

War For Profit: Does The Waste Ever End?

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More evidence of bungled Pentagon waste and fraud just keeps growing in mind boggling bewilderment, so much so that us mere mortals cannot truly fathom or even imagine just how much US wars cost... wars that clearly benefit only the military industrial complex that arms and equips the US killing machine. Certainly American taxpayers have not benefited from war, draining what is left of a disappearing middle class. Wars never benefit the actual soldiers fighting and dying for the US Empire, especially those surviving veterans who end up maimed and wounded physically and emotionally for life, or the thousands of suffering, grieving family members. And least of all, US wars have not benefited the nations America invades and wages protracted wars in. Those devatated nations are suffering still untold misery from US wars. America has inflicted on Iraq alone over a million and a half dead Iraqi citizens. Birth defects and cancer rates are both soaring for generations to come. And with no end in sight, Iraq still is literally bleeding with more than 9 thousand people killed last year alone from America's parting gift - the sectarian civil war one year removed from US military departure. Realistically, absolutely no one in this world ever benefits from war except one group - war profiteers represented by the top defense contractors that are the arms industry corporations.

A year ago a Harvard [study](#) released an estimate placing the cost of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars at American taxpayer expense at four to six trillion dollars. And now [news](#) comes out that up to 1.2 billion dollars worth of ammunition are being squandered in Afghanistan. And this latest waste comes after reconstruction in the country has already skyrocketed to an exorbitant [cost](#) for US taxpayers at 100 billion and rising.

The apparent problem causing the Pentagon to waste over a billion in bullets and missiles is poor bookkeeping. This latest fiasco is a very old problem at the Pentagon that unlimited Department of Defense (DoD) funding has yet to resolve. Bureaucratic inefficiency from the military top brass has been the result of corrupt and fraudulent accounting practices at the Pentagon for as long as the Iraq and Afghanistan wars have been draining the US economy. [Tom Carper](#), the Democratic Senator from Delaware who chairs the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee stated:

"Despite years of effort, the Army, Navy and Air Force still don't have an efficient process for doing something as basic as sharing excess bullets. This Government Accountability Office (GAO) report clearly shows that our military's antiquated systems lead to millions of dollars in wasteful ammunition purchases."Despite repeated past promises to automate its obsolete system, the Pentagon continues squandering taxpayer dollars using antiquated equipment, in this case mismanaging a stockpile of conventional weapons worth 70 billion dollars.

Here the Department of Defense wastes so much money, partly because of its obsolete,

inefficient equipment, yet with its enormous budget, it fails to invest in sorely needed upgrades of its delivery system based on faulty old [broken down equipment](#). Part of the problem is that Pentagon accounting has no internal mechanism capable of tracking its own money. Or at least so it says.

For decades the Pentagon has been notoriously guilty of fraud and corruption in a longstanding case of the left hand not knowing what the right hand is doing. For many years the US military's theft and pilfering has been commonplace for everything imaginable, from [9 billion dollars](#) lost and unaccounted for in Iraq, to well over a half billion dollars worth of lost and stolen equipment in Iraq, to the long known fraudulent accounting practices conveniently cooking the books to match US Treasury records. And the fact that little to no oversight mechanisms are still in place much less ever actually enforced has only permitted this systematic colossal theft to go on for years with complete impunity.

Based on a report released last November, Jonathon Turley outlined the far reaching extent of fraud and deception in an article entitled [Pentagon Plugs: New Study Finds Pentagon Has Hidden Trillions In Missing Money And Equipment](#). Euphemistically the military refers to its rampant practice of fraud as "plugs," almost as a shamelessly vain attempt to conceal and reverse the connotation of the Pentagon's black hole wasting trillions of tax dollars. The Pentagon claims there is no accurate record of outgoing money. A single accounting office in Columbus, Ohio that is part of the Pentagon's Defense Finance and Accounting Service made at least \$1.59 trillion in errors with \$538 billion in plugs.

Between 2003-2011 the Army lost track of an unbelievable [\\$5.8 billion](#) in supplies that left units at the warfronts without critical life saving equipment. Adding insult to injury, the trillions worth of unaccounted for hardware has to regularly be reordered, in effect double-dipping by bilking taxpayers even many times more for the military's corrupt and inept errors.

Every federal agency except the Pentagon by law is required to submit to an annual audit. The Pentagon's exclusionary loophole has given carte blanche to wholesale ripoff of the US taxpaying public for an unaccounted thievery of [\\$8.5 trillion](#) since 1996, which is when audits designed to hold Pentagon spending accountable suddenly stopped.

The arms industry of war profiteers are also immune from [accountability](#) in the business of banks laundering their dirty money. And under this same loophole, the military industrial complex also launders dirty drug money through banks. Fear mongering and war mongering peddled by politicians and generals translate into above the law crimes against humanity that could never occur without the direct backing of the US government. Thus, it is a morally decaying evil system that globally drives unlimited theft, corruption and destruction.

While US citizens have been forced to bail out the banks and corporations while simultaneously footing the war bills, draining the economy and depleting the middle class, now Americans are increasingly forced to adjust to a new era of austerity and financial hardship. Meanwhile, the Defense budget along with its ongoing theft has only grown over the last 30 years. The US spends more money on its military than the rest of the world combined. With the world's top 10 military powers spending a total of [\\$1.19 trillion in military funding in 2011](#), a whopping 58 percent of that total came from the US expense on its military.

With unparalleled global reach on every continent with a total of over 1000 US military installations around the world, the US outspends the next biggest military spender China by nearly 6-to-1. An overstretched US Empire now facing decline yet fighting unwinnable dirty secret wars throughout the world with an insurmountable national debt that can never be repaid while its citizens are suffering from the tyranny of a militarized police state at home, the insanity of this collision course is clearly unsustainable and economic collapse is inevitably eminent.

US spent 60.45 billion in Iraq [reconstruction](#) while post-WWII Germany's reconstruction adjusted in comparative dollars was only 35 billion from 1946-1952. Germany began cranking out VW bugs in 1949 and has never looked back, for many decades establishing itself as the most powerful economic nation in Europe. Unfortunately Iraq and Afghanistan are far worse off than prior to America's invasions and their future does not look so bright either. Nor for that matter does America's.

Even a cursory examination of war profiteering transnational corporations that make up the military industrial complex exposes the waste, graft and bribery committed by the Lockheeds, Boeings, General Electrics, Raytheons, Halliburtons, and the Exxon-Mobils actually gain from US blood for oil wars. William Hartung articulated the exponential growth at our expense of a select group of these companies in [The Military-Industrial Complex Revisited: Shifting Patterns of Military Contracting in the Post-9/11 Period](#):

"Many of the same companies that benefited from increased Pentagon and war spending were top contractors for other security related agencies. For example, Lockheed Martin was not only the top contractor for the Pentagon, but it also ranked number one at the Department of Energy; number eight at the Department of Homeland Security (Boeing was number one); number two at the State Department; and number three at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Contracts let by these agencies were only a fraction of the levels awarded by the Pentagon, but they were significant nonetheless. For example, the Department of Homeland Security issued \$13.4 billion in contracts in FY2008, NASA \$15.9 billion, the State Department \$5.5 billion, and the Department of Energy \$24.6 billion."The name of the game is theft. From absurdly overpriced equipment to constant change orders resulting from missing or stolen supplies that "justify" multiplying profit many times over, to sweetheart no-bid contracts, to the bribery of buying off corrupt politicians, to the generals prostituting to Congress for special war toys often enough not needed, to the retired generals becoming arms whores themselves, to products of inferior design that fail to promise on its hype - the war business is an ugly circulating cesspool of the most evil players.

The loss in life that US wars have causes is staggering enough. And considering that the outcome of both of the latest debacles in Iraq and Afghanistan is no different from the military defeat in Vietnam, America has nothing to show for itself except shame and disgrace, with ever rising costs in wasted lives, wasted dollars and immeasurable human hardship, suffering and pain. Yet America's war drums are still beating as loud as ever, drumming up more wars to fight and lose in places like Ukraine, Syria and Iran, potentially fighting Russia and triggering World War III. Is there no limit to the misery and pain brought to every corner of the globe by the crumbling desperate American Empire led by a bunch of psychopaths bent on destroying the world?

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issues and can be consulted at <http://www.redredsea.net/westpointhagopian/>. After the military, Joachim earned a masters degree in psychology and became a licensed therapist working in the mental health field for more than a quarter century. He now focuses on writing.□

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