

American Patriotism

And

The Military Industrial Complex

Mohamed Rabie

Fifty years ago, President Eisenhower warned of what he called at the time, the "military industrial complex". About ten years later, G. William Domhoff published his book, *Who Rules America*, in which he tried to expose the influence of the powerful men and corporations that directly and indirectly control the decision making processes in the United States. The warnings of both men, however, were largely ignored, causing the situation to deteriorate further. As a consequence, who rules America has become a complicated web of companies, interests, institutions, and powerful men and women working inside and outside the military industrial complex and the business community. These men and women and the institutions they represent control all major centers of power on the right as well as on the left in America. What we have today is an alliance made up of the military, the military industry, the intelligence community, the US Congress, executives of large banks and corporations, the media elite, and a growing number of retired generals and militarized intellectuals working for think tanks, public relations companies and lobbies and universities. Many leading universities and think tanks have joined this powerful alliance, granting former high-ranking intelligence officers and Pentagon officials and army generals prestigious academic positions, creating small elite of militarized intellectuals.

Militarized intellectuals are able to dominate security and international relations studies at major universities and think tanks and promote ideas that nurture suspicion, spread fear, and favor the use of force to settle conflicts and dominate other nations. Thus, even universities thought to be the last bastion of liberalism and freedom of speech, have fallen into the trap;

graduating smart young men and women committed to increasing spending on security matters and supporting war efforts and suppressing dissent. Members of Congress, for example, are willing to fight hard to increase military budgets by the tens of billions of dollars and fund military bases at home and abroad, especially bases located in their home districts; yet, they are hesitant to appropriate few billions of dollars to build shelters to house the homeless and help the unemployed. Meanwhile, the military industry, big banks and large corporations are spending annually billions of dollars on the media to brainwash the public and finance election campaigns of congressmen and senators committed to protecting their interests and promoting their views. In the meantime, the same executives continue to export American manufacturing and service jobs to other nations.

What makes the entire exercise of supporting the armed forces so unrealistic and vastly hypocritical is that congress, the media and conservative Americans in general consider supporting young American men and women fighting wars overseas to be nationalistic and patriotic and, therefore, they are unwilling to accept anything less than total backing. Yet, when soldiers return home with strange diseases and psychological problems that lead many of them to a state of homelessness, drug addiction and poverty, promoters of patriotism fail to show the same degree of support or even compassion. Patriotic Americans in congress, in the media, and in most think tanks seem to consider fighting wars, killing the other and getting killed in the process an act of courage and patriotism, but not defending soldiers' rights to live normal lives with their wives and children and get ready to defend the nation when and if the need arises to do so. Michael Moore's documentaries show that those people are not even willing to consider having their sons and daughters serve in the US armed forces. Meanwhile, people who oppose war and promote peace and dialogue with other peoples and cultures are often considered unpatriotic, sometimes traitors supporting the enemy. Thus, nationalism and patriotism are slogans meant to intimidate the other and serve the interests of an unholy alliance.

As a consequence of this alignment of interests among representatives of the military, the military industry, money, politics, the intelligence community, the media, lobbies, think tanks and many academic institutions, a new cartel has emerged to dominate all aspects of American

life, and control every major public policy. The new elites that represent this alliance and hold all strings of power in America are best described as the “**Hounds Cartel.**” Business and money peddlers are chasing every dollar made anywhere in the world; politicians and political consultants and lobbyists are chasing every potential voter and campaign contributor; former generals, intelligence officers and Pentagon officials are chasing every piece of information to justify building new destructive war machines and spying systems; militarized intellectuals are chasing every violent incident and media opportunity to gain more recognition and publicity and consulting fees; and media personalities are chasing every second to gain more notoriety and manipulate human needs and fears for the sake of money. Meanwhile, all hounds are tied together by unbounded greed, similar cultural backgrounds and a strong desire to dominate America and the world, confiscate as much of its wealth as accessible, and impoverish as many human beings as possible.

On the other hand, both the America Right and Left have become members of “**cultural ghettos.**” A traditional ghetto is a place where people are largely forced to physically live in isolation, separated from the rest of society to which they supposedly belong, due to inhumane circumstances that include discrimination, poverty and alienation. A cultural ghetto, in contrast, is a space where people mentally live, largely by choice, insulated from the rest of society to which they supposedly belong. The American Right and Left have formed two large ghettos and several sub ghettos where they live, think and dream, conspire and function. Members of all cultural ghettos are only able to hear themselves, speak to the walls within which they live and function, and listen to echoes of the voices of their ancestors who walked in the same halls of power and influence in the past. Although all such ghettos are largely isolated and do their best to remain insulated from the influence of outsiders, the Right has been more effective in spreading its message and advancing its agenda than the Left.

The reasons for the relative success of the Right and relative failure of the Left are not hard to understand. The Right has much more money, which gives it more access to the media to promote its views. In addition, its message is simple and directed to the masses that lack the sophistication to separate fact from opinion and theory from conspiracy; they are people who

tend to be culturally and religiously conservative and want to believe rather than to think. In contrast, the Left's message is more complicated; it needs people who are educated and rather sophisticated to understand and appreciate. And because the Left is isolated in its ivy ghettos, its members are unable to engage the other in an open and honest dialogue. Members of other cultural and religious and racial minorities are considered outsiders that must be excluded and isolated. Nevertheless, the Left is comfortable getting paid by the same rich that support the Right, who do it not out of belief in what the Left is saying, but to justify what the Right is doing by claiming that politics in America is a fair game. Meanwhile, moral decay, economic decline and political corruption continue in America, while the public takes a long, undeserved nap.

Dr. Rabie is an author and a professor of international political economy. He has studied, lived and taught in 4 continents, and lectured at more than 60 universities and research institutes worldwide. He has published 26 books and over 1,000 papers and articles. The interests, writings and activities of Dr. Rabie reflect a strong commitment to peace, freedom, social justice and human.

rabiem@hotmail.com