**Military “Solutions” Are Really the Problem!
For Real Security, We Need a Fair, Nonviolent Foreign Policy.**

by Glen Anderson

In our daily lives, we know better than to think violence solves problems, but at the national level the U.S. government routinely threatens and uses military violence all over the world. Militarism makes problems worse, but it gives power and money to some kinds of people and businesses. Let’s debunk military violence as a way to solve international problems. Let’s replace it with peace and fairness in order to achieve “national security” in a profound, holistic way, not as a euphemism for dominating the world through military violence and threatening nuclear war.

The U.S. had a Department of War from 1789 to 1947. During that time – more than century and a half – our nation fought only a few foreign wars.

But – in an Orwellian irony – since 1947 when the Department of War changed to the Department of Defense, the U.S. has been almost constantly at war. We simply pretended that endless wars were for our “defense.”

Since the late 1940s, the U.S. has felt entitled to bomb and attack a great many countries. We overthrew governments – including functional democracies that U.S. businesses and politicians did not like. Likewise, the U.S. has armed and supported a great many dictators and violent thugs who served U.S. business and geo-political interests.

The US has been fighting wars practically non-stop for more than 70 years, but 1942 was the last time Congress actually declared war. All of our subsequent wars have been started by presidents with or without approval by Congress, in violation of the US Constitution and often in violation of the Vietnam-era War Powers Act.

Now the U.S. has nearly 800 military bases in nearly every country on earth.

During the Cold War, the U.S. created NATO, so the USSR created the Warsaw Pact. After the Cold War ended a quarter of a century ago, the Warsaw Pact was dissolved, but – in violation to what the U.S. had promised – NATO expanded all the way to Russia’s borders, and NATO conducted wars in areas beyond the “North Atlantic.”

Nearly 200 years ago, in 1823, U.S. President James Monroe proclaimed “The Monroe Doctrine,” which asserted – with absolutely no basis in international law – that European nations were prohibited from interfering in any nation in North or South America, and that if they did, the U.S. would react militarily against them. The U.S., in effect, asserted dominance over the future of the Western Hemisphere.

Many, many times the U.S. sent its military to overthrow democracies, support military dictatorships, and serve U.S. business interests. The U.S. “War on Drugs has been another gimmick to do this.

When a crisis occurs, politicians, the media and the public demand that the government “do something.” Because militarism has been the U.S.’s default policy, “do something” is nearly always assumed to mean do something violent! Military reactions displace honest diplomacy.

Militarism is the default regardless of which political party controls Congress or the Presidency. The U.S. has conducted stupid, unwinnable wars – and covert CIA and military operations – continuously since the late 1940s.

Public opinion surveys find more and more Americans saying our nation is “on the wrong track.” But those surveys never ask whether the public thinks endless wars and excessive militarization are examples of being “on the wrong track.”

Martin Luther King said the U.S. was on the wrong side of history in fighting Vietnam’s poor people. He said that the war was wasting money that should be spent on ending poverty. He bluntly stated: “A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.” Don’t we feel the U.S. experiencing “spiritual death”? Isn’t that part of our nation being “on the wrong track”?

While politicians and media keep telling us the U.S. is “the greatest democracy in the world” and “a shining beacon of freedom and liberty,” let’s recognize that the opposite is what’s actually happening. The U.S. imprisons far more of our population than any other nation on earth. The U.S. violently attacks many nations and civilian populations – and this provokes people to take terrorist actions against us. The government spies on our own people. Governments practice systemic racism, classism, and many kinds of constitutional violations here in our own nation. These cruelties make Americans feel powerless and make government contemptible.

The self-serving myth of “American exceptionalism” is the notion that the U.S. is so special that we are not bound by international law, and that the U.S. is entitled to attack any other nation on earth. Ancient Greek tragedies referred to this as ***hubris***, the kind of arrogance that led to tragic outcomes. The U.S. keeps acting on the ***hubris*** of “American exceptionalism,” and we are reaping the consequences worldwide and at home (PTSD among our troops and veterans, budgets that enrich the military and starve domestic society, etc.). Somebody said, “War is terrorism with a bigger budget.”

Militarism has become so “normalized” that many people think war is the way to achieve peace. But in our daily lives, we have better sense than to use violence to solve problems. If your neighbor’s dog is barking, you do not shoot the dog. If you disagree with a family member, you do not assault your relative. If your car does not run properly, you would not pound a heavy hammer on it in the vain hope that bashing it will fix the problem.

To live in a civilized nation and world, we must renounce killing in international matters – just like we do at the interpersonal level – and solve problems in peaceful ways.

Militarism does not work – and it actually backfires! Military “solutions” are really the problem! Militarism actually makes problems worse! It creates enemies, provokes terrorism, disables our own troops, bankrupts our nation, and steals budgets from programs that people really need.

In 1954 the CIA first wrote about “blowback,” the CIA’s tendency to create enemies from its activities, but for 65 years the CIA has continued to do more and more of the very actions that it knows will cause “blowback.” The CIA and Pentagon keep knowingly creating new enemies, so we attack them and create more new enemies, and so on. It seems stupid to us, but it gives escalating budgets and political power to the CIA and Pentagon – and to the weapons manufacturers who fund Congress and presidents.

They do NOT want to win our endless wars, because this would shrink their budgets – and the profits of the weapons manufacturers and other U.S. businesses.

Truly, the biggest threat to U.S. security is the recklessly violent military-industrial complex itself! They get rich and powerful by always losing wars while endangering and bankrupting the 99%.

Instead of cruel violence, we need a NONVIOLENT FOREIGN POLICY.

Imagine a truly nonviolent foreign policy grounded in fairness, compassion, economic justice, environmental sustainability, and profound respect for human rights, the oneness of the entire human family, and the best standards of International Law.

This nonviolent foreign policy would create friends worldwide instead of provoking enemies worldwide. It would allow us to slash the Pentagon budget, eliminate poverty, restore the environment, fund a bold Green New Deal, and more!

The government will NOT lead the way. Only a bold, nonviolent grassroots movement can lead us into a better future.

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