The True Oil Cost of the Military Monster

Contributed by Culture Change
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In Schmookler's Parable of the Tribes: The Problem of Power in Social Evolution, the waste of resources and damage to quality of life has been a problem through history in cultures that choose conflict instead of peaceful collaboration.

America's energy consumption patterns are deeply insecure, and in a new report by Center for Naval Analyses (CNA), Powering America's Defense, authored by several military officials, perspectives from the vested interests of the military are revealed.
The paradigm remains the rigidly the same, that the military is 'necessity', and access to the world's resources will remain their priority and so-called 'right', largely for their benefit.

Consider the mentality of consumers of the large vehicles produced by the automobile companies in the last few decades -- basically ego-satisfying toys. Huge pickup trucks with no load in the back, façades of 'power' and 'status', and big family cars for big families who in their superiority-complex personalities have forgotten to consider the fate of their brothers and sisters around the world struggling to simply survive.

Steve LeVine, from BusinessWeek, points out the wastefulness in the military's actions:

In a long report, these former officers detail how long, vulnerable fuel supply lines have hobbled troops in Iraq and Afghanistan; how each soldier in Afghanistan is weighed down by 26 pounds of batteries; and how just 10% of the fuel used in Iraq goes for actual fighting vehicles — the rest just gets the fuel to the battlefield and protects it.

It appears that the U.S. military is following the rest of the world's lead on many of these issues, and seem to have had its head in the sand of their desertified paradigm.

LeVine also reveals the enormous subsidy to oil prices, arriving at a truer cost than the nominal price:

Reliance on oil, however, is the report's focus. It estimates that refueling military jets in flight raises the cost of each gallon of fuel to $42; on the ground the cost ranges from $15 a gallon to as much as hundreds of dollars a gallon depending on how much security and logistics are required to get the fuel to where it needs to be.

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In Iraq, just 10% of fuel used for ground forces went to heavy vehicles such as tanks and amphibious vehicles delivering lethal force; the other 90% was consumed by Humvees and other vehicles delivering and protecting the fuel and forces. "This is the antithesis of efficiency," the report says.

Bryan Bender, writing for the Boston Globe, summarizes:

In World War II, the United States consumed about a gallon of fuel per soldier per day, according to the report. In the 1990-91 Persian Gulf War, about 4 gallons of fuel per soldier was consumed per day. In 2006, the US operations in Iraq and Afghanistan burned about 16 gallons of fuel per soldier on average per day, almost twice as much as the year before.

In "Shortage of Energy" or "Longage of People"?, Jay Hanson writes:

America was specifically designed by special interests (e.g., General Motors, Firestone and Standard Oil) to require fossil fuel and automobiles to be viable. The exhaustion of fossil fuel will leave many millions of Americans with no access to food or water and facing certain death. For example, ten or more millions of people in Southern California alone will die within a couple of days after drinking their toilet tanks and swimming pools dry. See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_Motors_streetcar_conspiracy

Pathologically, Hanson's warsocialism.com is a nationalistic model that still promotes the looting of resources beyond its borders, causing more havoc and death to sustain the 'nation', deportation of undocumented immigrants, "pumping-up the stock market and real estate prices," and "divert[ing] energy from competitors directly by military action."

The DoD-connected families and corporations are a mafia or cartel, by which vast amounts of money, approximately 50% of taxpayer dollars and resources are allocated to 'defense'; in reality it is clearly an institutionalized, mega-looting scheme.

When racism no longer serves the military paradigm, then they work to integrate the races within their ranks to further their military might-makes-right paradigm. Racism only works for them when they need to brainwash young impressionable video game-trained people to demonize a culture whose resources are to be looted. The same techniques are used to divide people by their religious beliefs, causing more conflict and diversion from the the imperialist/corporate looting.

War is big 'money', but money is too easily printed by finance gangsters who have lost so much credibility in the recent foreclosure/Wall Street crisis/federal bailouts. Handing out wads of bills to the innocent civilian survivors of oversized bombing and shooting raids of terrorist hideouts is truly one of the most pathetic devices to hide one's guilt.

In a previous report, National Security and the Threat of Climate Change (2004), CNA summarized:

Projected impacts of climate change pose a serious threat to America’s national security.

- Climate change acts as a threat multiplier for instability in some of the most volatile regions of the world.
- Projected impacts of climate change will add to tensions even in stable regions of the world.
- Climate change, national security, and energy dependence are a related set of global challenges.

And even without the military's perspective, the scientists of the world have clearly made this information available. See

David Spratt's excellent coverage and analysis of the climate crisis at Climate Code Red: The Case for Emergency Action on Climate Change. Unfortunately the corporate news media, still slurping at the trough of automobile and real estate advertising, hasn't made peak oil and climate change the daily emergency alert that is warranted.

Certainly there has been some good technology coming out of the military, but we've also heard about the $200 toilet seats and other contractor boondoggles. (See US Army Paid Bonuses to KBR Despite Questions

It is unfortunate that the necessities of rigid secrecy, strategy and obedience to authority in the military leads to insular behavior in the context of the civilian world. This institutional and cultural rigidity impedes the free flow of much needed cultural change and technological innovation that would eliminate a good part of the wasteful ego-based behaviors and technologies that put the world in the predicament of catastrophic climate disruption and petrocollapse.

One familiar with the ancient Chinese book The Art of War would know about the dangers of wasting energy in foreign regions. Since the Middle East wars are clearly oil-looting wars, it spotlights how much time and resources have been wasted for this deep and pathological addiction.

Consider the conservation of resources in peaceful, collaborative and flourishing societies. The industrialization of the military has tragically made it possible to waste vast resources, a loss for everyone.

Richard Register's book EcoCities and EcoCityBuilders.org showcase architectural ideas for cities that don't even need cars, sprawl and parking lots, eliminating many of the problems: resource waste, war, climate disrupting pollution, noise pollution, destruction of natural habitat, pathological behavior and much more. Without waiting for physical architecture to guide us about our daily routine, it is urgent for us to modify the architecture of our behavior, all too often caused by the designs of consumeristic culture, towards a better, more sustainable lifestyle.

References:

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