

THE CONTOURS OF THE AMERICAN EMPIRE

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“War is a matter of vital importance to the State...the road to survival or ruin.
It is mandatory that it be thoroughly studied.”¹

Sun Tzu (Chinese military general, strategist and philosopher, circa 544 BC – 496 BC)

No country on the planet is untouched by the United States government. In fact, the US has the most powerful military on Earth and arguably the most powerful military in the history of the world. There is no more important “affair of the state” during the life of a nation than its participation in war. Yet instead of defending the country, the United States government often uses the military, the CIA, and a variety of international organizations to intervene in foreign affairs on behalf of powerful US based multinational corporations often to the detriment of the great majority of the people in the United States and billions of people around the world.

Modes of State Domination in Foreign Affairs

State power within international affairs can be viewed from multiple perspectives. From a radical political economy perspective (RPE), the most common view of state power is through the prism of empire, imperialism, neo-colonialism and globalization. An empire is a nation that dominates or exerts power over the political, economic and social life of a multitude of states generally for the benefit of the empire or the elites of the empire. Today, the recognized global empire or “hegemon” of the world is the United States. It has no equal. Imperialism, on the

other hand, is *the act* of the empire or a single nation exploiting the land, labor or resources of another nation for the benefit of the elites of the empire (and occasionally the exploiting nation, itself). During the early stages of capitalist development the domestic owning class began to transform itself into an international owning class in search of new markets outside of the territorial confines of its own country, generally with the assistance of the state. Today, imperialism involves both the state opening the door of foreign markets for international capital *and* international capital clearing the way to faraway sources of wealth for itself (as was the case with private military firms in the US war in Iraq) to exploit the riches of a poorer nation.

Imperialism has most prominently been written about by J.A. Hobson (1858 – 1940)² who later influenced the ideas of V.I Lenin (1870 – 1924),³ the leader of the Russian Revolution of 1917, who in turn, was one of the inspirations of Cuban revolutionary leader, Ernesto “Che” Guevara (1928 – 1967). Guevara wrote and spoke regularly about imperialism, viewing it as the central problem of the global order. Yet, he is most known for acting on his beliefs. Indeed, the Argentinian born revolutionary not only saw imperialism as a worldwide system of exploitation of the poor by the rich but risked his life on two different continents and in multiple instances to defeat

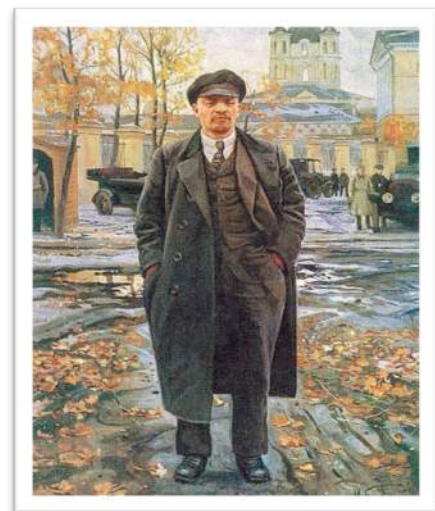


Ernesto “Che” Guevara: “We must bear in mind that imperialism is a world system, the last stage of capitalism — and it must be defeated in a world

it.”⁴ He was finally killed in Bolivia in 1967 in attempt to improve the lives of the peasants and bring an end to military rule by “Bolivian soldiers, trained, equipped and guided by U.S. Green Berets and [the] CIA.”⁵

Nonetheless, in laying the foundation for the modern understanding of imperialism, Hobson believed that it was a necessary development of capitalism as large trusts needed new markets to invest surplus value or profits. He wrote at the turn of the 20th century that “it is sufficient to point out that the manufacturing power of a country like the United States would grow so fast as to exceed the demands of the home market.”⁶ And, that “it was this sudden demand for foreign markets for manufactures and for investments which was avowedly responsible for the adoption of Imperialism as a political policy” by the United States.⁷

While Hobson was one of the first thinkers to write about imperialism, Lenin is the historical figure that is most closely associated with the concept. He viewed imperialism much the same as Hobson, identifying it as the final stage (or highest stage) of capitalist development. Lenin essentially agreed with Hobson’s theory of imperialism. He argued that as capitalism matured, the banks played the central role in modern capitalist nations monopolizing large parts of key industries and the economy. In turn, the banks (as well as other industries) began to accumulate huge surpluses of capital. As domestic markets became saturated the domestic owning class needed to find exterior markets or the domestic economy would begin to stagnate. So, they invested their surplus capital in foreign markets.⁸



*Russian Revolutionary Leader,
V.I. Lenin (1930)*

However, Hobson and Lenin differ in that Hobson believed capitalism could be reformed whereas Lenin saw the overturning of the capitalist economic system as the only resolution to the unequal distribution of wealth amongst the world’s people which he and Hobson viewed as the natural consequence of capitalism and capital accumulation. Many other thinkers have

developed the theory of imperialism further as capitalism has moved around the world impacting the lives of billions of people.⁹

Imperialism can take many forms. One of the more prominent ones today is that of neo-colonialism. Neo-colonialism (or the newest version of colonialism) was most prominently described by the Pan-African leader Kwame Nkrumah as the last stage of imperialism. In Nkrumah's conception of neocolonialism he explains that the central form of domination is through outside economic forces. Indeed, he wrote that "the essence of neo-colonialism is that the State...is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside."¹⁰

Nkrumah goes on to write that:

"The methods and form of [neo-colonialism] can take various shapes. For example, in an extreme case the troops of the imperial power may garrison the territory of the neo-colonial State and control the government of it. More often, however, neo-colonialist control is exercised through economic or monetary means...Where neo-colonialism exists the power exercising control is often the State which formerly ruled the territory in question...The result of neo-colonialism is that foreign capital is used for the exploitation rather than for the development of the less developed parts of the world. Investment under neo-colonialism increases rather than decreases the gap between the rich and the poor countries of the world."¹¹



The "African Lenin," President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana

In other words, a country that is in the grasp of neocolonialism is or has been dominated by an outside state and its productive forces are controlled by economic interests outside of the country. This is done so not for the benefit of the neocolonial state but instead for the benefit of

those external interests. Unfortunately for the people of the United States and Iraq, the war and occupation of Iraq by the US is probably the best present day example of this form of imperial domination.

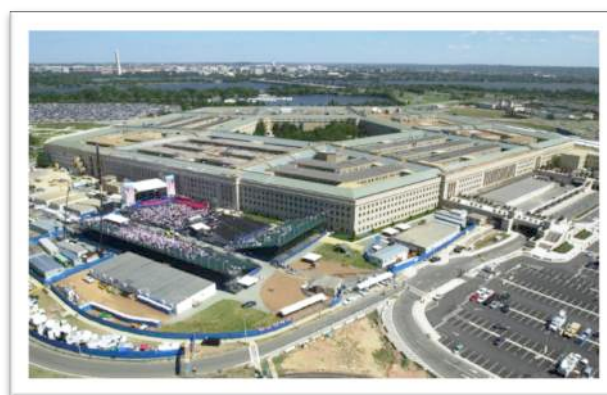
Finally, globalization is the notion that the world has become (or is becoming) one global unit that is integrated politically, economically and socially for the benefit of all. However, from a radical political economy perspective globalization is in reality capitalism on a worldwide scale where capitalists use labor and resources from the Third World to generate huge profits. This global system has not been to the benefit to all but instead a bonanza (as we shall see) to a very specific class and to the detriment of billions of people around the world. If globalization is First World elites using the land, labor and resources of the people of South America, Asia and Africa for the purpose of cheap labor and materials then globalization, at a fundamental level, is no different than empire, imperialism or neo-colonialism. It is a global order brought into existence through western political influence done so if necessary through military might for the purpose of securing international markets for transnational capital. Thus, RPE views the state in the international arena as the primary instrument which transnational capital uses to open foreign markets, exploit Third World labor and resources and protect “national interests” abroad (i.e., capital and capital accumulation). Central to state domination is a powerful military.

The Most Powerful Military on the Planet

The United States military budget for FY 2014 was approximately \$640 billion dollars. However, when funds allocated for nuclear weapons, space defense, military aid, supplemental war spending, Homeland Security, interest on past military spending, as well as benefits and care

for US veterans are included, the *actual* military budget exceeded \$1.2 trillion dollars. This is almost one-half of US total federal tax dollars and is *likely* more than all other 194 countries combined. China is second in defense spending with a reported military budget of \$130 billion dollars. In other words, the United States could reduce its military spending by 85% (from \$1.2 trillion dollars to \$141 billion dollars) and still outspend second place China by \$10 billion dollars.

Multiple programs and national concerns draw their money from the military budget. For instance, the US war in Iraq alone is projected to cost some \$3 trillion dollars in total.¹² The Department of Defense (or Pentagon or DOD) employs more than 3.2 million soldiers and civilians each year, making it the largest employer in the world.¹³ In the US, a few hundred billion dollars are spent annually to take care of wounded soldiers from past wars. This includes money allocated for long-term treatment of some 30% of the Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans who have returned home with their minds broken (i.e., Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD).¹⁴ The United States' nuclear weapons budget accounts for \$50 billion dollars annually and threatens the



*The Department of Defense (The Pentagon),
Washington D.C.*

whole of humanity yet President Obama has actually increased the budget allocation for nuclear weapons during his time in office. The network of military bases maintained by the US around the world is unlike any other nation on the planet and is the clearest sign of the United States' maintenance of some form of empire. While difficult to know for sure, within the United States and its territories the US maintains upwards of 5000 bases. Outside of its territories and

geographical borders, is estimated that the United States possesses some 750 military bases in over 130 countries around the world on every continent except for Antarctica and has troops stationed in more than 150 separate countries.

In fact, the Department of Defense claims that it “manages a global real property portfolio that consists of more than 555,000 facilities [buildings and structures] located on over 5,000 sites worldwide and covering over 28 million acres” making it the largest real-estate holder in the entire world.¹⁵ According to the Pentagon, the US provides military aid to more than 150 separate nations every year including \$3 billion dollars to Israel and \$1 billion dollars to Egypt annually. Notably, with the exception of Syria, the national leaders of nearly every one of the 18 countries that saw some form of social unrest, uprising or outright revolution in response to autocratic rule, corruption, wealth inequality and a poor standard of living during the “Arab Spring” (December 2010 – present) in the Middle East had in the lead up to those events been allied with the US government. The political elites of each country had either received some type of foreign aid, allowed US military bases to be stationed in their country, had powerful US corporate interests operating within their nation’s borders or all three. In addition, the federal government and US corporations sell more weapons to the rest of the world than any other country on Earth.

The United States military has grown so powerful in recent years that it is now permitted to arrest and without trial, indefinitely detain US citizens living within the United States. Indeed, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of 2012 allows for individuals who have been identified by the federal government as someone “who was part of or substantially supported al-Qaeda, the Taliban, or associated forces that are engaged in hostilities against the United States or its coalition partners” to suspend habeas corpus for that individual or individuals. A

government imprisoning a citizen without charge or trial is a violation of the right to habeas corpus which is protected under Article I, Section 9 of the United States Constitution.

Habeas corpus is a Latin term which means “You have the body” or “Produce the body” which requires the government to formally charge a person suspected of a crime. Generally, in the case of US law that means within 48 hours. On the other hand, if the person has already been convicted of the crime, a writ of habeas corpus requires the government to present the person to the court to make sure that he or she is legally detained. Internationally, it is considered a basic human right which dates back to the year 1305 in England. In the United States, according to the Constitution, the only branch of government which can suspend habeas corpus is Congress and that is only during times of domestic “rebellion or invasion.” In fact, historically, the right *against* the suspension of habeas corpus has been taken so seriously by the Supreme Court that it ruled in *Ex parte Merryman* (1861) that Abraham Lincoln (1809 – 1865) had acted in contradiction to the Constitution when he ordered the arrest and detainment of members of the Confederacy without the approval of Congress during the Civil War (1861 – 1865).

The real question for citizens of the United States is what is meant when they have been accused of “substantially support[ing]” the enemies of the United States? If a US citizen has picked up a weapon and fired it at US soldiers in a foreign country then it is within reason to argue that this individual has become an enemy of the United States (though possibly he or she is simply actively resisting what he or she considers to be an “unjust war” by the United States government). However, can a citizen be considered to have “substantially supported” an enemy of the United States simply by making a speech against the war in Iraq or Afghanistan? The fact of the matter is we don’t know. But if this is ever the case, then meaningful free speech will have disappeared from the American political landscape.

If we think this is an unrealistic scenario, we might remember the case of Chelsea (formerly Bradley) Manning (1987 – present) who was charged, convicted and sentenced in 2013 to 35 years in prison for leaking classified government documents to the transparency organization WikiLeaks under the Espionage Act of 1917. The documents were the largest ever released in US history by a “whistle-blower” and mostly provided documentation of government secrets and sometimes video-evidence of wrongdoing abroad. Most troubling for future prosecutions, the government argued (unsuccessfully) that Manning’s attempt to shed light on government illegality by providing government documents to WikiLeaks was a crime punishable by death for “aiding the enemy.” In other words, his exposure and publication of government misbehavior and the reality of US foreign policy was not used by the government to correct transgressions of high-ranking officials but instead was viewed as an act of treason. Yet, wasn’t Manning’s charge of “aiding the enemy” the same as or similar to “substantially supporting” the enemy under the NDAA of 2012? And, if it is then the US government did not need to charge Manning under the Espionage Act. Instead, the military simply could have arrested Manning and held her *indefinitely* without a trial or conviction on a charge of “substantially supporting” the enemy for as long as they saw fit.

In fact, while promising transparency in government when first elected in 2008, President Obama has regularly been on the wrong-side of the struggle for more transparency during his years in office. Notably, one of things that President Obama has been most transparent about which is clearly illegal is his so-called “kill-list.” The “kill-list” is reviewed each Tuesday with his closest military advisors. Sitting with members of the national security state, he acts as judge, jury and executioner in the “targeted killings” of “enemies of the United States” including

on more than one occasion, a citizen of the United States.¹⁶ That sets a very dangerous precedent, indeed.

The US “Global War on Terror” (2001 – present)

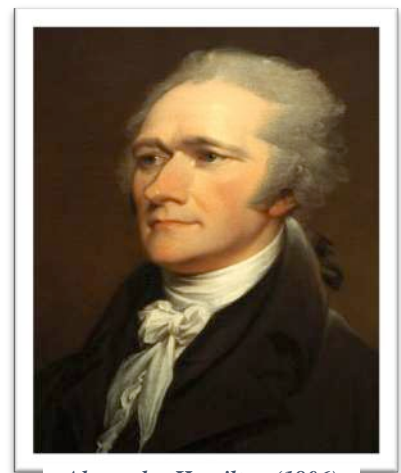
US political leaders have been responsible for the deaths of many people across the globe as a result of non-stop war on an ever-growing list of nations. Notably, more than one million people have died in the US war in Iraq (2003 – present). Iraq is a nation of just 32 million people. In comparative terms, this would be equivalent to 10 million (instead of 5,000) US citizens losing their lives during the war. After September 11, 2001, the United States began a “Global War on Terror” or sometimes referred to as a state of “permanent war” to presumably seek out and destroy those that are interested in harming the United States. In spite of some of the questions that arose from September 11th,¹⁷ since 2000 the US government has waged war upon or began “military operations” within the nations of: Sierra Leone (2000); Nigeria (2000); Yemen (2000; 2001; 2004-present); East Timor (2001); China - the Hainan Incident (2001); Afghanistan (2001-present); Somalia (2001-present); the Philippines (2002); Cote d’Ivoire (2002); Sahara (2001-present); Iraq (2003-present); Liberia (2003); Georgia (2003; 2008); Haiti (2004); Pakistan (2004-present); Kenya (2004); Syria (2004; 2008); Ethiopia (2004); Eritrea (2004); Lebanon (2006); Uganda (2011 and 2014); Libya (2011); Sudan (2011-present); Jordan (2012); Turkey (2012); Chad (2012); Syria (2012 – present); Mali (2013); and South Sudan (2013).

In fact, since the inception of the United States in 1776, US armed forces have been deployed more than 270 separate times with more than 100 of those deployments coming since

1945.¹⁸ Many of the deployments from 1776 – 1941 were for the “protection of US citizens” or the “American consulate” or to protect the “US embassy.”¹⁹ However, equally as often the reason given for the deployment of US troops was to “protect American commerce,” “protect American property,” “quell a riot taking place on American property,” “maintain order during a period of...threatened insurrection,” “protect American interests during an attempted revolution,” or to protect American interests or property during an “insurrection” or actual “revolution.”²⁰ Notably, not one “war” (limited or otherwise) since 1945 has been formally declared by the United States Congress as required by the Constitution.

As stated in Article I, Section 8, Congress is the *only* branch of government that has the power to move the nation from a state of peace to a state of war through its power to “declare war.” The framers of the United States Constitution were very specific in their placement of the “war power” with the most democratic branch of government as they were gaining independence from a nation (i.e., England) ruled by a king that had, on more than one instance, used the nation’s purse and military to enrich himself and those closest to him. The rather conservative (but non-slaveholding) Alexander Hamilton who is probably the most talented political figure in the history of the United States wrote in *Federalist #69*:

“The President is to be commander in chief of the army and navy of the United States. In this respect his authority would be nominally the same with that of the king of Great Britain, *but in substance much inferior to it* [italics added]. It would amount to nothing more than the supreme command and direction of the military and naval forces, as first general and admiral of the confederacy: while that of the British king extends to the *declaring* of war, and to the *raising* and *regulating* of fleets and armies; all



Alexander Hamilton (1806)

which, by the constitution under consideration [which was adopted], would appertain to the *legislature* [italics added to legislature only].”²¹

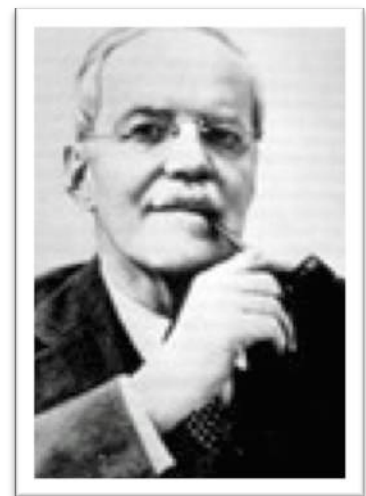
In other words, Congress was given the power to raise, fund and regulate the military while the President of the United States, by Constitutional configuration (Article II, Section 2, Clause 1), is only to be the “commander-in-chief” of the military “when called into the actual service” of the country. The political body which “calls” the President into the “actual service” of the nation is the United States Congress through a declaration of war. Accordingly, the President’s war powers are latent and not active until Congress makes them so. Thus it might be worth hearing the words of Sun Tzu again. In the *Art of War*, Tzu wrote that the result of military activity and waging war is that the “wealth of the nation is exhausted.”²² While the US global war has not *exhausted* the public funds of the United States it has increased public debt and decreased the amount of public funds available for social programs. At the same time, the global war has generated new enemies which in turn has created a further rationale for a massive military budget and a continuation of the “Global War on Terror.”

The CIA: In Support of American Capital(ism)

Of the 17 separate intelligence agencies in the United States,²³ the Central Intelligence Agency is both the largest and has been the most active in foreign affairs. The CIA grew out of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) after World War II and today has an estimated “classified black budget” of \$15 billion dollars. Officially, the CIA is responsible for collecting, analyzing, and providing foreign intelligence to policy-makers as well as carrying-out covert (i.e., secret) operations abroad. Yet this last charge, the “carrying-out covert of activities” is overwhelmingly how much of the world has come to know the CIA.

Without a doubt, popular movements and government leaders who have attempted to nationalization resources, redistribute wealth or have kept US transnational corporations from exploiting their nation's riches have often been the target of CIA assassinations and coup d'états (i.e., overthrowing of foreign governments). In fact, even conservative or nationalist leaders who have attempted to keep US capital out of their country have become targets for the CIA. Since 1945 the CIA has assassinated, attempted to assassinate, or played a role in the assassination of at least 50 foreign leaders or heads of state²⁴ and tried to topple at least 30 separate foreign governments. In addition, the CIA helped to capture South African anti-apartheid leader Nelson Mandela (1918 – 2013) in 1962 and capture and kill the revolutionary leader Ernesto “Che” Guevara in Bolivia in October of 1967. Below is a *partial* list of governments that have been overthrown and leaders that have been assassinated by or with the assistance of the Central Intelligence Agency since 1945. They include:

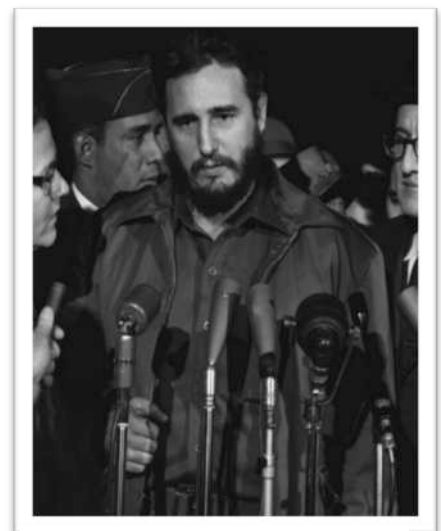
- **Syria:** In 1949 the CIA backed the overthrow of the Syrian government because it had resisted calls to construct Trans-Arabian oil pipeline by the US-based engineering firm the Bechtel Corporation. The pipeline itself was a joint venture between what would become Chevron and ExxonMobil. After the US-backed coup, the pipeline was built.²⁵ Still unhappy with developments in the country, the CIA twice more tried to overthrow the Syrian government during the 1950s.²⁶
- **Iran:** In 1953, after a unanimous vote by the Iranian Parliament to nationalize the country's oil industry, the CIA overthrew democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadeq (1882 – 1967) once he began to carry-out his



*Allen Dulles, Director of the
CIA (1953 - 1961)*

government's decision. Mossadeq was replaced by the US-backed Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi (1919 – 1980), who had been the ruling monarch. Once in power, the Shah authorized the killing and torture of thousands of Iranian “dissidents” which included *the torture of children in front of their parents and parents in front of their children* including cutting off the arms of a young boy in front of his father.²⁷ The CIA only publicly acknowledged their role in the coup in August of 2013.

- **Guatemala:** In 1954, the CIA overthrew the democratically elected President Jacobo Arbenz (1913 – 1971), replacing him with a military junta after Arbenz began modest land reforms by nationalizing small tracts of land held by the United Fruit Company – a massive-sized US-based multinational corporation. Notably, in a blatant example of the very rich using the state to advance their economic interests, Allen Dulles (1893 – 1969), the Director of the CIA at the time of the coup *was also a member* of the board of trustees of the United Fruit Company.²⁸
- **Tibet:** In 1959, Tibetan rebels were trained and funded by the CIA in an uprising in Tibet against Chinese Communist Party rule.
- **Indonesia:** In 1958, Indonesian rebels received arms and aid from the CIA in their struggle against the Sukarno (1901 – 1970) who embraced a socialist path for the Indonesian people. The CIA also made its own plans to assassinate Sukarno.²⁹ With at least the quiet support of the US, he was eventually overthrown by Indonesian generals.
- **Cuba:** Most prominently, in 1961 the CIA financed and trained Cuban exiles in their invasion of Cuba at the “Bay of Pigs” which was put down by Fidel Castro



Cuban Leader Fidel Castro (1959)

within two days.³⁰ Castro is most famous for nationalizing Cuba's industrial and farming sectors which had been dominated by US corporations under the US-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista (1901 – 1973). Batista was forced out of Cuba by Castro at the end of the Cuban Revolution, going into exile on January 1, 1959. Since 1959, the CIA has planned or attempted to assassinate Castro on multiple occasions with the Cuban government counting as many as 638 separate plots.³¹ In addition, the US has developed at least two programs to destabilize Cuba and overthrow the government – Operation Mongoose and Operation 40.

- **Congo:** Patrice Lumumba (1925 – 1961) was the first democratically-elected Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In 1961, with the assistance of the CIA, Lumumba was removed from power and killed. The reason – he resisted Katanga (a mineral rich province) and South Kasai (a province known for diamond mines) from separating from the Congo against the wishes of Belgium, their former colonial rulers.³²



*President of the Congo,
Patrice Lumumba (1961)*

- **Dominican Republic:** General Rafael Trujillo (1891 – 1961) was the autocratic and conservative ruler of the Dominican Republic from 1930 – 1961. The CIA admitted to “extensive Agency involvement” in Trujillo’s assassination.³³
- **South Vietnam:** In 1963, during the Vietnam War (1955 – 1975) the President South Vietnam Ngo Dinh Diem (1901 – 1963) was overthrown and assassinated by generals within the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) who were funded and supported by the CIA.³⁴

- **Iraq:** In 1960, Prime Minister Abd al-Karim Qasim (1914 – 1963) nationalized 99% of Iraq’s oil held by the Western oil company Iraqi Petroleum Company – a giant oil corporation that is controlled by multiple Western oil companies. The result – Qasim was overthrown by the Ba’ath Party in 1963 backed by the CIA.³⁵ The most prominent figure to emerge from the Ba’ath Party was Saddam Hussein (1937 – 2006).



Prime Minister of Iraq, Abd al-Karim Qasim (circa 1958)

- **Brazil:** In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson (1908 – 1973), the US military and CIA supported the overthrow of the democratically elected left-leaning President of Brazil, Joao Goulart (1918 – 1976).³⁶ Goulart was targeted by the US and the Brazilian military for his plans to redistribute wealth including that of US corporations. A military regime was put in place after Goulart’s overthrow that was friendly to the United States and remained in power until 1985.
- **Bolivia:** In 1964, with the support of the CIA, the Bolivian military overthrew the democratically elected and left-leaning President of Bolivia, Victor Paz (1907 – 2001).³⁷
- **Ghana:** In 1966, the great Pan-African socialist leader and President of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah, was overthrown by a military coup supported by the CIA.³⁸
- **Greece:** In 1967, with the support of the CIA, right-wing military officers seized power in Athens just weeks ahead of scheduled democratic elections.
- **Chile:** In September of 1973, the first democratically elected socialist leader of Latin America, President Salvador Allende (1908 – 1973) of Chile, was overthrown and died during a military coup led by General Augusto



Socialist President Salvador

Pinochet (1915 – 2006). The coup was supported by US President Richard M. Nixon (1913 – 1994) and the CIA. Following the overthrow of Allende, the Pinochet government instituted “free market” reforms under the neoliberal designs of the “Chicago Boys” (1970s) and imprisoned, tortured and killed thousands of Chilean citizens during Pinochet’s 17 years in power.³⁹

- **Argentina:** After the right-wing military coup in 1976, the CIA supported the Argentinian military junta in its “Dirty War” (1976 – 1983) against its civilian population. The “Dirty War” saw thousands of left-leaning and progressive Argentinians killed, tortured, or “disappeared.”⁴⁰
- **Afghanistan:** From 1979 – 1989, the United States government and the CIA “successfully” funded anti-communist militants (known as the “mujahedeen”) against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. The multibillion dollar project produced, most notably, Osama bin Laden (1957 – 2011).⁴¹
- **Turkey:** In 1980, at least diplomatically the US government and the CIA supported the right-wing military coup in Turkey.
- **Cambodia:** From 1980 – 1995 the United States government and the CIA funded anti-Vietnamese dissident groups in Cambodia including former members of the Khmer Rouge government (1975 – 1979) in an attempt to remove Vietnam from Cambodia. Vietnam liberated Cambodia from the Khmer Rouge where between one and two million people died during their time in power through torture, disease, execution or by being worked to death.⁴²
- **Nicaragua:** From 1981 –1990, the Reagan Administration (1981 – 1988) and the Bush Sr. Administration (1989 – 1993) ordered the CIA to train, fund and assist Contra rebels in overthrowing the social-democratic Nicaraguan government. The Contras were funded by

weapons sales by the Reagan Administration to Iran in violation of a US-imposed arms embargo against Iran. The revenue from the sales to Iran were then given to the Contras in violation of a Congressional prohibition against further funding of the right-wing Contra rebel group.

- **Grenada:** Beginning in “1981 the CIA had engaged in efforts to destabilize” Grenada “politically and economically.”⁴³ The small nation was guided by the Marxist political figure Maurice Bishop (1943 – 1983) who was eventually overthrown by his own party and executed just days before the US invasion.
- **Iraq:** The CIA had been a part of the first US war on Iraq in 1990 – 1991 and again during the second war beginning in 2003. The 2003 invasion saw the end of the Hussein government and his execution. After which, international capital and multinational corporations were allowed to exploit Iraq’s most valuable resource – oil.
- **Libya:** In 2011, the US military and CIA, deployed by President Obama, helped overthrow and kill the leader of oil-rich Libya, Muammar Gaddafi (1942 – 2011).
- **Syria:** Since 2012, President Obama has authorized the CIA to fund, train and arm Syrian rebels in their attempt to overthrow the President of Syria, Bashar al-Assad (1965 – present).

Other nations that have been subject to US and CIA intervention include: the Soviet Union (1917 – 1991) and its Eastern European allies during the Cold War; China (1945 – 1960s); Italy (off and on since 1947); Korea (1945 through today); Costa Rica (1950s); Laos (1957 – 1973); Ecuador (1960 – 1963); Peru (1960s); Uruguay (1964 – 1970); Jamaica (1976 – 1980s); El Salvador and the Congo in the 1980s; the overthrow of Manuel Noriega (1934 - present) of Panama in 1989; the Philippines (ongoing since 1898); Venezuela throughout the first decade of the 2000s under Hugo Chavez (1954 – 2013); the overthrow of the first democratically elected

President of Haiti (and former priest) Jean Bertrand Aristide in 2004, and; the launching of airstrikes and drone attacks (but not officially occupying) multiple countries, primarily in the Middle East, since the early-2000s.

Yet, what has been consistent about every single CIA intervention? In each instance, CIA involvement in a foreign country has been for *the protection of capital and capital accumulation*. Not one time has the CIA worked to protect a democratic government, improve the living conditions of the poor or assist a popular movement. Instead, each time the CIA has overthrown or assassinated a foreign leader or armed, funded or trained a right-wing organization it was done on behalf of the interests of a specific class. Whether a popular leader was attempting to redistribute wealth, nationalize resources or move the country in a socialist direction, every CIA intervention was undertaken to thwart those efforts. In fact, even when conservative leaders such as Trujillo in the Dominican Republic or Hussein in Iraq attempted to control their nation's resources they became targets of the CIA.

Nuclear Weapons: A Threat to the Whole of Human Existence

Today, the most serious threat to the human race is the existence of nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons are considered to be a Weapon of Mass Destruction (WMD). Other WMDs include: chemical weapons (e.g., nerve agents such as Agent Orange, mustard gas, etc.); biological weapons (e.g., germ warfare where bacteria, fungi or viruses such as malaria and anthrax are used as a weapon), and; radiological weapons (e.g., the "Dirty Bomb," i.e., the "Poor Man's nuclear weapon" where traditional explosives are mixed with a small amount of nuclear material and detonated in an airport or a train station).

Currently there are nine separate countries that possess nuclear weapons – five legally and four illegally. In addition, some members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) store nuclear weapons within the confines of their national border. The countries that possess nuclear weapons legally are the countries that are the permanent members of the UN Security Council. The UN Security Council is charged with the “maintenance of international peace and security” and is comprised of the victors of World War II. They include the United States, the United Kingdom (UK), France, China and Russia. The countries that possess nuclear weapons illegally include: India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea. These nine countries makeup the so-called “nuclear club.”

A Brief History of Nuclear Weapons

The first nation that attempted to development nuclear weapons was Germany in April of 1939. However, by 1942 Germany decided to halt its program as it was believed that nuclear weapons would not have a significant impact in ending World War II.⁴⁴ Out of concern that Adolf Hitler (1889 – 1945) would not only develop nuclear weapons but would use them, a group of prominent scientists including Albert Einstein (1879 – 1955) wrote a memo to President Franklin D. Roosevelt (1882 – 1945) urging him to a develop nuclear program. The communication, known as the Einstein-Szilard letter, recommended that the US develop its own nuclear weapons. In agreeing with the scientists, FDR initiated the Manhattan Project (1942 – 1947). The Manhattan Project was a program located in Los Alamos, New Mexico to develop nuclear weapons for the United States. It was headed by the noted physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer (1904 – 1967) and included some 6000 people.

After a relatively short period of time, Oppenheimer and his team of scientists had developed a working nuclear bomb (i.e., an atomic bomb) in July of 1945. Still, the scientists first needed to test the weapons before turning them over to the military, whose new commander-in-chief after the death of FDR, was President Harry S. Truman (1884 – 1972). So, at the White Sands Proving Ground in New Mexico, Oppenheimer and his group of scientists detonated the first nuclear device in the history of the world during a test code-named “Trinity” and officially ushered in the so-called “Atomic Age.” Oppenheimer later said that upon seeing the explosion of that first nuclear bomb in the New Mexico desert that “we knew the world would not be the same” and that he remembered the Hindu scripture that read, “Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.”⁴⁵ With the newly developed weapons, President Truman quickly attempted to put an end to the war in the Pacific with Japan. Indeed, on August 6, 1945 President Truman ordered the bombing of Hiroshima with the nuclear bomb “Little Boy.” In a split second more than 100,000 people were killed with many disappearing completely from the face of the Earth and thousands more eventually dying from radiation burns and poisoning totaling some 140,000 people in all.

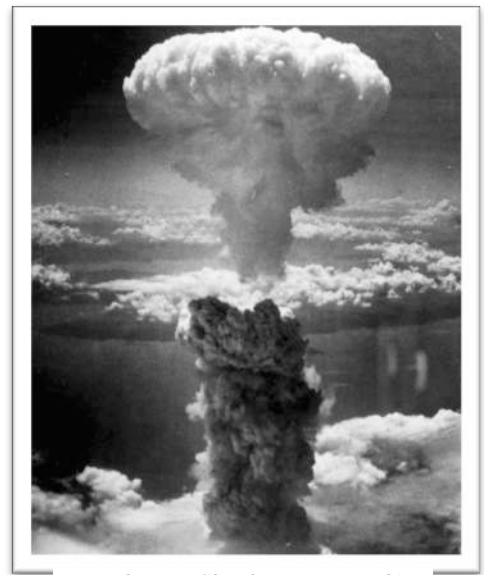
Probably the most famous victim of the bombing of Hiroshima was the young girl Sadako Sasaki (1943 – 1955) whose family lived just outside the city of Hiroshima and was blown out of the window of her family’s house from the explosion. While Sadako survived the bombing, she and her family soon learned that Sadako was sick with “atom bomb disease” (i.e., leukemia). By the time Sadako was eleven years old, she was forced to leave school, was hospitalized and was given a year to live. Once hospitalized Sadako acted on the



Sadako Sasaki (circa 1955)

ancient Japanese myth which held that whoever folds 1000 origami paper cranes will have their wish granted by the gods. Sadako's wish was to live. She went to work folding her paper cranes eventually reaching some 644. However, early on the morning of October 25, 1955 Sadako died of leukemia at the age of 12 without finishing her task. Later, in a symbolic gesture to Sadako, her friends completed the remaining cranes and buried them with her.⁴⁶ If such a thing can be measured, Sadako Sasaki's death is one of the most important deaths in human history as she has come to represent all innocent victims of war and the moment when the human race developed the technological capacity to destroy itself.

Nevertheless, upon hearing of the bombing of Hiroshima, President Truman remarked that "it was the greatest thing in history."⁴⁷ Three days later on August 9, 1945 Truman ordered the bombing of Nagasaki. In detonating "Fat Man" over the city, some 50,000 people were killed almost instantly with thousands of others dying from burns and nuclear poisoning totaling more than 80,000 people. Truman argued after the war that the United States had no other choice but to bomb Hiroshima and Nagasaki. However, as is well-known today the United States was aware that Japan was negotiating terms of peace with the USSR during the summer of 1945 before the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In fact, each city was left untouched by the US military in an effort to identify the full range of damage that could be meted-out by a nuclear bomb.



*Mushroom Cloud over Nagasaki,
August 1945*

At the end of World War II the United States embarked on a series of nuclear tests – most famously in the South Pacific on the Bikini Atoll Islands. (In the US, more than 900 tests were conducted in the state of Nevada, alone).⁴⁸ At Bikini Atoll, the US first relocated the 200 or so inhabitants of the islands and then proceeded to denote 23 nuclear devices upon the islands from 1946 – 1958 which were 1000 times more powerful than those detonated on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The result: the explosions chipped off a part of the largest island, created a mile long crater in the lagoon located in the middle of the atoll and one small island was blasted completely off the map. In fact, the islands are still too polluted with radioactive material for people to live on and the original inhabitants continue to receive reparations from the federal government for the loss of their island home to this day.

Nuclear Weapons Today

Today, the total number of nuclear weapons in the world exceeds 17,000 warheads. With more than 3,100 cities in the world (defined as 100,000 people or more) the US *or* Russia possess enough nuclear weapons for either country to destroy every single city on the planet more than two times over. While difficult to know for sure, the estimated global nuclear weapons stockpile is as follows:

TABLE 1: Global Nuclear Weapons Stockpile⁴⁹

Nation	Nuclear Weapons
1) Russia	8,500
2) United States	7,700
3) France	300
4) China	250

5) United Kingdom	225
6) Pakistan	120
7) India	110
8) Israel	80
9) North Korea	less than 10
Total	17,300

Yet, the detonation of possibly as few as 25 – 100 nuclear devices could push the whole world into “Nuclear Winter.” A nuclear winter is a hypothetical model (it is hypothetical because it cannot be tested) which predicts that a low-scale nuclear war would result in the burning of so many cities and to such a degree that smoke and soot would rise into the Earth’s stratosphere and block-out or severely reduce the amount of sunlight the Earth receives for months or even years. The planet would become colder making it harder to grow food and raise livestock and at least a part of the global food-supply would be poisoned from nuclear radiation and fallout.

Presently, the average nuclear weapon that the United States possesses is just under one megaton. One megaton is equal to one million tons of TNT. Each one of these one megaton nuclear bombs are 70 times more powerful than the bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945. The largest bomb ever exploded in the history of the world is a 50 megaton bomb which was detonated by the USSR. Known as the “Tsar Bomb,” it was reduced down from a 100 megaton bomb and was detonated on an island in the Arctic Circle in 1961. The Tsar Bomb was 10 times more powerful than all the explosives detonated during WWII *combined*.

The incredible power of the global nuclear arsenal has left some to contemplate the fate of the human race. Indeed, it is worth considering that the average life-span of any species which has existed on Earth is about 100,000 years. Human beings have walked the planet for

roughly 220,000 years. Thus, some have concluded that nuclear weapons, in conjunction with other unresolved politico-economic problems such as global warming, poverty, HIV- AIDS and war itself, could potentially push the human race to the edge of extinction. Nonetheless, this possibility has not slowed down the United States from continuing to develop evermore deadly nuclear weapons and steadily increasing an already multibillion dollar nuclear weapons budget that has the potential to “turn the lights out” on the whole of humanity.

The United States and International Institutions

The United States government is a key player in multiple international organizations. Among the most prominent are the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Yet to more fully illuminate US power we might first examine two economic organizations that play a vital role in the US global empire – the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (or the World Bank Group).

The International Monetary Fund and World Bank

The IMF and World Bank are neoliberal financial institutions created at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire in 1944 at the end of World War II. Sometimes referred to as the “Bretton Woods Institutions,” the World Bank and IMF are technically a part of the UN but remain autonomous in their decision making. Each is funded by their 188 member nations as well as bonds which it sells on the global market to wealthy corporate investors and other investing

nations. Voting within the institutions is based upon monetary contributions by member states. As the US government regularly provides the Bretton Woods Institutions with the highest dollar amount it has a strong influence over the direction of monetary policy within each institution. Originally, the World Bank was designed to loan money to countries to help rebuild after World War II whereas the IMF was created to assist in reconstructing the world's international payment system.

Today, the World Bank is charged with poverty reduction and economic development by loaning money to poor countries for projects such as roads, bridges and dams. On the other hand, the IMF is supposed to help prevent currency collapses of largely poor nations by loaning money to them to help the cash-poor nation pay its creditors. Whatever the Bretton Woods Institutions are supposed to do, each has evolved into massive corporate-backed financial institutions that primarily loan money to Third World countries which generate large profits for their corporate financiers.

To be sure, while China or Russia can invest in an IMF or World Bank security, so too can Bank of America, JPMorgan Chase, Wells Fargo, Citigroup and Goldman Sachs. Each loan to the IMF and World Bank is then repaid to them with interest. The IMF and World Bank then use their investors' capital to loan money to Third World countries who want to develop some public works project or are having a difficult time meeting their debt obligations. However, significantly each institution requires the recipient nation to accept a structural adjustment program (SAP) as a condition of accepting the loan. An SAP is a series of neoliberal policies that are imposed on a recipient nation that are sometimes referred to as "conditionalities," "austerity measures," or economic "shock therapy." For example, if a nation wishes to borrow money from the World Bank to build a dam to transport water to the nation's farmers or for fresh

drinking water for its citizens, that government must agree to do at least one, and possibly all, of the following:

- Reduce or eliminate funding for social programs such as education, health care, social security, unemployment, welfare, food subsidies and daycare. Sometimes this also includes reducing or eliminating state workers and cutting benefits and pensions for government employees;
- Focus the domestic economy on exports. This was very similar to rule under colonialism for many Third World countries where economies were developed to produce a handful of commodities or even just a single commodity for the “home country;”
- Devalue the nation’s currency and tie it to a foreign currency such as the US dollar. This has the obvious effect of making poor people even poorer as their currency buys less;
- Open the country for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and develop a domestic stock market which allows for transnational capital to invest in the recipient nations publicly traded firms;
- Reduce or eliminate government protections of the domestic market, such as high tariffs for imported goods, price controls on domestic commodities and services, state subsidies to domestic industries, etc., and/or;
- Privatize state owned industries such as oil, gas, electricity and water.

While the World Bank’s motto is “Working for a World Free of Poverty,” the reality is that its austerity measures often drive poor countries into further economic hardship. The result is that recipient nations end up borrowing additional money from the IMF to pay their debts, including borrowing money from the IMF to pay the World Bank. The borrowing of more money from the IMF to prevent a currency collapse because a recipient nation cannot pay its debts often brings more rounds of austerity measures which in turn creates more economic

hardship. It is true that dams, bridges and factories do get built with World Bank loans and debts do get paid by IMF financing. However, by laying off state workers, devaluing currencies, privatizing public industries and reducing or eliminating the social welfare state for working people and the poor, the “Bretton Woods Institutions” help create a situation where people have less money in their pockets (which is already worth less from devaluation) and the state has fewer tax dollars being generated to fund state programs and pay debts.

This is not to say that nobody is benefitting from IMF and World Bank loans. Bank of America, JPMorgan Chase, Wells Fargo, Citigroup and Goldman Sachs, among others, continue to make billions of dollars annually by “investing” in IMF and World Bank bonds. Significantly, by spending tens of millions of dollars lobbying the federal government each year, these already powerful banks ensure that the United States government continues to push a neoliberal ordering of IMF and World Bank loan policies, which in turn, provides opportunities for them to generate more capital still.⁵⁰ Though no bombs are dropped and no people are directly killed by IMF and World Bank austerity measures, the economies of recipient nations can be greatly damaged – and so too, the lives of billions of people – for the benefit of a handful of very wealthy individuals that are drawn largely from the financial sector within the US economy.

The United States, the UN & NATO

In addition to the IMF and World Bank, the United States can shape the political, economic and social reality of many parts of the world through its position in the United Nations. The United Nations was created in San Francisco, California in



The Flag of the United Nations

1945 at the end of World War II and is presently located in New York City. The UN consists of five separate “organs,” including: the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the International Court of Justice, and the Secretariat. Each member nation has one vote in the General Assembly (which is similar to a world Congress) but significantly, the General Assembly is not permitted to bring into existence any of its own decisions. Instead, it may only make “recommendations” to the Security Council.

The UN Security Council has five permanent members – the US, UK, France, Russia and China – and ten non-permanent members that rotate into the Security Council from the General Assembly every two years. The Security Council is charged with maintaining international peace and security and authorizes all UN military action. Importantly, within the Security Council rests the power to *veto* a General Assembly recommendation. While it takes nine Security Council members to pass a resolution, *just one* permanent member can veto any decision made by the Security Council including one that has been “recommended” by every country in the world through the General Assembly.

Nonetheless, the great majority of the General Assembly’s resolutions come into existence because they remain unopposed (passed by unanimous consent) by the Security Council. When the Security Council does reject a General Assembly resolution it is often the United States that is using its veto power. Below is an incomplete but representative list dating from the 1970s of the kinds of resolutions which the US has *opposed* in the face of unanimous (or near unanimous) global support within the General Assembly and the Security Council. Indeed, the United States has *vetoed*:

1970s

- **Resolution 33/136** by a vote of 119 – 1 which asked wealthy countries to provide more assistance to poor countries.
- **Resolution 34/46** by a vote of 111 – 1 which requested protection of Third World nations' exports.
- **Resolution 34/46** by a vote of 136 – 1 which requested all countries to improve human rights and human freedoms.
- **Resolution 34/100** by a vote of 104 – 2 (US, Israel) which asked all nations to not intervene in the internal or external affairs of sovereign nation-states.
- **Resolution 34/136** by a vote of 118 – 2 (US, Israel) which asked all countries to respect the national sovereignty over national resources in occupied Arab territories.
- **Resolution 34/199** by a vote of 112 – 1 which attempted to safeguard the rights of Third World countries in multinational trade negotiations.

1980s

- **Resolution 35/57** by a vote of 134 – 1 which sought a new international economic order to promote the growth of poor countries and international cooperation.
- **Resolution 35/145A** by a vote of 111 – 2 (US, UK) which asked all nations to cease nuclear test explosions.
- **Resolution 35/154** by a vote of 110 – 2 (US, Albania) which asked nuclear states to not use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states.
- **Resolution 35/174** by a vote of 120 – 1 which emphasized that the development of nations and individuals is a human right.
- **Resolution 36/18** by a vote 123 – 1 which promoted co-operative movements in Third World countries.

- **Resolution 36/19** by a vote of 126 – 1 which provided for the right of every state to choose its economic and social system in accord with the will of its people, without outside interference in whatever form it takes.
- **Resolution 36/84** by a vote of 118 – 2 (US, UK) which called for an end to all test explosions of nuclear weapons.
- **Resolution 37/83** by a vote of 138 – 1 which attempted to prevent an arms race in outer space.
- **Resolution 37/137** by a vote of 146 – 1 which attempted to protect against products harmful to health and the environment.
- **Resolution 38/124** by a vote of 132 – 1 which declared that education, work, health care, proper nourishment and national development are human rights.
- **Resolution 38/182** by a vote of 116 – 1 which prohibited the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction.
- **Resolution 40/445** by a vote of 133 -1 which asked for international cooperation in the interrelated areas of money, finance, debt, trade and development.
- **Resolution 41/450** by a vote of 146 – 1 which provided measures to improve the situation and ensure the human rights and dignity of all migrant workers.

1990s

- **Eight separate resolutions** by votes ranging from 157 – 2 (US, Israel) to 59 – 2 (US, Israel) to end the US embargo against Cuba.

2000s

- **Multiple resolutions** to again end the US embargo against Cuba.

- **Multiple resolutions** to ban new weapons of mass destruction and brokering illicit arms sales.
- **Multiple resolutions** to assist the Palestinians in a variety of ways.
- **Resolution 58/179** by a vote of 181 - 1 which called on all nations to increase access to medication in the context of pandemics such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.
- **Resolution 63/87** by a vote of 181 – 1 which called for a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty (multiple instances).
- **Resolution 63/187** by a vote of 184 – 1 which established a right to food (multiple instances).
- **Resolution 63/241** by a vote of 159 – 1 which was a call to protect the rights of the child (multiple instances).
- **Resolution 63/40** by a vote of 177 – 1 (with 1 abstention, Israel) which called for the prevention of an arms race in outer space.⁵¹

As illustrated by the vote count on the above resolutions, the United States, on multiple occasions, has used its veto power to protect US capital, limit the expansion of human rights and maintain a global order dominated by the United States. In addition to its veto power, the United State, has on a number occasions used its position within the Security Council to push for war, sanctions and embargoes. Probably the most notable example was the US drive for sanctions against Iraq in the early 1990s. Indeed, in August of 1990 the UN Security Council passed Resolution 661, imposing an almost complete trade and financial embargo against Iraq after Iraq's invasion of the oil-rich nation of Kuwait just south of the Iraqi border. After Iraq was removed from Kuwait by the United States the sanctions remained until May of 2003, the beginning of the US war on Iraq. After the war, in 1991 the Security Council passed Resolution

687 which called on Iraq to remove its chemical and biological weapons and pay Kuwait reparations.

Why did the US care about Kuwait? In a word, oil. British and US oil firms had been involved with Kuwait since 1951 when oil was first discovered in the country. Many US and British corporations have won oil “concessions” from the Kuwaiti government since the 1950s or have done business with the Kuwaiti government, including, Shell, BP, ChevronTexaco, ExxonMobil, Gulf Oil and Getty Oil. If Iraq was to occupy Kuwait, Hussein may have nationalized Kuwaiti oil which would have pushed US and western oil interests out of the Kuwait.

Whatever the exact reasons for the war, economic sanctions imposed on Iraq by the UN and backed by the United States were very destructive for the people of Iraq. In fact, according to the UN some 567,000 children died as a result of the economic sanctions from a lack of basic necessities such as food and medicine.⁵² Notably, former US Ambassador to the United Nations Madeleine Albright (1937 – present) was asked during a television interview on *60 Minutes* in May of 1996 if she thought that in light of all the children that had died in Iraq from the US backed UN sanctions, if she thought that price had been worth it. Her response, “I think this is a very hard choice, but the price – we think the price is worth it.” An unbelievable statement from any person that is responsible for furthering the parameters of human dignity.

NATO

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization was created after World War II in April of 1949. Located in Brussels, Belgium, it was developed for the purpose of defending member nations,

primarily Western Europe and North America, from the Soviet Union. In addition, NATO was created to help prevent European militarism and encourage political integration in Europe. The guiding principle of NATO is that an attack on one will be considered an attack on all. With a powerful combination of militarized nations, 70% of all global military spending is done so by the 28 NATO members with the United States ranked at the very top, which all by itself, accounts for more than 70% of the total NATO military budget.⁵³

While NATO did not conduct military operations during the Cold War there have been a few notable NATO “interventions” since its end with the United States often playing a leading role. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, NATO enforced a no-fly zone with airstrikes in Bosnia and Hercegovina from 1993 – 1995, bombed Yugoslavia in 1999,⁵⁴ “secured” Kabul in Afghanistan in 2001 and continues to have a present there as of 2015. NATO also deployed warships to protect maritime commerce from Somali pirates in 2009 and enforced a no-fly zone and economic embargo in Libya in 2011. All countries which were unfriendly to US capital.

A Final Word on US Foreign Policy and Empire

At the end of his second term in 1961 during his farewell address, President and former General Dwight D. Eisenhower (1890 – 1969) famously remarked that:

“We . . . must avoid the impulse to live only for today, plundering for our own ease and convenience the precious resources of tomorrow... Until the latest of our world conflicts, the United States had no armaments industry...We have been compelled to create a permanent armaments industry of vast proportions...Now

this conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience. The total influence...is felt in every city, every Statehouse, every office of the Federal government. We recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet, we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications...In the councils of government we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex.”⁵⁵

While Eisenhower recognized the potentially corrupting impact of a massive military on democratic government, he at the same time said that he understood the need for it. The need, so the argument goes, was to defeat the Soviet Union and put an end to the Cold War. However, the Cold War has been over for more than two decades and the US military is today bigger and more powerful than it has ever been in the history of the United States. The Soviet Union was a large country with many countries that were directly under its control with a total population numbering in the hundreds of millions. Today, according to the Central Intelligence Agency, the United States’ chief enemy – Al Qaeda– numbers *not more* than 1000 individuals worldwide.⁵⁶ And, notably not all people within the Al Qaeda Network are considered to be enemies of the United States as President Obama has armed Al Qaeda associated rebel forces to fight against the Syrian government in its civil war in direct contradiction to the “associated forces” clause of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2012.⁵⁷

So, the real question is why does the United States continue to maintain a massive military? At least one reason is because the armaments industry is regularly one of the top two or three industries which lobbies the federal government each year. Indeed, their lobbying efforts have made it so the military “itself is a direct source of immense capital accumulation.”⁵⁸ However, there is a second reason which is based in historical fact and present day reality. Sun Tzu wrote that war needed to be “thoroughly studied” as it is “the road to survival or ruin.” Yet,

if we have learned anything from our study of war and empire, it is that the United States military has been (and continues to be) spread out around the world fighting war after war, not for the survival or ruin of the nation, but instead for one overarching purpose – *to create and protect a global order where transnational capital is able to continue its pursuit of capital accumulation.*

About the Author

Jeremy Cloward has run for public office on three separate occasions and appeared on FOX, the Pacifica Radio Network (KPFA) and in other media outlets. He teaches political science at Diablo Valley College and has published articles with *Socialist Worker* and *Project Censored*. The article above is an excerpt from his forthcoming book titled: *Class Power and the Political Economy of the American Political System* scheduled for release in August of 2015.

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³ V.I. Lenin, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (New York, NY: International Publishers, 1939).

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