

# The Militarization of Education in America

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In his brilliant article "[The Perversion of Scholarship](#)", Chris Hedges exposes factors which have destroyed most major American universities. Hedges writes: "Fraternities, sororities and football, along with other outsized athletic programs, have decimated most major American universities. Scholarship, inquiry, self-criticism, moral autonomy and a search for artistic and esoteric forms of expression—in short, the world of ethics, creativity and ideas—are shouted down by the drunken chants of fans in huge stadiums, the pathetic demands of rich alumni for national championships, and the elitism, racism and rigid definition of gender roles of Greek organizations. These hypermasculine systems perpetuate a culture of conformity and intolerance. They have inverted the traditional values of scholarship to turn four years of college into a mindless quest for collective euphoria and athletic dominance." Left unmentioned is the militarization of the American educational system.

Israel Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers are coming to a campus near according to a blaring headline: "Served in IDF? US universities want you!" ([Ynet News, July 4, 12](#)). According to the report, among the recruiters were representatives from Stanford, Brandeis, Duke, UC Berkeley, Kellogg, Harvard, NYU, UCLA and Tuck at Dartmouth have gone to Israel to interview and offer scholarships to soldiers who have served in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers — on your dime. There are specific "scholarships designated for Israelis and among them are those that include military service as criteria for receiving the scholarship". [[This and similar factors seem to have escaped Mitt Romney when he made his racist remarks in Israel](#)].

Disturbing as this news is, the idea of militarizing education is nothing new. *The New Yorker* staff writer, George Packer opined in his July 2007 piece "[Guns and Brains](#)" that after the sixties, "intellect and patriotism went separate ways, to the detriment of both." No doubt. At the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, antiwar demonstrators clashed with the police, and the images of police beating students shocked television audiences. Violence peaked at an antiwar protest at Ohio's Kent State University in May 1970 when National Guard troops gunned down four student protesters.

9/11 provided the perfect opportunity for the intellectuals and the military to reconcile — according to Packer who writes: "September 11th made military service more attractive to the kind of college students who used to find it unthinkable." He cites General Petraeus' degree in humanities and the engineers and social scientists in Iraq as evidence of this mindset.

But if the "brains" and the "guns" are no longer at odds with each other, why are representatives from American universities recruiting soldiers who have served in the IDF —

especially at a time when there are slashes in education budget across the country and the high/unaffordable cost of education?

Perhaps George Packer's concluding remark that "[s]ome intellectuals find the war and the Administration so objectionable that they regard associating with the military as a kind of crime" is a clue to the answer. Since its founding in 2003, across the country, Campus Antiwar network (C.AN.) has chased military recruiters off. Perhaps it is these [counter-recruitment](#) protests that have necessitated the recruitment of former IDF soldiers.

While May 2012 figures estimate homeless US veterans to be at 60,000 ([Daily Stripes](#)), American universities are offering scholarships to former IDF soldiers to enroll in MBA (Masters of Business Administration) programs. Given that GOP Presidential contender, Mitt Romney, has assured us that Israel has a "culture of economic vitality", why do American tax payers have to foot scholarship funds so that Israeli soldiers can manage business? Whatever the reason, undoubtedly, neoconservative [Daniel Pipes](#) and his "[Campus Watch](#)" will welcome these soldiers into their fold.

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