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U.S. Soldiers Died for Empire and Hegemony

by Jacob G. Hornberger

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On Memorial Day, Americans honor the soldiers who have died in the defense of our country. There is one big problem though: Those soldiers didn't die in the defense of our country. Instead, they died in the defense of empire and hegemony.

For obvious reasons, U.S. officials, as well as many of the family members of the deceased, can't bring themselves to admit that and so they settle for just mindlessly repeating the mantra, "They died defending our country,"

Consider the Spanish American War in 1898. Did Spain ever attack and invade the United States? Nope. The U.S. government intervened in a war of independence that was being waged between the Spanish Empire and its colonial possessions, including Cuba and the Philippines. Thus, U.S. soldiers clearly didn't die in the defense of our country in that war. This is especially true with respect to those U.S. soldiers who died in the Philippines in a war designed to replace Spanish rule with U.S. rule.

World War I. No one attacked and invaded in the United States in that war either. U.S. soldiers died to make the world safe for democracy and to finally bring an end to war itself. The outbreak of World War II proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that the soldiers who died in WWI died for nothing.

World War II. Yes, I know, it's called the "good war" because Japanese forces engaged in a sneak attack at Pearl Harbor. But the fact is that President Franklin Roosevelt wanted Japan to attack the United States. Should we really just ignore that? That was the purpose of the oil embargo that FDR imposed on Japan — to cause Japan to attack the U.S. Pacific fleet in an attempt to break free of FDR's oil embargo and to get the oil they desperately needed for their war on China. FDR knew that if he could squeeze Japan into "firing the first shot," he could say "We're innocent! We've been attacked!" and use that as a "back door" to the war in Europe against Nazi Germany, which the American people overwhelmingly were opposed to getting involved with.

Let's not forget, after all, that Japan never attacked and invaded the continental United States. Hawaii was not a U.S. state at that time. It was a colony of the U.S. government. Indeed, have you ever wondered why U.S. troops were in the Philippines, where they were serving as additional bait for the Japanese and later killed or captured by Japanese forces after the attack on Pearl Harbor? That's because the U.S. had acquired the Philippines as a colony as part of the Spanish American War.

The fact is that Japan lacked both the interest and the military means of attacking, invading, and occupying the United States. Japan's sole purpose in attacking the U.S. fleet at Pearl was to break free of the oil embargo that FDR had imposed on it.

Let's also not forget the initial reason that England and France declared war on Germany in WWII — to free Poland from Nazi totalitarianism. Yet, what was the result at the end of the war? Poland was under the control of the communist totalitarianism of the Soviet Union and remained so for the next 45 years. It seems to me that replacing Nazi control over Poland and Eastern Europe with communist control is a rather ignominious thing to die for.

Supporters of the "good war" say that even though Hitler never attacked and invaded the United States, he would have done so later. Really? My understanding is that his military forces were not even able to cross the English Channel and invade and conquer England. Wouldn't crossing

the Atlantic with an enormous military force and then successfully invading, conquering, and occupying the United States have been a much more formidable task?

If the United States could survive the Soviet Union, which was every bit as evil as Nazi Germany, why couldn't it have survived Nazi Germany or, for that matter, any other foreign dictatorship in the world?

European Jews? They were all dead by the end of the "good war." Moreover, the U.S. government never showed any concern for their plight, either before or during the war. So, we can't really say with any degree of legitimacy that U.S. soldiers died to save European Jews and others from the Holocaust.

World War II gave us much more than communist control over Eastern Europe and East Germany. It also gave us a permanent national-security establishment as well as its Cold War against its World War II partner and ally, the Soviet Union. (Yes, you read that right — the U.S. government partnered with the Soviet communists in World War II, the same Soviet communists who were then converted into an official Cold War enemy of the U.S. government before the war was even over.)

That led to the Korean War and Vietnam War, neither of which involved any attack on or invasion of the United States. We also got assassination programs, MKULTRA, FBI and CIA surveillance of antiwar dissidents, the anti-communist crusade, covert operations, U.S.-instigated coups and other regime-change operations in Iran, Guatemala, Iran, Cuba, Indonesia, Chile, and other countries, foreign aid, an ever-burgeoning military-intelligence establishment, a permanent climate of militarism, crisis, and emergency, and, of course, ever-increasing taxpayer-funded military and intelligence expenditures.

The demise of the Cold War led to the "war on terrorism," which further fortified the national-security establishment, followed by the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, neither of which ever attacked and invaded the United States. We also got more assassination programs, torture, rendition, partnerships with brutal dictatorial regimes, secret surveillance schemes on the American people and the people of the world, denial of due process, indefinite incarceration, a permanent climate of emergency, crises, and fear, and, of course, ever increasing funding for the permanent national-security apparatus that was grafted onto the original governmental structure that was established by the Constitution.

Died for our country?

Nope.

The soldiers we honor today died for empire and hegemony.