

# America's War Incorporated: Weapons and Wars 'R' US

By [John Stanton](#) and [Wayne Madsen](#)  
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*Critics of the US war machine frequently cite U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower's seminal speech in which he uncannily predicted the threat the “US military industrial complex” would pose to America and the world.*

In 1961, Eisenhower, a retired U.S. Army general who led the allied invasion of Germany in WWII, uttered these prescient words,

“ . . . In the councils 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. We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together . . . ”

If only the citizenry had listened.

Eisenhower's feared military industrial complex has been swept aside by the U.S. War Corporation. It took just 42 years for the War Corporation to eliminate the dividing line between the U.S. military and U.S. industry and eradicate the troublesome provisions of Posse Comitatus—an 1878 law that forbids military involvement in most domestic affairs, including law enforcement. The War Corporation has its tentacles in every element of the American political, military, economic and cultural milieu, and it affects the lives of every citizen in every country on the planet. It operates in the heavens, has claimed the Earth's moon and, perhaps, through the U.S. Air Force's Planetary Defense operation, has some

Strangelovian designs for Mars.

The United States of America has been at war with the world since Eisenhower made his remarks 42 years ago. From 1961 to 2002, the War Corporation has fueled the fires of death and destruction in every corner of the globe in order to make the world safe-for-profit, using the clever ruses of freedom and democracy. The evidence is astounding and sickening: the Cold War, the Vietnam War, the bombing of Libya, the indiscriminant offshore shelling of Lebanon by U.S. battleships, the invasion of Grenada, the invasion of Panama, the Persian Gulf War, daily bombings of Iraq in the “no fly zone,” ill-conceived military interventions into Somalia and Haiti, cruise missile attacks on Afghanistan and innocents in Sudan, U.S. state-sponsored assassinations in Chile, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Congo, Rwanda, Brazil, Colombia, a likely resumption of nuclear testing, and, finally, the War in Afghanistan and the War on Terrorism.

To make some interventions more palatable to the public, the Pentagon devised Orwellian-sounding code names to convey “good intentions”—Operations Provide Comfort (Kurdistan), Noble Eagle (the War on Terrorism), Enduring Freedom (War in Afghanistan), Restore Hope (Somalia), Just Cause (Panama), Uphold Democracy (Haiti), Guardian Retrieval (Zaire), Shepherd Venture (Guinea-Bissau), Noble Response (Kenya), and one that could have only been devised by a military Freemason with entirely too much time on his hands, Noble Obelisk (Sierra Leone).

How many wars will a society tolerate until it says no more?

Arms for All

Consider the despicable global arms trade in which the U.S. dominates. The U.S. will sell weapons, gear and training to all comers with cash or a country with exploitable geography and resources. The U.S. War Corporation counts as its clients Chad, with an annual per capita income of \$230, and Kenya, whose law enforcement is skilled at “common methods of torture . . . including hanging persons upside down for long periods, genital mutilation, electric shocks, and deprivation of air by submersion of the head in water,” according to the Council for a Livable World (CLW). Despite all this, the American citizenry refuses to heed Eisenhower’s warning and has taken its liberty “for granted,” placing its trust in U.S. officials who see “evil” and threats in every corner.

For this ignorance-of-the-damned, the American people have now brought upon themselves the militarization of American society that Eisenhower so feared, and that Herbert Marcuse so eloquently described in *One Dimensional Man*. The American people are routinely psyop’ed by the War Corporation into an “us-versus-them” mentality; we’re right, your wrong—no argument allowed. Is it any surprise that a less enlightened retired U.S. Army general, Colin Powell, recently admitted that the War on Terrorism will never end “in our lifetime”? Today, sadly, the U.S. War Corporation has taken almost complete control of America and has marshaled its entire war machinery against approximately 33 foreign terrorist groups, numbering perhaps 5,000 to 8,000 individuals who are mostly impoverished and oppressed by ruthless regimes who retaliate with the armaments, strategies and tactics purchased from the U.S. War Corporation.

GlobalIssues.org reports that close to \$1 trillion dollars is spent on worldwide military expenditures and the international weapons trade. They rightly point out that globalization has caused weapons makers to take a globalization and porous border approach to selling

weapons. In the words of one U.S. “defense” contractor, “We have no allegiance, this is a business and we sell to whatever country can afford them.” The CLW’s research indicates that U.S. military spending comprises over half (53 percent) of total discretionary spending (\$755 billion), an increase from 48 percent in fiscal year 2001. The proposed military budget of \$396.1 billion is 15 percent higher than the average Cold War budget, even in today’s dollars. CLW reports that from 1946 to 1989 the U.S. budget authority for defense was an average of \$343 billion a year (fiscal year 2003 dollars). In terms of outlays, according to the Senate Budget Committee minority staff, the proposed spending in fiscal year 2003 exceeds the Cold War average by \$44 billion. How much money is enough?

## Forget the Poor

Just a fraction of what is spent on defense might—probably would—eliminate many of the conditions that breed terrorists in today’s world. Oscar Arias Sanchez, the 1987 Nobel Peace Prize winner and former President of Costa Rica declared, “The world’s priorities are wrong. With just a small amount of what the world spends on defense, we could address poverty, inequality, illiteracy, disease, environmental degradation, and drought.”

In 2002, the War Corporation’s “center-of-gravity or nexus of operations,” as it is known in war-speak, is in the Washington, D.C., metro region and includes the U.S. presidency and U.S. Congress, uniformed and non-uniformed war contractors (to include the four military branches, weapons manufacturers and mercenaries), war intelligence agencies, various war departments operating under Zemyatinesque names like the Department of Defense, Department of State, Department of Justice, and President of the United States. Even toy companies and bubble gum trading card companies are in on the war gig. And why not? It is the number one business in America. For just \$45 American children can have their very own “Tora Bora Ted, Swift Freedom Delta Force Night OPS” action figure to replace GI Joe. Operation Enduring Freedom bubble gum cards are also on the streets. No, not even children are spared the insanity of the War Corporation’s propaganda.

A major U.S. War Corporation bureau of information—NBC News—is owned by major weapons contractor General Electric, which runs advertisements extolling the virtues of its global reach. According to [globalissues.org](http://globalissues.org), America’s leading weapons maker, Lockheed Martin, ran an advertisement claiming “the perception of peace means less jobs for Americans.” But the Turks build F16s, not Americans. Another Lockheed Martin propaganda piece claimed the F-22 was an antiwar plane. Many advertisements run on all the major networks emphasized that a better fighter plane would ensure loved ones can come back home. The U.S. Congress buys these claims, in the fishing metaphor, hook-line- and sinker. Between 1990 and 2002, [opensecrets.org](http://opensecrets.org) reports that the U.S. War Corporation weapons makers contributed more than \$67 million to the U.S. Congress to protect their global interests. In one of the more crass instances of U.S. “defense” contractor lobbying, the weapons contractors defeated a U.S. congressional resolution recognizing Turkey’s culpability in the Armenian genocide in 1919. The reason? Turkey threatened to cancel U.S. military contracts.

The War Corporation influences politics and economics in every state of the American Union and as far away as provinces in China, on the sparsely populated Cook Islands in the South Pacific, and in more familiar places like Nicaragua, where it recently fixed the outcome of a national election, and Colombia, where the U.S. War Corporation helped assassinate a Catholic bishop opposed to the U.S. puppet regime there.

## Profiting From Middle East Bloodshed

Perhaps nowhere is the War Corporation's influence seen more vividly than in the current turmoil in the Middle East. The U.S. Department of State is completely militarized under the regime of Colin Powell—who helped whitewash the My Lai Massacre in Vietnam, his deputy Richard Armitage—a former U.S. Special Forces and CIA dirty tricks operator in Southeast Asia, and Middle East Special Envoy retired US Marine Corps General and American proconsul Anthony Zinni. These so-called “diplomats” are the major U.S. players ostensibly responsible for bringing “peace” to the region. But as Robin Wright, a respected Middle East expert, pointed out in her column in the Los Angeles Times on March 31, 2002, even Kuwait has had enough of U.S. duplicity in the region.

“11 years after Kuwait was freed, about 4,000 demonstrators rallied at Flag Square in Kuwait City to denounce Israel and the United States. With the speaker of the Kuwaiti parliament and other top ministers present, the crowd shouted, “No god but Allah! America enemy of Allah!” and “Muslims, Muslims unite! Death to Israel, death to America!” the Reuters news agency reported.

In a reflection of shifting sentiments over the last 18 months, since the latest Palestinian Intifada began, the crowd also roared, “America and Zionism are against the Muslim nation!” Rallying on behalf of the Palestinians and against the United States is particularly ironic because the Palestinians sided with Iraq, not the Kuwaiti monarchy, during the 1991 Persian Gulf War.” But that's of little consequence to the U.S. War Corporation.

Most Middle East analysts, from ex-Reagan administration department heads to former President Jimmy Carter—experts who have traditionally remained committed to even-handedness in their commentaries—are blaming the Bush administration, and primarily the State Department, for allowing events to explode out of control in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. There should be little wonder why the U.S. chose passive disengagement over active engagement. After all, as Israel commits more occupying troops to the West Bank and Gaza, they will require more U.S. weaponry—tanks, armored personnel carriers, artillery, and consultants from the likes of MPRI and Dyncorp. And who will profit from prolonging bloodshed in the Middle East? The U.S. War Corporation and its surrogates.

In the fiscal year 2002 budget, Israel was allotted \$2.04 billion in U.S. military aid. Under a memorandum of understanding signed between the U.S. and Israel on January 19, 2001, just a day before Bush's appointment to the US presidency, U.S. military aid to Israel will likely grow to \$2.4 billion by 2008. As Israel's right-wing militaristic government continues to flex its muscles, its Arab neighbors will increase their own military stockpiles. Three of them—Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia—are among the largest recipients of U.S. military weaponry. From 1999 to 2000, Egypt received \$1.3 billion in U.S. military aid and Jordan got \$123 million. While Saudi Arabia receives no outright U.S. military assistance, it has bought over \$33.5 billion of the most sophisticated U.S. weapons systems (AWACS, F-15's and more) over the past 10 years. That's more than U.S. military assistance given to Israel and Egypt combined.

Among the most vociferous propagandists of the Bush administration's ratcheting up of Middle East tensions, ludicrous military spending, and U.S. takeover of the Persian Gulf and Middle East are retired U.S. military generals whose telephone numbers cram every cable and non-cable network producers' Rolodex. The current crop of Pentagon generals and admirals unknowingly betray a long tradition of senior U.S. military officers refraining from

political activity. Generals William Tecumseh Sherman and George Marshall refrained from voting, reflecting their desire for political neutrality among the officer corps. But that is of no consequence to the troupe of military officers who mock Dwight Eisenhower.

### Weapons Everyone, Weapons!

According to a Congressional Research Service study, Conventional Arms Transfers to Developing Nations, poor countries bought 68 percent of U.S. weapons output. American weapons producers signed contracts for some \$18.6 billion dollars in 2000, up from around \$12.9 billion dollars the previous year. U.S. contracts accounted for 49.7 percent of global sales in 2000 and the U.S. controlled half of the developing world's arms market with \$12.6 billion in sales. CLW commented that "this dominance of the global arms market is not something in which the American public or policy makers should applaud. The U.S. routinely sells weapons to undemocratic regimes and gross human rights abusers." That list of countries includes those that Americans believe are trustworthy allies. These include Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Pakistan, Kuwait, Turkmenistan and Turkey.

Meanwhile, back in the United States, War Corporation member, Joint Strike Fighter winner and largest weapons producer—Lockheed Martin—is busy behind the scenes operating home mortgage tracking databases for the Department of Housing and Urban Development and providing state and local law enforcement and correctional facilities with an "Integrated Justice Information System," a platform which "integrates and modernize systems for law enforcement, courts, and corrections." Why do they need that business? The rationale behind the "commercial" ventures, and for those of every weapons contractor, is to make sure that enough profit is made courtesy of public largesse to keep weapons production lines open.

While Lockheed Martin personnel are hailed as "heroes," few know that Lockheed's mixed history includes bribing Japanese government officials in 1976. That action led fellow War Corporation member, the U.S. Congress, to pass the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act in 1977. And as of 2000, Lockheed Martin and the majority of U.S. weapons manufacturers refused to renounce production of landmines and their deployment along the Korean demilitarized zone and other killing fields in Africa and South Asia.

### Landmines

On that cheery note, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines reports that the U.S. government adamantly refuses to ban or place a moratorium on the production of antipersonnel mines. According to the United States Campaign to Ban Landmines, those devices kill 18,000 people a year, most of them civilians. The stockpile cap announced on January 17, 1997, does not preclude the production of new antipersonnel mines to replace those used in future combat operations. Former US Army Lt. Gen. Hal Moore, who was recently portrayed by Mel Gibson in the movie *When We Were Soldiers*, in a letter to President Bush, stated, "landmines pose a particularly grave threat to refugees and the internally displaced as they seek to return home and rebuild their lives." He and other retired military veterans urged Bush to sign the international Mine Ban Treaty in a March 12, 2002, letter.

Yet, the U.S. War Corporation ignores their pleas. The U.S. is currently producing M87A1 Volcano mine canisters containing antivehicle mines at the Lone Star Army Ammunition Plant in Texarkana, Texas. This is a government-owned facility operated by War Corporate

member Day and Zimmerman. Although the production of these mines is scheduled to end next November, the death and mayhem caused by these inhuman weapons have already been dealt.

In the end, the worst hit are the young people of the world. Because many anti-personnel mines look like toys, children have been attracted to them, with many losing their arms, legs, and eyesight, if not their lives. But there can never be too many weapons. The problem of overproduction was solved by George Orwell's "Oceania" in 1984: "As for the problem of overproduction . . . it is solved by the device of continuous warfare, which is also useful in keying up public morale to the necessary pitch."

Dwight Eisenhower, ignored by the U.S. War Corporation in his post-presidency, uttered words seemingly too lofty for the current generation of war mongers to understand:

" . . . Disarmament, with mutual honor and confidence, is a continuing imperative. Together we must learn how to compose differences, not with arms, but with intellect and decent purpose. Because this need is so sharp and apparent I confess that I lay down my official responsibilities in this field with a definite sense of disappointment. As one who has witnessed the horror and the lingering sadness of war—as one who knows that another war could utterly destroy this civilization which has been so slowly and painfully built over thousands of years—I wish I could say tonight that a lasting peace is in sight."

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*Featured image: President Dwight D. Eisenhower (National Archives)*

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