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The Suicide of the West

By: Justin Raimondo

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I had to laugh when I saw the headline blaring from one end of the Huffington Post to the other: [“Pentagon Preps For Global Economic Warfare”](#)!

Yikes! Man the battlements! Deploy the credit cards! Unleash the default credit swaps! And for the love of God speed up those [printing presses](#) at the Federal Reserve! The story in Politico deadpanned this hilarious news:

“The Pentagon sponsored a first-of-its-kind war game last month focused not on bullets and bombs — but on how hostile nations might seek to cripple the U.S. economy, a scenario made all the more real by the global financial crisis.”

Why should these “hostile nations” bother with a campaign to cripple our economy when we’re doing such a good job of it ourselves?

The whole premise of this dubious exercise is that our problems aren’t caused by anything or anyone here on the home front — no, no, it’s those [horrible foreigners](#), with their cheap labor costs and spicky foods, who are responsible for the economic plight of our nation!

Oh, I can hear it now, in calls for protectionist measures, and lame justifications for government subsidies to favored businesses: “The Europeans do it!” It won’t be long before we hear accusations that the Enemy of the Month is harboring *economic* weapons of mass destruction aimed directly at the American people.

As absurd as such a premise is — the idea of the world economy as a battle zone, rather than an interlocking grid of economic self-interest, is a primitive throwback to pre-industrial economics — it is perfectly suited to the modern [welfare-warfare state](#), and hardly surprising that the Pentagon is now spending our tax dollars on such anti-market, autarchist nonsense. They're keen to dissolve the economic bonds that bind us all, and treat the world market as if it were a battle zone — and they call *us* “isolationists”!

A reflexively warlike mentality has [infected](#) the national psyche since September 11, 2001, and now permeates every aspect of life, including discussions of economics. The inauguration of Barack Obama as President changes this not one iota: indeed, it suits the purposes of this administration, which is fighting a “war on recession” as well as [the Long War](#) on the [Af-Pak](#) front.

The Politico piece describes the enactment of this taxpayer-funded display of computerized economic ignorance as follows:

“The two-day event near Ft. Meade, Maryland, had all the earmarks of a regular war game. Participants sat along a V-shaped set of desks beneath an enormous wall of video monitors displaying economic data, according to the accounts of three participants.

“‘It felt a little bit like Dr. Strangelove,’ one person who was at the previously undisclosed exercise told POLITICO.”

Well, yes, I do indeed see the resemblance: Dr. Strangelove, after all, was a [former National Socialist](#) and all-around creepy mad scientist. Yet who were these would-be Strangeloves, playing games on the taxpayers' dime? Politico reports:

“Instead of military brass plotting America’s defense, it was hedge-fund managers, professors and executives from at least one investment bank, UBS — all invited by the Pentagon to play out global scenarios that could shift the balance of power between the world’s leading economies.”

This Pentagon for plutocrats playing war-games with our economy turns out to consist of none other than the Napoleons of our recent economic Waterloo. Is a bigwig from UBS, a Swiss bank that had to be [bailed out](#) by its government, really the sort of general we want to put in command of our economic fate? I think not.

As “uniformed military officers and members of the intelligence community carefully observed,” Politico assures us, the game reached its climax:

“In the end, there was sobering news for the United States — the savviest economic warrior proved to be China, a growing economic power that strengthened its position the most over the course of the war-game.

“The United States remained the world’s largest economy but significantly degraded its standing in a series of financial skirmishes with Russia, participants said. The war game demonstrated

that in post-Sept. 11 world, the Pentagon is thinking about a wide range of threats to America's position in the world, including some that could come far from the battlefield."

A nation with one of the world's highest [savings rates](#) and [lowest labor costs](#), not to mention [a fifth](#) of the world's population, is an economic powerhouse? You don't say! For this solemn revelation we needed a panel of "experts" playing around on expensive super-computers? The Politico writer gushes

"And it's hardly science fiction. China recently shook the value of the dollar in global currency markets merely by questioning whether the recession put China's \$1 trillion in U.S. government bond holdings at risk — forcing President Barack Obama to issue a hasty defense of the dollar."

It's an interesting perspective: the problem, you see, isn't the weakness caused by the popping of the [bubble economy](#), and the policies pursued by our own elites in government and high finance — the problem is the *Chinese*, who dared to point out our essential [insolvency](#). We are never at fault: it's always *other people*. I know a lot of drunks who talk like that. But are we really drunk enough on our easy money and our own hubris to believe it?

The United States pursues futile and horrendously [expensive](#) wars of "liberation" throughout the world, maintains an empire on which the sun [never sets](#), spends more than it produces — and it's all China's fault! After all, *they* lured us into borrowing all that money from them — it was a Communist plot utilizing capitalist means! Now I know what Lenin meant when [he said](#) that the last capitalist would sell the revolutionaries the rope to hang him with. Except Lenin got it wrong: the ChiComs sold us the rope, and then we hung ourselves.

One of the session attendees, Professor [Paul Bracken](#), a private equity specialist at the Yale School of Management, claims to have gained an important insight from the exercise:

"First, that the United States needs an integrated approach to managing financial and what the Pentagon calls 'kinetic' — or shooting — wars. For example he says, the U.S. Navy is involved in blockading Iran, and the U.S. is also conducting economic war against Iran in the form of sanctions. But he argues there isn't enough coordination between the two efforts."

Even as the Obama administration airs [videos](#) of the Dear Leader holding out his hand like God did to Moses, the Pentagon game-players are planning to strangle the Iranians, economically, or else [obliterate them](#) physically — and they are making no secret of it.

What can one say of a culture that makes everything a "war on this" or a "war on that"? Where the popular language, the national mindset, is seemingly fixated on the glory and necessity of conquest?

At least, that's what I ask in my gloomier moments. Most of the rest of the time, however, I realize that this characterization of American political culture is just a reflection of the "false consciousness" created by [regime propaganda](#), superimposed by the elites on ordinary Americans. That's why Antiwar.com exists — to counter this false consciousness, to expose the lies of the War Party and create a counter-culture of antiwar and anti-authoritarian

consciousness. No matter which party is in power, this movement is growing and will grow beyond the power of States to tame or stop it — and that's the power our own rulers, and the rulers of states all around the world, fear the most.

Any attempt to blame “foreigners” for our economic ills is letting [the Money Power](#) in the US off the hook, and diverting the righteous anger of the American people to a convenient overseas scapegoat. If we're looking to blame someone for the impending bankruptcy of the United States of America, then the search for the culprits ought to begin on our own shores — and you don't have to be a modern day Sherlock Holmes to know exactly where to find them. The economic saboteurs aren't in Beijing or Moscow — they're in [Washington, D.C.](#)