

There Must Be 50 Ways to Leave the Military Industrial Complex

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And we heard all of them from two dozen brilliant speakers during a [three-day conference](#) this past weekend. If you missed it, the [video](#) is all online. So is the text of many of the [papers](#) presented. Here are a few excerpts to whet your appetite:

“Let’s say we want to create 29 million jobs in 10 years. That’s 2.9 million each year. Here’s one way to do it. Take \$100 billion from the Department of Defense and move it into education. That creates 1.75 million jobs per year. Take another \$50 billion and move it into healthcare spending. There’s an additional 400,000 jobs. Take another \$100 billion and move it into clean energy. There’s another 550,000 jobs. And take another \$62 billion and turn it into tax cuts, generating an additional 200,000 jobs. Now the military spending in the Department of Energy, the State Department, Homeland Security, and so forth have not been touched. And the Department of Defense has been cut back to about \$388 billion, which is to say: more than it was getting 10 years ago when our country went collectively insane.” — [David Swanson](#)

“This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience. The total influence — economic, political, and even spiritual — is felt in every city, every State house, and every office of the Federal government. We recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. Our toil, resources and livelihood are all involved; so is the very structure of our society.” — President Eisenhower in a play by [Wally Myers](#)

“In addition to the continuing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, on World Peace Day, in violation of its commitment to disarmament under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the United States will fire an Intercontinental Ballistic Missile from Vandenberg Air Force Base, California over Hawaii and the Pacific Missile Range tracking facility (PMRF) to crash into the Pacific Ocean near Kwajalein in the Marshall Islands.” — [Ann Wright](#)

“And when I met with Congresswoman Chellie Pingree, an ostensibly very progressive Democrat early in her freshman term of office, I told her that her constituents wanted her to cut military spending and bring the war dollars home. But she said it wasn’t that easy. Once she got to Washington ‘they’ asked her, ‘What do you want to do, put 3,000 people out of work your first term in office?’ This made reference to the largest employer in the state, Bath Iron Works, which has contracts to build the Aegis destroyers that the Navy hopes will be docked on little Jeju Island off the coast of China that Ann Wright spoke of last night.” — [Lisa Savage](#)

“It occurred to me over the past couple of days that there is a common thread across these

issues of drones, torture, and illegal wars. The unifying thought was that the use of drones, interrogation, and armed conflict each have various legal regimes that shape them and form the universe of what we see as what is legally permissible. The legality of the manner in which state actors operate in these areas are derived from both domestic and international law rules. The powers of any individual official to act are derived from the internal state structure such as the Constitution. Just like there is the known universe of these rules that apply for these areas, I started to wonder about what is not seen in the universe: when state actors act with malice aforethought or sufficient mens rea and actus reus to be a crime. It occurred to me that this part of the universe of law might also be viewed as the dark matter in a similar fashion to how the term is used in astrophysics. Dark matter has not been seen but is used as a way to explain certain phenomenon that are inexplicable by what is seen in the known universe.” — [Ben Davis](#)

“In 1942, the 3,000 residents of five rural Tennessee mountain communities were given just a few weeks’ notice to vacate their homes and ancestral farms. Thus was the ‘secret city’ of Oak Ridge established, and the 60,000 acres of Tennessee valleys and ridges expropriated for the war effort. The Manhattan Project was developed to enrich the uranium used for the Hiroshima bomb. In subsequent decades, and in the name of national security, officials knowingly subjected atomic industry workers, soldiers and nearby residents to deadly doses of radiation at nuclear sites throughout the country. ‘Some 300,000 people, or half of those who ever worked in the U.S. nuclear weapons complex, are believed to have been affected by exposure to radiation,’ asserts Michael Renner, of the World Watch Institute writing in the 1997 book *War and Public Health*. Every step of the nuclear bomb-making process involves severe environmental contamination that lingers for generations.” — [Clare Hanrahan](#)

“In 2004, a North Carolina child protection group analyzed sixteen years of records involving the murder of children by parents or step-parents. The rates of such homicides were steady across the state’s one hundred counties, with two exceptions: in Onslow and Cumberland counties, the childhomicide rates were consistently *twice as high*. Onslow County is home to Camp Lejeune; Cumberland County hosts Fort Bragg.” — [Mia Austin-Scoggins](#)

“Put your ear to the railroad tracks and you can hear the train coming. Now that the new 12-member Congressional ‘Super Committee’ has essentially been given the power of God (and the Devil) the military industrial complex, and their appendage called the corporate media, are swinging into action. Their message? We can’t cut Pentagon spending because it will hurt an already tight job market.....and we need these troops to keep knocking countries off the “Non-Integrating Gap” list (those countries that refuse to play ball with corporate globalization).” — [Bruce Gagnon](#)

“The more famous stories we do know. Daniel Ellsberg was harassed and attacked, caricatured by the state as a criminal, not a hero. The many witnesses against the U.S. military regarding Agent Orange, and years later, the vaccinations and experimental drugs that are part and parcel of what would become known as Gulf War Syndrome, which today has killed more U.S. citizens than the Vietnam War, all of these men and women were treated as enemies of the state. Those who would tell the truth about the propaganda, and original intent, on the way to the wars in and continuing occupations of both Afghanistan and Iraq, are all made to be enemies of the state. Think about Bunny Greenhouse observing in pre-Iraq invasion contracting, and Sibel Edmonds in the months before 9-11. Fired, stifled, harassed, treated badly by our own government for simply telling the truth. And those who would bear witness to mistreatment and unlawful acts of war and interrogation

by the United States here and around the world, are, you guessed it, enemies of the American state.” — [Karen Kwiatkowski](#)

“From a strategic, economic, and security perspective, our response to the attacks on September 11th has created many more problems than it has solved. For example, invading the Greater Middle East violated the most basic principles of military strategy. According to Sun Tzu, who wrote *The Art of War*, one of the worst things a leader can do in war is become angry. Sun Tzu knew that when people are enraged, they cannot think clearly and will make self-destructive decisions. This is why one of the best things a leader can do in war is make his opponent angry, because when leaders – whether military or civilian – become angry they lose concern for consequences, and they become reckless and careless. An angry and reckless opponent is much easier to lure into a trap than a calm and rational opponent.” — [Paul Chappell](#)

“I was there. All the stories that were in the Western media about Gaza are completely untrue. I’ve been to Gaza many times before. On this occasion we were told there’s no need for flotillas and such because the borders of Gaza are open. Not true. Absolutely not true. We’re told that the people who are ruling Gaza, who were they elected authorities (they were elected in 2005) are irrational, Islamist madmen who want to oppress women. Not true.” — [Helena Cobban](#)

“Many Americans have developed what Bob Marley — the poet laureate of oppressed people around the world — called ‘mental slavery.’ Social scientists have also recognized this phenomenon of subjugation resulting in demoralization and defeatism. Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educator and author of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, and Ignacio Martin-Baró, the El Salvadoran social psychologist and popularizer of ‘liberation psychology,’ understood this psychological phenomenon of fatalism, and they helped their people overcome it. We must first acknowledge the reality that for millions of Americans, subjugation has in fact resulted in demoralization and fatalism. Then, we can begin to heal from a “battered people’s syndrome” of sorts and together begin to fight for democracy.” — [Bruce Levine](#)

Click the authors’ names above to read more, or for a better taste of the conference that brought these and many more opponents of militarism together, [check out the videos and photos](#).

The conference closed with a song:

For Bradley Manning

When Bradley comes marching home again Hurroo, hurroo

When Bradley comes marching home again Hurroo, hurroo

We’ll charge the war makers with their crimes

Put ‘em in the dock, make them pay for those crimes

When the peace is won and Bradley comes marching home

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