

Dancing with the Beast, The Military Industrial Empire

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In **Oliver Stone's** brilliant film **Nixon** there is one scene that underlines the whole prism of this Military Industrial Empire. In this scene, we see thousands of young Americans camping out at the Lincoln Memorial to protest our involvement in Vietnam. Nixon cannot sleep, and actually gets his valet to drive him over to the Memorial. Nixon begins to engage some of the students in conversation, using his knowledge of college football to disarm them. It fails. One young woman confronts him on the war. Nixon, using his previous skills as a college debater, begins a mini monologue on the current situation. Suddenly the young woman interrupts him saying "You can't stop it even if you wanted to!" Nixon then explains how this entire system that we live under is like a Beast that has a life of its own. Even he as president can only attempt to 'control' it, this Beast.

Since WW2 our nation has lived under the auspices of this *Military Industrial Empire* and its *Beast*. Every single president has worked for this *Beast* in one way or another, regardless of being a Republican or Democrat. *Imperialism* is our national tonic, and *all* who serve this empire drink it. That goes for politicians and mainstream media members of all stripes. Even many academics still carry the water for this *Beast*, regardless of calling themselves conservative or liberal/progressive. Look at C-Span for a minute. Brian Lamb, its founder, worked for the Nixon White House. He appears to be so 'grandfatherly' and open minded, but in reality C-Span makes sure true 'anti imperialists' and true 'socialists' rarely are seen or covered. When they are covered it is either late at night or on a Sunday early morning. Recently, C-Span covered a class lecture by **Prof. Margaret O'Mara** at the University of Washington on the 1968 political year. She explains to her students how we were fighting in Vietnam to stop a 'Communist insurgency' orchestrated by the Soviet Union and Red China. Never did she explain to the students that this was a Civil War, since Vietnam was originally ONE nation divided by the colonial French with US aid. Never did she raise the question of what right did our country had to even be involved there in the first place! Doesn't this echo what happened in 2003 regarding Iraq?

What right did we have in attacking another sovereign nation, and then *occupying it*? This writer recalls the almost *obscene* cheerleading by our entire mainstream media as we carpet bombed Baghdad. Little Katie Couric of NBC yelled out her famous 'Marines Rock' to millions of viewers. **Lester Holt** of MSNBC (owned by defense contractor General Electric) described the *invasion force on steroids* as if it was the Normandy landings on D-Day. Of course, a few years later Lester got his promotion to evening news anchor... and host of one of the 2016 presidential debates.

So long as so many working stiffs continue to drink this empire's Kool Aid, the *Beast* will ask them to dance... until 'Death do they part'.

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