



## Guns for Hire: America's Crisis State Goes Global



John Whitehead

“Political parties exist to secure responsible government and to execute the will of the people. From these great staffs, both of the old parties have ganged aside. Instead of instruments to promote the general welfare they have become the tools of corrupt interests which use them in martialling [sic] to serve their selfish purposes. [Behind the ostensible government sits enthroned an invisible government owing no allegiance and acknowledging no responsibility to the people.](#)” —*Theodore Roosevelt*

From being a nation in a permanent state of emergency, America's crisis state has gone global.

The military industrial complex, which has established itself as the “solution” to all of our worldly problems (at taxpayer expense, of course), has mired the nation in endless wars abroad waged by U.S. military service people who have been reduced to little more than guns for hire.

Every successive president starting with Franklin D. Roosevelt has been bought—lock, stock and barrel—and made to dance to the tune of the police state, a.k.a. the Deep State, a.k.a. the military industrial complex, a.k.a. the surveillance state complex.

Even Dwight D. Eisenhower, the retired five-star Army general-turned-president who warned against the disastrous rise of misplaced power by the military industrial complex was complicit in contributing to the build-up of the military's role in dictating national and international policy.

The [Biden Administration's response to the latest carnage in the ongoing Israel-Hamas war](#) merely plays into the hands of a salivating military industrial complex for whom war is merely a means to a larger profit margin.

War has become a huge money-making venture, and America, with its vast military empire and its incestuous relationship with a host of international defense contractors, is one of its best [buyers](#) and [sellers](#).

Under President Trump's leadership, the U.S. military [dropped a bomb every 12 minutes](#).

President Obama, the antiwar candidate and Nobel Peace Prize winner, [waged war longer than any American president](#). His administration's targeted-drone killings resulted in [at least 1.3 million lives lost to the U.S.-led war on terror](#).

America has long had a penchant for endless wars that empty our national coffers while fattening those of the military industrial complex.

The United States has [been at war for all but 15 years in its 247-year](#) history.



Written by [John and Nisha Whitehead](#) on October 15, 2023

Since 9/11, we've spent more than [\\$8 trillion to wage wars abroad](#), including [the lifetime price of health care for disabled veterans and interest on the national debt](#).

The average American [pays over \\$2300 a year in taxes to support the military](#), half of which goes to [military contractors](#).

Even with America's military might spread thin, the war drums continue to sound as the Pentagon polices the rest of the world with [counterterror activities in 85 countries](#).

The American Empire—with its endless wars waged by U.S. military service people who have been reduced to little more than guns for hire: outsourced, stretched too thin, and deployed to far-flung places to police the globe—is approaching a breaking point.

Aided and abetted by the U.S government, the American military industrial complex has erected an empire unsurpassed in history in its breadth and scope, one dedicated to conducting perpetual warfare throughout the earth.

Although the U.S. constitutes barely 5% of the world's population, America boasts almost [40% of the world's total military expenditure](#), spending more on the military than the next 10 biggest spending nations combined.

Unfortunately, this level of war-mongering doesn't come cheap to the taxpayers who are forced to foot the bill.

Having been co-opted by greedy defense contractors, corrupt politicians and incompetent government officials, America's expanding military empire is bleeding the country dry. In fact, the U.S. government is spending money it doesn't have on a military empire it can't afford.

As investigative journalist Uri Friedman puts it, for more than 15 years now, the United States has been [fighting terrorism with a credit card](#), "essentially bankrolling the wars with debt, in the form of purchases of U.S. Treasury bonds by U.S.-based entities like pension funds and state and local governments, and by countries like China and Japan."

War is not cheap, but it becomes outrageously costly when you factor in [government incompetence, fraud, and greedy contractors](#).

For example, a leading accounting firm concluded that one of the Pentagon's largest agencies "[can't account for hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of spending](#)."

Unfortunately, the outlook isn't much better for the spending that can be tracked.

Consider that the government lost more than \$160 billion to waste and fraud by military and defense contractors. With paid contractors often outnumbering enlisted combat troops, the American war effort dubbed as the "coalition of the willing" has quickly evolved into the "coalition of the billing," with American taxpayers forced to cough up billions of dollars for cash bribes, luxury bases, a highway to nowhere, faulty equipment, salaries for so-called "ghost soldiers," and [overpriced anything and everything](#) associated with the war effort, including a [\\$640 toilet seat and a \\$7600 coffee pot](#).

A government audit found that defense contractor Boeing had been massively [overcharging taxpayers](#) for mundane parts, resulting in tens of millions of dollars in overspending. As the report noted, the [American taxpayer paid](#):

\$71 for a metal pin that should cost just 4 cents; \$644.75 for a small gear smaller than a



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dime that sells for \$12.51: more than a 5,100 percent increase in price. \$1,678.61 for another tiny part, also smaller than a dime, that could have been bought within DoD for \$7.71: a 21,000 percent increase. \$71.01 for a straight, thin metal pin that DoD had on hand, unused by the tens of thousands, for 4 cents: an increase of over 177,000 percent.

That [price gouging](#) has become an accepted form of corruption within the American military empire is a sad statement on how little control “we the people” have over our runaway government.

It’s not just the American economy that is being gouged, unfortunately.

There’s a good reason why [“bloated,” “corrupt” and “inefficient” are among the words most commonly applied to the government](#), especially the Department of Defense and its contractors.

Driven by a greedy defense sector, the American homeland has been transformed into a battlefield with militarized police and weapons better suited to a war zone. Biden, no different from his predecessors, has continued to expand America’s military empire abroad and domestically, calling on Congress to approve billions that pander to the powerful money interests (military, corporate and security) that run the Deep State and hold the government in its clutches.

Mind you, this isn’t just corrupt behavior. It’s deadly, downright immoral behavior.

Essentially, in order to fund this burgeoning military empire that polices the globe, the U.S. government is prepared to bankrupt the nation, jeopardize our servicemen and women, increase the chances of terrorism and blowback domestically, and push the nation that much closer to eventual collapse.

Clearly, our national priorities are in desperate need of an overhauling.

The illicit merger of the global armaments industry and the Pentagon that [President Dwight D. Eisenhower warned us against more than 60 years ago](#) has come to represent perhaps the greatest threat to the nation’s fragile infrastructure today.

The government is destabilizing the economy, destroying the national infrastructure through neglect and a lack of resources, and turning taxpayer dollars into blood money with its endless wars, drone strikes and mounting death tolls.

This is exactly the scenario Eisenhower warned against when he cautioned the citizenry not to let the profit-driven war machine endanger our liberties or democratic processes:

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children. The cost of one modern heavy bomber is this: a modern brick school in more than 30 cities. It is two electric power plants, each serving a town of 60,000 population. It is two fine, fully equipped hospitals. It is some fifty miles of concrete pavement. We pay for a single fighter plane with a half million bushels of wheat. [We pay for a single destroyer with new homes that could have housed more than 8,000 people.](#) This is, I repeat, the best way of life to be found on the road the world has been taking. This is not a way of life at all, in any true sense. Under the cloud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron.



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We failed to heed Eisenhower's warning.

As I make clear in my book [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#) and in its fictional counterpart [The Erik Blair Diaries](#), the growth of and reliance on militarism as the solution for our problems both domestically and abroad bodes ill for the constitutional principles which form the basis of the American experiment in freedom.

As James Madison warned, "Of all the enemies to public liberty war is, perhaps, the most to be dreaded because it comprises and develops the germ of every other. War is the parent of armies; from these proceed debts and taxes... known instruments for bringing the many under the domination of the few... No nation could preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare."

At the height of its power, even the mighty Roman Empire could not stare down a collapsing economy and a burgeoning military. Prolonged periods of war and false economic prosperity largely led to its demise. As historian Chalmers Johnson predicts:

The fate of previous democratic empires suggests that such a conflict is unsustainable and will be resolved in one of two ways. [Rome attempted to keep its empire and lost its democracy](#). Britain chose to remain democratic and in the process let go its empire. Intentionally or not, the people of the United States already are well embarked upon the course of non-democratic empire.

#### ABOUT JOHN & NISHA WHITEHEAD:

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