

Looting Social Security To Wage War

By [Sherwood Ross](#)

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“As long as the \$1.2-trillion annual budget for the military-security complex is off limits (to cutting), nothing can be done about the US budget deficit except to renege on obligations to the elderly, confiscate private assets or print enough money to inflate away all debts,” Paul Craig Roberts, former Assistant Treasury Secretary under President Reagan warns.

In an article titled “Stealing from Social Security to Pay for Wars and Bailouts,” published in the April issue of the *“Rock Creek Free Press”* of Washington, D.C., Roberts says that Republicans are calling Social Security and Medicare “entitlements”—making them sound like welfare—when, in fact, workers over their lifetimes have contributed 15 percent of all their earnings to the payroll tax that funds these benefits and have every right to them.

And far from Social Security being in the red, between 1984 and 2009, Roberts writes, “the American people contributed \$2-trillion...more to Social Security and Medicare in payroll taxes than was paid out in benefits” but “the government stole” that sum to fund wars and pork-barrel projects!

What’s more, under one realistic estimate, far from crashing into the red, “Social Security(OASDI) will have produced surplus revenues of \$31.6-trillion by 2085, Roberts says.

Americans, apparently, are unaware of how the federal government’s illegal, foreign wars sap the economy and rob every household. The Iraq war cost alone is 20 percent of the size of last year’s entire U.S. economy. Instead of investing that sum at home, “which would have produced income and jobs growth and solvency for state and local governments, the US government wasted the equivalent of 20% of the economy in 2010 in blowing up infrastructure and people in foreign lands,” Roberts says.

“The US government spent a huge sum of money committing war crimes, while millions of Americans were thrown out of their jobs and foreclosed out of their homes,” he added. Viewed another way, the Pentagon continues to expand and put people to work to modernize its 700-800 bases abroad in order to dominate every corner of the globe while public works and public employment in America are going into the toilet.

“When short-term and long-term discouraged workers are added ...the US has an unemployment rate of 22%,” Robert says. A country with that large a percentage out of work “has a shrunken tax base and feeble consumer purchasing power.”

The U.S. media, he claims, is only reporting one-third of the real cost of the wars, leaving out the sums needed for “lifelong care for the wounded and maimed, the cost of lifelong military pensions of those who fought in the wars, the replacement costs of the destroyed equipment, the opportunity cost of the resources wasted in war, and other costs.”

President Obama's budget, if passed, doesn't reduce the deficit over the next 10 years by enough to cover the projected deficit in the fiscal year 2012 budget alone, the financial authority writes. "Indeed, the deficits are likely to be substantially larger than forecast," as the military-industrial complex "is more powerful than ever and shows no inclination to halt the wars for US hegemony," Roberts says.#

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