

Fighting Back: Ridding America of the Warmongers

By [Sherwood Ross](#)

Global Research, December 31, 2009

31 December 2009

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [History](#)

Disgusted Americans who vote for politicians that talk peace yet, once elected, support wars, need to get active in between elections. Just voting every four years won't hack it.

As MIT activist philosopher Noam Chomsky points out in his book *"Failed States"*(Metropolitan), "Opportunities for education and organizing abound. As in the past, rights are not likely to be granted by benevolent authorities, or won by intermittent actions—attending a few demonstrations or pushing a lever in the personalized quadrennial extravaganzas that are depicted as 'democratic politics.' ...These tasks require dedicated day-by-day engagement..." Failure to grasp these opportunities "is likely to have ominous repercussions: for the country, for the world, and for future generations."

The major goal, as Chalmers Johnson writes in *"The Sorrows of Empire"*(Henry Holt), is for Americans to "retake control of Congress, reform it along with the corrupted election laws that have made it into a forum for special interests, turn it into a genuine assembly of democratic representatives, and cut off the supply of money to the Pentagon and the secret intelligence agencies."

He's right, of course. America today *is* a warfare state, the most powerful ever, and its leaders lie when they claim that small countries half way around the world with \$5 billion annual military budgets represent a threat to Washington, which spends roughly \$800 billion a year for war. That's more, by the way, than the \$780 billion all 50 state governments combined collected in 2008 to run the country. In his book, *"House of War"*(Houghton Mifflin), James Carroll points out the Pentagon "exceeding agency and intention, has mutated into the great white whale of anarchy and destruction."

One way to reform Congress is to stop elected officials from accepting donations, (i.e., bribes,) and instead to conduct their business exclusively with public funds. In *"Free Lunch"*(Portfolio), Pulitzer Prize-winner David Cay Johnston writes, "Let each member of Congress spend however much he or she deems necessary to do his or her job. If we can imbue representatives and senators with the power to make laws, surely we can give them the authority to manage their own expense accounts."

Johnston explains, "This would come at a price: No more free trips, no more free meals, and no more gifts. Senator, if you need to inspect the cleanliness of the sink behind the bar at a resort in Tahiti, go right ahead, just give us the receipts with an explanation of the costs. We will collect the receipts from every elected representative monthly and post it all on the Internet in a format that makes for easy analysis."

Johnston urges, "Every dollar, and every meeting, must be disclosed. And we will pay for it all, subject only to the usual penalties for embezzling, the punishments accorded by the full

House or Senate because of their exclusive right to judge the fitness of members, or the decision by voters to oust a spendthrift.”

“The time for preventive action is now,” writes Francis Boyle in *“Protesting Power,”*(Rowan & Littlefield). Civil resistance is one important strategy. People power can overcome power politics. Popular movements have succeeded in toppling tyrannical, dictatorial, and authoritarian regimes in former Communist countries throughout Eastern Europe as well as in Asia, Latin America, and recently in the Middle East. It is time for Americans to exercise people power here in the United States.”

Boyle explains that under the First Amendment, civil-resistance protesters are exercising their right “peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.” He writes that amendment “does not require their assembly to be ‘lawful’ in a positivist technical sense, only that it be peaceable. Certainly ongoing criminal activity committed by officials of the U.S. government itself is the type of grievance the American people should have a right to petition for the redress of by means of civil resistance.”

David Swanson, author of *“Daybreak,”*(Seven Stories) suggests, “Work on what moves you, what would make a difference in your life and your family’s life. Mobilize your community, your school, your clubs and organizations.” Hundreds of peace-seeking organizations are listed at <http://afterdowningstreet.org/coalition>, he says. He warns, “As the Obama presidency advances, and the ones after it as well, we will see each abuse and distortion of power that has gone uncorrected further entrenched and established and quite possibly abused and expanded upon, unless we act.”

Chomsky in *“Imperial Ambitions”*(Metropolitan) writes that labor unions “are one of the few mechanisms by which ordinary people can get together and compensate for the concentration of capital and power. That’s why the United States has a very violent labor history, with repeated efforts to destroy unions anytime they make any progress.” Action required? Organize, for better wages and for peace.

Another way to strengthen “people power” is to re-enfranchise the 5.3 million citizens “still barred from the polling stations because of some prior conviction,” writes Greg Palast in *“Armed Madhouse”*(Plume). “The Right to Vote campaign is fighting this Soviet-style loss of citizenship. Notably, lifetime loss of citizenship is imposed by only seven states of the Old Confederacy under laws originally created at the behest of the Ku Klux Klan.”

Palast also urges citizens to check their voter registration. “Check online with your Secretary of State’s office or call your County Board of Elections. Then register your girlfriend, your wife, your mailman, and your mommy. Contact Operation PUSH, the League of Women Voters, and your local party organization, and commit to a couple of days of door-to-door registration, especially in minority neighborhoods or at social service agency offices.”

Sherwood Ross has worked for a civil rights organization, as a reporter for major dailies, as a columnist for wire services, and currently runs a public relations firm for good causes. Contact him at sherwoodross10@gmail.com .

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Sherwood Ross](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca