**United States Militarism,**

**Global Instability and**

**Environmental Destruction**

(59 pages)

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**PART ONE**

**1. Introduction**

Everything worth saying about the American way of life I could put in thirty pages. Topographically the country is magnificent and terrifying. Why terrifying? Because nowhere else in the world is the divorce between man and nature so complete...To call this a society of free peoples is blasphemous. What have we to offer the world beside the superabundant loot which we recklessly plunder from the earth under the maniacal delusion that this insane activity represents progress and enlightenment?

-- Henry Miller, The Air-Conditioned Nightmare (Miller, 2003)

*oderint dum metuant*: Let them hate so long as they fear. -- Roman emperor, Caligula (Parry, 2003)

We will export death and violence to the four corners of the Earth in defense of our great nation. -- U.S. President George W. Bush, post 9/11 (Pfaff, 2003)

This paper will employ the concept of *militarism* in the broadest sense. At the time of writing, the U.S. is not directly under military control and is nominally under civilian rule. However, extensive military operations are integral to the operations of empire, *Pax Americana*. *Global instability* refers to many areas in the social and natural worlds that are affected by the military empire. *Environmental destruction* will be treated as the major and culminating theme of this paper since without a thriving habitat, *Homo sapiens* will eventually cease to exist.

**2. The U.S. imperial alliance system**

The U.S. imperial alliance system embodies the "reign of terror, genocide, plunder, theft, death and destruction" that began with Europe’s conquest of the world 500 year ago (Moen, D., personal communication, December 29, 2002). The system consists of the United States at the hub of military and economic power. The G7 nations fulfill the crucial role in the empire as the first tier countries supported by the lesser rich OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries at the second tier. Dictatorships in the Third World help to insure U.S. hegemony by crushing domestic opposition. The UN Security Council members of Russia, China, the United Kingdom and France now support Pax Americana to varying degrees. The military alliances of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) in Europe and AMPO (U.S.-Japan alliance) in East Asia are crucial to U.S. military expansionism. Other ruling class mechanisms include: the Bretton Woods institutions including the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization; the Trilateral Commission; the Business Roundtable; the World Economic Forum, and numerous other rich men’s clubs. Elite lobbying groups play an increasingly powerful role in controlling the U.S. congress these days while an array of mega-corporations--whose assets tower over the collected wealth of most of the world’s countries--have a large role in constructing U.S. policies for their own benefit.

**2.1. Socio-political background**

While the terrorism which is carried out by non state actors and military dictatorships is treated with constant attention by the mainstream media, terrorism’s victims are small compared to the millions of people who die from preventable hunger, disease and state sponsored war.

While unbelievably horrible in both their nature and scale, the attacks on September 11th were foreseeable, and, in many ways, inevitable-the result of deepening structures and cultures of violence and increasing acts of violence in nearly all parts of the world. The association which many people have between these trends and the practices and policies of the United States' economic, political and military power made the choosing of the United States as the target of these attacks something which many had long predicted, and warned of. U.S. economic, political and military policies since

World War II have resulted in the impoverishment, marginalisation, and devastation of hundreds of millions of people world-wide (Brand-Jacobsen, 2001).

The socio-economic policy that causes millions of preventable deaths every year is consciously constructed by the institutions of the U.S. imperial alliance system. This system is terrorism writ large, but it is not called so by the corporate media.

**2.2 Economic genocide**

Chossudovsky (1997) notes that IMF/World Bank reform and structural adjustment policy is “Economic genocide...carried out through the conscious and deliberate manipulation of market forces,” whose social impact is more devastating than “forced labour and slavery” (p. 37).

Chossudovsky documents U.S. foreign economic policy which pursues: social polarization and concentration of wealth; intensification of the cheap labor economy and financial instability in under developed and developing countries; intensifying the process of turning the private debts of wealthy corporations into public debt in the Third World; Third Worldization of the former Soviet bloc countries; using debt as a mechanism for imposing structural adjustment; structural adjustment as a means to transform and privatize the common wealth into corporate profits; imposing fiscal crises upon states thereby destroying national economies; spurring a global economic crisis; “dollarising prices,” thus forcing global prices to rise even in poor countries; manipulating statistics on poverty to diminish its perceived severity, for example, by siting “medium income” as a reliable indicator of a nation’s economic health; and destroying national currencies (pp. 16-43). If readers have further suggestions for imposing instability and suffering on the world, I’m sure the IMF/World Bank would welcome your inquiries.

Another aspect of economic genocide is the funding for so-called Third World development. Blum (1995) shows in his chart, “This is How the Money Goes Round” (pp., 442-3) the conduit by which funding flowed during the Cold War to insure hegemony. Starting with the CIA, money is dispersed through a number of foundations, funds and trusts. From there money goes to prominent U.S. think tanks, research institutes and aid foundations. The money is then dispersed further into smaller organizations in specific geographic locations where it is finally dispersed to journalists, writers, educators, students, lawyers, and research, labor and university receptacles. These funds are nominally used to improve living standards, but in fact work to increase corporate profits while destroying ancient cultures and inflicting poverty on vast numbers of people (Sachs, 1992).

**2.3 Murdering the body politic**

The essence of U.S. foreign policy is succinctly illustrated by the account of a Greek Ambassador who had been protesting U.S. manipulation of Greece’s domestic affairs. He was rudely informed by President Lyndon Johnson, “fuck your parliament and your constitution” (Blum, 1995, p. 216). Far from bringing freedom and democracy to the down-trodden masses of the world, Blum’s classic work, *Rogue State* (2000), outlines U.S. strategies which include but are not limited to: training terrorists; assassinating democratically elected leaders; training foreign military and police units in the arts of controlling unruly civilian populations through use of torture and terror; hiring war criminals to spread aforementioned tactics; giving haven to terrorists; supporting dictators and mass murderers in the Third World; employing a massive array of weaponry, including mini-nukes, depleted uranium tipped missiles, cluster bombs, and chemical and biological weapons (CBWs); and the encouragement of the use of CBWs by other nations. Other tactics have included innumerable direct military interventions abroad; the perverting of elections; using “trojan horse” aid agencies as a guise to control domestic policies in foreign countries; the undermining and manipulation of the U.N.; an elaborate high tech global surveillance system; “kidnapping and looting” when appropriate; aiding the South African apartheid regime; CIA money-making through global illegal drug sales; and controlling the media and avoiding accountability (pp. 38-214).

Grossman (2001) provides a list of 134 U.S. military interventions from 1890 to 2001, most of which took place in foreign countries but also domestically. The list does *not* include other military actions such as:

...demonstration duty by military police, mobilizations of the National Guard, offshore shows of naval strength, reinforcements of embassy personnel, the use of non-Defense Department personnel (such as the Drug Enforcement Agency), military exercises, non-combat mobilizations (such as replacing postal strikers), the permanent stationing of armed forces, covert actions where the U.S. did not play a command and control role, the use of small hostage rescue units, most uses of proxy troops, U.S. piloting of foreign warplanes, foreign disaster assistance, military training and advisory programs not involving direct combat, civic action programs, and many other military activities.

In the chart, “The Sun and its planets: Countries using torture on an administrative basis in the 1970’s, with their parent-client affiliations,” Chomsky & Herman (1979) document U.S. influence on 26 countries where funds and military training were used to employ torture against political opponents and prisoners. This compared with nine other countries including the Soviet Union who employed torture on an administrative basis who were outside the U.S. sphere of political influence.

Gerson & Birchard found that during the Cold War the U.S. was involved in “more than 200...military interventions in the Third World” (p. 12). Most of the intervention had little to do with fighting communism but was mainly devoted to protecting U.S. corporate interests and crushing movements toward political and economic independence (Chomsky, 1991).

Parenti (1995) states that the true nature of U.S. interventionism is a desire to preserve the “politico-economic domination and the capital accumulation system” and at any time attack the “designated ‘enemy’ [of the U.S. which] can be a reformist, populist, military government...a Christian socialist government...a social democracy...a Marxist-Leninist government...an Islamic revolutionary order...or even a conservative military regime” (p. 39).

The permanent U.S. concern about ruthless adversaries is mainly a ruse used to serve U.S. imperial goals. Enemies, either real, imagined, potential or supported and created by the U.S. itself, are crucial for justifying the military system to public taxpayers. Given that the U.S. has consistently opposed and undermined international treaties aimed at reducing or abolishing conventional, chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, the latest “war on terror” against an “evil axis” of formidable enemies, be they communists, drug traffickers, Islamic fundamentalists or marijuana smoking tree huggers, rings hollow indeed (Chomsky, 2001).

**2.4 We want the world (and we want it, now)**

When progressive writers say that America wants to control the world, they are differentiating between various interest groups. To paraphrase F. Scott Fitzgerald: there are the rich, and then there are the rest of us slobs. Most Americans do not want the U.S. to be the world’s policeman. More precisely though, most of the world sees the U.S. as a global *mafia don.* Domestically, the Bush crime family took power in the most audacious election fraud in American history (Bugliosi, 2001). Abroad, the Bush killers are well known for there unilateral foreign policy: ie., aggression.

But if this is the case, why don’t millions of Americans surround the White House and demand the Bush administration’s immediate removal? A major part of the reason lies in media manipulation. If people are bombarded with Goebbel’s “big lie” often enough they will begin to assimilate nonsense as reality. Schecter (1997) titled a book about TV news coverage of the Gulf War, “the more you watch the less you know.” Empirical evidence showed that since most Americans now get their news from television, the more TV that people watch, they less accurate is their understanding of the world. Especially in politics.

Propaganda for Iraq war II war was whipped up by the giant right wing talk- radio network that permeates American society, and the notorious *Fox (faux) News* TV network which spins every issue to support U.S. ruling class interests. Other supposedly liberal news outlets such as the *New York Times* and *CNN* barely protested the war before it began, and largely cheered it on once it began. This is not surprising in an age where entertainment and news have blurred into one medium and critical thinking is discouraged in favor of sexy scandals.

Of an endless array of Hollywood movies, while some are critical of U.S. actions abroad, most reinforce the notion of the U.S. as the world’s reluctant policeman fighting the terror war against hordes of faceless dark skinned peoples (mainly Arabs), while revealing little about America’s far flung military empire or the economic interests that support it.

There are probably deeper socio-psychological reasons why a majority of Americans appear to have given so much support to the Bush presidency (if polling information can be trusted). These may include the old stand-bys of stupidity, laziness, greed, arrogance, not to mention willful ignorance. In other words, America is a criminal society complicit in the actions of its rulers. They/we timidly accept repressive measures at home and “patriotically” cheer the government’s murderous adventures abroad.

On the other hand, there are millions of young Americans who are smart and savvy, have not become dumbed down in the way the corporate media would like, and are offering incisive critiques and decisive actions regarding capitalism and imperialism. There are a wide array of average folks who do not particularly subscribe to any political party other than the party of common sense and decency. Most Americans are progressive in practice even if they identify themselves, naively perhaps, as being “conservative.” Millions of Americans identify with alternative health, education, and social movements as a rejection to corporate control of society and the dumbing down of America. This is evident by the flourishing of progressive non governmental organizations (NGOs), websites and well organized demonstrations carried out in recent times. Many people have sussed out the lies of the World Bank/IMF/WTO and various “free trade” agreements and demonstrated against the rich men’s gathering spots. Anti-war demonstrations in 2002 and 2003 have drawn hundreds of thousands of people in the U.S. and millions from around the world.

**2.5 Building empire**

Today, U.S. military and corporate power is unrivaled in the history of the world (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2001). U.S. military power is expanding it’s permanent bases to every region of the planet in order to secure crucial natural resources such as fossil fuels and oil. Every new war carried out by the U.S. is accompanied by a spate of military base building as seen recently in South America, Eastern Europe and Central Asia (Blum, 2002). As of September 30, 2002, the U.S. officially acknowledged the existence of 703 “foreign military enclaves” (Johnson, 2003).

Gerson & Birchard (1991) present an authoritative study on military bases. After the end of WWII, the U.S. began a 45 year build up of half a million troops and 375 major foreign military bases around the world (p. 3). That trend changed at the end of the Cold War and saw some troop and base reductions for a time, such as the withdrawal of bases from the Philippines. However, the potential peace dividend with the end of the Cold War did not occur after it became clear that the Cold War itself was mainly a ruse to insure U.S. hegemony under the pretext of fighting communism. One of the purposes of the 1991 Gulf War was to reaffirm the global U.S. military presence, especially in the Middle East. After the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, any lingering trend toward reducing overseas military presence has been reversed.

As of 1989 there were 525,000 U.S. troops stationed abroad with nearly half of them in Western Germany. In Japan there were 48,000 troops and in South Korea, 44,000, thus, a strong U.S. presence had been maintained long after the end of World War II (p. 6). By comparison to U.S. bases and their personnel during the Cold War, in 1989, the “Soviet Union had 627,000 troops deployed in 19 nations” with more than half of them in East Germany (p. 9).

The actual number of U.S. military bases in the world is hard to calculate with precision since they continue to grow in number, and in some cases the functions of various institutions are ambiguous. As of 1993, a conservative estimate for major bases (not including various smaller installations placed in the area of a main base) was 375 while one exhaustive study found the U.S.’s “global nuclear infrastructure” contained “more than 1,500...facilities involved in preparations for nuclear war” (p. 8).

In addition, there are innumerable ports and airfields as well as air space which the U.S. military regularly accesses. For example, in Tokyo, Japan, one of the world’s most important economic centers, the international airport had to be placed at an inconvenient distance from the city center due to the prerogatives of the U.S. Air Force (Moen, D., personal communication, December 29, 2002). Wilkinson (2001) reports that:

a great deal of Japan’s airspace is controlled by the US military, and Japanese civilian aircraft have to adjust their flights to fit the complex pattern of corridors surrounding the different bases and airports...the airspace above Japan can be considered a separate “invisible US base.” In 1996 and 1997 alone, according to Japan’s major pilot union, there were 105 instances where military jets activated the collision avoidance systems of civilian airliners. In 1998, the Ministry of Transport finally got around to sending a note to the US military command in Japan indicating its concern, but nothing has changed.

**2.6 Social impacts**

Gerson provides a broader perspective to this usurpation of sovereignty:

Numbers [of bases fails] to communicate the deeper meanings of foreign military bases...[which] bring insecurity; the loss of self determination, human rights, and sovereignty; as well as the degradation of the culture, values, health, and environment of host nations. Foreign military bases are designed to integrate host nations into U.S. military strategies and structures...While the toll of U.S. bases on the people and societies of host nations is more immediately visible than its toll on the people of the United States, there are many similarities. Military bases corrupt what remains of our national commitment to democratic values, and they alienate us from people with whom we share the planet. Military forces endanger our lives by increasing the likelihood that conflicts will escalate into wars, and they drain our national economic, ecological, and spiritual resources” (pp. 9 -10).

The training of troops at foreign bases cause can cause severe disruption to local residents in the vicinity of bases due to noise, air, water and land pollution, and from danger by accidents from fighter jets and other activities. In Johnson’s invaluable contribution to the literature on U.S. imperialism (2003), he notes what should be obvious to anyone concerned with it’s intrusive nature:

Stationing several thousand eighteen-to-twenty-four year-old American youths in cultures that are foreign to them and about which they are utterly ignorant is a recipe for the endless series of “incidents” plaguing nations that have accepted U.S. bases...[furthermore] All servicemen in Okinawa know that if after committing a rape, a robbery, or an assault, they can make it back to the base before the police catch them, they will be free until indicted even though there is a Japanese arrest warrant out for their capture.

An age-old symptom of the social degradation surrounding military bases is prostitution. “The town of Olongapo next to the U.S. base at Subic Bay was devoted entirely to “rest and recreation” for U.S. troops and housed more than fifty thousand prostitutes” (“US military bases,” 2002). The behavior of off duty troops stationed at bases can have devastating consequences, such as the legacy of criminal acts committed by soldiers against civilians in Okinawa, Japan. In the 1995 case of three U.S. marines who were found guilty of raping a twelve year old girl, the soldiers were only arrested and turned over to the Japanese police after public outrage. Even then, they were quickly sent back to the U.S. to a military prison and reportedly released shortly thereafter (Moen, D., personal communication, August 29, 2003). At the time, a U.S. Admiral familiar with the case told the press “I think that [the rape] was absolutely stupid. For the price they paid to rent the car, they could have had a girl.” In other words, while rape is deemed unacceptable, prostitution is considered by many in the military, including top brass, to be standard operating procedure.

Okinawa Women Act Against Military Violence, were not [reacting]... just in response to this single rape, brutal though it was. Between 1972 and 1995, U.S. servicemen were implicated in 4,716 crimes, nearly one per day,..

The Japan-U.S. agreement that governs the Okinawa base allows U.S. authorities to refuse Japanese requests for military suspects, and few indeed have suffered any inconvenience for their crimes (“US military bases,” 2002).

In the summer of 2003, there was a case in Tokyo of a hit and run driver who was not apprehended by the police despite there being several witnesses to the accident. The driver was U.S. military personnel. While many U.S. military members vehemently deny that such lawless behavior is allowed to go unpunished, and in fact argue that Japanese police are either incompetent or go out of their way to target U.S. military personnel for scrutiny, victims who receive cavalier treatment from both the U.S. and Japanese authorities and do not receive adequate monetary compensation in such matters would beg to differ. Even in the best cases, the Status of Forces Agreement (SoFA) lacks transparency of procedure and does not bestow justice consistently or fairly. In many cases the U.S. is blatantly “above the law” (Wilcox, 2003).

Johnson (2003) cites the opinions of two SoFA experts, “Most SOFAs are written so that national courts cannot exercise legal jurisdiction over U.S. military personnel who commit crimes against local people, except in special cases where the U.S. military authorities agree to transfer jurisdiction.”

In fairness to U.S. military personnel, rank and file members have been sold a bill of goods about “serving their country” through deceptive recruiting techniques. Apart from a few *Rambos* and other true believers, in general, people join the military due to the lack of better economic opportunities available to them. Once enrolled, personnel may be fed disinformation about the purpose of their work or the circumstances of their post, and suffer psychological stress due to the nature of military service which constrains individual freedom. Whistle blowers are threatened with serious criminal violation of the military code or other forms of retribution.

**2.7 Spreading like cancer**

Today, the U.S. International Military Education and Training program (IMET) offers US military and police aid to 26 countries in the Western hemisphere alone.

International Military Education and Training (IMET) pays for the training or education of foreign military and a limited number of civilian personnel. IMET grants are given to foreign governments, which choose the courses their personnel will attend...IMET funding for Latin America was used to send students to approximately 150 U.S. military training institutions throughout the United States. A wide variety of courses for U.S. personnel – some 2,000, including topics ranging from counterintelligence to helicopter repair to military justice systems – qualify for IMET funding” (International Military Education and Training, 2003).

Lumpe (2002) found that over the past decade “the U.S. has interacted with almost all governments in the world” while training foreign militaries at a rate of “approximately 100,000 foreign soldiers annually... This training takes place in at least 150 institutions within the U.S. and in 180 countries around the world.” IMET is a key institution that has partially justified its mission based on strengthening human rights and democracy. “In truth, most of the programs have had no discernible focus on human rights and have been carried out in a highly, if not completely, unaccountable manner.”

While it is well known that the CIA is actively meddling in the affairs of foreign countries, it is perhaps surprising that a domestic U.S. police agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is active abroad in the FBI's Office of International Operations (“Federal Bureau,” 2003). As of 2003, pending congressional approval for funding, new FBI offices are to “be established in Sarajevo, Bosnia; Jakarta, Indonesia; Tashkent, Uzbekistan; Kabul, Afghanistan, and Belgrade, Serbia. Existing offices would be expanded in Ottawa, Seoul, London, Berlin and Moscow," the FBI has reported. Justified by the war on terror there may soon be about 250 FBI personnel and agents “stationed at 46 locations around the world.”

The venerable socialist journal, *Monthly Review* (2002) recently provided an informative essay on the U.S. military base issue. Despite an immediate decrease in deployments directly after the WWII, the following quotes illustrate that the creation

of U.S. military bases abroad have steadily increased in number and global scope of operations.

1) The United States emerged from the Second World War with the most extensive system of military bases that the world had ever seen...at the end of the Second World War consisted of over thirty thousand installations located at two thousand base sites residing in around one hundred countries and areas...

2) Many current U.S. bases were acquired in...the Second World War, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, and the war in Afghanistan. U.S. military

bases in Okinawa, formally part of Japan, are a legacy of the U.S. occupation of Japan during the Second World War.

3) Like all empires, the United States has been extremely reluctant to relinquish any base once acquired.

4) Bases obtained in one war are seen as forward deployment positions for some future war.

5) The majority of U.S. bases were justified as... “containing” Communism. Yet, upon the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States sought to retain its entire basing system on the grounds that this was necessary for the global projection of its power and the protection of U.S. interests abroad.

6) Although the Clinton administration was to insist more strongly than the Bush administration that preceded it on the need to diminish U.S. foreign military commitments, no attempt was made to decrease the U.S. “forward presence” abroad represented by its far-flung military bases. The main shift rather was to reduce the number of troops permanently stationed overseas by deploying troops more frequently but for shorter stays...bases were to be used for pre-positioning equipment for purposes of rapid deployment.

7) On any given day before September 11, according to the Defense Department, more than 60,000 military personnel were conducting temporary operations and exercises in about 100 countries.

8) According to the Defense Department’s *Base Structure Report, 2001*, the United States currently has overseas military installations in thirty-eight countries and separate territories. [In addition: there are 6 bases in U.S. territories outside the U.S.; there are strategic forward bases in Saudi Arabia, Kosovo, Bosnia and Colombia; in the Latin America there are bases in] Puerto Rico, Manta, Ecuador; Aruba; Curaçao; and Comalapa, El Salvador; Since September 11, the United

States has set up military bases housing sixty thousand troops in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan, along with Kuwait, Qatar, Turkey, and Bulgaria. Also crucial in the operation is the major U.S. naval base at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean.

9) All told, the United States now has overseas military bases in almost sixty countries and separate territories.

10) In some ways this number may even be deceptively low. All issues of jurisdiction and authority with respect to bases in host countries are spelled out in...status of forces agreements. During the Cold War years these were normally public documents, but are now often classified as secret—for example, those with Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and in certain respects Saudi Arabia. According to Pentagon records, the United States now has formal agreements of this kind with ninety-three countries.

In other words, between actual bases, the ability to move from one base into another country (forward bases) and the penetration of international air spaces and agreements with foreign militaries and police forces, the U.S. military is virtually global in expanse. Other important aspects of the global presence are the encirclement of Russia and China; the use of bases to secure valuable fossil fuel pipelines in areas such as Central Asia; the intrusion on the sovereignty of host nations such as Japan where joint military exercises enmesh the host into the U.S. empire; the use of bases as an extra political threat to countries who dare to “chart an independent course that is perceived as threatening U.S. interests...There can be no doubt, therefore, that the last remaining superpower is presently on a course of imperial expansion, as a means of promoting its political and economic interests...”