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## U.S. foreign policy flies under banner ‘American Exceptionalism’

By Bruce Fein

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The modus operandi of the multi-trillion dollar military-industrial-terrorism complex (MITC) is as transparent as is Donald Trump's narcissism.

The MITC manufactures conflicts by gratuitous interventions abroad. Then it demands trillions of dollars and limitless time to defeat the monsters it created.

The MITC bonanza never ends.

What stuns is not the modus operandi. All organizations covet expansion for the sake of expansion. What amazes is the willingness of the President, Congress, and the American people to feed a failed enterprise.

Russia, China, Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan, and ISIS are six current examples. The Cold War ended with the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991. The United States then confronted no existential threats. Our military power dwarfed rivals as an oak dwarfs an acorn. We should have dissolved NATO, ended our troop presence in Europe, and embraced a foreign

policy worthy of our democratic dispensation and the sacrifices of Valley Forge: "HUNDREDS OF BILLIONS FOR SELF-DEFENSE, BUT NOT ONE CENT FOR EMPIRE.

The MITC trembled at the thought. It wept at the prospect of losing gold-plated cost-plus contracts, multi-million dollar executive salaries, rich consulting fees, and the status and celebrity that constant conflict or warfare bring. Thus was born a new and counter-constitutional conception of foreign policy. The United States must bestride the world like a colossus to ensure that no other nation or non-state actor attains the capability of doing anything we oppose. As others had sallied forth under a banner of "master race," we must march under a banner of "American exceptionalism."

Instead of dissolving, NATO expanded cheek by jowl to the edges of Russia's borders. It now sports 28 nations, and occupies Russia's traditional sphere of influence in the Baltic States and Eastern Europe. The Russian sphere is a mirror image of our own sphere of influence. It begot the Monroe Doctrine, Dollar Diplomacy, and interventions in Mexico, Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala, Grenada, and Panama.

As the United States went to the brink over the Cuban Missile Crisis, President Vladimir Putin has predictably responded to our encroachments on Russia's sphere of influence with the conquest of Crimea, destabilization of Ukraine, and saber rattling on its eastern borders.

The MITC silently rejoiced. NATO expansion had worked perfectly. It had created conflict with Russia, which provided cover to maintain troops in Europe and to enhance military sales to nations vulnerable to Russia's ambitions. Most recently, the Pentagon announced plans to increase the deployment of heavy weapons, armored vehicles and other equipment to NATO members in Central and Eastern Europe. The White House contemplates paying for the anti-Putin gambit with a budget request exceeding \$3.4 billion to support military spending in Europe for 2017. The weapons and equipment will be used to insure that a full armored combat brigade can be fielded in the region by American and NATO forces at all times.

China has never attacked the United States. We intervened militarily to quell the Boxer Rebellion. We assisted Chiang Kai-shek over Mao Zedong in the Chinese civil war. We contemplated nuclear weapons against China in the Korean War. We sell weapons to Taiwan. We have defense treaties with Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines fortified with military bases and troops. We contemplate extending our defense commitment to shoals and islands claimed by the Philippines in the disputed South China Sea. The United States Marines have a training base in Darwin, Australia.

Despite this encirclement strengthened by the U.S. Pacific Command, the MITC has championed a "pivot to Asia" to confront China in its traditional sphere of influence. It summons the specter of China to justify a hike in defense spending. The MITC created a dystopia in Libya featuring an ISIS auxiliary by overthrowing Muammar Gaddafi after he abandoned WMD. Now the MITC is poised to re-engage militarily to attack the ISIS presence that it created.

The MITC turned Iraq into a sectarian and tribal nightmare dominated by Iran and threatened by ISIS with its 2003 invasion to overthrow President Saddam Hussein. Thirteen years later, the MITC is enhancing its presence in Iraq to contain the threats that it created.

The MITC has occupied Afghanistan for more than fifteen years following the 9/11 abominations. It has supported corrupt, inept, tribal, unpopular governments that have presided over record levels of opium production. Combined with our predator drone attacks that have killed civilians, our support for the Afghan government has fueled a revival of Taliban and the birth of ISIS there. The MITC is now insisting that we remain militarily engaged in Afghanistan for decades while it nurses a Neanderthal political culture into the Age of Enlightenment with bayonets and bombs.

After giving birth to ISIS through the pulverization of Iraq and support for repressive Middle East states and statelets, the MITC bugled for military force to degrade and destroy its own malevolent offspring in Iraq, Syria, and anywhere on the globe. To rally popular support and spiraling congressional funding, the MITC inflated the danger of radical Islam to an existential threat. More than 9,000 airstrikes against ISIS have accomplished nothing militarily significant. The MITC is now clamoring for boots on the ground in Syria or Iraq indefinitely, a throwback to General William Westmoreland's demand for 200,000 more troops in Vietnam after the 1968 Tet Offensive.

What explains the seeming inexplicability of the MITC's success in turning failures into organizational triumphs?

The mindless human lust for power and domination that crushes everything in its path, including reason, justice, and moderation alike.