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War is Peace, Freedom is Slavery ... and Fighting Back is “Aggression”

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The US Department of Defense recently promulgated a new “defense” guidance document: “Sustaining US Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense.” I use scare quotes because it just doesn’t seem quite right to use “defense” to describe a document that — like its predecessors — envisions something like an American Thousand-Year Reich.

The greatest shift in emphasis is in the section “Project power despite Anti-Access/Area Denial Challenges.” The “threat” to be countered is that China and Iran “will continue to pursue asymmetric means to counter our power projection capabilities.”

That refers to a long-standing phenomenon: What Pentagon analysts call “Assassin’s Mace” weapons — cheap, agile weapons that render expensive, high-tech, weapons systems ineffective at a cost several orders of magnitude cheaper than the Pentagon’s gold-plated turds. In the context of “area denial,” they include cheap anti-ship mines, surface-to-air missiles, and anti-ship missiles like the Sunburn (which some believe could destroy or severely damage aircraft carriers).

Thus the Pentagon defines as a “threat” a country’s ability to defend itself effectively against attack or to prevent an enemy from putting offensive forces into place to attack it. Yes, you read that right: To the American national security establishment, it’s considered threatening when you prepare to defend yourself against attack by the United States. It’s the perspective of a *Family*

Circus character: “Mommy, he hit me back!” That kind of double standard is pretty common in the National Security State’s assessment of the world.

What can one say of a situation in which America runs a military budget equal to the rest of the industrialized world put together, maintains military bases in half the countries around the globe, routinely intervenes to overthrow governments, rings China with military bases — then solemnly announces that China’s military establishment is “far larger than called for by its legitimate defensive needs?”

Considering that the U.S. considers its “legitimate defensive needs” to encompass outspending the other top ten military powers in the world combined and maintaining the ability to preemptively attack any other country in the world, it’s hard to guess what the Pentagon’s criterion is for determining China’s “legitimate defensive needs.” But it’s safe to say “legitimate” defensive forces don’t extend to the ability for China to defend its territory against attack from the main actual threat facing it: A global superpower trying to turn China’s neighborhood into a battlefield.

And how about attacking Saddam for “making war on his own neighbors” — when the U.S. actively supported his invasion of Iran in the 1980s? Not to mention the U.S. Marines waltzing in and out of most of America’s Caribbean “neighbors” throughout the middle of the 20th century. Did they have “incubator babies” in Nicaragua and Costa Rica back in the 1930s?

To Washington, any country capable of resisting American attack, or of “defying” American commands (whether under a UN Security Council fig leaf or not) is by definition a “threat.” And any country inflicting significant losses on U.S. military forces, in the process of defending itself against American military attack, is guilty of aggression (against U.S. attempts to “defend our freedom,” one presumes).

American perceptions of “self-defense” and “aggression” are as distorted as those of Nazi Germany. When the only way you can “defend yourself” against another country’s “threat” is to go to the other side of the world to fight it, because it lacks the logistical capability to project military force more than a few hundred miles outside its own borders — and the main “threat” is its ability to fight back when you attack it — you know something’s pretty messed up.