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## **Dismantling America's Military Empire**

**by Jacob G. Hornberger**

As President Dwight D. Eisenhower warned us thirty years ago, the military-industrial complex is a menace and a threat to the freedom and well-being of the American people. The time has come to dismantle America's military empire.

Since the end of World War II, the proponents of conscription, taxation, military spending, and war repeatedly told us, "The only reason we favor these deprivations of liberty is to stop the communist threat. If there were no communist threat, America's warfare state could be ended."

The Soviet Union is now dismantled. The communist threat to America has ended. Yet, what are the proponents of the warfare state now saying? "The military budget must be reduced somewhat, but it is necessary for the United States to maintain its military predominance in the world to combat the new enemies of 'uncertainty and unpredictability.' Moreover, those who have become dependent on military spending have a right to continue receiving it."

With the fall of communism, Americans have a unique opportunity: not simply to reduce their government's military budget but to fully and completely dismantle their nation's military-industrial complex.

From the time our nation was founded until the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration, the American people, by and large, favored a policy of non-intervention in the affairs of other nations. In fact, until 1941, the party platforms of both the Republicans and Democrats opposed United States governmental involvement in foreign wars.

After World War II, those who had benefited from the military largess — in both the public and private sectors — were panicked. They knew that after all previous wars, the American people had demanded a dismantling of the military complex which the wars had produced.

But the communist threat gave new life to the military-industrial complex at the end of World War II. For in order to avoid conquest by the communists, they said, it was necessary to use their same tactics — including the continual and constant buildup of military forces.

Today, at the end of the Cold War, those within the military-industrial complex are as panicked as they were at the end of previous wars. For they know that the possibility looms that the American

people are going to discover the non-militaristic heritage of their ancestors — and demand not simply a reduction in American military might, but instead the dismantling of it.

Is the primary threat to the American people one of taxation, conscription, and foreign wars? These are certainly a large part of the problem. Governmental spending for military purposes constitutes just about the largest percentage of total governmental expenditures. Moreover, the hundreds of thousands of people who benefit, directly and indirectly, from the military largess have the fiercest and most effective special-interest lobbyists in Washington. And periodic foreign wars waged by our government against new official enemies are now accepted as part of the everyday lives of the American people.

But taxation, conscription, and foreign wars are not the biggest threats arising from a huge, standing military force. The real threat — as our American and British ancestors understood so well — is that, at some point, the guns might be pointed not at foreigners, but at us — the American people. I realize that some of you already are saying to yourselves, "Well, Hornberger, this time you've gone too far. There is no way that those in our government, and especially those in the Pentagon, would ever use their military force against the American people."

But let us consider a scenario. Assume the American people decide to end America's welfare-warfare state, regulated-economy way of life. Pursuant to the Constitution, they persuade two-thirds of their state legislatures to call a constitutional convention to consider amendments to the Constitution which abolish: income taxation and the Internal Revenue Service, all welfare and regulatory laws, all immigration and trade restrictions, all foreign troops and foreign aid, conscription, the standing army (including the Pentagon), and virtually every bureaucracy of the U.S. government.

Most Americans innocently believe that the Congress would meekly obey and call the constitutional convention, as required by the Constitution. But Americans might well discover what foreigners have discovered: that when politicians, bureaucrats and bureaucracies are attacked, they fight back. How could they retaliate? Imagine the following pronouncement by the president of the United States;

"My fellow Americans — as a result of the constitutional convention which the state legislatures have recently called for, our nation is in deep crisis. National security has never been more at stake. Abolishing America's welfare state, regulated economy, and standing army would result in conflict, chaos, and unemployment, both here and abroad. Therefore, pursuant to the authority granted to me by the Congress, I hereby declare a national emergency. The government shall continue as is during the pendency of this emergency. The constitutional convention will not be called, and the Constitution will not be amended. Income taxes will continue to be paid and strictly enforced by the IRS. All citizens will immediately surrender their gold and their weapons. Domestic order will be

preserved by the FBI, the CIA, the DEA, and the armed forces of the United States and the United Nations. These agencies are hereby vested with the authority, upheld many years ago by the Supreme Court, to round up potential dissidents, place them and their families in interment camps, and seize their properties. Acting together, our nation will survive the extreme acts of the state legislatures. Acting together, we shall preserve our freedom."

Unlikely? Has the U.S. government ever declared "national emergencies" and jailed potential dissidents during those "emergencies?" Has it ever ordered troops into America's cities to maintain "order?" Has it ever fired on and killed domestic dissenters? Has it ever incarcerated large groups of people who had not been accused of any crimes? Has it ever confiscated private property?

One of these days, the American people might very well discover that American politicians and bureaucrats will violently resist losing their parasitic grip on the citizenry. And one can only wonder where the proponents of gun control will be standing (or hiding) then.

"But would you have us move toward isolationism?" it is asked.

The goal is to isolate the U.S. government, not the American people. For the latter, not the former, are our nation's greatest diplomats of peace and friendship. If trade and immigration restrictions were abolished, the American people would not be isolated from the rest of the world — on the contrary, they would be interacting with people all over the globe.

But wouldn't this cause Americans to become more dependent on people in other nations? Absolutely — just as foreigners would become more dependent on us. And it is these interdependencies that we should value and cherish, for they are the greatest deterrents to the mother's milk of the military-industrial complex — conflict and war.

But what about foreign tyrants? Shouldn't our government act as judge, jury, and executioner to put them down? No! If Americans are upset over foreign tyranny, they can risk their own lives and fortunes to help oppose the tyrants. No government has any legitimate role in interfering with the affairs of other nations.

Today, the Pentagon sees America as a new Roman Empire — with American politicians and bureaucrats ruling the world through military might. For the military-industrial complex, the empire means bigger budgets and more power. But for us — the citizenry, the empire holds a darker destiny: death, destruction, taxation, enslavement, impoverishment, and collapse.

Our government was founded to protect the United States from attack, not to rule the world through force of arms. The possibility of any nation attacking our country in the foreseeable future is virtually non-existent. Windows of opportunity do not often repeat themselves. Americans should "seize the day" by dismantling not only their welfare state but their military empire as well.

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