



# *The* Wonder Springs Chronicle

16 August 2010;

## The Wonder Springs Chronicle

### Contact Information:

Jerry Bannon

Publisher

Wonder Springs

36 Merkel Road

Kettle Falls, Washington 99141

phone: 509.496.5855

blog: [www.wondersprings.org](http://www.wondersprings.org) email:

[jerryb@wondersprings.org](mailto:jerryb@wondersprings.org)

[chronicle@wondersprings.org](mailto:chronicle@wondersprings.org)

©2010; non-commercial education  
& forwarding encouraged, please  
give a citation credit all other rights  
reserved. This work is licensed under  
a Creative Commons Attribution-  
Noncommercial-No Derivative  
Works 3.0 United States License.

For past Chronicle archives or to  
subscribe to this weekly email please  
visit our web site at:  
[www.wondersprings.org](http://www.wondersprings.org)

## Special Report: *The War Racket*

*"Al Qaeda has won the War on  
Terror!"*

*"But we haven't had a successful  
large terrorist attack on America since  
9-11."*

As they say in the Ballard  
neighborhood of Seattle, "Ya sure,  
you betcha! At what cost, monetarily,  
in regard to the lives of our troops,  
and the limitations of our personal  
freedoms?"

Putting this in a realistic  
perspective, it is reported that  
there are 100 Al Qaeda operatives  
in Afghanistan, and maybe a few  
hundred more in Pakistan. Then  
there are bunches in Yemen and  
Somalia and scattered in other  
countries around the world.  
There are probably equal numbers  
in western democracies and in  
Islamic and developing countries.  
If we were to qualify only those  
who have both the desire and the  
where with all to directly attack  
the United States or European  
countries, adding in similar groups,  
the worldwide total of Islamic  
jihadis is probably less than 10,000.

So what does it cost to keep  
us safe from these hordes of wild  
extremists?

According to Wikipedia based  
on numbers from the Stockholm  
International Peace Research  
Institute, (SIPRI) the United  
States leads the world in military  
expenditures at \$660 billion,  
followed by China at about \$100  
billion, France at \$64 billion, the  
United Kingdom at \$58 billion,  
and Russia at about \$53 billion.  
You have to go to the SIPRI  
website to find out what their  
definition of what is a military  
expenditure.

One could assume from their  
definition that the \$660 billion  
figure includes the wars in Iraq, and  
Afghanistan, but not Homeland  
Security and various transfer  
payments within and without the  
United States, not directly tied to  
the military expenditure definition.  
Since Wonder Springs has no way  
of quantifying that number we will  
take an educated guess of perhaps  
\$440 billion, bringing the yearly



total to a trillion bucks. That makes our War on Terror assessment equal to \$10 million per really bad guy — per year.

If our efforts to keep America safe is expressed as a cost benefit ratio, our enemies are getting unparalleled literal bangs for our bucks. The point being however if you put these yearly expenditures in some context from 9-11, that could take overall military and encompassing domestic costs to the nation towards \$100 million per bad dude.

Now the progressive elite is beginning to get really-really upset about all these continuing expenditures because they believed Afghanistan was a necessary war, Iraq was not. Rather than killing terrorists, they would hope to save the world by sharing the love of social justice and the redistribution of wealth. However looking at total world expenditures for coalition forces in the broader Middle East theater of say 200,000 troops, you might be able to see why the world is still in a deep economic recession.

In the United States the good thing about all these military expenditures is that they pump money into the domestic economy. What would happen if back in early 2002 we had decided to build a solid gold brick wall to regulate immigration into the country, would we be in this state of flux now? Of course you could also look at the military expenditures as an economic stimulus plan that really is working. Without all this military spending what would be the unemployment rate?

So many specific questions, that nobody is bold enough to ask. And no one with resources to find the answers is willing to lead.

However to really get to the root of the conflict we must look at this whole situation in long historic terms.

Our professional military is made up of basically a class of domestic mercenary soldiers, which also includes a high number of foreign born, looking for a short path to citizenship. Throughout history, nations have declined rapidly when they no longer sacrifice to fight their wars, but hire others to do it for them. Then these professionals fight numerous wars to create the national empire and then attempt to keep the empire from collapsing.

During the Vietnam era, other than schooling, I spent my military service in Germany. Looking back on that time I now see that, in the total context of that duty, it was a tremendous gift, because it combined a lot of true leadership opportunities, while at the same time giving me a unique strategic experience not only in the Cold War context of Europe, but also with Vietnam.

I was the first officer sent to Augsburg, of what I shall call the Vietnam era reluctant volunteers. Hence I got to see first hand a divide that grew over time between the career officers and this, our slowly enlarging group. As the personnel buildup eased and the drawdown in Vietnam began in earnest, each of us had to choose whether to stay in the Army or put in out papers to be discharged.

To go to Europe in the Army Security Agency (ASA), in contrast with other assignments such as Vietnam, Korea, or God knows where, we were all forced to sign papers that made our active duty Voluntary Indefinite (Vol. Indef.). This meant that we would be required to serve on active duty until such time as the Army said we could get out.

What that really meant was we were essentially betting that Vietnam would wind down and give us the option to get out of the commitment, before our somewhat guaranteed two years in theater, and perhaps a full three year tour, would open us to assignments to that unknown God knows where.

Things worked out pretty much as I had estimated and I spent a little over thirty-four months on active duty and was discharged as a Captain. Rank came pretty easy for us and I still remember the Group's Command Sergeant Major coming up to me after my promotion and saluting, shaking my hand, smiling and saying, "Welcome to the Officer Corp Captain." It seems I was learning first hand, that my nice secure unflappable personality made some career officers quite uneasy.

Anyway I was the first with the opportunity to sign my papers to get out, others followed, or chose to stay in. Most people tried to keep that leaving decision secret until the last possible minute, because once you signed papers to get out, any good job you had with some potential disappeared. For example a good friend was made "Crypto Custodian" as his one and only job. I had that job as an extra duty, for a couple of months when I arrived in country as a 2nd Lieutenant.

The good thing about it he could spend all these remaining boring days in a secure area where very few people could bug him, because there was a very limited access list.

With the changes that this new context took on, we the unwilling began to discuss not so much our futures, but the future of the country as the military began to adjust to a new concept of the All Volunteer Military. For most of us the reason to leave was determined not only by our desire to do other things, but problems with our career compatriots, who were not so much military professionals, but CYA bureaucrats that really were not leaders, but in the box followers. In that light the Vietnam era saying below became a reality of strategic importance.

We the unwilling, led by the incompetent, to do the impossible, for the ungrateful, have struggled so long, with so little, we are now able to create anything out of nothing.

Our out of grace discussions, began to include thoughts such as, "If we were forced to fight a real war, could we really win, with a truly voluntary professional army, that really wanted to, in essence, just play army." In the shocking politically correct words of our first Group Commanding Officer, "Vietnam is a lousy little war, but it is the only one we have."

To me that losing concept changed greatly just before I returned stateside when an unexpected visit from then ASA commander Mag. Gen. Long-Haired Charlie (Charles) Denholm brought all us reluctant volunteer officers into the largest secure room in the area, and he explain in extreme detail why we were there, in time, space and strategic mission. This time is also described in "In My Tent Leadership" discussing the firing of General Stanley McChrystal. So I learned there were truly good professional people in the military that knew what they were doing and were quite good at it. The competence question however revolves around the military career bureaucrats, most of which are officers, not NCOs.

Here are my thoughts on the American military, which today are so politically incorrect that I am probably in a minority much smaller than the Al Qaeda presence in the world.

We won World War II in essentially four years by drafting enough soldiers, both officer and enlisted, to get the job done. They had other things they wanted to do with their life, other than kill people in Africa, Europe and on Pacific Islands. These draftees and reluctant volunteers (all Vol. Indef.) did the job, and if some incompetent career officer got in the way, shall we say they were eliminated from the gene pool. So working together the true professional military leaders led, reluctant volunteer officers led, and the allies defeated Italy, Germany, and Japan in short order.

Late last week I heard about the most decorated soldier in United States history, one Marine Maj. Gen. Smedley Butler, who after his distinguished career wrote a little booklet describing his conclusions about our war machine. The title of the booklet is "War Is A Racket" (PDF). This is quite similar to Eisenhower's warnings about the "Military - Industrial Complex" (full text — mp3) This also points to a question, has the American Republic morphed into a wannabe American empire? Or stated in another way, does the American desire to be the financial leaders of the world, also require us to be the world's police force or umpires?

Our military is now completely in the hands of post Vietnam leadership. Both General McChrystal and General Petraeus were still at West Point during the final stages of Vietnam. In the context of my first Commanding Officer in Germany, "Iraq, now Afghanistan, are lousy little wars, but they are the only ones we have."

It is very good that the finest military minds in the country came up with these counterinsurgency plans for both Iraq and Afghanistan, (2007 – Interagency and Counterinsurgency Warfare document running 617 pages, or a 2009 – Counterinsurgency Guide of 67 pages), but just like professional armies being the downfall of empires, so counterinsurgency operations anywhere, really don't have a very good long term success history. Insurgencies however more often succeed rather than not.

The American Revolution was the most important insurgency war in history and furthermore the founders did all they could ordinarily do to instill that continual insurgency mindset into the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. The states rights battles that are now beginning to take place, are peaceful insurgencies to regain that true, and

now revolutionary battle, for the supremacy of the Constitution.

At this time it looks like the counterinsurgency troop surge worked at helping stabilize Iraq, but the head of Iraqi military forces said last week it will be 2020 before he thinks this troops will be ready to be completely independent. That is provided that they soon can form a real government with a meaningful authority over the whole country.

Afghanistan is a whole different counterinsurgency model, with really no history, few resources and little desire to be what Americas elite military planners hope they will be. For now General Petraeus is charge of that high stakes, high budget, high visibility plan. There is no plan B and no time to assemble another plan except on the fly with current resources and training.

Barack Obama, even though he seems to be completely oblivious to Machiavelli's "The Prince," desires to turn America into, at a minimum, a progressive shining city on a hill, where the collective salvation of social justice succeeds. In historic reality his vision has always resulted in a total failure, even when compared to the long shots of counterinsurgencies. Hence as we are in the process of living current history, Afghanistan may turn out to be his finest hour. Too bad that isn't much of a legacy.

As for me, if I had my turn at Machiavelli's occupation, the first thing I would do is get rid of the All Volunteer Military. I would then restructure our defense apparatus not to be based on the Military - Industrial Complex, or Neocon champions of nation building, but rather a Military Intelligence (not as an oxymoron) Network that kills our enemies for a reasonable cash expenditure, and trains a goodly portion of the Americans to be citizen soldiers and leaders of the community. That means at least the ever present reality of potential conscripted military service and a real emphasis on true militia training, as an honored price for being called an American.

Through that process, military expeditions to the ends of the earth would cease, and over time the general population could again be infused with such currently archaic ideals such as, "Duty, Honor, Country," (General Douglas MacArthur) instead of "You are nothing but a coward," (General George Patton).

What really Machiavelli only touched upon, but all good and successful generals know, is that they may have all the authority of the United States of America, but the power to implement that authority comes from the troupes — bottom up. If your men do not respect your leadership abilities and your integrity, you will fail. The current failure of the United States basically stems from the reality that those outside the military, who think they are real leaders — are not.

Until that changes, Al Qaeda will continue to win, and they will eventually bankrupt this nation. While the odds are such that it is impossible for them to take over this country, they will have waged the most successful military insurgency in the history of mankind. All the while the leaders of America will still be playing politics and building costly bureaucracies, while the nation crumbles around us.