

Your Local Military Industrial Complex

By [David Swanson](#)

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As in any other U.S. city, things are looking up for Charlottesville, Va., job seekers who don't mind helping to kill tons of people for no good reason. This week's "[community job fair](#)" features some prominent members of the Charlottesville community whom we don't usually think of as such.

When I travel the country, people often inform me that their town is a military-industrial town as if that were unusual. I always ask them if they can name a U.S. town that isn't — in part because nobody has yet been able to, and in part because if someone ever does I might want to move there.

Once you weed through the predictable dead-end poverty-wage, fast-food, and box-store jobs at the job fair, much of what's left is jobs that help kill people. Whether you support or oppose what the U.S. military is doing in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Libya, and 75 or so other countries, you're probably not aware that the machinery behind it dominates the local economy here, just as in the rest of the United States. The "community" at the job fair is the community of death.

And let's hope you're lucky enough to support what the dozens of countries that U.S. corporations sell weapons to do with them. Would you be proud of having built weapons for Muammar Gaddafi and also of having built weapons for U.S. attacks on his military? Would you take pride in building engines of death for a so-called democracy and also for Saudi Arabia? It's still a little known fact, but our biggest business is the machinery of death, not only because the U.S. military could be cut by 85% and still be the world's largest, but also because the United States is far and away the leading seller of weapons to other countries. Often we end up arming additional countries to fend off countries we've armed. Often we end up at war with countries we've armed. Much of U.S. "foreign aid" is actually cash with which other nations are expected to purchase U.S.-made weaponry.

At the local community job fair you can get a job "researching biological and chemical weapons," an enterprise that necessarily involves creating such weapons. Here's your new employer:

Battelle Memorial Institute
1001 Research Park Blvd., Suite 400
Charlottesville, VA 22911

Or you can become a cog in one of the largest weapons makers on the planet at Northrop Grumman
995 Research Park Blvd., Suite 400
Charlottesville, VA 22911

Here you could be proud of also working for one of the [top violators](#) of U.S. laws where fines of \$845.7 million for 33 instances of misconduct since 1995 is just a cost of doing business. Check out #21 in that list of instances: failing to pay employees. Don't say you weren't warned.

Other Cville area employers that would be delighted to hire you (and maybe even pay you) to help kill include Teksystems, the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, Pragmatics, Wisser, and no doubt others with fat Pentagon contracts. Lots of employers are recruiting here from Northern Virginia and elsewhere as well, such as Concurrent Technologies Corporation, Ogsystems, the Defense Logistics Agency, and BAE Systems. Here are [a few of the products](#) you could take pride in creating at that last one.

BAE is also another [top criminal](#) among government contractors. I don't mean that these companies are participating in illegal wars. I mean that they are lying to the government about whether its weapons work, and engaging in other colorful abuses. For example, BAE has had the bad habit of [bribing Saudi Arabian dictators](#) to buy its killing machines.

Also on the list of employers at the community job fair is the Virginia Army National Guard, which is of course now an international outfit guarding nothing but attacking quite a few things. Then there's the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, recruiting employees to work in a government that consists primarily of a massive military.

This jobs fair is no rarity. Check out [the endless list](#) of military jobs in Charlottesville on the Washington Post website. Then, just for laughs, search for a nonviolent career, and compare the results. Where does all the money for these military jobs come from? From your good old federal government, which is pouring it in quite generously. Here's a [resource](#) that shows 161 military contractors in Cville sucking down \$919,914,918 through 2,737 contracts from the federal government from 2000 to 2010. And the trend is quite cheerful:

In 2005 there were 263 contracts for \$53,824,125.

In 2006, 423 contracts for \$94,526,855.

In 2007, 345 contracts for \$121,250,093.

In 2008, 396 contracts for \$115,243,243.

In 2009, 321 contracts for \$108,881,509.

In 2010, 325 contracts for \$121,506,296.

Where's the recession?

And for a mere \$24.98 the above website will sell you the details on all the contracts.

Or you can find most of them [for free here](#) on a site that gives 2008 info for Virginia's Fifth Congressional District on all government contracts. Here are the "Top 5 Contracting Agencies Purchasing from Contractor(s)":

ARMY \$367,947,807

NAVY \$74,818,358

Defense Logistics Agency \$65,361,602

Department of Homeland Security \$48,612,379

Defense Information Systems Agency \$25,073,111

And here are the "Top 10 Contractors":

GLOBAL FLEET SALES, INC \$236,506,666
NORTHROP GRUMMAN CORP. \$62,771,743
FOSTER FUELS INC \$60,156,180
HEWLETT-PACKARD CO. \$47,931,248
WALSH GROUP LTD THE \$41,000,000
CACI INTERNATIONAL INC \$24,977,432
GENERAL DYNAMICS CORP. \$14,712,119
ASHBURY INTERNATIONAL GROUP \$13,857,589
GENERAL ELECTRIC COMPANY \$11,830,439
PRAGMATICS INC \$7,225,556

Probably CACI should instill the most pride in members of our “community,” given its expert role in torturing bad information out of people.

Again, when you look at the trend for all government contracts for the whole congressional district (which are of course dominated by the military), the trend seems happy:

2003 - \$669,272
2004 - \$23,889,653
2005 - \$27,542,909
2006 - \$93,417,440
2007 - \$426,605,143
2008 - \$649,814,845

This explains the apparent impossibility of getting Congressman Goode/Perriello/Hurt to oppose any wars. Aside from “campaign contributions,” they are influenced by the absurd notion that backing wars creates local jobs.

It does create jobs. It’s our biggest industry. It’s a government jobs program on a massive scale that we don’t label “socialism” solely because it has the saving virtue of killing millions of human beings. But [the fact is that](#) spending the same public dollars on almost anything other than the military would produce more jobs and better paying jobs, and without all the horrible side-effects.

Where does the government get all the money to waste on a type of expenditure that is worse for the economy even than nothing, produces fewer jobs than cutting taxes? It takes [over half of our income taxes](#) to waste on the military industrial complex. This beast is not so complex after all, but rather simple. Its sole source of income is you and me. Nationally, here are the [military contracts](#) for the first two months of this year:

January: \$12,716,492,445
February: \$35,654,248,811

And you thought there was a budget crisis!

Charlottesville Mayor Dave Norris has signed onto the following draft resolution, to be voted on at the U.S. Conference of Mayors meeting in June in Baltimore:

CALLING ON CONGRESS TO REDIRECT MILITARY SPENDING TO DOMESTIC PRIORITIES

WHEREAS, the severity of the ongoing economic crisis has created budget

shortfalls at all levels of government and requires us to re-examine our national spending priorities; and

WHEREAS, an inordinate level of military expenditure is being made by the U.S. federal government for warfare in Iraq and Afghanistan; and

WHEREAS, the people of the United States are collectively paying approximately \$126 billion dollars per year to wage such warfare; and

WHEREAS, this warfare creates great and unnecessary harm to the people of Iraq and Afghanistan and to the U.S. military personnel and their families.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the U.S. Conference of Mayors calls on the U.S. Congress to oppose all legislation that provides further funding of U.S. warfare and military occupation in Iraq and Afghanistan; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the U.S. Conference of Mayors calls on the U.S. Congress to take immediate action to terminate funding of these military operations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the U.S. Conference of Mayors calls on the U.S. Congress to bring these war dollars home to meet vital human needs, promote job creation, rebuild our infrastructure, aid municipal and state governments, and develop a new economy based upon renewable, sustainable energy.

That would be a start. With two-thirds of Americans wanting out of those two wars, this is not really a test of leadership so much as a test of whether mayors can still rhetorically represent people whom Congress refuses to substantively represent. But even were Congress to listen to the public or the mayors or common sense and end those wars, the base military budget is several times bigger than this war budget. And Charlottesville will remain a military town until we change our country's basic structure.

A glance at Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, and Libya suggests the following score: Nonviolence 3, Violence 0. Wars are not just ugly and murderous; they do not work. Compare two weeks in Egypt with 10 years in Afghanistan. Wars are ineffective, immoral, illegal, economically disastrous, environmentally catastrophic, endangering of all of our lives through blowback and proliferation, and yet our community's job base.

On September 16-18, 2011, in Charlottesville, a conference will be held called "The Military Industrial Complex at 50: On Moving Money from the Military to Human Needs."

It can be done. It must be done. Get involved: <http://micat50cville.org>

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<http://warisalie.org>

<http://davidswanson.org>

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