

In Honor of Martin Luther King: “The Pursuit of Peace” and MLK’s Historic Analysis of “American Militarism”

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa, USA](#)

Theme: [History, US NATO War Agenda](#)

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Consider some of what the Reverend MLK proclaimed about American militarism:

“A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual doom.”

“A few years ago there was a shining moment in the struggle. It seemed as if there was a real promise of hope for the poor — both black and white — through the poverty program. There were experiments, hopes, new beginnings. Then came the buildup in Vietnam and I watched the program broken and eviscerated as if it were some idle political plaything of a society gone mad on war, and I knew that America would never invest the necessary funds or energies in rehabilitation of its poor so long as adventures like Vietnam continued to draw men and skills and money like some demonic destructive suction tube.”



“There is at the outset a very obvious and almost facile connection between the war in Vietnam and the struggle I, and others, have been waging in America. A few years ago there was a shining moment in that struggle. It seemed as if there was a real promise of hope for the poor -- both black and white -- through the poverty program. There were experiments, hopes, new beginnings. Then came the buildup in Vietnam and I watched the program broken and eviscerated as if it were some idle political plaything of a society gone mad on war, and I knew that America would never invest the necessary funds or energies in rehabilitation of its poor so long as adventures like Vietnam continued to draw men and skills and money like some demonic destructive suction tube.”

– Martin Luther King Jr.

The assassination of **Qassem Soleimani** and seven others including a top Iraqi commander was “mad on war.” Soleimani was both an Iranian general and an Iranian diplomat at the highest level, a hero throughout the mid-east for defeating ISIS in Iraq and Syria. Literally millions of Iranians demonstrated in four different Iranian cities in mourning and in solidarity against the U.S.

Soleimani did not pose an “imminent danger,” the only possible way to justify the murders under international law. Just another bold-faced lie to justify American aggression. On Jan. 13, NBC News reported that Trump authorized the killing seven months ago.

The drone attack on Soleimani happened at Baghdad Airport – without notice to, much less permission from the Iraqi government. Two days later, the Iraqi Prime Minister addressed the Iraqi Parliament stating that Soleimani was in Baghdad to meet with him at Trump’s request so as to discuss a Saudi proposal to de-escalate the volatile situation between Saudi Arabia and Iran; in other words, Trump lured Soleimani to Baghdad on a mission of peace.

The Iraqi Parliament thereupon voted to expel all American troops from Iraq. Sec. of State Pompeo’s response? We’re staying anyway. So much for the cause of freedom and democracy.

This illegal, self-defeating, counter-productive, barbaric attack put us right back on the brink of a tit-for-tat escalation with no end in sight.

Pompeo, former CIA director, “the loudest voice pushing Trump to kill Soleimani” (NY Times, 1/7/20), identifies himself as an “evangelical Christian.” [Pompeo has stated that the Bible “informs everything I do” and that Trump just might be selected by God to “save the Jewish people from the Iranian menace, just like Queen Esther \[in the Bible\].](#)” Evangelicals believe in the prophecy that the gathering of Jews in Israel will be followed by apocalyptic “end times” and the “rapture,” which is the ascent of true Christians into the kingdom of God.

Also, see [“Mike Pompeo Is the Most Dangerous Man in the World Right Now” \(Adam Weinstein, New Republic, 1/6/20\)](#):

“For more than a year now, [Pompeo] has systematically led Trump and the Pentagon onto a war footing with Iran with shocking, unprecedented moves. These include designating a foreign government arm as a terrorist group; taking trips without his Pentagon counterpart to consult with America’s Mideast combatant commanders; defying Congress to arm the Saudis and other Iranian antagonists in the region; and publicly blaming regional attacks on Tehran with little evidence but heavily edited, ambiguous videos.”

More MLK:

“We still have a choice today: nonviolent coexistence or violent co-annihilation ... Before it is too late, we must narrow the gaping chasm between our proclamations of peace and our lowly deeds which precipitate and perpetuate war ... There is nothing, except a tragic death wish, to prevent us from reordering our priorities, so that the pursuit of peace will take precedence over the pursuit of war.”

The problem is not just Trump. The problem is systemic. Both parties cater to the military-industrial complex. MLK was protesting a Democratic administration. Three days after Soleimani’s murder, Jesse Jackson issued a statement in which he acknowledged that “Obama added to the mess, seeking regime change in Syria and in Libya, spreading the chaos.”

Most telling is the consistent support of both parties in Congress for funding preposterous Pentagon budgets, [half of which now enrich profiteering contractors](#), what MLK referred to as a “demonic destructive suction tube.

” The Pentagon eats up more of the federal government’s discretionary budget ... than all other discretionary spending combined ... At the same time, the Pentagon is unable to pass an audit ... The result is that we are wasting hundreds of billions of dollars, fueling endless war and diverting money from other vital needs.” (Robert Weissman, Pres. of Public Citizen, 1/11/20)

“Some 140 million Americans are living in poverty or on the brink, while more than a third of us report not getting health care because it costs too much. Our infrastructure, with \$2 trillion in unfunded needs, gets a D+ from the American Society of Civil Engineers. A poll last fall found that three-quarters of Americans — Democrats and Republicans alike — don’t want a war with Iran.” (Lindsay Koshgarian, Institute for Policy Studies, 1/10/20)

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