

## Globalization: American Style

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The United States and some of its allies have been expanding their sphere of influence more broadly than just corporate globalization; expansion encompasses civil and criminal laws, military and prison industrial complexes, and eventually a single global currency. All of these spheres are interconnected and the overall trend is similar to, perhaps an extension of, the expansionism that began in 1492: the conquest and trade in human flesh (slave labour) for the purpose of building economic, political, and military dominance worldwide. In other words, a one-world government or, in more modern terms, a “New World Order.” This article examines some of the doctrines and practices that have facilitated America’s ongoing process of military, prison, and corporate expansionism worldwide in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and offers suggestions as to why this trend continues.

### THE MILITARY INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX AND THE CORPORATE OLIGARCHY

Larry Berman, a professor of political science at the University of California in Davis, and Bruce A. Murphy, a professor of American history and politics at Pennsylvania State University, locate the rationale for recent U.S. expansionism in the National Security Council Report No. 68 (NSC 68) of April 14, 1950, also known as *The United States Objectives and Programs for National Security*. According to Berman and Murphy, the globalization of American domestic and foreign policy – both military and economic – is expansionism facilitated under the guise of the NSC 68, which is a “National Security Council paper outlining a sweeping mobilization of American economic and human resources in the struggle to contain Soviet communism” (1999:621).

NSC 68 was much more than a “struggle to contain Soviet communism.” It was also a “top secret” doctrine facilitating the expansion of U.S. economic and labour resources that actually began in 1947 with the “Truman Doctrine,” through which the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the National Security Council (NSC) were established. Subsequently, pursuant to Truman’s directive in January 1950, the CIA investigated and compiled information on the socio-political, economic, and military status of countries throughout Eastern Europe, Asia, Latin America, and several African nations. This information was presented to the NSC, which then passed the NSC 68 Report to Truman in April 1950.

This report provided the groundwork for the 1949 formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a military alliance among the U.S., Belgium, Britain, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, and Portugal. By 1955, Greece, Turkey, and West Germany had joined NATO, as did Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and other nations in 1999. This alliance ultimately led to the 1967 trans-global trade alliance called the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trades (GATT) among member nations. Subsequently, NSC 68 also paved the way for the 1993 regional economic alliance, called the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), among the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. Collectively, these alliances and agreements led to a trans-global corporate alliance called the World Trade Organization (WTO). Between 1986 and 1995, seven of these nations formed what was referred to as the "G-7," re-named the "G-8" with the inclusion of Russia at the meetings of 1995 in Canada. The global military, political, and economic power of NATO, the WTO, and the G-8 respectively are self-evident. NATO serves as the enforcement arm for this collective oligarchy.

In the NSC 68 Report, the National Security Council set forth its so-called "fundamental purpose" of U.S. economic and military expansionism in the following words:

The Fundamental Purpose of the United States, is laid down in the Preamble of the Constitution: "... to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, ensure domestic Tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and for the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Prosperity." In essence, the fundamental purpose is to assure the integrity and vitality of our free society, which is founded upon the dignity and worth of the individual.

Three realities emerge as a consequence of this purpose: Our determination to maintain the essential elements of individual freedom, as set forth in the Constitution and Bill of Rights; our determination to create conditions under which our free and democratic system can live and prosper; and our determination to fight if necessary to defend our way of life, for which as in the Declaration of Independence, "with a firm reliance on the protection of **Divine Providence**, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our Fortunes, and our **sacred Honor**." (NSC 68, 1950: II., p. 26)

Clearly, the NSC 68 plan was not just a defensive plan – it was an aggressive offensive plan delineating U.S. expansionism globally, a kind of rebirth of the doctrine of Manifest Destiny.<sup>1</sup> Throughout U.S. history, the very same fundamental principles have been in place. Yet in practice people of African descent, Native Americans, women, and other economically and ethnically disadvantaged groups were excluded from the essential elements of individual freedom, justice, liberty, prosperity, and equality espoused in the language of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights.

Indeed, NSC 68 led to an all-out political, economic, and military attack on actual and contrived Communist aggression domestically and worldwide against nations like North Korea, Vietnam, Cuba, China, Iran, and Iraq. This was rationalized by the specific purpose of “containing” and “isolating” the system of government of their primary target, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (NSC 68, IX D, pp. 71–76) comprised of 15 constituent republics. The current social, economic, and political instability of those communist/socialist republics are the end result of NSC 68, a consequence of the U.S. forcing its socio-economic, capitalist republicanism onto other nations.

It was believed by many that in practice, the communist and/or socialist doctrines were diametrically opposed to the U.S. doctrine of republicanism, which in reality was a racially oppressive, economically driven doctrine of invasive trade practices. In the process of promoting this particular form of republicanism, U.S. government officials, the corporate/military oligarchy, and their NATO allies redefined and demonized communism and socialism, as well as the people who chose to govern themselves according to elements of those doctrines. Key to these doctrines is a belief that privately owned property such as life-sustaining goods and other marketable products should be, to different degrees, owned in common by all the people and protected and distributed by the State to all as needed.

Indeed, the meaning of communism and socialism are the opposite of the meaning of U.S. republicanism, in which an elite few own and control the

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<sup>1</sup> First coined in an 1845 editorial in the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review*, the doctrine of Manifest Destiny asserts that the “expansion of the U.S. is not only inevitable but divinely ordained” (Webster’s, 1988, p. 606). Readers may also refer to the 1823 Monroe Doctrine, declared by then-President James Monroe and the 1904 Roosevelt Corollary invoked by then-President Roosevelt as U.S. justifications of North American expansionism and corporate protectionism (editor).

means of producing and distributing marketable goods. The NSC claimed that the U.S. was a “free society [that] cherishes and protects as fundamental the rights of the minority against the will of a majority, because these rights are the inalienable right of each and every individual” (NSC 68, IV C, p. 31). In practice, this is an untruth. In reality, republicanism, communism, and socialism as practiced by the U.S., the former U.S.S.R., and other nations are/were not democratic forms of government.

Under NSC 68, agents of the U.S. government falsely labelled domestic social movements as communist – for example, the civil rights and labour movements from the 1950s through 1970s – and violently attacked them. With a large faction of the upper-class business-owning community and their followers fearing the mere mention of communism/socialism and espousing racism, it was not hard for the conservative media and politicians to win support for violent suppression of these movements. Using NSC 68 counter-insurgency tactics, uniformed and plain-clothed government personnel (military, CIA, and FBI), local police, and others beat, criminalized, imprisoned, and even killed members of the social movements who were seeking their “inalienable rights.”

Any individual, group, or country that appeared to interfere with the economic, political, and military dominance of the U.S. government and the corporate elite, domestically and/or globally, were labelled “threats to national security” by the NSC. The “interfering” ones were subverted and criminalized by agents of the NSC – the CIA, FBI, and others. How can such violent suppression of individuals’ civil liberties and civil rights occur in a “democracy” or a “free society”? Such forceful acts amount to fascism – republicanism in survival mode. Social intolerance of minority groups based upon physical characteristics, religious or political beliefs in the name of “national security” is no excuse for violently suppressing civil rights and civil liberties.

As a result of this process of criminalization, many if not most of the oppressed end up being politically and economically deprived slave labourers for the capitalist oligarchy, the trans-global corporations’ military and prison industrial complexes. The elites’ objective is to maintain a cheap labour force via imprisonment (“containment”), political disfranchisement, and economic isolation, thus systematically subjugating the working classes domestically and globally. This is the elites’ concept of a “New World Order.”

### THE MILITARY AND PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEXES

Eve Goldberg and Linda Evans (1998) make the connection between the building and maintenance of weapons and armies (military industrial complex), and the building and maintenance of prisons (prison industrial complex). They poignantly state that these industrial complexes motivate people's fear of communism and crime in order to expand their sphere of influence. They also show that the military and prison industrial complexes ensure an instant and endless supply of cheap labour that fuels the world market economy. The authors clearly point out that the twofold primary goals of these institutions are profit and social control (p. 5). Moreover, in tandem with U.S. government policy, these industrial complexes are in many instances responsible for fanning people's fear of communism and for the rise in crime rates.

Cases in point are the U.S. military- and CIA-initiated Iran-Contra affair and the "War on Drugs" campaign against the Mexican, Panamanian, and Colombian drug cartels in the 1980s. These so-called wars not only helped to plunge these Latin American countries further into economic and unemployment crises, but also increased the crime rates and prison population in the U.S. During the Nicaraguan Civil War between its military regime (the Contras) and the Sandinista rebels, the U.S. government illegally and secretly supported the Contras by selling arms to Iran in exchange for the release of American hostages and giving the profits from the arms sales to the Contras. This expanded the conflict into the neighbouring countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, causing tremendous atrocities to be committed against the civilian populations. A significant portion of the "funds for arms" given to the Contras were used by them to purchase tons of cocaine from Columbia to be sold in major U.S. cities, while the U.S. government turned a blind eye. These events led to a rapid influx of over a million poor refugees into the U.S.

With the U.S. prison population already on the rise throughout the early 1980s, the rapid influx of refugees and cocaine from Latin America fuelled further imprisonment and a rise in drug-related crimes nationwide. The U.S. government responded by diverting federal and state tax dollars from inner-city schools, urban vocational and educational training programs (e.g., the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act [CETA] program, Job Corps, etc.) to expand the military and build industrial warehouse-style prison facilities. The market for an inner-city minimum-wage labour force dwindled in conjunction with the labour pool, because people were either incarcerated or

opting to enter the lucrative powder and crack cocaine business and related quick money schemes.

From the mid-1980s through the mid-1990s, large and small corporations began experiencing these entry-level labour shortages, especially with respect to African- and Latino-American males. Many corporations responded by laying off thousands of experienced domestic labourers and moving south to some of the aforementioned Latin American countries, where labour was cheap and the environmental health and safety standards lower (Goldberg & Evans, 1998:7). The result was many jobless Americans committing crimes for financial gain – robberies, burglaries, thefts, and drug dealing. Many of the jobless were first time offenders.

The U.S. government responded by declaring and escalating “war on crime” and “war on drugs” campaigns. Nationwide, governments expanded the military and police, built more prisons and jails, and hired more prison officers, paying them higher wages and equipping them with high-tech surveillance and military-style armament. Episcopal priest, independent researcher, and pamphleteer Frank Morales wrote a compelling discourse explaining how this power expanded in the late 1990s:

The Clinton administration extended the police/military connection by mandating that the Department of Defense and its associated *private industries* form a partnership with the Department of Justice to “engage the crime war with the *same* resolve they fought the Cold War.” The program, entitled, “Technology Transfer From Defense: Concealed Weapons Detection,” calls for the transfer of military technology to domestic police organizations to better fight “crime.” (Morales, 1999:46, emphasis added)

Indeed, the increasing number of prisoners and prisons opened up a new market of cheap labour for private corporations to exploit. Goldberg and Evans (1998) also note that defence industries – for example, Westinghouse – began “re-tooling and lobbying Washington for their share in the domestic law enforcement market.” The company created “night enforcement goggles,” “electric hot wire fences,” and other military equipment to paramilitarize the police and prison guards (p. 6).

Other private corporations (AT&T, Sprint, MCI, Smith Barney Investment Firm, American Express, and General Electric, for example)<sup>2</sup> are also earning

enormous profits from prisons. They are also partly responsible for the rapid growth of the private prison industry, such as the trans-global private prison Correctional Corporation of America, which owns 48 prisons in 11 states, Puerto Rico, the United Kingdom, and Australia (Goldberg & Evans, 1998:6).

Prison guards are also benefiting from this expansionism. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, an audit of the California prison system revealed that excessive use and abuse of overtime led to over 5,000 sergeants and lieutenants making more than \$108,000 a year – double their base pay and more than the annual salary of the Director of California’s Department of Corrections (p. A-3). Lower ranking prison guards are similarly abusing the overtime system. Such funds could be used for rehabilitation programs, but that would lead to fewer released prisoners returning to prison and thus interfere with the expansionists’ agenda.

The current trend in prison expansion would not be possible without lawmakers doing their part by passing such laws as “two-strikes,” “three-strikes,” mandatory minimum sentences, and the Juvenile Crime Initiative (Proposition 21). The expansion requires laws that allow private corporations to invest in city and county jails, state and federal prisons, and laws granting government contracts to private corporations to build, staff, and operate prisons. Such laws guarantee an endless supply of raw material – prisoners, including child labourers. Indeed, the common goals of the prison and military industrial complexes and private corporations are to maintain social control while maintaining a cheap slave labour force and high profit margins. Their interconnected agendas drive the globalization of their practices under the guise of national security.

### THE CORPORATE OLIGARCHY

After interviewing corporate executives from several trans-global corporations, authors of one study illustrate the influence corporations and their political action committees (PACs) have on *domestic* policy making (Clawson et al., 1993). However, chief executive officers and PACs failed to mention the amount of influence they have on U.S. *foreign* policy making. As already stated, the

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<sup>2</sup> See Melissa Barthelemy, “Virtual Democracy and the Prison-Industrial Complex,” in *Humanist* 62(4), 2002, pp. 9–11.

goals of corporate globalism are high profit margins via the maintenance of a cheap labour force, both domestically and abroad, especially where unemployment is high. Many of the desperate unemployment situations were created by those affiliated with – and/or those who have an economic interest in – trans-global corporations.

An example of the effects of global corporatism is cited by Dr. Vandana Shiva, a physicist, ecofeminist, writer, and a leader in the international movements against corporate globalization (Gordon & Wing, 2000). Dr. Shiva explained that:

The Rockefeller Foundation financed the “Green Revolution” in the 1960s, which shifted agriculture worldwide from sustainable, organic bases to totally non-sustainable chemical farming. It did not produce more food; it displaced more peasants. It bonded Third World countries into permanent debt. (p. 31)

The high-tech agri-industry genetically engineers chemically dependent golden rice and “Roundup-ready” soy seeds *en masse* to withstand massive doses of pesticides. Industrial farmers are then able to sell genetically altered crops for less than their peasant counterparts, who are unable to sell their organic rice and soy seeds. Consequently, peasant farmers are forced to either borrow money to survive from day-to-day or sell their land to the Rockefeller Foundation or the World Bank or to trans-global corporations financed by these same entities, for example, RiceTec, the creator of chemically dependent rice and soy seeds (Gordon & Wing, 2000:31). The result is that agri-corporations displace and dispossess peasant farmers and dominate the food production industries in India and many other Third World countries. This increases the national debt of those countries and plunges the masses deeper into poverty and dependency on the corporate oligarchy, not to mention the potential for health problems from eating rice and soy contaminated with pesticides and other chemicals.

Another outcome of the new globalism and the effects of the NSC 68 plan is the collapse of the Russian economy in the early 1990s. The trans-global fast food giant McDonald’s was one of the first to construct restaurants in Russia that were five to ten times larger in size than those in the U.S. Russian workers, especially entry-level workers, were paid less than half of what their American counterparts were paid. Corporate PACs had lobbied for and seen



the passage of legislation allowing them to pay foreign workers less than U.S. minimum wages.

The expansion of these and other U.S.-based businesses is neither intended to help revive the Russian economy, nor revive the economy in Latin America and other Third World countries affected by NSC 68. The purpose of trans-global oligarchies is to extend U.S. military influence, and to increase the wealth of corporate executives. Large portions of the accumulated wealth was set aside for corporate PACs to donate to the re-election campaigns of politicians who are “willing and able to help” get legislation passed that is favourable to their parent corporations (Clawson et. al., 1993, pp. 11–13). Such methods of globalization disenfranchise the majority of people and deprive them of the means to establish small industries, especially those farmers who produce food for human consumption.

Someone once suggested that many people go through life wearing emotional blinders because they do not want to see the world as it truly is. Then there are those who make it their mission in life to uncover the facts and causes behind socio-economic injustices throughout the world. The search to uncover hidden agendas and causes is not always an easy task – nothing worthwhile ever is – but it is always better to know than not know. Knowledge is power. Globalization – American style – by the corporate, military, and prison oligarchy benefits only an elite few at the expense of the poor and the working classes.

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