



Written by [John and Nisha Whitehead](#) on June 19, 2025

The Real National Emergency: Endless Wars, Failing Infrastructure, and a Dying Republic

Seventy years after President Dwight D. Eisenhower warned about the cost of a military-industrial complex, America is still stealing from its own people to fund a global empire.

In 2025 alone, the U.S. has launched [airstrikes in Yemen](#), bombed Houthi-controlled ports and radar installations (killing scores of civilians), deployed greater numbers of troops and multiple aircraft carriers to the Middle East, and [edged closer to direct war with Iran](#) in support of Israel's escalating conflict.

Each of these "new" fronts has been sold to the public as national defense. In truth, they are the latest outposts in a decades-long campaign of empire maintenance—one that lines the pockets of defense contractors while schools crumble, bridges collapse, and veterans sleep on the streets at home.

This isn't about national defense. This is empire maintenance.

It's about preserving a military-industrial complex that profits from endless war, global policing, and foreign occupations—while the nation's infrastructure crumbles and its people are neglected.

The United States has spent much of the past half-century policing the globe, occupying other countries, and waging endless wars.

What most Americans fail to recognize is that these ongoing wars have little to do with keeping the country safe and everything to do with propping up a military-industrial complex that has its sights set on world domination.

War has become a huge money-making venture, and the U.S. government, with its vast military empire, is one of its best buyers and sellers.

And now, the price of empire is rising again.

Clearly, it's time for the U.S. government to stop policing the globe.

The U.S. military reportedly has more than *1.3 million* men and women on active duty, with [more than 200,000 of them stationed overseas](#) in nearly every country in the world.

As investigative journalist David Vine explains, "Although few Americans realize it, the United States likely has [more bases in foreign lands than any other people, nation, or empire in history](#)."

Incredibly, America's military forces aren't being deployed abroad to protect our freedoms here at



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home. Rather, they're being used to guard oil fields, build foreign infrastructure and protect the financial interests of the corporate elite. In fact, the United States military spends about [\\$81 billion a year just to protect oil supplies around the world](#).

America's [military empire](#) spans nearly [800 bases in 160 countries](#), operated at a cost of more than \$156 billion annually. As Vine reports, "Even US military resorts and recreation areas in places like the Bavarian Alps and Seoul, South Korea, are bases of a kind. Worldwide, [the military runs more than 170 golf courses](#)."

This is how a military empire occupies the globe.

This is how the military-industrial complex, aided and abetted by the likes of Donald Trump, Joe Biden, Barack Obama, George W. Bush, Bill Clinton and others, continues to get rich at taxpayer expense.

War spending is bankrupting America.

Since 2001, the U.S. government has spent more than [\\$10 trillion waging its endless wars](#), much of it borrowed, much of it wasted, all of it paid for in blood and taxpayer dollars.

Add Yemen and the Middle East escalations of 2025, and the final bill for future wars and military exercises waged around the globe will total in the tens of trillions.

Talk about fiscally irresponsible: the U.S. government is spending money it doesn't have on a military empire it can't afford.

Even if we ended the government's military meddling today and brought all of the troops home, it would take decades to pay down the price of these wars and get the government's creditors off our backs.

As investigative journalist Uri Friedman puts it, for more than 15 years now, the United States has been [fighting terrorism with a credit card](#).

Americans have thus far allowed themselves to be spoon-fed a steady diet of pro-war propaganda that keeps them content to wave flags with patriotic fervor and less inclined to look too closely at the mounting body counts, the ruined lives, the ravaged countries, the blowback arising from ill-advised targeted-drone killings and bombing campaigns in foreign lands, or the transformation of our own homeland into a warzone.

That needs to change.

The U.S. government is not making the world any safer. It's making the world more dangerous.

The U.S. government is also not making America any safer. It's exposing American citizens to alarming levels of blowback, a CIA term referring to the unintended consequences of the U.S. government's international activities.

The war hawks' militarization of America—bringing home the spoils of war (the military tanks, grenade launchers, Kevlar helmets, assault rifles, gas masks, ammunition, battering rams, night vision binoculars, etc.) and handing them over to local police, thereby turning America into a battlefield—is also blowback.

James Madison was right: "[No nation could preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare](#)." As Madison explained, "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."



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We are seeing this play out before our eyes.

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 isn't just bad budgeting. It's moral bankruptcy. A country that can't care for its own people has no business policing the rest of the world.

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

We are funding our own collapse.

At the height of its power, even the mighty Roman Empire could not stare down a collapsing economy and a burgeoning military.

This is the "unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex" that President Dwight Eisenhower warned us not to let endanger our liberties or democratic processes.

We failed to heed his 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](#), war is the enemy of freedom.

As long as America's politicians continue to involve us in wars that 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, "we the people" will find ourselves in a perpetual state of tyranny.

About John & Nisha Whitehead:

Constitutional attorney and author John W. Whitehead is founder and president of The Rutherford Institute. His latest books [The Erik Blair Diaries](#) and [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#) are available at www.amazon.com. Whitehead can be contacted at johnw@rutherford.org. Nisha Whitehead is the Executive Director of The Rutherford Institute. Information about The Rutherford Institute is available at www.rutherford.org.



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