

America Programmed for War

The Long War: from NSC68 to 2005

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first in a series of three commentaries in advance of public forums planned for the fall. The next viewpoint will be titled, "Our Schools: Cogs in the Machine," followed by "Pentagon World or People's America: Cause for Unity and Hope."

In the counsels of Government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the Military Industrial Complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists, and will persist. We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes.

– President Dwight Eisenhower upon leaving office, 1961



As the UO's first graduate student in the transdisciplinary field of Peace Studies, it is my responsibility to explore the role of the military in society and those conditions that most promote peace and human welfare. Unfortunately, this task puts me in direct conflict with UO administrators, including President Dave Frohnmayer, whose signature appears on my bachelor's degree.

There is nothing personal about this conflict, and Frohnmayer has done nothing out of the ordinary. Like the presidents of more than 300 other universities that conduct research for the Department of Defense, he is simply leading the UO into an evermore intimate partnership with America's military industrial complex. Soliciting funds to cultivate teaching programs is necessary to compensate for the low federal priority of education and the diversion of state funds to the top federal priority of military supremacy. On the other hand, as I will explain in this series, such a partnership contradicts the inherent purpose of enlightenment (aka higher education), as most if not all of these outsourced projects will in one way or another result in the death or disabling of humans.

There is no fundamental difference between the Cold War and today's so-called permanent war on terror – perfect fuel for our military-based economy.

Before I expand on the costs to our society and the active participation of our schools, it is worth noting that in my 50 years I wrote pen-pal letters asking President Kennedy to take down the Berlin Wall, marched with Martin Luther King Jr., worshipped John Lennon, worked for companies building Trident, MX, and Stinger missiles simultaneous to my involvement with Carl Sagan's anti-Cold War *Space Bridge* project, and helped build the B-1 bomber and parts for the Aegis Weapons System (capable of directing 20 missiles at once) on the Ticonderoga-class battle cruiser – much of this while attempting to deconstruct the obvious conflict between what I wanted (peace) and what I needed (a paycheck).

So, I know a thing or two about conscience. But only after 500 hours of research this year (some 14 years after leaving the defense industry) did I come to appreciate the simple nature of the dilemma confronting a world dominated by a war-driven America and to identify the opportunity it presents.

A single policy decision made in secluded chambers of the White House shortly after World War II explains why our financial and intellectual creativity focuses on lethal technologies, why 51 percent of our taxes go to defense and less than 5 percent go to education, why there are 6,000 military bases in the U.S. and 1,000 U.S. bases overseas, why comprehensive agendas support warfighting and weak agendas address human services and the environment, and why our top industry since 1950 remains the manufacture and sale of weapons.

Our dilemma stems from the postwar adoption of a military-based rather than a people-based economy. This policy, authored by Wall Street's Paul Nitze, is embodied in NSC68, a document signed by President Truman in 1950. Along with then Secretary of State Dean Acheson, Nitze convinced – some say coerced – Truman into recognizing the Soviet Union as an evil and imminent threat, and into adopting NSC68 and launching the Cold War.

Assessing key indicators in 1947 and '48, Truman's advisors acutely feared an economic collapse back into the Depression, and, as Noam Chomsky points out, there was scant debate among them: "It wasn't really a debate because it was settled before it started, but the issue was at least raised – should the government pursue military spending or social spending?"

All U.S. military actions from 1950 to 2005 flow from this decision, made without the consent of the American people. There is no fundamental difference between the Cold War and today's so-called permanent war on terror – perfect fuel for our military-based

economy. For 55 years, America has been waging a crime against humanity, a crime for profiteers. I call it the Long War because "permanent" is defeatist.

As satellite photos and extensive post-Cold War interviews have revealed (including interviews with Acheson, Nitze, and Paul Wolfowitz, our current Deputy Secretary of Defense), no Soviet threat existed in 1950. NSC68 was a for-profit ploy. Paul Wolfowitz cites Nitze and Acheson among his role models:

"Paul Nitze has had a huge mark on my career over many, many years, starting with 1969, when I was still a very much wet-behind-the-ears graduate student who came to Washington to work with three great men: Paul Nitze, Dean Acheson, and Albert Wohlstetter."

When the Cold War ended, longtime admirers and associates of Paul Nitze, led by Paul Wolfowitz – mentor to Donald Rumsfeld, Dick Cheney, and Richard Perle – immediately began searching for another means to justify America's permanent war economy.

Plans for today's war on terror surfaced in 1992 as President George H.W. Bush pulled out of Iraq. Realizing that the follow-up to the Cold War was not playing out according to their expecta-

tions, blueprints for re-invasion and global expansion were drawn up by Wolfowitz, Dick Cheney, and Lewis Libby, Cheney's current chief of staff.

When not promoting fear ("Today we face an even greater threat, an enemy that not only hates freedom; it hates life itself and worships death"), Paul Wolfowitz provides our rationale for the Long War: "This is not about America imposing its values on other people. It's about America enabling other people to enjoy the values from which we benefit so enormously."

In other words, our permanent war policy *is* about imposing our values on others, and it therefore thoroughly contradicts the objectives of the Constitution *to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.*

A war-driven economy requires conflict – there have been more than 200 wars since World War II ended. But those in power today have also retooled our corporate industry (through the weakening of safeguards), our national intelligence agencies (through top-down coercion, firings, and policy changes), and the public mindset (through consolidation of media) to optimize war profits and popularize the notion of the need for permanent war.

Today our war-driven economy is justified by a "necessary" war on terror. But which came first – America's global military-economic outreach, or international terrorism? Terrorism is a blowback of our own policy, and as Chomsky says, the way to stop terrorism is to stop participating in it.

In the pathological pursuit of profit and power, government and corporations (and university executives) march hand in hand, realizing President Abraham Lincoln's worst fears:

I see in the near future, a crisis approaching that unnerves me and causes me to tremble for the safety of my country. Corporations have been enthroned, an era of corruption will follow, and the money power of the country will endeavor to prolong its reign by working upon the prejudices of the people, until the wealth is aggregated in a few hands, and the republic destroyed.

The cause of our problems – the adoption and maintenance of the Long War policy – is well defined and its proponents are self-identified. We know what the future holds as long as we have leaders who sustain this policy as the engine of our nation. Yet, with the problem identified, the people can begin to implement a solution.

To motivate ourselves, we might also consider at stake the control and meaning of creativity, for in today's America, heroes are made of dark insights. In 2004 Paul Nitze was honored for his creativity in the interest of serving peace by having a ship christ-

'To name a destroyer after a living American is an honor bestowed on very, very few people.'

– Paul Wolfowitz

tened in his name. About that celebration, Paul Wolfowitz declared: "To name a destroyer after a living American is an honor bestowed on very, very few people."

Peace bears no arms, erects no barriers, and plays not upon the fears of people. Call our foreign policies offensive, contentious, and coercive, but they do not serve peace. In the words of the Roman historian Tacitus, *Rome creates a desert and calls it "peace."*

We the people serve neither Rome nor any empire, and in serving peace, we shall neither create conflict nor consent to exchange our rights so leaders may profit. Rather – as written – we are obliged to exchange our leaders so humankind may prosper. Our constitutionally guaranteed rights rest beneath the deliberate manufacture of war for profit. Fifty five years of the Long War is long enough. It is time to rise and organize for a peaceful world in the name of the people for whom America was born.

Brian Bogart is a guest speaker every Monday at 4 pm on AM radio 1600 KOPT, and is planning free talks on these topics at 4 pm Aug. 12, 19, 26, and Sept. 2, 9 at 128 Chiles Hall across from the UO Bookstore. To help fund and complete his project, IntelligentFuture.org, contact him at bbogart@uoregon.edu