

Abolish the Military

BY GREG SHUPAK

We should honor those killed and injured in past US wars by stopping future ones.



US Army rangers training near Fort Stewart, Ga. in 2012. Dvidshub

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Lisa Simpson had the right idea. In a 2002 episode of *The Simpsons*, the elementary school student tries to impress two college kids by putting a sticker on her bike that says "US Out of Everywhere."

It is a slogan that should be ubiquitous on the Left. With the string of disastrous military interventions across the world in recent years, it's even more apparent that US crimes aren't isolated — there's an underlying structure that produces them.

Tackling that underlying structure, though daunting, also fosters opportunities for unity. Because of the sheer destructiveness of US militarism, and its vital role in maintaining global capitalism, a reinvigorated antiwar movement could bring together leftists with a broad range of concerns.

So on Veterans Day, here's how US militarism stands in the way of a just world — and why the Left should come together to bring it to its knees.

Abolish the Billionaire Class Luke Savage

A Plan to Win Socialism In America Peter Gowen

Wielding the Imperial Presidency Mazgon Day

Ihan Omar Is Not Antisemitic Seth Ackerman

1. US imperialism breeds racism.

For starters, the main victims of the US military have been people of color. Just since World War II, there are the millions slaughtered in Korea and Indochina, the over one million killed in Iraq, and the tens of thousands in Afghanistan — all of which have then been affixed with dehumanizing labels to rationalize the murdering spree.

The bigotry doesn't stay overseas. Using racist language to legitimize attacking Arabs or Southeast Asians contributes to the dissemination of racism against minorities in the United States.

There's also the long-running presence of Klansmen and Neo-Nazis in the American forces and the tacit acceptance of their presence by officials. As *Reuters'* Daniel Trotta reported in 2012, white supremacist groups encourage their followers who join the Army and Marine Corps to acquire the skills to overthrow the "Zionist Occupation Government" that they think is running America and to prepare for the race war that they see as imminent.

Former service members such as Wade Page and James Burnmeister have carried out racist murders on US soil, and a 2008 report commissioned by the Justice Department found that half of all right-wing extremists in the United States had military experience.

2. The military is anti-feminist.

US military actions also need to be thought of as exercises in mass violence against women. Millions of women in the Global South have been killed, maimed, assaulted, or traumatized by the United States military.

In just one horrifying example, a set of documents declassified in 2006 shows recurrent attacks on ordinary Vietnamese — families in their homes, farmers in rice paddies, teenagers out fishing. Hundreds of soldiers, in interviews with investigators and letters to commanders, described a violent minority who murdered, raped and tortured with impunity. Abuses were not confined to a few rogue units... They were uncovered in every Army division that operated in Vietnam.

Similarly, activist and scholar Kozye Akibayashi notes that in Okinawa, Japan a "problem caused by the US military presence is sexual or gender-based violence by US soldiers," including "hundreds of cases of sexual assaults against women and children of all ages."

The same problem exists in Colombia where, according to an April 2015 report, US military soldiers and contractors sexually abused at least fifty-four children between 2003 and 2007 — and were never held accountable because American military personnel are protected by diplomatic immunity agreements between the two countries.

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