**Reflections on The People’s Army, The Constitution, & Grand Strategy**

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The People’s Army – the Continental Army rooted in home-spun militias – was formed and fought and won a war before the U.S. Constitution was written and signed in 1787. The Constitution – and the Republic – exist because the People’s Army, the Continental Army led by George Washington – leveraged the twin advantages of a righteous cause and home court to eject what was then the greatest imperial power on the planet. Of the 55 men attending the Constitutional Convention, at least 29 served in the Continental Army, most of them in positions of command.[[1]](#endnote-1) Understanding the relationship between the people from whom the early militias were drawn, the Army, and the Constitution, is essential to evaluating where we fall short today.[[2]](#endnote-2)

The Constitution’s Preamble provides the six purposes for the Constitution and the Republic represented by the Constitution, itself a “mission statement” and an operating manual for the United States of America:

To form a more perfect union;
To establish justice;
To insure domestic tranquility;
To provide for the common defense;
To promote the general welfare; and
To secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.

These are not simply purposes of the American people or its government. These were once and should again be integral missions of the United States Army, an Army intended to be Of, By, and For We the People. When this is the case – it is not today – the Army will not go to war without a Constitutional mandate from Congress;[[3]](#endnote-3) foreign countries will not be able to buy US foreign policy;[[4]](#endnote-4) and war will not be a profit center and budget buster.[[5]](#endnote-5)

“National security” has become a cancer, and false patriotism the last refuge of scoundrels whose real purpose is to loot the public treasury. The time has come for the public to demand a baseline review of how the government generally and the Army specifically is trained, equipped, and organized. There are many laws and regulations in place that are questionable if one applies the standard of service to the public interest. Army doctrine and Army practice have tended to be complacent about high crimes and misdemeanors among civilian politicians and their political appointees. One could go so far as to say that the time has come to alter the government – to alter the way the government is financed, the way the government makes decisions, and the way the government does or does not reflect the will and interests of the larger public.[[6]](#endnote-6)

Grand Strategy – the last one was done in 1953 by President and former General Dwight Eisenhower – is how the Executive and Congress can address all threats in a coherent and sustainable – which is to say affordable as well as effective – manner.[[7]](#endnote-7)

The most fundamental aspect of any Grand Strategy in a constitutional democracy is its integrity in relation to both the Constitution, and to We the People as the center of gravity and the ultimate source of national power. Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and George Mason all focused on how an educated citizenry is a nation’s best defense. A century later Hans Morgenthau focused the entire discipline of political science and the sub-discipline of international relations on the fact that the root of any nation’s power is its own population.[[8]](#endnote-8)

The US Army has always been – and should remain – the embodiment of national power as rooted in a public that is educated, employed, fit, and mobilizable. It is helpful to remember that the US Military Academy (West Point) was created to assure the Army – and the Republic – of a reliable source of *engineers* – of nation-builders who could also win wars. This from West Point’s own history page, with emphasis added: [[9]](#endnote-9)

Colonel Sylvanus Thayer, the "father of the Military Academy," served as Superintendent from 18l7-1833. He upgraded academic standards, instilled military discipline and emphasized honorable conduct. Aware of our young nation's need for engineers, Thayer made civil engineering the foundation of the curriculum. For the first half century, **USMA graduates were largely responsible for the construction of the bulk of the nation's initial railway lines, bridges, harbors and roads.**

As the 2016 presidential race moves toward Election Day, it should concern all citizens that no candidate has uttered the words “grand strategy,” and no candidate has – or plans to have – a grand strategy. Nor does any candidate have a credible plan for rebuilding America (Bernie Sanders came close[[10]](#endnote-10)). Platitudes have displaced reasoned discourse, and the greatest platitude of them all, “a strong America” has displaced any regard for the core of any nation’s strength, **the population**. Absent an educated, employed, and healthy public fit for duty, no tweaking of the existing military system is going to lead to “a strong America.”

Human Security – the security of our public at home, the security of representatives abroad (both those that wage war and those that wage peace and commerce), and the security of our veterans in the aftermath of their often bloody and mind-bending service – is the essence of the matter.

With over twenty million veterans,[[11]](#endnote-11) many of them unemployed,[[12]](#endnote-12) and fifty million poor[[13]](#endnote-13) (one sixth of the population, many of the poor being both people of color and veterans), there could not be a better moment to educate the public and mobilize the voice of veterans in demanding that the candidates articulate commitments to devising a Grand Strategy that connects our military to our economy and our society in a sustainable – that is to say affordable – fashion. It should concern us that veterans do not appear to have a voice in this election cycle.[[14]](#endnote-14)

It merits emphasis that inter-state conflict and terrorism – two of the ten high-level threats to humanity identified by LtGen Dr. Brent Scowcroft, USAF (Ret) and the other members of the High-Level Panel on Threat, Challenges, and Change that reported out in December 2004 – are the sole focus on our national security community. We persist in ignoring the top three high-level threats (Poverty, Infectious Disease, and Environmental Degradation), and we pay lip service to the remaining five (Civil War, Genocide, Other Atrocities, Proliferation, and Transnational Crime).[[15]](#endnote-15)

Human Security cannot be assured by focusing only on state-based uniformed enemies carrying weapons. Many of us have tried to point this out through successive generations across the 1970’s, the 1980’s, the 1990’s. “National Security” demands that we address all threats simultaneously, and that we do so in a cost-effective manner by combining holistic analytics with true cost economics – across all the Cabinet domains – so that we achieve the greatest return on investment possible for the scarce taxpayer dollar.

What we have now in the Department of Defense (DoD) will simply not do. The infantry, 4% of the force that takes 80% of the causalities, receives 1% of the DoD budget.[[16]](#endnote-16) The bulk of all defense spending is on a heavy metal military that is neither needed nor sustainable nor effective. The F-35 in the US Air Force (USAF) and the USS Gerald Ford in the US Navy (USN) stand out as examples.[[17]](#endnote-17) Across the board, DoD waste is documented as ranging from 45% in weapons acquisition to 75% in Afghanistan. There is no reasonable connection between what we spend money on within DoD, and what the Republic actually needs in the way of national defense.

I have analyzed US Army posture statements and the many excellent references available through the Strategic Studies Institute (SSI), inclusive of *Parameters*, and other sources such as the *Armed Forces Journal* (AFJ) and the *Joint Force Quarterly* (JFQ), and come to three conclusions:

01 DoD (which is to say, the uniformed and civilian leaders of DoD) continues to subordinate itself to politics, confusing loyalty with integrity. They are not the same. Integrity demands adherence to our oath to defend and protect the Constitution against all enemies **domestic** and foreign, which in turn imposes upon us a dual responsibility: first, to refuse and report to Congress illegal orders rooted in lies that offer up blood, treasure, and spirit for corrupt reasons such as inspired the elective occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq,[[18]](#endnote-18) or more recently the granting to Saudi Arabia of both Syria and Yemen for its desired oil pipelines to the sea, one to the northwest the other to the southeast; and second, to demand of Congress evidence-based force structure rooted in the holistic analysis of all threats and an honest estimate of the true costs of addressing all threats across all policy domains.[[19]](#endnote-19) We do this with a Grand Strategy – an on-going transparent (publicly accountable) Grand Strategy process is how we eliminate fraud, waste, and abuse in our planning, programming, and budgeting process, and how we strike a better balance between diplomacy, development, and commerce, versus defense alone.

02 DoD acquisition is beyond broken. The lack of integrity within our acquisition process – both within the individual military services and within the department-level offices and agencies, as well as across all the Cabinet agencies, is a major threat in and of itself.[[20]](#endnote-20) Within the acquisition process we have three related sucking chest wounds any one of which is fatal: **first,** the continued corruption of Congress and the uninterrupted flow of money, much of it borrowed, such that DoD consumes 60% of the disposable budget and 16% of the total budget,[[21]](#endnote-21) will continue to make waste too easy; **second**, government specifications cost plus will continue to make waste the most profitable aspect of defense contracting; and **third**, the built-in complexity demanding contractors in the field and the switch out of entire assemblies instead of uniformed enlisted repair or replacement of single items in the field, will continue to make most of our equipment unaffordable as well as unreliable.[[22]](#endnote-22)

03 Readiness – the top priority of General Mike Milley, the current Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA) can be achieved in three ways: by being in a state of constant war, learning as we go at great cost in dead, wounded, discarded, and displaced; by using our training facilities (many of them redundant and under-utilized) to the extent we can afford to fund training – only a fraction of our Total Force is properly trained today for lack of time and money; or by bringing our entire Army home, increasing it to 3 million soldiers, and putting it to work on a day to day basis across our inner cities (mostly black) and impoverished rural areas (mostly white), interspersing combat arms *training* with stabilization & reconstruction *doing* at home. I believe that readiness will never be achieved if the Army continues to be spread thin on missions that are not authorized by Congress and not in the public interest. The time has come to say “no” to illegal orders and ill-conceived political adventures that create more terrorists because they are inevitably mounted in support of dictators repressing their publics, not in support of genuine independence movements that want our help.[[23]](#endnote-23)

Missing in Action (MIA) from current discussions of the future of the US Army are the intertwined issues of our widespread neglect and even abuse of veterans, and our failure to raise a new generation of citizens who live the Constitution and can defend the Constitution. They both could be combined with a massive nation-building endeavor sparked by the US Army and the Army Corps of Engineers working with private sector and community organizations.

In my view, informed by studying the work of others, the neglect and suffering of our veterans, and the refusal to care for them properly, is how we can illuminate for the American public the true cost of war while also educating our citizens on the less than ethical trade-offs in the national security budgeting process – trillions for technology that does not work as it should, next to nothing for our fighting forces and the veterans.

A notional Grand Strategy is outlined below, first for the national security aspect – defending, deterring, and defeating foreign enemies – and then for the homeland aspect that is vital to the future of the Republic: rebuilding the manpower and culture and community and infrastructure of our entire nation.[[24]](#endnote-24)

When fewer than 1% of all youth eligible by age for entering on duty with the US military are actually fit enough to be considered – everyone else is obese, suffering from illnesses (many rooted in the toxic air, food, and water that “modern” industry has manufactured), or otherwise ineligible – then the Republic has ceased to exist as a viable construct in classic terms.[[25]](#endnote-25)

A Grand Strategy that places America First would immediately cease all investments overseas that detract from our ability to take care of our veterans, rebuild our communities and our national infrastructure, and groom a new generation of leaders going forward. At a minimum the following means toward the end of America First would include:

1. Close all overseas bases, all heavy equipment and facilities to the host nation.
2. Cease all foreign military subsidies and most if not all foreign assistance.
3. Re-negotiate all treaties to end US force as the *primary* defense for other nations.
4. Bring the Army home.
5. Build a long-haul Air Force and a 450-ship Navy.
6. Execute General Eric Shinseki’s vision of an air-mobile Army.[[26]](#endnote-26)
7. Create an Inter-Agency Development Corps to do peace at a fraction of the cost of war with the signal goal of stopping all illegal immigration by stabilizing source countries.
8. Cease all regime change, drone assassination, torture & rendition, and financial war endeavors that are of our own volition (and also acts of war without authorization).
9. Mandate that the entering classes of all US military academies and all US officer accessions shall be comprised of no fewer than 15% veterans of the Afghanistan, Iraq, and related “Global War on Terror” campaigns undertaken since 9/11 2001.

For those who quite properly point out that most of what is proposed here is not politically feasible, that is precisely the point. The US political system that disenfranchises 70% of the eligible voters and blocks independents and small parties from participation in that political system, is the single greatest threat to the Republic and therefore that aspect of our governance must be altered or abolished. This essay seeks to focus on “first principles” much as our Founding Fathers did. IF we want our Republic back, along these lines, THEN we must demand electoral and governance reform, another topic entirely.

A Grand Strategy that places America First would clearly focus on the human factor, over-turning fifty years of short-changing investments in humans that benefit all of us, for investments in technology that favor a few banks and corporations and leave us with a hollow ineffective military.

A domestic Grand Strategy focused on our youth, our families, our communities, and our veterans would at a minimum:

1. Guarantee timely health care and full employment for all veterans – having fought and died for Middle Eastern oil, none of that oil should be sold in the USA unless full provision is made for all veterans off the top – perhaps with a tax of fifteen cents on every gallon of gas that also pays off a renegotiated debt with the banks who should also be taxed since they profit handsomely from war.[[27]](#endnote-27) The Rebuild America Jobs Act should be considered – we have spent $5 trillion on war, why not spend $1 trillion on employing veterans and rebuilding our infrastructure?[[28]](#endnote-28)
2. Restructure the US Army as a Home Guard rather than a global imperial police force, increasing the Total Army to three million in uniform, evenly divided between Regular Army, Army Reserve, and National Guard. There is no place for contractors in this restructured Army, whether in the mess halls or logistics chain or financial and database management.[[29]](#endnote-29)
3. Execute the Joint DoD-Labor Plan devised under President Ronald Reagan, turning all Army training facilities into public service training facilities, offering free training to all citizens of any age who desire to re-enter the workforce with new skills such as open source software coding, open source hardware building, or renewable energy and green construction tradecraft.
4. Restore Universal Service for all men and women, with three big differences: **first**, no one is ineligible – the obese and the intellectually challenged will benefit from an exposure to Army Strong and the community-building that goes with universal empowerment;[[30]](#endnote-30) **second**, all inductions will be generic, into a joint military training regime where the first three months focus on fitness and civic duty skills, and then each person volunteers for one of five paths with six months additional training followed by two years’ service with an option to extend: a) armed forces; b) peace corps, c) homeland reconstruction, d) first responders, or e) community development and veteran/family support services; and **third**, all training will be done under the oversight of a National Guard restructured into regions, perhaps consistent with the ten Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) districts as well as RA and AR elements.
5. Once the National Guard and FEMA are aligned and a new nation-wide program of re-building is underway, the Department of Homeland Security should be phased out, and most of the mass surveillance contractors phased out with it – the Home Guard, FEMA, and citizen intelligence minutemen reconnected to one another and their communities and the Home Guard, should be our homeland defense triad.

The “ends” we seek with such a Grand Strategy are the re-instatement of public power and public purpose in all that we do; using the US Army and its facilities and capabilities, much expanded and much less burdened by illegal wars and illicit regime change mandates, as the center of gravity for reconstituting We the People as a force in being.

A new Grand Strategy that examines our Constitution, our present structure of government and how it spends money, and the current sad state of our Republic, is needed. Such a Grand Strategy will produce a more complete list of needed changes across all of our local, state, and government elements. For the new three million soldier Army, I envision three broad-brush aspects:

1. The Regular Army (RA) will maintain an excess of company grade and non-commissioned officer positions toward any national emergency requiring mobilization and induction of another million citizen-soldiers. All officers and as many non-commissioned officers as possible will be rotated through both foreign and domestic “by, with, and through” assignments, with each RA Corps having a geographic alignment and a very strong emphasis on officers learning the culture, history, and language of their regional specialization while being active members of their geographic community at home. The RA will have a heavy engineering element focused on inter-agency and joint service sustainable design that restores integrity to the Mission Needs Statement (MNS) / Joint Required Operational Capability (JROC) while championing Open Source Everything Engineering (OSEE), complemented by a heavy intelligence element that sets the gold standard for holistic analytics and true cost economics across all domains.
2. The Army Reserve (AR) will be heavy on “fixing” instead of “fighting.” The AR is our three-day, three-week, three-month reinforcement capability. War is no longer about replacing human causalities, but rather about keeping the complex equipment going while maintain extremely nuanced relationships with a range of stake-holders far broader than our Army has had to deal with in the past.
3. The National Guard (NG) will be a true Home Guard and unique within the Total Army because it is a state-based force that can hold law enforcement credentials as well as foreign intelligence clearances and federal service obligations. *Posse Comitatus* does not apply to the National Guard. The NG will be heavy on “building” as well as “fixing.” The NG will manage state and county intelligence centers that integrate local, state, and federal collection, processing, and acquisition related to homeland security and prosperity – these will be proactive centers that will among other things hold corporations accountable for poisoning local air, water, ground, and food supplies.

What does the three million soldier Army do, exactly? I will do my best to answer that question in Part III of my monograph series. [[31]](#endnote-31) The short answer is that the Army comes home and rebuilds itself, our inclusive community, and our national capacity at home. We need to rest the Army, reintegrate the Army, and in a most significant divergence from our abuse of the Army these past few decades, we need to restore the Army to its centrality in relation to the Constitution, the Republic, and We the People.

In Part III, my final offering, I identify nine precepts rooted in Grand Strategy (Part I) and Global Reality (Part II):

1. Integrity is our foundation, our mission, and our product.
2. We must close all overseas bases and bring our troops – and their wallets – home.
3. Allies must be responsible for the heavy-metal aspect of their own defense.
4. An air-mobile Army demands a long-haul Air Force and a 450-ship Navy.
5. An Army without organic Close Air Support (CAS) is not viable.
6. The Army must be equally adept in desert, jungle, mountain, and urban environments while dealing with state and non-state actors in all languages at all levels of intensity.
7. The Army is the hub for Gray Zone Whole of Government/Multinational Operations—this means that the Army must have reliable satellites that cannot be disabled, up to date 1:50,000 combat charts for everywhere, and a C4ISR system that can integrate all information in all languages from all parties.
8. Army Strong means no contractors in garrison or in the field – Army Strong also means a home-based Army that helps rebuild our human depth and breadth at home.
9. Peace is cheaper than war – the Army must lead the charge to fund peaceful preventive measures including an Inter-Agency Development Corps.

General Eric Shinseki and Deputy Secretary Del Spurlock have each offered a compelling vision for the US Army – the first focuses on replacing weight with agility, the second on replacing contractors with uniforms and overseas bases with home bases. I embrace both their visions and add my own: the US Army must be the center of gravity for restoring Constitutional evidence-based decision-making not only in the Department of Defense, but across Whole of Government. The Army must come home and reassert itself as the foundation for one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

**Endnotes**

1. "[The Founding Fathers: Delegates to the Constitutional Convention](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_founding_fathers_overview.html)," Washington, DC: National Archives and Records Administration, undated, accessed September 19, 2016. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. [Del Spurlock Jr.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delbert_Spurlock), served successively as General Counsel of the US Army, then Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs under President Ronald Reagan and finally Deputy Secretary of Labor under President H.W. Bush. He was the architect of the DoD-Labor plan for rebuilding America by leveraging US Army training processes. His subsequent work on [Open Civics](http://www.civicvision.net/), and his views on how the US public, US Army, and US Constitution must be “one” at all times, have deeply influenced my understanding of these pillars of the Republic.  [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Congress has only declared war eleven times in history, and authorized the use of military force for operations other than war eleven times. The last time Congress declared war was on December 8, 1941. The Korean War and Desert Storm in Kuwait were military actions pursued with a UN mandate. Congress did not declare war on Vietnam (or Cambodia and Laos), Grenada, Lebanon, Somalia, Haiti, Panama, Serbia, or Bosnia. Congress has not authorized regime change operations since World War II including the latest on behalf of Saudi Arabia, against Syria and Yemen. Among varied references see Garance Franke-Ruta, “[All the Previous Declarations of War](http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2013/08/all-the-previous-declarations-of-war/279246/),” *The Atlantic*, August 31, 2013; John Reed, “[Should the U.S. go to war without a declaration of war?](http://www.johntreed.net/declarationofwar.html),” JohnTReed.net, undated, accessed September 19, 2016; and Michael Kinsley, “[Unauthorized Entry: The Bush Doctrine – War without anyone’s permission](http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/readme/2003/03/unauthorized_entry.html),” *Slate*, March 20, 2016. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Syria and Yemen stand out. The real reason the US is supporting regime change in Syria and the bombing of Yemen further back into the Stone Age is because Saudi Arabia has long wanted to build oil pipelines to the sea, northwest across Syria and southeast across Yemen. *Cf.* Christina Lin, “[Saudi Arabia and Turkey’s pipeline wars in Yemen and Syria](http://atimes.com/2016/06/saudi-arabia-and-turkeys-pipeline-wars-in-yemen-and-syria/), *Asia Times*, June 12, 2016. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Open-ended “supplemental” contracting has become a permanent slush fund that is unaccountable and a toxic influence on both political and military decision-making. On top of “government spec cost plus” contracting long derided by every responsible program manager going back a quarter century, the politically-driven Pentagon budget is the sucking chest wound in US strategy, policy, acquisition, and operations. *Cf.* Warren Strobel, “[How Pentagon war fund became a budget buster Washington can’t resist](https://www.yahoo.com/news/pentagon-war-fund-became-budget-buster-washington-cant-131221455--business.html),” Reuters, July 31, 2015. The single most famous indictment of “Versailles on the Potomac” is Franklin Spinney, [*Defense Facts of Life: The Plans/Reality Mismatch*](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0865317194/ossnet-20), Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985. Two recent books complement that earlier and still relevant statement are Winslow Wheeler and Pierre Sprey (eds.), [*The Pentagon Labyrinth: 10 Short Essays to Help You Through It*](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0615446248/ossnet-20), Washington, DC: Center for Defense Information, 2011; and Jeffrey St. Clair, [*Grand Theft Pentagon: Tales of Corruption and Profiteering in the War on Terror*](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1567513360/ossnet-20), Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 2005. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Existing Army doctrine – for example the all-important [*Army Doctrine Reference Publication #1* (ADRP-1)](http://cape.army.mil/adrp-1/) and all documents that follow including the [Army Operating Concept (AOC)](http://www.arcic.army.mil/Concepts/Operating), which is brilliantly written in relation to its narrow focus, “assume” that all orders from civilian authorities are legal orders rooted in evidence, and that the corruption of the budget process is “business as usual.” In my view, both those assumptions are wrong, and the time has come for the Army to reconnect to its integrity in a deeply Constitutional sense. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. *Cf.* Tyler Nottberg, “[Once and Future Planning: Solarium for Today](http://www.eisenhowerinstitute.org/about/living_history/solarium_for_today.dot),” Eisenhower Institute at Gettysburg College, undated, accessed September 18, 2016. The national and military strategy documents, and the quadrennial defense reviews, are not strategy documents, they are publicity documents that lack the moral and intellectual rigor of a 360 degree review with true cost economics considered across all policy domains. The concluding sentence of the post bears repeating here: “One of the principal strengths of Solarium was its recognition from the beginning that it was a long-term planning exercise. The frame of reference went beyond just one, two, or even five budget cycles. A similar vision is needed today.” [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Han Morgenthau, [*Politics Among Nations*](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/007289539X/ossnet-20), New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education, 7th Edition, 2005. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. “[A Brief History of West Point](http://www.usma.edu/wphistory/_layouts/mobile/mblwiki.aspx?Url=%2Fwphistory%2FSitePages%2FHome%2Easpx),” United States Military Academy, undated, accessed September 18, 2016. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Bernie Sanders, “[Creating Jobs Rebuilding America](https://berniesanders.com/issues/creating-jobs-rebuilding-america/),” BernieSanders.com, undated. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. There are 21.8 million veterans of the US Armed Forces as of 2014 according to the Census Bureau. As cited in Tom Risen, “[Veterans Day Boot Camp](http://www.usnews.com/news/blogs/data-mine/2014/11/10/veterans-day-data-boot-camp),” *US News & World Report*, November 10, 2014. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Government statistics about unemployment have been challenged. While the government claims an official unemployment rate of 5%, those who count all forms of unemployment suggest that the actual rate is 23% (see for instance John Williams at [ShadowStats.com](http://shadowstats.com)). An accurate independent appraisal of the condition of our veterans is not available. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. *Cf.* Pam Fessler, “[How Many Americans Live in Poverty?](http://www.npr.org/sections/money/2013/11/06/243498168/how-many-americans-live-in-poverty),” National Public Radio, November 6, 2013. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. *Cf.* John Mikelson, “[Give veterans a voice during this election season](http://www.thegazette.com/subject/opinion/guest-columnists/give-veterans-a-voice-during-this-election-season-20151222),” *The Gazette* (Cedar Rapids, MI), December 22, 2015 and Melvina Scott with Del Spurlock, “[Toward a community of veterans](http://wcfcourier.com/news/opinion/guest_column/toward-a-community-of-veterans/article_eee7570f-d43c-57b1-9806-27392a5fb514.html),” *The Courier* (Waterloo, IA), January 29, 2016. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. High-Level Panel on Threat, Challenges, and Change, [*A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/9211009588/ossnet-20), New York, NY: United Nations, December 2004. Another useful reference ignored by national-level decision-makers is J. F. Rischard, [*HIGH NOON: 20 Global Problems, 20 Years to Solve Them*](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0465070108/ossnet-20), New York, NY: Basic Books, 2003. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Robert H. Scales, Jr., “[The Next Generation of Small Unit Warfare](http://tinyurl.com/Scales-1-80-4),” Brookings Institution, September 27, 2010. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. *Cf.* Mark Prigg, “[The $400bn F-35 is ‘not on a path to success,’](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-3759036/The-400bn-F-35-not-path-success-Damning-test-report-warns-fighter-jet-running-time-money.html)” *Daily Mail* (UK), August 25, 2016; and Liam Quinn, “[US Navy’s newest $12.9bn supercarrier doesn’t work](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3701727/Navy-s-12-9-billion-USS-Gerald-R-Ford-delayed-dogged-reliability-issues.html),” *Daily Mail* (UK), July 21, 2016. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. *Cf.* Sheldon Rampton and John Stauber, [*Weapons of Mass Deception: The Uses of Propaganda in Bush’s War on Iraq*](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1585422762/ossnet-20), New York, NY: TarcherPerigee, 2003; Charles Lewis, [*935 Lies:* *The Future of Truth and the Decline of America’s Moral Integrity*](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1610391179/ossnet-20), New York, NY: PublicAffairs, 2014; James Risen, [*Pay Any Price: Greed, Power, and Endless War*](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0544570359/ossnet-20), New York, NY: Mariner Books, 2015. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. We expanded the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to the borders of Russia – in violation of an explicit promise not to do so as made by President George H. W. Bush, and become the greatest purveyors of violence on the Earth, in passing creating millions of displaced persons and illegal immigrants. We have privatized war and made it a profit center. For a useful overview from the former direct personal assistant to Secretary of State Colin Powell, see Ben Norton, “[’We are the death merchant of the world’: Ex-Bush official Lawrence Wilkerson condemns military-industrial complex](http://www.salon.com/2016/03/29/we_are_the_death_merchant_of_the_world_ex_bush_official_lawrence_wilkerson_condemns_military_industrial_complex/),” *Salon*, March 29, 2016. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Self-knowledge is essential. *Cf.* Leonard Wong and Stephen Gerras*,* [*Lying to Ourselves: Dishonesty in the Army Profession*](http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=1250), Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, February 17, 2015. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. Jasmine Tucker, “[President’s 2015 Budget in Pictures](https://www.nationalpriorities.org/analysis/2014/presidents-2015-budget-in-pictures/),” National Priorities Project, March 19, 2014. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. *Cf. Politico* Staff, “[Harvard study: Political ‘dysfunction’ crippling U.S. economy](http://www.politico.com/story/2016/09/political-system-economic-competitiveness-harvard-study-228192),” *Politico*, September 15, 2016. A critical enabler of winning over Congress and the military-industrial complex is a commitment on the part of DoD to propose reforms that are revenue and job neutral from state to state and Congressional district to Congressional district. Absent electoral reform freeing Members from their dependency on banks and contractors for campaign funding, this is an essential foundation for all that we suggest. Having said that, we need to be able to do evidence-based decision-making. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. *Cf.* three classic works, (General) Smedley Butler, [*War Is a Racket*](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0922915865/ossnet-20), Los Angeles, CA: Feral House, 2003; Chalmers Johnson, [*The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic*](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0805077979/ossnet-20), New York, NY: Metropolitan Books, 2006; and (Ambassador) Mark Palmer, [*Breaking the Real Axis of Evil: How to Oust the World's Last Dictators by 2025*](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0742532550/ossnet-20), Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. For much greater detail see the author’s final draft free online as [*Reinventing the US Army Part I – An American Grand Strategy*](http://phibetaiota.net/2015/10/robert-steele-a-notional-grand-strategy-request-for-comments/). This is the first third of a three-part series on reinventing the U.S. Army. A short URL for the entire series is <http://tinyurl.com/Steele-GOARMY>. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. *Cf.* “[Obesity in the Army](http://www.civicvision.net/dunn-fe-1),” Open Civics, undated; and Susanne Schafer, “[Fewer Orders, More Coaching: Army Rookies Learn to Fire Guns](http://www.usnews.com/news/us/articles/2016-09-10/fewer-orders-more-coaching-army-rookies-learn-to-fire-guns),” Associated Press, September 10, 2016. **Citizenship Regeneration** is a core concept for re-imagining the future of the US Army in tight alignment with the future of the Republic. Learn more at Del Spurlock, “[Republicans for Obama Memorandum to the Campaign](https://opencivics.squarespace.com/students-b-2),” Open Civics, August 2008. The original plan created for President Ronald Reagan, but not enacted, can be seen at [“Building a Post Cold War Workforce for the 21st Century: Our Manpower Peace Deficit”](http://www.oss.net/dynamaster/file_archive/120125/704eed9f151af1a380c30a41209eab4d/Reagan%20Era%20Labor%20Resurrection%20Plan.pdf), BigBatUSA.org, see also [ON THE RECORD: Our Jobs Proposal, Centered on Veterans](http://bigbatusa.org/jobs/on-the-record-our-jobs-proposal-centered-on-veterans/). [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. In my view General Eric Shinseki’s vision was undermined by a dysfunctional political and acquisition environment that favors very expensive very heavy technical investments over more agile and human-centric investments. The US Air Force declined to embrace the need for long-haul airlift. His vision merits resurrection and is in my view the only affordable sustainable vision for the future of the US Army, when combined with Del Spurlock’s vision for the Army as the center of gravity for a strong population at home. See Eric Shinseki, “[The Army Vision: A Status Report](https://acc.dau.mil/docs/tatm/references/01_the_army_vision_a_status_report.pdf),” *Army Magazine*, October 2001. A useful overview (with some questions) is provided by Philip Gold, “[Going for Lofty Goals](http://www.discovery.org/a/194), *The Washington Times*, October 24, 1999. General Shinseki’s vision is consistent with the vision outlined by General Al Gray, USMC, then Commandant of the Marine Corps, in (Ghost-Written by Robert Steele), “[Global Intelligence Challenges in the 1990’s](http://www.phibetaiota.net/1989/07/general-al-gray-on-global-intelligence-challenges-1989/),” *American Intelligence Journal*, Winter 1989-1990, pp. 37-41. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. Veterans – and the health of our domestic population – should not be held hostage to a dysfunctional political process and the corrupt budgeting schemes that dominate federal spending today. The excitement generated by Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump represent a depth of public dismay with “the establishment” that cannot be over-stated. As a Republic, our most urgent priority must be to restore integrity and continuity into government operations. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. Naomi LaChance, “[Latest Estimate Pegs Cost of Wars at Nearly $5 Trillion](https://theintercept.com/2016/09/14/latest-estimate-pegs-cost-of-wars-at-nearly-5-trillion/),” *The Intercept*, September 14, 2016 and Bernie Sanders, “[Creating Jobs Rebuilding America](https://berniesanders.com/issues/creating-jobs-rebuilding-america/),” BernieSanders.com, undated. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. Mess halls used to be the equivalent of community centers, and the non-commissioned officers managing the mess hall the equivalent of the commander’s pulse takers and early warning network. Today we have Bangladeshi slaves or the lowest possible wage scale poor Americans manning the mess halls, with the result that we not only lose the positive aspects of a mess hall by, for, and of the soldiers eating there, but we introduce an alienating outsider aspect. In relation to logistics, too many have observed that the Army can no longer rely on any piece of equipment that does not come with a contractor – “one contractor per laptop” is not funny, it is a tragedy. From design to materiel to first through fifth echelon maintenance, we have built a system of systems that is incapable of being sustained by our own soldiers. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. All of our institutions are failing us. The US Army is not the sole means by providing “Outward Bound for everyone,” but it can set an example. Churches, labor unions, schools, scouting, 4H Clubs, all other forms of community activity, are in the toilet. The US Army can draw the line. My extended comments on this point are in “[Paradigms of Failure](http://phibetaiota.net/2008/10/2008-paradigms-of-failure-election-2008-lipstick-on-the-pig-full-text-online-for-google-translate/),” a preface to [*Election 2008: Lipstick on the Pig*](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/B00WGQURW2/ossnet-20), Oakton, VA: Earth Intelligence Network, 2008. [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. Steele, Robert. [Reinventing the US Army Part I – An American Grand Strategy](http://phibetaiota.net/2015/10/robert-steele-a-notional-grand-strategy-request-for-comments/), Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Press, Projected Publication December 2016 and Steele, Robert. [Reinventing the US Army Part II – Overview of Planning and Programming Factors for Expeditionary Army Operations](http://phibetaiota.net/2016/09/robert-steele-reinventing-the-us-army-part-ii-overview-of-planning-and-programming-factors-for-expeditionary-army-operations/), Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Press, Projected Publication December 2016. The third part, Steele, Robert. Reinventing the US Army Part III – 3 Million Soldiers, Home-Based, Air-Mobile, Organic Close Air Support, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Press, Projected Publication December 2016 should be published in author’s final draft by October 15, 2016. All three parts will be permanently online at <http://tinyurl.com/Steele-GOARMY>. [↑](#endnote-ref-31)