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Regimen of Permanent Wars

by RON RIDENOUR

We live in the Permanent War Age. The United States' goal is simple—one that exposes a superpower's arrogance and monetary greed, and one that appeals to the American Dream for the majority of its citizens—world domination!

Most US Americans believe they are the best people in the world, the strongest, the bravest, owners of the Land of Opportunity. And if war is necessary to maintain that predominance, so be it—although since the 2008 capital-created economic crisis, there are some cracks in the wall.

Granted, there have been wars for thousands of years ever since the idea took hold that one should possess private property. From that came acceptance of war to seize others' private property. Wars for territorial expansion have existed since the first empires were formed some 4000 years ago.

While emperors sought territorial expansion and control over socio-political entities, modern imperialism concentrates on economic domination without a permanent military presence, until a military intervention is deemed necessary to put down domestic unrest or other foreign influence.

For the last generation since the fall of state socialism (or state capitalism) in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, as well as in Viet Nam, Cambodia, China and Cuba, the US has stood as the world's sole superpower. Nevertheless, to assure world domination it must ally with Europe especially NATO, along with Canada, Australia and Japan.

The so-called Cold War ended with the fall of any pretense of functioning socialism but wars continue, and the militarization of the world marches hand in hand with globalization extending

even into outer space. The United States gets off with its aggressive wars by simply declaring them necessary to stop terrorism, especially in the Middle East, but not, of course, its terrorist friends in Israel and Saudi Arabia. US self-righteous excuse is the terrorism committed against US power structures within the United States, on September 11, 2001. No matter that almost all of those allegedly identified terrorists were Saudi Arabians—none were from Afghanistan or Iraq—the warriors in the Pentagon and Langley unleashed patriotic murder and legitimized torture in Afghanistan, then Iraq and other Middle Eastern and African countries where challengers lurk.

“The War-On-Terror” script was written just a year before its terror was enthusiastically unleashed to grab all oil and gas fuel and other raw materials anywhere it could. The world’s policeman warehoused ample ammo in 800 military bases, in 131 countries. Today, the US has military bases where it never had before the fall of European socialist states, including in several new sovereign states earlier under the Soviet Union, but also in Iraq and Afghanistan, and even in Australia. It has doubled its number of bases in Colombia for a total of eight where it also has troops. It operates military war games with previous enemies in Viet Nam and Cambodia. □□The business warlord promoters, who wrote the script “to promote American global leadership” with its preeminent military forces, had founded the right-wing think tank, Project for a New American Century (PNAC), in 1997. In September 2000, the PNAC published its imperial report, “Rebuilding America’s Defenses: Strategies, Forces, and Resources for a New Century”. They knew it would be unpopular so they predicted that, in order for it to be accepted by sufficient numbers, a tragedy on the scale of Pearl Harbor would have to occur. Some forces complied a year later.

September 11, 2001 was the best of days for the weapons, oil and construction industries. And it fortified the relatively new service branch of professional paramilitary mercenaries into a large national killing industry. Now that the stage was set, the Permanent War Age had to be sold. We good humans must be fearful of the terrorists, and thus we will passively or actively support all the wars the various US governments render us, as we must accept their terror laws and the demise of civil and labor rights fought for and won by workers, solidarity and leftist activists, ethnic rights fighters and civil libertarians.

“When a state is committed to such policies, it must somehow find a way to divert the population, to keep them from seeing what’s happening around them. There are not many ways to do this. The standard ones are to inspire fear of terrible enemies about to overwhelm us, and awe for our grand leaders who rescue us from disaster in the nick of time,” so Noam Chomsky asserted already in 1986 (What Uncle Sam Really Wants.)

The September 13, 2001 edition of the “Philadelphia Inquirer” spoke to those fears aroused on 9/11 with the headline: “Give War a Chance”!

George Bush Jr. ordered the war-on-terror October 7, after having granted the military forces unlimited money, weapons and resources. The CIA got ten times the previous amount of money for bribes and payments to mercenaries and torturers. “Preventative” war was approved with new mass destruction weapons including nuclear and bacteriological weapons. □PNAC spokesmen took up many important posts in the Bush regime—Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, William

Kristol, Elliott Abrahams, John Bolton, Richard Perle, John Ashcroft, Richard Cheney (Halliburton's former CEO). They succeeded in ramming through the Patriotic Act. People can now be arrested and detained indefinitely without a judge's approval or even a trial. A police state is well underway.

Former NATO Commander, U.S. General Wesley Clark told "Democracy Now"(2007) that just ten days after 9/11, the Bush regime had plans to invade as soon as possible several of 40 countries it listed as "rogue states"—Iraq, Libya, Syria, Lebanon, Somalia, Sudan and Iran. What they had in common was oil and banks not under the multinational corporation control of the Banking International Settlement (BIS) rules that benefit private capital interests. One of the empire's fears, for example, was that Saddam Hussein had agreed with France President Jacques Chirac to switch from dollars to Euros in oil trading. Six months later oil dollar rich Bush invaded. □ Despite initial hesitancy from several European governments, the Bush regime succeeded in drawing nearly all of Europe, including most Social Democrats and Socialists, into its wars. NATO's constitution had been limited to defense but was remade, in order to allow for aggressive wars in any area of the world.

While the Bush government was held down to two wars at a time, the Obama regime has stepped up the ante with seven at once: Iraq still is under partial control of U.S. military advisors and well paid mercenaries, plus Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Uganda, Somalia, Libya. The Syrian opposition is also politically and materially supported by the US and some of Europe.

The US governmental budget is \$3.7 trillion; about half of that is for its military apparatus and its present and past wars. There are currently 25 million war veterans and they get paid pensions and payment for injuries received under wartime. □ □ To be able to understand how the US got the way it is today—the world's dominating war power—we must look at its two hundred history saturated in war. □ □

Imperial History

The first war began even before the United States gained nationhood. While still a British colony, the white colonists warred against the indigenous "Indians", in order to take over the lands they used. Formal warring began in 1775 with the declared Chickamauga War against the Cherokee nation, the Shawnees and others. The "Indian wars" lasted for a century in which up to two million natives were murdered. Those who survived were incarcerated into "reservations". □ □ This war, and those to come against Latin Americans, was part of "Manifest Destiny", ordained to "expand its territory" and "to extend and enhance its political, social and economic influences". □ □ The congress legalized, in 1823, the "Monroe Doctrine" as part of Manifest Destiny. Its policy towards Europe: Hands off the US's backyard, that is, Latin America. □ □ Of the thousands of times that US military force has been used, many countries have been subjected several times. Cuba has been attacked 12 times since 1814; Nicaragua 12 times since 1853; Panama on 13 occasions since 1856. □ □ Although Latin America has been the most targeted, China has been attacked 30 times from 1843 "gunboat diplomacy" to 1999 when the US bombed its embassy in Yugoslavia. □ □ War was waged in 1798-1800 against France over its colonies in the Caribbean. Then it was Britain's turn in 1812. The United States stole half of Mexico in 1846-8: Texas, California, New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, Nevada and

Wyoming. □ □ In 1933, the pensioner Marine Corp Major-General Smedley Butler explained how war is a racket.

“I spent thirty- three years and four months in active military service as a member of this country’s most agile military force, the Marine Corps. I served in all commissioned ranks from Second Lieutenant to Major-General. And during that period, I spent most of my time being a high class muscle- man for Big Business, for Wall Street and for the Bankers. In short, I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism.

I suspected I was just part of a racket at the time. Now I am sure of it. Like all the members of the military profession, I never had a thought of my own until I left the service. My mental faculties remained in suspended animation while I obeyed the orders of higher-ups. This is typical with everyone in the military service. □ □ I helped make Mexico, especially Tampico, safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefits of Wall Street. The record of racketeering is long. I helped purify Nicaragua for the international banking house of Brown Brothers in 1909-1912. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for American sugar interests in 1916. In China I helped to see to it that Standard Oil went its way unmolested.”

Overt military invasions and interventions

□ □ In my research about US wars, I found many sources of facts and statistics. Some of them are from US government departments, the Congress, historians, journalists, former top killers, such as General Butler and secret service officers. Listing names and figures is boring reading but bear with me because these facts are startling.

Between 1869 and 1897, the US sent is war ships to Latin American harbors **5,980** times. That is one ship ever two days over three decades. Hundreds of these dockings resulted in killings of local workers on strike and insurgents against national governments. (1)

In a report to Congress in 2008, **330 military interventions** were detailed. (2) 167 interventions from 1798 to 1941, plus 163 interventions from 1945 to 2008. Since then wars against or within Pakistan, Libya, Somalia, Yemen and Uganda must be added: 335. All these wars were aggressive. Both world wars in the 20th century are not included since they were uniquely defensive wars.

After World War Two, the United States economy was booming and its territory unscathed unlike all of Europe and Japan. Its tycoons and politicians seized the perfect opportunity to strive for world domination, albeit the Soviet Union was an obstacle as was China also soon to become. State Department chief for national security planning, George Kennan, expressed the policy succinctly in the secret Policy Planning Study of 1948: □ □

“...We have about 50% of the world’s wealth but only 6.3% of its population. This disparity is particularly great between ourselves and the peoples of Asia. In this situation, we cannot fail to be the object of envy and resentment. Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of

relationships which will permit us to maintain this position of disparity without positive detriment to our national security. To do so, we will have to dispense with all sentimentality and day-dreaming; and our attention will have to be concentrated everywhere on our immediate national objectives. We need not deceive ourselves that we can afford today the luxury of altruism and world-benefaction.”□□ “In the face of this situation [Asiatic problems among the peoples themselves, overpopulation, lack of food, and Moscow’s luring influence. Ed. note] we would be better off to dispense now with a number of the concepts which have underlined our thinking with regard to the Far East. □ We should dispense with the aspiration to ‘be liked’ or to be regarded as the repository of a high-minded international altruism. We should stop putting ourselves in the position of being our brothers’ keeper and refrain from offering moral and ideological advice. We should cease to talk about vague and – for the Far East – unreal objectives such as human rights, the raising of the living standards, and democratization. The day is not far off when we are going to have to deal in straight power concepts. The less we are then hampered by idealistic slogans, the better.” (3)

Kennan was considered by the mass media to be a “liberal dove”, just as were John Kennedy, Bill Clinton and Colin Powell, and as is Barak Obama today.

US military bases on foreign soil were used 200 times between 1945 and 1991 to intervene in third world countries. Millions were killed during the alleged Cold War period. (4)

Several analysts add to the above aggressions the use of military power as threats to force governments to do what the US demands, which succeeded without the use of bullets. This happened 218 times just between January 1946 and January 1976. (5)

The US has conducted military aggression 565 times—combining direct military attacks and lesser military interventions—between 1798 and the present; 395 of these attacks occurred since World War 11 (6) in, at least, 60 countries up to 1988. (7) The estimated numbers of persons killed in these non-defensive wars is placed at **20 million**.

Of these invaded countries the US has bombarded 28 nations between the end of the Second World War and 2000. (8). Since then one must add Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and drones against Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen: 34 nations.□□

Covert Wars

Five hundred and sixty-five military invasions/interventions is not the whole story of state terror. We must add the covert murders under the direction of the National Security Council (NSC) with the CIA as its key killer since WW11. President Harry Truman’s National Security Council Directive 10/2 gave the NSC/CIA permission to use paramilitary forces, sniping and other forms of assassinations, create instability in economies, intervene in elections, and use other means to overthrow governments “from time to time”.

These preemptive deadly actions were ordered to be “so planned and executed that any US Government responsibility for them is not evident to unauthorized persons and that if uncovered the US Government can plausibly disclaim any responsibility for them.” (9)

Following the victory of the tenacious Vietnamese over the warrior Yankees, Congress investigated US executive use of unlawful violence against several countries and leaders. □□ In 1975 and 1976, Senator Frank Church's Committee United States Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities "published fourteen reports on the formation of U.S. intelligence agencies, their operations, and the alleged abuses of law and of power that they had committed, together with recommendations for reform, some of which were put in place." □□

"Among the matters investigated were attempts to assassinate foreign leaders, including Patrice Lumumba of the Congo, Rafael Trujillo of the Dominican Republic, the Diem brothers of Vietnam, Gen. René Schneider of Chile and President John F. Kennedy's plan to use the Mafia to kill Fidel Castro of Cuba." (10)

The Church committee found that the CIA had committed 900 large and 3,000 lesser covert and violent operations. (11)

John Stockwell, one of several CIA officers who became whistle-blowers, said, in 1990, that the CIA had completed 3,000 large and 10,000 lesser covert operations during its existence. □□ Stockwell asserted that at least six million people had been murdered in the CIA's secret wars. That would bring the figures of persons murdered overtly and covertly by the United States to 26 million by 2008—and that does not include covert murders since 1990 or the overt killings since 2008. (12) □□

Libya

Despite the fact that all humans either know or can know that the United States is a gruesomely violent nation, its Obama government (and many others in Europe) was able to convince the majority of its citizens, including well-meaning NGOs and many progressive activists that it and NATO were justified in a partial invasion of Libya, in order to remove the Gaddafi government because it was killing "innocent civilians".

Let us see what was really at stake. □□ Libya was Africa's largest exporter of oil, 1.7 million tons a day, which quickly was reduced to 300-400,000 ton due to US-NATO bombing.

Libya exported 80% of its oil—80% of that to Italy (32%), Germany (14%), France and China (10% each), and USA (5%). With just 20% of the extracted oil there was plenty of money to afford education and health care for the entire population without individual payment. There were schools, libraries, hospitals enough for all. Youths studying abroad had their education paid for by the state. Each newly wed couple received \$50,000 from state coffers to start a family. There was no poverty. And there was plenty left over for wealth to the Gaddafi clan. (13)

Gaddafi had been preparing to launch a gold dinar for oil trade with all of Africa's 200 million people and other interested countries. French President Nickola Sarkozy called this, "a threat for financial security of mankind". Much of France's wealth—more than any other colonial-imperialist power—comes from exploiting Africa. There is evidence from Gaddafi defectors (especially Nouri Mesmari, who was under French protection) that France started preparing a

Benghazi-based rebellion against Gaddafi from November 2010, in order to stop his plans to switch from the dollar to a new gold currency. US politician, Rep. Dennis Kucinich confirms this. (14)

Central Bank of Libya is 100% owned by state (since 1956) and is thus outside multinational corporation BIS banking control. The state can finance its own projects and do so without interest rates, which reduces the costs by half that of private banks. Libya's central bank had 144 tons of gold in its vaults, which it could use to start the gold dinar. (China, Russia, India, and Iran are also stocking great sums of gold rather than relying only on dollars.)

The Central Bank used \$33 billion, without interest rates, to build the Great Man-Made River of 4,000 kilometers with three parallel pipelines running oil, gas and water supplying 70% of the people (4.5 of its 6 million) with clean drinking and irrigation water. This provides adequate crops for the people and was a competitive exporter of vegetables with Israel and Egypt. □□The Central Bank also financed Africa's first communication satellite with \$300 million of the \$377 million cost. It started up for all Africa, December 26, 2007, thus saving the 45-African nations an annual fee of \$500 million previously pocketed by Europe for use of its satellites. This means much less cost for telephones and other communication systems for all Africans. □The opposition, led by some clan leaders in the east, and former Gaddafi ministers, set up a central bank in Benghazi to replace Libya's central bank even before they had set up a government. It was immediately recognized by Paris' stock exchange and soon other Westerners. This is the first time in history that rebels have set up a bank before victory or before having a government.

Key western powers decided that Gaddafi was not enough their man and France, along with the UK, took the lead to threaten him militarily. In March, 2011, Gaddafi threatened to throw western oil companies out of Libya. With more blustering from the west, Gaddafi invited Chinese, Russian and Indian oil companies to take their place. □□The West then accused Gaddafi of murdering "innocent civilians". What he did was to threaten that they would be killed in battle if they did not surrender their arms. They were not "innocent civilians" but armed insurrectionists. Every government fights armed insurrections. □□On March 17, the US-France-UK got what they wanted for starters from the UN. Resolution 1973 called only for a no-fly strategy and not a regime shift or troop landings. It was not backed by key big powers: China, Russia, Brazil, India and Germany. Of the 28 NATO countries, only 14 were involved in the Libyan campaign and only six of those (including Denmark) took part in the air war, which soon escalated far beyond a "no-fly" strategy to hit any target. The Gaddafi forces did not use any aircraft once the Triumvirate (The US, NATO and the European Union) invaded. □□Sadly, as former State Department analyst William Blum, put it:

"If the Triumvirate's propaganda is clever enough and deceptive enough and paints a graphic picture of Gaddafi-initiated high tragedy in Libya, many American and European progressives will insist that though they never, ever support imperialism they're making an exception this time because ..." □□"The Libyan people are being saved from a "massacre", both actual and potential. This massacre, however, seems to have been grossly exaggerated by the Triumvirate, al Jazeera TV, and that station's owner, the government of Qatar; and nothing approaching reputable evidence of a massacre has been offered, neither a mass grave or anything else... Qatar, it should be noted, has played an active military role in the civil war on the side of NATO.

It should be further noted that the main massacre in Libya has been six months of daily Triumvirate bombing, killing an unknown number of people and ruining much of the infrastructure...” (15)

Following the Triumvirate victory against secular Libya, several Islamist fundamentalist factions, including al-Qaeda, formed the new government. And the Triumvirate seeks to privatize the National Oil Corporation, transferring Libya’s oil wealth into foreign hands. □ □

Today

□ □ Now, it is the secular governments of Syria and Lebanon’s turn to be corralled. If the Triumvirate is successful in overthrowing these governments, all of the Middle East will be run by religious regimes, and al-Qaeda will be in several of them. Ironic it is, but it is also understandable since the Islamic fundamentalists became powerful throughout so much of the Middle East only after the United States trained, armed and financed both al-Qaeda and Taliban, in order to be rid of Soviet influence. These fundamentalists, in reality, need be no economic threat as they are guided by conservative capitalism. The only contention is that they wish to be sovereign. And so does Iran, and that is the next big target.

The Obama regime is also exercising the traditional Hands Off policy against its southern back yard whereas Bush was nearly inactive there. State Department Secretary Hillary Clinton mentioned Bush’s insufficiency in dealing with the new rogue states in Latin America during her May first, 2009 speech. And she warned the region and the west in general about Russian, Chinese and Iranian growing influence, which must be stopped. Clinton also blamed Bush, in effect, for Hugo Chavez ascendancy in Venezuela, and that of Evo Morales in Bolivia, and Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua. □ □ Honduran General Romeo Vasquez was among Clinton’s devout listeners. Less than two months after his mentor’s authoritarian speech, he led a coup d’état against the popularly elected president Manuel Zelaya. Although coming from a conservative political party, and being a rich rancher, once in office he began to listen to Chavez and sought to improve the lot of the poor. Zelaya even brought Honduras into the ALBA (Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America), an alternative economic-socio-political alliance to those bound to capitalist economics and politics. □ □ After illegally arresting President Zelaya, some of Vasquez troops beat up and harassed ambassadors and other diplomats from the embassies of Venezuela, Nicaragua and, of course, Cuba. The Clintons alongside Obama, with Bush in the wings, must have smiled. □ □ Zelaya was exiled to Costa Rica, and the new government got out of ALBA and rejoined the United States’ back yard. Unlike in the past, all of Latin America refused to recognize the coup and suspended Honduras from cooperative unions. □ □ Three years afterward, June 2012, another progressive president—former Catholic Bishop Fernando Lugo elected president of Paraguay—was ousted from office by a “congressional coup d’état”. Practically all of Latin America, including conservative Colombia and Chile, denounced what they also considered to be a coup. Paraguay’s new government was expelled from cooperative unions such as Mercosur. But, as in the case with Honduras, no matter how much critique and denunciations there may be as long as the world’s policeman backs totalitarianism so be it.

Conclusion

Not all is bleak. As Leonard Cohen sings, *“There are cracks in everything; that’s how the light gets in”*.

Wikileaks whistle blowers disseminate worldwide many of these cracks in the imperial wall. There are many insiders who come over to the people’s side, brave people such as Bradley Manning. There is still hope with the Arab Spring persistency, albeit many protestors have been persuaded to ally directly or indirectly with new governments and insurgencies friendly to the imperial system.

Moreover, the Occupy Wall Street movement, although not as powerful as at its beginning, is far from being finished. Their militancy, coupled with the original Arab Spring energy and that of indignados in Spain and like minded activists in several crisis-rammed European countries, is an inspiration today and for the future.

As someone born in the USA, I encourage us to rebuild and fortify anti-war movements in our countries, and act in solidarity with progressive forces in people-oriented governments and insurgency movements. Let us engage the monster creatively, using not only mass demonstrations but also direct actions and civil disobedience, and disseminate our message loudly and clearly wherever we are: in schools, work places, in religious-spiritual centers, worker unions...

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14. Bechis, Franco, "French plans to topple Gaddafi on track since last November." <http://www.voltairenet.org/article169069.html> □ 15. Blum, William. *The Anti-Empire Report*, September 1, 2011. <http://killinghope.org/bblum6/aer97.html>
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