

“Solution” to the Economic Crisis? The Military Industrial Complex Stimulus Package

By [Danny Schechter](#)

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Is there a panic on the Potomac? The Congress has turned into a wailing wall just to hear all the moans about threatened cuts in what is patriotically known as our Defense budget.

Never mind that many of the cuts were ordered from above because the people at the top know how much they have to slash given all the waste, planned obsolescence and other waste they can afford to trim before they cut the bone or some hostile force can bring us to our knees.

The people who experience the reality up close and personal know that the public is being defrauded on almost every level.

Listen to Sgt. 1st Class Robert Zlotow from Fort Riley, Kan. who had the guts to send this letter to Army Times.

“I nearly spit out my dinner when I read your headline “Fighting through austerity” (March 4).

Even with these “evil” and “scary” cuts factored in, the defense budget will still rise every year in the foreseeable future. According to the Congressional Budget Office, the projected defense budget will still go from \$593 billion in fiscal year 2014 to \$702 billion in 2023, even if this sequester is allowed to stand.

When I hear politicians and the top brass say that training will have to be cut back and units will go without supplies, and all these other dire consequences, it begs a very simple question:

What on earth are they doing with all that money?

If troops are not getting trained and their benefits are being cut back, then where are these hundreds of billions of dollars in our budget going?

Only in the cesspool of fraud, waste and abuse that is the Defense Department can budgets like these be called “austere.”

Thank you Sargent. Your letter from the trenches at the Fort named after the Life of Riley, brings to mind another Sgt., Sergeant Bilko played by Phil Silvers whose popular TV series kept millions of Americans laughing every week for years about the absurdity of “the service.”

What was clear that Bilko and the boys were serving a machine that was kept in business by what a former General and president Dwight David Eisenhower called the military industrial complex. He is remembered as much for his candor in that ‘farewell address’ as for being the “Supreme Commander” who won World War 2.

Ike was a military insider turned critic and prophet. As Andrew Bacevic noted on the Atlantic: “Equally significant, if now nearly forgotten, was his presentation to the American Society of Newspaper Editors on April 16, 1953. In this speech, the president contemplated a world permanently perched on the brink of war—“humanity hanging from a cross of iron”— and he appealed to Americans to assess the consequences likely to ensue.”

The consequences are *“the dangers of the perpetual march to war it has put us on.”*

War has always been a business first, and for the economy of these United States a very good one. Keeping the weapons factories and high tech workshops humming not only creates jobs but also a flow of exports that keep the USA alive. We may not be number #1 in maternal health but we are number one in arms sales,

These contracts keep the complex soaring; one report on MilitaryIndustrialComplex.com recorded a total of 22,828 publicly reported defense contracts. That number has grown dramatically over the years. And it will grow more and more because of the revolving door between the contractors and the lobbyists and the politicians. More importantly, with the Congress blocking stimulus funds that could benefit those in need, military spending is used to prime many a pump because the Pentagon operates under the umbrella of unquestioned patriotism.

Some of these contracts seemed to be sweetened under the sheets, as John Grant reported, “If Maryland is stopped in [its efforts to force](#) Montgomery County to give Lockheed Martin millions of dollars, we may never know whether that could have been done without sex. And that’s a shame. Yet it certainly should be reported that, according to [Maryland Juice](#), “a lobbyist for Lockheed Martin may be dating one of the bill’s sponsors in the State Senate. Several Annapolis sources are now indicating to Maryland Juice that State Senator Rob Garagiola is currently romantically involved with lobbyist Hannah Powers of the Alexander & Cleaver firm. But [Garagiola is a sponsor of the Lockheed welfare bill](#), and [Powers is a lobbyist for Lockheed](#).”

Scandalous stories like that propels this turgid and often invisible world of wheeling and dealing into public view, along with an unending supply of Stories about \$15,000 toilet seats and \$5000 coffee pots ordered by the Pentagon, or the graft that is built into the contacting process.

Here in South Africa where I am working on a film project, one arms deal is still being debated because of all the corruption that came to light in its wake. The South African politicians who benefited are blasted in the news but the overseas military companies who gave the bribes are kept out of sight.

Most of these contracts are filtered through a politically calculated system for spreading the money into every Congressional district. There is a method to this madness and never a shortage of crises, or threats, real or invented, that can be used as a pretext for more spending.

This recent report LBN report offers a case in point: “The Pentagon will spend \$1 billion to deploy additional ballistic missile interceptors along the Pacific Coast to counter the growing reach of North Korea’s weapons, a decision accelerated by Pyongyang’s recent belligerence and indications that Kim Jong-un, the North Korean leader, is resisting China’s efforts to restrain him. The new deployments, announced by Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel on Friday, will increase the number of ground-based interceptors in California and Alaska to 44 from 30 by 2017.”

On top of the alleged military threats, there’s a new cyber terror threat that is opening the doors for a flood of new spending on “essential” (sic) counter-measures.

When you look at how the money is divvied up you can see how convoluted the system is.

Here’s just one contract itemized on Huffington Post. I am sure there are books of computer printouts and a whole army of accountants that processes them.

- “Vital Link Inc., Sealy, Texas, (FA8519-13-D-0001) is being awarded a \$73,540,000 indefinite-delivery/indefinite-quantity contract for repair, refurbishment and relocation of the fleet of T-9, T-10/T-11 and T-12 Noise Suppression Facilities.

The locations of the performance are Dyess Air Force Base, Texas; Eglin AFB, Fla.; Ellsworth AFB, S.D.; Tinker AFB, Okla.; Hill AFB, Utah; Kadena Air Base, Japan; Kirtland AFB, N.M.; Lackland AFB, Texas; Kunsan AB, Korea; Langley AFB, Va.; Luke AFB, Ariz.; Moody AFB, Ga.; Buckley AFB, Colo.; Mountain Home AFB, Idaho; Minot AFB, N.D.; Nellis AFB, Nev.; Osan AB, Korea; McGhee-Tyson Air National Guard Bureau, Tenn.; Barksdale AFB, La.; Royal Air Force Lakenheath, United Kingdom; Bradley Field ANGB, Conn.; McGuire AFB, N.J.; McConnell AFB, Kan.; Offutt AFB, N.E.; Robins AFB, Ga.; Scott AFB, Ill.; Whiteman AFB, Mo.; Spangdahlem AB, Germany; Andrews AFB, Md.; Shaw AFB, S.C.; Seymour Johnson AFB, N.C.; Tyndall AFB, Fla.; Homestead AFB, Fla.; Elmendorf AFB, Alaska; Eielson AFB, Alaska; Hickam AFB, Hawaii; Holloman AFB, N.M.; Laughlin AFB, Texas; Randolph AFB, Texas; Sheppard AFB, Texas; Vance AFB, Okla.; Columbus AFB, Miss.; Ramstein AB, Germany; Aviano AB, Italy; Springfield, Ill.; Sandston, Va.; Klamath, Ore.; St. Louis, Mo.; Columbia, S.C.; Burlington, Vt.; Belle Chasse, La.; Cape Cod, Maine; Hartford, Conn.; Westfield, Maine; Detroit, Mich.; Boise, Idaho; Springfield, Ohio; Swanton, Ohio; Sioux City, Iowa; Sioux Falls, S.D.; San Juan, Puerto Rico; Madison, Wis.; Tucson, Ariz.; Tulsa, Okla.; Fort Worth, Texas; Des Moines, Iowa; Montgomery, Ala.; Duluth, Minn.; Houston, Texas; Fresno, Calif.; Fort Smith, Ariz.; Syracuse, N.Y.; Fargo, N.D.; Terre Haute, Ind.; Jacksonville, Fla.; Pleasantville, N.J. and Great Falls, Mont. Work is expected to be completed by March 14, 2014.

Type of appropriation is fiscal 2013 through 2014 depot purchase equipment maintenance funds. The contracting activity is AFLCMC/WNKBBA, Robins Air Force Base, Ga.”

Very little of the reporting on the military link it to its economic function or explain its real role in our society. The real war is the conflict over who gets what how to get the money flowing.

News Dissector Danny Schechter edits the new Mediachannel.org. He blogs at Newsdissector.net. Comments to dissector@mediachannel.org. For more on the Military Industrial Complex, see Danny Schechter’s report in the

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