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Denounce the World Order of Permanent War

Veterans Day

by GILBERT MERCIER

November 11, 2014

On the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918, World War I officially ended. That day marked the end of a four-year massive slaughter that killed more than seven million French, German, British, Russian and Austro-Hungarian soldiers, and killed or wounded millions more civilians. The United States stayed on the sidelines of the conflict to enter it only in its last 19 months. Nevertheless, during World War I, 116,000 US soldiers were killed in action, making this a conflict twice as deadly as Vietnam for the US military.

World War I, at its inception, was rationalized by calling it “the war to end all wars.” Obviously, this did not work out as planned and 31 years later Europe was engulfed in the psychotic killing mayhem of World War II. Since then, the world has had few periods of sanity where conflict resolution between nations entailed diplomacy rather than warfare. Almost 70 years after the end of World War II, we live in a world at war, as if no lessons were learned.

The insane logic of war seems always to have the upper hand over peaceful solutions between nations. For centuries politicians and generals have made arguments to justify warfare. One of the newer versions, still currently made by the defenders of military action in the US, is the convoluted and disingenuous distinction between “wars of choice” and “wars of necessity.” One could argue that the last “war of necessity” fought by the US was World War II. In effect, the US was attacked by Japan in Hawaii and German U-boats in the Atlantic, and had the right to defend

itself. After this, the wars fought by the two new super-powers (the US and the USSR) were arguably “wars of choice,” or more accurately, wars either to maintain or expand their respective empires. This was the case for the Korean and Vietnam wars, both fought on the ideological ground of preventing the so-called domino-effect spread of communism.

Today, the nation that wages wars across the globe is the US. In the cases of Iraq and Afghanistan, the never ending war in Iraq is almost unanimously identified as being a war of choice, while the conflict in Afghanistan is too often called a war of necessity. Some have even pushed the barbaric logic of this definition by calling it “the good war.” For the US, war is not the solution of last resort anymore but has instead become a pathological way to assert dominance and conduct world affairs. It is also, and mainly, a crucial part of the United States’ economy.

Seven decades after the end of World War II, US troops remain in Germany and Japan. The US military still has a strong military base in South Korea. On November 10, 2010, the Obama administration made a move away from its commitment to start the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan in July 2011. Then, 2014 was supposed to be the target date to a complete withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan, but now this extremely elusive “target” has been conveniently switched to 2016, right at the end of president Obama’s second term in office. In 2009 the White House had insisted on the July 2011 deadline; the message to shift this deadline is effectively a victory for the military, which was saying that the July 2011 deadline was undermining its mission.

In a book titled “*Washington Rules: America’s Path to Permanent War*“, Andrew Bacevich, a retired US Army Colonel, offers one of the most drastic and insightful critique of America’s military and foreign policies since World War II.

“By the midpoint of the 20th century, the Pentagon had become Leviathan, its actions veiled in secrecy, its reach extending around the world. Yet, while the concentration of power in Wall Street had once evoked deep fear and suspicions, Americans by and large saw the concentration of power in the Pentagon as benign. Most found it reassuring,” wrote Bacevich in his book.

Since 2001, the logic of capitalism’s global war economy has dictated US foreign policy. There are no more wars of necessity or even choice. The wars are for profit, and they feed the infinite appetite of the military-industrial complex and its Wall Street stockholders. It does not matter that Libya, Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan have been turned into permanent killing fields. Unless the edifice that manufactures ruins, death and misery either collapses or is taken down, the permanent wars for profit of America Empire Inc. will indefinitely continue.