carter, essentially: 'We now have the opportunity of giving to the USSR its Vietnam War.'" "And neither do you regret having supported Islamic fundamentalism, which has given arms and advice to future terrorists?" Brzezinski: "What is more important in world history? The Taliban or the collapse of the Soviet empire? Some agitated Moslems or the liberation of Central Europe and the end of the Cold War?" It seems likely that the American people will remember the "agitated Moslems" Brzezinski helped bring into being much longer than they will the end of the Soviet empire in Eastern Europe he sought to engineer. Moreover, Brzezinski's native Poland was well on its way toward freeing itself of Soviet influence due to the activities of the trade union leader Lech Walesa—without any help from Washington.

It was only after the Russians bombed Afghanistan back into the Stone Age and suffered a Vietnam-like defeat, and the U.S. turned its backs on the death and destruction that the CIA had helped cause, that Osama bin Laden turned against his American supporters. The last straw as far as bin Laden was concerned was that, after the Gulf War, the U.S. based "infidel" American troops in Saudi Arabia to prop up that decadent, fiercely authoritarian regime. Ever since, bin Laden has been attempting to bring the things the CIA taught him home to the teachers. On September 11, 2001, he succeeded with a vengeance.

## **American Foreign Policy**

Why has there been blowback against the role of the United States in international affairs? There are today, ten years after the demise of the Soviet Union, some 800 Department of Defense installations located in other people's countries.<sup>8</sup> The people of the United States make up perhaps four percent of the world's population but consume forty percent of its resources. They exercise hegemony over the world directly through overwhelming military might and indirectly through secretive organizations such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization. Although largely dominated by the American government, these are formally international organizations and so beyond Congressional oversight.

As the American-inspired process of "globalization" inexorably enlarges the gap between the rich and the poor, a popular movement against it has gained strength, advancing from its first demonstrations in Seattle in 1999 through protests in Washington, D.C., Melbourne, Prague, Seoul, Nice, Barcelona, Quebec City, and Goteborg and on to the violent confrontations in Genoa during early 2001. Ironically, although American leaders are deaf to the desires of the protesters, the U.S. Department of Defense has

actually adopted the movement's main premise—that current global economic arrangements mean more wealth for the "West" and more misery for the "rest"—as a reason why the United States should place weapons in space. The U.S. Space Command's pamphlet "Vision for 2020," argues that "the globalization of the world economy will continue, with a widening between 'haves' and 'have-nots'" and that we have a mission to "dominate the space dimension of military operations to protect U.S. interests and investments" in an increasingly dangerous and implicitly anti-American world. Immediately prior to the September 11 attacks on New York and Washington, the U.S. president named Air Force Gen. Richard B. Myers, former head of the U.S. Space Command, chairman of the American Joint Chiefs of Staff, the first chairman to come from such a background. Unfortunately, while the eyes of military planners were firmly focused on the "control and domination" of space and "denying other countries access to space," a very different kind of space was suddenly occupied.

On the day after the September 11 attack, U.S. Senator Zell Miller, D-GA, declared, "I say, bomb the hell out of them. If there's collateral damage, so be it." "Collateral damage" is another of those hateful euphemisms invented by the Pentagon to disguise its killing of the defenseless. It is the term American defense spokesmen use to refer to the Serb and Iraqi civilians who were killed or maimed by bombs from high-flying American warplanes in the U.S. campaigns against Saddam Hussein and Slobodan Milosevic. Massive military retaliation with its inevitable "collateral damage" will, of course, create more desperate and embittered childless parents and parentless children, and so recruit more maddened people to the terrorists' cause. Moreover, a major crisis in the Middle East will inescapably cause a rise in global oil prices with, from the terrorists' point of view, desirable destabilizing effects on all the economies of the advanced industrial nations.

### **How America's Postwar Empire Began**

In February 1998, the then U.S. Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, defending the use of cruise missiles against Iraq, declared that "If we have to use force, it is because we are America. We are the indispensable nation. We stand tall. We see farther into the future."<sup>9</sup> The evidence suggests precisely the opposite. I believe that America's role is not disinterested but instead grew out of the structural characteristics of the Cold War and the strategies the U.S. pursued, particularly in East Asia, to achieve what it thought were its interests. The United States created satellites in East Asia for the identical reasons that the Soviet Union created satellites in East Europe. During the course of the Cold War, the USSR intervened militarily to try to hold its empire together in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. The United States intervened militarily to try to hold its empire together in Korea and Vietnam. The United States, incidentally, killed a great many more people in its two losing interventions than the USSR did in its two winning interventions.

The richest prize in the Soviet empire was the former East Germany; the richest satellite in the American empire remains Japan. Japan today, much like East Germany before the wall came down, is a rigged economy brought into being and maintained for America's benefit. During the Cold War and for the decade after its end, the U.S. offered unrestricted access to the American market and tolerated Japan's protectionism. In return Japan accepted and helped to pay for American troops based there and gave at least verbal support for America's foreign policies. For the first half of the Cold War, down to about 1970, the U.S. also encouraged Japan to take positive advantage of these terms in order to prosper economically. Economic growth was the American way of inoculating the Japanese against Communism, neutralism, socialism, and other potentially anti-American political orientations.

Over time, this pattern produced gross overinvestment and excess capacity in Japanese industries. It also produced the world's largest trade deficits in the United States (over \$300 billion per year at the beginning of the new millennium), huge trade surpluses in Japan, and in general a lack of even an approximation of equilibrium in supply and demand across the Pacific. Moreover, contrary to the Communist accusations of neocolonialism, it was costly to the United States in terms of lost American jobs, destroyed American manufacturing industries, and smashed hopes of American minorities and women trying to escape from poverty.

The American government continued to accept these costs as the price of keeping its empire

together. From about the Nixon administration on, the U.S. did start to negotiate more or less seriously with the Japanese to open their markets to American goods and to "level the playing field." But attempts to lessen trade friction and open reciprocal markets always collided with the security relationship. In order to level the economic playing field, the United States would also have had to level the security playing field, and this it was never willing to do.

Perhaps these American policies made strategic sense during the period from approximately 1950 to 1970, when they also had the desirable consequence of bringing real competition to such complacent industries as American automobile manufacturing. But today these old policies are utterly destructive to the security and economic well-being of both the U.S. and Japan. They continue to alter the American economic system away from manufacturing and toward finance capitalism, and they prevent Japan from producing an economy that can stand alone and trade with other economies on a mutually beneficial basis. The day of reckoning for American pride and Japanese myopia cannot be very far away.

The U.S.-Japan Security Treaty today is an anachronism left over from the Cold War. When during the Cold War Japan was used as a launching pad for American troops, ships, and aircraft, Japan had no voice in the matter. During the Korean War, Japan was still under American occupation, and during the Vietnam War, Okinawa was still under American occupation. Today, the Japanese Diet would have to approve any U.S. military action emanating from its soil. And it is not likely, despite the Security Treaty's nebulous assurances or the new so-called Security Guidelines, that Japan would countenance the U.S.'s launching air strikes against either North Korea or China from its Okinawan or mainland bases. Only Washington's so-called strategists, totally ignorant of East Asian history in the twentieth century, can seriously believe today that Japanese facilities could be used for American wars against Japan's former colony, Korea, or against China, where Japan still faces accusations of war crimes and crimes against humanity. The onset of detente on the Korean peninsula, begun by the Pyongyang summit meeting of June 2000, has made all these policies obsolete, but the Americans and Japanese still cling to them because of hegemonism on the one hand and dependency in the second instance.

In 1995 an incident occurred that revealed more clearly the relationship between the United States and Japan as one of an imperial power and its dependent satellite. On September 4, 1995, two U.S. Marines and a sailor from Camp Hansen, located in Kin village in central Okinawa, kidnapped and gang-raped a twelve-year-old schoolgirl they had picked out at random. This incident was bad enough, but it was what followed over the succeeding years that forces one to reexamine the American role in Japan and, by extension, to consider the American role in the world throughout the so-called Cold War era.

The Okinawan rape produced the most serious crisis in Japanese-American relations since the Security Treaty riots of 1960. It illuminated the costs to the 1.3 million Okinawans of the thirty-eight American military bases located in an overcrowded space smaller than the island of Kauai in the Hawaiian Islands. It revealed that Washington and Tokyo were quite prepared to force the Okinawans to bear burdens during peacetime that the citizens of the Japanese mainland or of the United States would not even contemplate assuming for themselves. The United States treated the Okinawan rape incident not as a symptom of a need for a change in policy but as a public relations problem. It endlessly spun the case as a singular tragedy, not typical of the American military or of its sixty-five major military installations located in other people's countries (even though Okinawa actually has a higher rate of rapes of local women than any other place on earth where the American military is located).

The Cold War in East Asia did not end when the Soviet Union disappeared. Instead, the United States worked strenuously to shore up its old Cold War structures in East Asia, including keeping its satellites, Japan and South Korea, in subordinate and obedient positions. This suggests that the deployments of American forces in East Asia over the years reflected not just Cold War requirements but constituted a new form of imperialism—an American determination to maintain hegemony over the nations of East Asia in much the same way that the former USSR maintained hegemony over the nations of Eastern Europe.

During the early Cold War years, the problem for the United States in East Asia was that national Communist parties had filled the vacuum of leadership of movements for liberation from European, Japanese, and American colonialism. Since the U.S. was supporting the Europeans in their attempts to keep their colonies, it inevitably ended up on the wrong side of history. In order not to see all of East Asia,

possibly even including Japan, come under the influence of nationalistic Communist parties, the United States from time to time used the same brutal methods the USSR resorted to in Eastern Europe to hang on to its sphere of influence. The best example of this was the role played by the United States in South Korea from 1945 to the present, a history that until recently has been almost totally obscured in the United States. In the spring of 1980, for example, keeping the U.S.'s South Korean satellite securely under the control of an American puppet involved killing hundreds of South Korean civilians who were demonstrating for democracy and against the country's American-backed military dictator, General Chun Doo Hwan, at Kwangju. This incident, almost totally ignored by the American news media, is quite comparable to the Chinese government's suppression of democratic demonstrators at Tiananmen in 1989.<sup>10</sup>

One of the prime consequences of the long and persistent period of Cold War, as well as a major source of future blowback against the United States, is the development of militarism in America. By militarism, I mean the phenomenon in which a nation's armed services come to put their institutional preservation ahead of effectiveness in achieving national security or a commitment to the integrity of the governmental structure of which they are a part. Related to this internal transformation of the military is an enlargement and progressive displacement by the military of all other institutions within a government for the conduct of relations with other nations. A sign of the advent of militarism is a nation's relying on its armed forces for numerous tasks for which it is unqualified, indeed its particular capabilities almost guaranteeing to make a problematic situation worse. Classical tools of international relations, such as diplomacy, foreign aid, international education, and the making of one's country a model of international behavior, atrophy as the carrier task force and cruise missiles become the first choices as instruments to solve global problems. Militarism portends that the armed services have or are about to pass beyond effective political control and become the de facto or explicit governing class of a society. It is an increasingly common phenomenon around the world—examples include much of Latin America during the 1970s, Suharto's Indonesia from 1965 to 1998, South Korea from 1961 to 1993, Pakistan today. American political leaders, from Washington's farewell address to Eisenhower's identification of the "military-industrial complex," have warned against its dangers to a democratic society.

### **The Appearance of a Military Class**

The onset of militarism is commonly marked by three broad indicators that suggest its presence. First is the emergence of a professional military class and the subsequent glorification of its ideals. This began to occur in the United States after the Vietnam War. When it became apparent that the military draft was being administered in an inequitable manner—university students were exempted while the weight of forced military service fell disproportionately on minorities and those with insufficient means to avoid it—the U.S. government chose to abolish the draft rather than apply it equitably. Henceforth, serving in the military in defense of the country was no longer a normal obligation of U.S. citizenship. Service in the armed forces is entirely voluntary and has become a route of social mobility for those for whom other channels of advancement are often blocked—much as was the case in the former Imperial Japanese Army during the 1930s, where conscription was in effect but city dwellers were commonly deferred for health reasons.

Vietnam also contributed to the advance of militarism because the United States lost the war. This defeat was disillusioning to American elites and set off a never concluded debate about what "lessons" were to be learned from it.<sup>11</sup> For the newly ascendant far right in American politics, Vietnam became a just war that the left wing did not have the will or courage to win. Whether they truly believed this or not, rightist political leaders came to some quite specific conclusions. As Christian Appy observes, "For Reagan and Bush, the central lesson of Vietnam was not that foreign policy had to be more democratic, but the opposite: it had to become ever more the province of national security managers who operated without the close scrutiny of the media, the oversight of Congress, or accountability to an involved public."<sup>12</sup> The result has been the emergence of a "general staff" of professional militarists that classifies as secret everything they do and has thoroughly infiltrated other branches of government.

Not all of these militarists wear uniforms. One consequence of the way the United States waged war

in Vietnam was to undercut the professionalism of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), since they often opposed the decisions of President Lyndon Johnson. As the historian of the JCS, H. R. McMaster, explains: "The president and [Secretary of Defense Robert] McNamara shifted responsibility for real planning away from the JCS to ad hoc committees composed principally of civilian analysts and attorneys, whose main goal was to obtain a consensus consistent with the president's pursuit of the middle ground between disengagement and war.... As American involvement in the war escalated, Johnson's vulnerability to disaffected senior military officers increased because he was purposely deceiving the Congress and the public about the nature of the American military effort in Vietnam."<sup>13</sup>

The old and well institutionalized American division of labor between elected officials and military professionals who advise the elected officials and execute their policies was destroyed and never recreated. In the Reagan administration, a vast array of amateur strategists and Star Wars enthusiasts occupied the White House and sought to place their allies in positions of authority in the Pentagon. The result was the development of a kind of military opportunism, with the military paying court to the pet schemes of politicians while also preparing for lucrative post-retirement positions in the arms industry or military think tanks. Top military leaders began to say what they thought their political superiors wanted to hear, and they also undertook covertly to maintain and enlarge the interests of their individual services.<sup>14</sup>

These tendencies accelerated and became entrenched during the 1990s and the opening years of the twenty-first century. Lobbyists and representatives of groups wanting to maintain Cold War-type relationships took charge of making virtually all politico-military policy, particularly in East Asia, where the possibilities for a new Cold War seemed most promising to them.<sup>15</sup> They often sought to eliminate or counter expertise that stood in their way; the influence of the State Department within the U.S. government notably withered. For example, Kurt M. Campbell, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for East Asian and Pacific Affairs in the Clinton administration, notes approvingly that U.S. policy toward China has increasingly been taken over by a new "'strategic class'—that collection of academics, commentators and policy-makers whose ideas help define the national interest." He says that this new crop of military experts, of which he is a charter member, is likely not to know much about China but instead to have "a background in strategic studies or international relations" and to be particularly watchful "for signs of China's capacity for menace."<sup>16</sup> These are the attitudes of militarism.

The second political hallmark of militarism is the preponderance of military officers or representatives of the arms industry as officials of state policy. During 2001, the administration of George W. Bush filled many of the chief American diplomatic posts with militarists, including the secretary of state, General Colin Powell, a former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the deputy secretary of state, Richard Armitage, undersecretary of defense in the Reagan administration. The secretary of defense, Donald Rumsfeld, served previously as secretary of defense some twenty-six years earlier, in entirely different political times and circumstances. The vice president, Richard Cheney, was also a former secretary of defense. At the Pentagon itself, President Bush nominated Albert Smith, a Lockheed-Martin vice president, for the post of undersecretary of the Air Force; Gordon England, a vice-president of General Dynamics, for secretary of the navy; and James Roche, an executive with Northrup-Grumman and a retired brigadier general, for the post of secretary of the Air Force.<sup>17</sup> It should be noted that Lockheed-Martin is the world's largest arms manufacturer, selling \$17.93 billion worth of military hardware in 1999. On October 26, 2001, the Pentagon awarded Lockheed-Martin a \$200 billion contract, the largest military contract in American history, to build the F-35 "joint-strike fighter," an aircraft that might have been needed during the Cold War but that is irrelevant to the anticipated military problems of the twenty-first century.

Richard Gardner, a former U.S. ambassador to Spain and Italy, estimates that the United States spends more on preparing for war than on trying to prevent war by a ratio of at least 16 to 1.<sup>18</sup> Policies that attempt to prevent war by eliminating the underlying conditions that breed social discontent or that make resorting to violence relatively easy or that try to mitigate misunderstandings among nations include: programs for combatting AIDS, promoting health, seeking to achieve food security, providing humanitarian assistance to refugees, safeguarding nuclear materials and stopping their proliferation, economic aid generally in areas of potential conflict such as Afghanistan, in the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation, and in the Balkans, and activities such as the international exchange of students and

scholars in the Fulbright program. The United States is notoriously delinquent in paying its dues to the United Nations and is at least \$490 million in arrears to the various multilateral development banks. By comparison the United States will spend at least \$340 billion on defense in 2002 and is well on its way, following the terrorist attacks, toward \$400 billion defense budgets.

### **Military Preparedness as Highest Goal of the State**

The third hallmark of militarism is devotion to policies in which military preparedness becomes the highest priority for the state. In his inaugural address, President George W. Bush said, "We will build our defenses beyond challenge, lest weakness invite challenge. We will confront weapons of mass destruction, so that a new century is spared new horrors." But there is no nation that has the capability to challenge the United States militarily. Even as the new president spoke, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute was compiling the 2001 edition of its authoritative SIPRI Yearbook. It shows that global military spending rose to \$798 billion in 2000, an increase of 3.1 percent from the previous year. The United States accounted for 37 percent of that amount, by far the largest proportion. It was also the world's largest arms salesman, being responsible for 47 percent of all munitions transfers between 1996 and 2000. The United States was thus already well prepared for war when Bush came into office. Since his administration is nonetheless devoted to enlarging America's military capability—a sign of militarism rather than of military preparedness—they had to invent new threats in order to convince the people who voted for them that more was necessary. China has long been one of the Republican Party's special targets of vilification, despite the fact that since 1978 China has turned decisively toward a strategy of commercial integration with the rest of the world.

On April 1, 2001, a U.S. Navy EP-3E "Aries II" electronic espionage aircraft collided with a Chinese fighter plane off Hainan Island. The American aircraft was on a mission to provoke Chinese defenses and then record the transmissions and procedures the Chinese use in sending up its interceptors. One Chinese pilot lost his life, while all twenty-four American spies landed safely on Hainan and were taken well care of by the Chinese authorities. It soon became clear that China, which is the third largest recipient of foreign direct investment on earth today, after the United States and Britain, was not interested in a confrontation with the U.S., where many of its most important investors have their headquarters. But it could not instantly return the crew of the spy plane without provoking powerful domestic criticism of its obsequiousness in the face of American provocation and belligerence. It therefore delayed for eleven days, until it received from the U.S. a pro forma apology for causing the death of a Chinese pilot on the edge of Chinese territorial air space and for making an unauthorized landing at a Chinese military airfield. Meanwhile, the American media labeled the crew as "hostages," encouraged their relatives to tie yellow ribbons around trees near their homes, claimed that Bush was doing "a first-rate job," and endlessly criticized China for its "state-controlled media." The incident allowed Washington's militarists to promote their view that hostility between a commercially oriented China and a jealously hegemonic United States is inevitable and that a war between them is likely to break out sometime in the first quarter of the twenty-first century.

The other main arena of war-scare propaganda has been the Bush administration's attempt to convince the American public and the other nations of the world that the United States needs to build a "ballistic missile defense" to protect itself from "rogue states," a euphemism for four very small and economically insignificant nations: Iran, Iraq, Libya, and North Korea. China opposes the so-called ballistic missile defense (BMD) because it suspects that it is actually aimed at neutralizing China's minuscule nuclear deterrent, and all of America's main allies are reluctant to go along with it, fearing that the BMD would unleash an arms race in missiles in order to overwhelm such defenses with numbers. Russia rejects it because it is incompatible with the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty of 1972, which is designed to prevent the signatories from achieving what they might think is a first-strike capability because they have constructed missile defenses. Nonetheless, the Bush administration is determined to go ahead with this unproven and highly destabilizing system, and the patriotic euphoria following the attacks of September 11, 2001, caused the Congress to vote all the money the Pentagon requested to get started. The U.S. military is also prepared to buy Russia's acquiescence by maintaining the shell of the 1972 treaty and by

turning a blind eye to its war in Chechnya. This, then, leaves only China in opposition, which is likely to reinforce militarist and conservative elements within the Chinese leadership.

The Bush administration's BMD campaign included doing everything in its power to hide official information on how it is likely to malfunction and the hazards that entails. For example, the Pentagon has continued to suppress the report written in August 2000 by Philip E. Coyle, then director of operational testing and evaluation at the Department of Defense, despite six different Congressional requests for it. Among other things, Coyle documents how the command and control system of the BMD is easily confused and has in the past caused a simulated launch of multiple interceptors against missiles that did not exist. Representative John Tierney (D-MA) commented that "One immediate danger in these types of situations is that adversaries may interpret these launches as a hostile first strike and respond accordingly."<sup>19</sup> Defense Secretary Rumsfeld says he wants a national missile defense even if it has not been thoroughly tested and is admittedly not able to perform to specifications.

Suppression of information has become routine at the Pentagon. The most recent case is the doctoring of information about design flaws in the V-22 "Osprey" tilt-wing aircraft that the Marine Corps wants Congress to buy even though several crashes have killed more than twenty-five Marines.<sup>20</sup> The ease with which the Marine Corps has been able to defy the civilian leadership of the Pentagon and push for production may well be a precedent for the ballistic missile defense.

The U. S. nuclear arsenal today is comprised of 5,400 multiple megaton warheads atop intercontinental ballistic missiles based on land and sea; an additional 1,750 nuclear bombs and cruise missiles ready to be launched from B-2 and B-52 bombers; and a further 1,670 nuclear weapons classified as "tactical." Not fully deployed but available are an additional 10,000 or so nuclear warheads held in bunkers around the United States.<sup>21</sup> One would think this is more than enough preparedness to deter the four puny nations the United States identifies as potential adversaries—two of which, Iran and North Korea, have been trying to achieve somewhat friendlier relations with the U.S. despite the decades of hostility and clandestine interference in their societies. The overkill in the enormous American nuclear arsenal and its lack of any rational connection between means and ends is clear evidence of militarism in the United States.

### **An Out-of-Control Military**

In addition to these three prime indicators of militarism—a military class, the predominance of the military in the administration of the state, and an obsession with military preparedness—there are other manifestations of militarism that may be less significant but are no less revealing. They all suggest that the military is in the process of passing beyond civilian control and is acting as a separate corporate body in order to preserve and enlarge its diverse spheres of influence. Let me discuss some of these, in no particular order of importance.

1. *Military Recruitment.* During the year 2000, President Clinton signed a new law promoted by the Pentagon that would give military recruiters the same access to American high schools that is granted to college and business recruiters. This law contained no penalties and exempted schools where an official district-wide policy had been adopted restricting military access. In order to overcome these obstacles, the Pentagon in 2001 engineered an amendment to a new law intended to help disadvantaged students. This law, which the House of Representatives passed, is called (without apparent irony) the "No Child Left Behind Act of 2001." The amendment, which the House adopted by a vote of 366-57, says that "Any secondary school that receives Federal funds under this Act shall permit regular United States Armed Services recruitment activities on school grounds, in a manner reasonably accessible to all students of such school." As Representative John Shimkus (R-IL) put it, "No recruiters, no money." As of this writing, the bill is stalled in a House/Senate conference committee, but the trend toward trying to attract high school students into military service is well advanced beyond the old Junior ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) programs.<sup>22</sup>

Another aspect of the Pentagon's creative efforts to attract more recruits is its support for pro-war Hollywood films. The latest example of this strategem is the Pentagon's backing of Disney Studios' *Pearl*

*Harbor*. The movie premiered on May 21, 2001, at a special showing on the flight deck of the nuclear powered aircraft carrier *U.S.S. John C. Stennis* that had bleachers and a huge screen installed and that was moved without its aircraft from its home port in San Diego to Pearl Harbor specifically for this purpose. As the credits reveal, numerous U.S. military commands helped make the film and in turn extracted changes to the scenario in order to portray the American military in a favorable light and to promote the idea that service in the armed forces is romantic, patriotic, and fun. According to the *Chicago Tribune*, military recruiters set up tables in the lobbies of theaters where *Pearl Harbor* was being shown in hopes of catching a few youths on their way out after viewing the three-hour recruiting pitch.<sup>23</sup>

Disney and the Pentagon also worked closely with the American media to promote the idea that *Pearl Harbor* was an example of what the NEC broadcaster Tom Brokaw has, called *The Greatest Generation* in his book of that title (New York: Random House, 1998)—as distinct from the Vietnam generation, which the Pentagon hopes the American public will forget. On May 26, the day after the film opened in theaters, the Disney-owned ABC-TV network ran a one-hour special on Pearl Harbor narrated by David Brinkley; and the next day, rival NEC broadcast a two-hour National Geographic special featuring Tom Brokaw himself. The NBC cable affiliate, MSNBC, put on a two-hour program about the survivors of the Pearl Harbor attack narrated by General Norman Schwarzkopf, commander in the Gulf War.<sup>24</sup> Until September 11, 2001, this propaganda blitz was the latest effort in an ongoing campaign to prettify war and make the armed forces a routine aspect of American daily life. After the September 11th attacks, television news broadcasts began their programs with a thematic logo, "America at War," and the *New York Times* began running a special news section it called "A Nation Challenged."

2. *Military Lobbying*. The Navy and Disney invited more than 2,500 guests to the film premier of *Pearl Harbor* on Battleship Row aboard the *John C. Stennis*. This suggests that the Navy did not learn any lessons from the case of the *U.S.S. Greeneville*, a 6,500-ton nuclear-powered attack submarine, that on February 9, 2001, only a few months before the party on the *Stennis*, performed an emergency surfacing off Honolulu and collided with and sank the 190-foot Japanese high-school training ship *Ehime Maru* with a loss of nine Japanese lives. It is also possible that the Navy high command was so confident of its coverup of what actually happened that it went ahead with the *Pearl Harbor promotion* undisturbed.

The *Greeneville* put to sea on February 9 solely in order to give sixteen rich civilian backers of the Navy a joyride. Even though the *Greeneville* was missing about a third of its crew and was operating close to land with several pieces of equipment out of commission, its captain, Cmdr. Scott D. Waddle, testified before a court of inquiry that he had not been distracted by the civilians and a Navy captain-escort crowded into the control room. Nonetheless, such a collision between a surfacing submarine and another ship could only be caused by negligence on the part of the submarine's crew. On April 16, 2001, the *Honolulu Advertiser* reported that Waddle had reversed himself and said that if he were court martialed for negligence, his main defense would be that he had been ordered to take the civilians on a cruise; and he said to *Time* magazine that "having them in the control room at least interfered with our concentration."<sup>25</sup> A Texas oil company executive was actually at the controls when the submarine shot to the surface.

In order to prevent any of this from becoming public, the Navy's court of inquiry did not call on any of the civilian guests to testify; and Adm. Thomas B. Fargo, commander of the Pacific Fleet, decided against court martialing Waddle because it would, he argued, be detrimental to morale.<sup>26</sup> Waddle was allowed to retire with full pension benefits. The *Greeneville* case revealed for the first time the extent to which the Navy was using public property to generate support for its operations. During the year 2000, the Pacific Fleet alone welcomed 7,836 civilian visitors aboard its vessels. It made twenty-one voyages using *Los Angeles-class* nuclear attack submarines like the *Greeneville* for 307 civilian guests and seventy-four voyages of aircraft carriers for 1,478 visitors. No member of Congress was recorded as questioning or even taking an interest in this lobbying by the Navy on its own behalf.

Another instance of Navy propaganda was the cover story in the March 11, 2001, issue of *Parade* magazine. *Parade* is the largest weekly in terms of circulation of any publication in the United States—more than 37 million copies are included as a supplement in Sunday newspapers across the country. The article was titled "Should We Leave Okinawa?" and was written by the former secretary of the Navy

in the Reagan administration, James Webb. From its cover photo of a U.S. Marine helping an Okinawan woman and her baby during the Battle of Okinawa of 1945 (with no mention that a third of the Okinawan civilian population lost their lives in the battle) to its citing erroneous statistics on crimes committed by U.S. service personnel against Okinawans and its McCarthyite insinuation that former Governor Masahide Ota, a retired professor and a former Fulbright scholar, is a communist, the article is a tissue of lies about this unlucky island and its thirty-eight American military bases. The only American commentary on this whitewash of the American military's record in Okinawa appeared in the *Rafu Shimpo*, a Japanese-American newspaper published in Los Angeles.<sup>27</sup>

3. *Military Tyranny over the Defenseless.* The American military enjoys its comforts on places like Okinawa and wants to preserve them. It is so confident of its independence from any form of effective oversight that it sometimes mistreats not only foreigners but also American civilians. For the past sixty years, the U.S. Navy has used the beautiful beaches of Vieques, a small, inhabited island off Puerto Rico, for bombing practice using live ammunition by ships and aircraft. Protests against this activity have had no effect on Washington's militarists, although in January 2000, President Clinton offered the then governor, Pedro Rossello, \$40 million in "development" funds if Puerto Ricans would continue to put up with the bombing. Needless to say, Vieques has not attracted much in the way of private development funds given that life there is constantly interrupted by the sounds of supersonic aircraft and explosions. It was never clear exactly what Clinton proposed to develop. Some 500 Puerto Rican protesters have been arrested at the bomb site over the past five years.<sup>28</sup>

In April 2001, the Navy took into custody another group of demonstrators, this time including Velda Gonzalez, the 68-year-old vice president of the Puerto Rican Senate, and U.S. Congressman Luis Gutierrez of Illinois. It subjected them to "harsh, dangerous and at times sadistic treatment-at the hands of Navy personnel" and conducted a public and humiliating strip-search of Ms. Gonzalez. A Navy spokesman said that the Navy did not intend to investigate this incident because "We have not deemed that, in fact, we have had any cases of abuse or excessive force."<sup>29</sup>

A similar case of military arrogance and mistreatment of civilians exists in the atolls of the Marshall Islands, including Kwajalien, Bikini, Enniburr, Ebeye, and Boken. Kwajalien is one of the main test sites for the proposed ballistic missile defense and no Marshall Islanders are allowed to live there. Bikini and Boken are uninhabitable due to earlier atomic and hydrogen weapons tests. A third of the population of the Marshall Islands has thus been concentrated on Ebeye, which has been described by Howard W. French as "a scorching place with poor sanitation, inadequate water supplies and few trees—one of the most densely inhabited islands on earth."<sup>30</sup> America's military colonialism in the Marshall Islands is comparable to its long imperial reign over Okinawa and Vieques. The fact that in all three places it is virtually immune from any form of supervision by elected American officials is a further sign of militarism.

4. *The Terrorism Threat.* The United States Constitution of 1787 establishes a clear separation between the activities of the armed forces in the defense of the country and domestic policing under the penal codes of the various states. The Posse Comitatus Act of 1878 was enacted to prevent the military from engaging in police activities in the United States without the consent of Congress or the president. However, with the rise of militarism and particularly after the attacks of September 11, 2001, these old distinctions have been eroded. The military has expanded the meaning of national security to include counterterrorism, interdicting drug traffickers, preparing for natural disasters, and controlling immigration, all areas in which it actively participates. The Department of Defense has drafted operation orders to respond to what it calls a "CIDCON," a "civilian disorder condition." When it declares a CIDCON, it plans to intervene and take control of civilian life. During the Republican Party's convention in Philadelphia in August 2000, for example, the Pentagon placed on alert in case of a large-scale terrorist incident a "Joint Task Force-Civil Support" based at Fort Monroe, Virginia, and "Task Force 250," ready to go into battle to restore order. Task Force 250 is actually the Army's 82nd Airborne Division based at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.<sup>31</sup>

The United States is obviously not immune to terrorist attacks, including the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York in 1993, the destruction of the Federal office building in Oklahoma City in

1995, and the assaults of September 2001. Some of these incidents reflect blowback from U.S. government activities in foreign countries. The U.S. has also seen instances of state terrorism, as in the FBI's assault on religious dissidents at Waco, Texas, in 1993. It is conceivable that control of such incidents might require the use of U.S. Army troops. But it is equally true that "terrorism" is an extremely flexible concept and that it is open to abuse by the leaders of an ambitious and unscrupulous military. For example, several weeks after September 11, 2001, the FBI was still holding well over 1000 people it had arrested immediately following the attacks but against whom it had filed either no charges or trumped-up charges concerning immigration.

Several civilian agencies, including the FBI, the Public Health Service, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, have expressed dismay at the growing role of the military in their spheres of responsibility. It is not at all obvious which is a greater threat to the safety and integrity of the citizens of the United States—the possibility of a terrorist attack using weapons of mass destruction or an out-of-control military intent on displacing elected officials who stand in their way.<sup>32</sup>

## Notes

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