

# [***ERIK PRINCE: Neocons Almost Killed America. Here's How Patriots Can Fix It***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BY1-FBB1-DXXD-7365-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

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**How the MIC and the Neocons Keep America Losing**

It is painfully apparent to anyone of sound mind and judgment that there's something gravely wrong with America's current military capacity and our ability to project power in the world. The WWII-era fighting force composed of fourteen million GIs with a muscular industrial base backing them up is almost unimaginable today. In the last three years, five different US embassies have been hastily evacuated: Sudan, Afghanistan, Belarus, Ukraine and Niger. Americans are held hostage in Gaza; commercial shipping traffic is blockaded and our ground and naval forces are shot at daily with impunity. How did America go from winning the Cold War and becoming the sole global superpower in the 90s to the state of disarray that we find ourselves in now?

One reason is financial. All warfare has an underlying economic basis and a nation's military power reflects its economic structure. Today in America the “exorbitant privilege” of the US dollar and the unlimited printing press of fiat currency it enables means current US defense spending is essentially covered by debt: indeed at least 30% of the current national debt consists of military overspend from the so-called Global War on Terror. This reality has created an absence of strategic discipline, and a military policy that prioritizes a tiny guild of contractors feeding an obese top-heavy structure rather than winning wars.

The roots of the current situation reach back to the election of Reagan in 1980. Reagan started a pivot from 35 years of containment to a more aggressive approach, covered by deficits. Channeled economically, politically, culturally, socially and through covert action these measures helped to bring an end to the Soviet Union, but at a critical strategic cost. Partly as a consequence of the central economic role that the USSR had come to play for the US defense industry, the opportunity to positively engage with Russia after 1991 was rejected by the dominant neoconservative faction and their military-industrial complex allies in Washington. Originally Trotskyites, [*the Neocons*](https://im1776.com/neoconservatism-as-brood-parasitism/) had taken root in the corporatist wing of the Republican Party and gradually increased in influence, to eventually become dominant in the Washington Beltway foreign policy and emblematic of its mentality of continuous warfare funded by an unlimited fiat printing press.

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Former U.S. President Ronald Reagan arrives at the annual G7 Summit in Toronto in this June 19, 1988 file photo. REUTERS/Gary Hershorn

The so-called “Peace Dividend” that followed the end of the Cold War was redirected into expanding NATO instead of ending it. The goal was to enrich the military-industrial complex by creating more clients to buy US weapons, at the expense of the opportunity to partner with Russia. Promises of not expanding NATO eastward into former Warsaw Pact countries were broken and NATO troops were deployed on Russia's border.

The priorities of Neocon Washington were also projected into US policy in Africa. After Liberian warlord Charles Taylor sponsored the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone in the late '90s, the RUF quickly captured most of the country, particularly the diamond-rich areas of the north. In the process they committed atrocious acts of savagery against Sierra Leone's civilian population. Into this maelstrom entered Executive Outcomes (EO), a South African PMC. EO initially deployed 60 ex-South African Special Forces personnel fresh from ending a civil war that had raged for years in Angola, and eventually expanded to around 200 well-trained personnel. Using mostly equipment abandoned by Sierra Leone's disintegrated army, within 6 months they'd retaken the country and restored peace and order to the extent that free and fair elections could be held 3 months later.

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Liberian President Charles Taylor delivers a speech at the courthouse in Accra, Ghana June 4, 2003 where African heads of state have gathered to participate in a Liberian peace conference. Sierra Leone's prosecutor expects Ghana to arrest Taylor after he was indicted for war crimes in sierra Leone, the court's chief investigator said on Wednesday. REUTERS/Luc Gnago

Executive Outcomes was sponsored by an association of diamond miners who wanted their mines back. This group was willing to sponsor an ongoing 30-man EO presence to retrain a new Sierra Leone armed forces while providing a backstop in case the rebels returned. Susan Rice, then Bill Clinton's Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, vetoed this proposal: “We don't want any white mercenaries in Africa,” she declared. The result? Within months the RUF and a new group called the West Side Boys had returned, killing, looting and pillaging the country. 11,000 UN Peacekeepers at a cost of $1B+ per year in 1990s US dollars were now deployed. But they didn't solve the problem, and not until the British SAS killed hundreds of rebels during a large hostage rescue mission of Irish Peacekeepers did the country start to stabilize.

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U.S. President Barack Obama and National Security Advisor Susan E. Rice (L) talk on the phone with Homeland Security Advisor Lisa Monaco to receive an update on the attack in Brussels, Belgium, in this official White House handout photo taken in Havana, Cuba March 22, 2016. The President made the call from the residence of the U.S. Chief of Mission in Havana. REUTERS/White House/Pete Souza/Handout via Reuters

This debacle in West Africa occurred on the heels of an even greater catastrophe further East. In the spring of 1994, after decades of simmering ethnic hatred in Rwanda, the Hutus launched a program of manual genocide. Over a four-month period they killed almost 1,000,000 of their Tutsi neighbors, a murder rate exceeding 8,000 per day, mainly using machetes and farm tools. Here as well EO made a formal proposal to the UN and the US government to intervene and prevent further slaughter. The proposal was also rejected by Rice in Washington. EO stayed out and the carnage continued unabated until Paul Kagame's exiled Rwandan Patriotic Front invaded from Uganda and retook the country.

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By the late 90s, with Washington engaged in combat in the former Yugoslavia, a new kind of enemy was emerging: jihadist Islam. In 1993 a poorly conceived and badly executed nation-building exercise in Somalia had already supplied a foretaste when the Battle of Mogadishu resulted in the death of 18 US Special Operations personnel and 73 wounded after repeated requests for air support were rejected by an indecisive Clinton administration. By 1999, unanswered attacks in Nairobi, Dar As Salaam, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and New York had claimed hundreds of lives and mauled a US Destroyer, USS Cole. Finally, on Sept 11th, 2001, this series of body blows reached its spectacular culmination.

In the aftermath of 9/11, President Bush met with his War Cabinet to plan a response to the costliest attack on American soil since Pearl Harbor. As the Pentagon smoldered, the Department of Defense recommended a bombing campaign and a Ranger raid against an Al Qaeda-linked farm, but wanted to wait at least six months before beginning combat operations in order to avoid the Afghan winter. The CIA, for their part, recommended an Unconventional Warfare campaign. They wanted to supercharge the Northern Alliance, who'd been fighting the Taliban for a decade, with US airpower directed by SOF advisors. The CIA plan was adopted. The Taliban and their guests Al-Qaeda were routed in weeks by a highly aggressive SOF targeting cycle which gave them no quarter.

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President Bush leads his National Security Council in the Situation Room of the White House, October 12, 2001. With the nation on edge after a fourth case of anthrax exposure, President George W. Bush said on Friday the United States “is still in danger” of terrorism but vowed, “They will not take this country down.” (REUTERS/WHITE HOUSE/Eric Draper)

[*Link to Image*](https://cdn01.dailycaller.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/2006-12-06T120000Z_903956393_GM1DUCHDXIAA_RTRMADP_3_BUSH-IRAQ-scaled.jpg)

U.S. President George W. Bush (C) speaks to the press after receiving the official report of the Iraq Study Group in the Cabinet Room of the White House in Washington December 6, 2006. From left to right are: Co-Chairman and former U.S. Congressman Lee Hamilton, Bush, and Co-Chairman and former Secretary of State James Baker. REUTERS/Larry Downing

The US response to 9/11 should have resembled a Scipio Africanus-style Roman punitive raid, killing all Taliban and Al-Qaeda remnants within reach, including those sheltering in the tribal areas of Pakistan, and then withdrawing. Instead, the Neocons saw a lucrative opportunity to 'nation build.' Because the Pentagon runs on the bureaucratic principle of budget cycles and the internal war for promotion rather than the principle of victory, a vastly inflated occupational army ultimately comprising 120,000 soldiers was deployed to the country. This force represented a repetition of the failed Soviet plan of the 80s, to the extent of occupying the same bases.

Ignoring every historical lesson of successful counter-insurgencies, experienced soldiers were rotated on 6-12 month intervals with fresh units, losing all continuity and local intelligence. The top commander spot rotated 18 times in 20 years. Concerned as per usual with marketing for their defense contractor clients, the Neocons dragged dozens of largely unwilling NATO members to Afghanistan, producing a dysfunctional chaos of individual national mandates. Many nations wouldn't patrol at night or engage in offensive combat missions. When the German army arrived in Kabul in the spring of 2002, among their concerns was finding appropriate housing for all the gay couples deployed in the Bundeswehr.

The Neocon plan for Afghanistan, or at least the story, was to impose a centralized Jeffersonian democracy on a largely illiterate, semi-feudal tribal nation by throwing infinite money at a paper-thin civil society. The result, unsurprisingly, was corruption, not infrastructure. Meanwhile, the military operation remained chaos incarnate. Not only was there never a truly empowered supreme commander, but authorities were split between the US Ambassador, CIA Station chief, the current 4-star US General, the CENTCOM Commander and their staff residing in Qatar or Tampa and various representatives from NATO. This committee from Hell produced predictable results.

In the 1980s the US provided lethal aid to the Mujahedeen fighting the Soviets running to $1B a year including state-of-the-art Stinger missiles, which knocked down an average of one Soviet aircraft per day. Nobody provided this kind of aid to the Taliban: not one NATO/Coalition aircraft was lost to a guided missile. But air supremacy wasn't enough. The Taliban were a self-funded insurgency composed of mostly illiterate fighters using weapons designed more than 70 years earlier. Although they lacked the techno-wizardry of the Pentagon forces, their budget grew to approximately $600mm per year from tolling narcotics and the import of fuel used to feed a thirsty Pentagon presence. Fuel logistics alone cost the Pentagon tens of billions per year, despite the fact that a vast reserve of crude - Amu-Darya Field in Balkh Province Afghanistan - had been drilled, proven and properly cemented by Soviet forces before they left in 1989. But what could have supplied the entire Afghanistan operation with low-cost, reliable hydrocarbon energy was ignored in favor of paying, by the time the fuel reached the vehicles, an operational cost of $250 per gallon.

It's fair to compare the longevity of the Soviet-built Afghan forces, holding on for years after the Soviets left, versus the Pentagon-built Afghan forces collapsing only weeks after the American withdrawal. Today of course the Taliban rule Afghanistan with an iron sandal. The trillions of dollars and thousands of lives expended by America's youth were completely wasted – and nobody has ever been held to account. The Taliban have not become more moderate - they are exactly the same group as before and hosting more terror groups than ever. Al Qaeda is resident once again in Kabul, and now known to be gathering means to enrich uranium in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan wasn't even the worst US military failure over the last twenty years. Almost exactly the same Neocon fever dream also played out in Iraq. Here again the fantasy of deposing a dictator in the name of installing democracy in a country with a culture with no history of representative democracy followed its inevitable course. After an initial phase of 24/7 war porn of the US invasion, broadcast by the network media through “embedded journalists,” the Pentagon was quickly dragged into an urban counter-insurgency quagmire involving a Sunni faction rebranded as Al Qaeda in Iraq, Saddam regime holdovers, and Shia insurgents, armed, trained and sometimes led by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps.

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U.S. military personnel are seen in the city of Gardez after a rocket attack September 16, 2004. A rocket was fired at Afghan President Hamid Karzai's U.S. military helicopter as it was landing in Gardez but the landing was aborted and Karzai returned safely to Kabul. REUTERS/Ahmad Masood

This development was not inevitable. I still recall a sliding door moment early in the conflict when the Director of the Iraqi National Intelligence Service came to see me with his CIA liaison officer in early 2004. He described the scale of the efforts by the IRGC Quds Forces to infiltrate Iraqi society and establish a proxy capability similar to Hezbollah in Lebanon and requested that we develop a joint program to locate and eradicate the Iranian presence. Unfortunately, the program was blocked by then-National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, on the grounds that Iran was not our enemy and that the US must support the political process in Iraq. In the event, this political process spun into a vicious civil war, killing hundreds of thousands of civilians. Meanwhile, our 'non-enemy' Iran flooded the country with thousands of lethal EFP roadside bombs, to shred armored vehicles with American soldiers inside.

Today Iraq is subjugated by Iran with Tehran making key decisions and approving all key ministry appointments, including who becomes Prime Minister. Their power is backed by the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) or Hashd al Shabi - an Iranian-controlled proxy mirroring Hezbollah in Lebanon. The PMUs are paid for by the Iraqi Government, armed in most cases with American weapons, and led either by Iranian-appointed commanders or by serving IRGC officers directly.

America continues to wage futile forever wars of convenience because Washington believes we are immune to reality and evolved beyond history. The grand strategy of the so-called Global War on Terror was conceived on a false premise promoted by Neocon think tanks and the Military-Industrial Complex that American drone technology could revolutionize counter-insurgency warfare through surgical strikes targeting only the leadership of terror organizations. This delusion produced sclerosis in the military by stripping authority away from field commanders concerning when to shoot and when to hold fire. A fixation on large orbiting cameras likewise devolved into high-tech voyeurism with lawyers, not commanders making battlefield decisions even when friendly troops were in peril and requiring urgent air support.

Ultimately, the paradigm flies in the face of the realities of war. Leaders are replaceable. There's always another ambitious jihadi looking to wear the crown of command. What actually ends wars is destroying enemy manpower, finance, logistics, and ability to resupply. Every relevant historical example tells the same story, from the wars of ancient Greece to continental European and Napoleonic wars to the American Civil War and the world wars of the 20th Century. In the course of losing WWII Germany lost 5.3 of 17.7 million men aged 15-44 years old, or 30% of their male population. This brutality is the reality of winning wars - as the recent US track record of failure shows. The “measured and proportional response” crowd wants a war without war. It's a fantasy that only seems plausible to people who have never experienced war and are insulated from its consequences; their first-born children should be drafted into frontline combat units to relieve them of this problem.

After the Roman Empire lost a crushing defeat at the Battle of Cannae, the Roman Senate immediately became 40% undermanned, because the Roman leaders actually served in the defense of their Republic and risked their lives in battle for it. Today, America's elites instead spend their time on Wall Street or in think tanks gathering degrees and attending conferences. The old concept of *noblesse oblige* has gone missing from our national culture and so has the concept of accountability.

Despite the failures of Iraq and Afghanistan, there have been zero lessons learned or course corrections made. Consequently, the failures keep coming. When Hamas unleashed thousands of rockets, missiles, paragliders, and ground assaults across 30 breach points into Israel on October 7 of last year, they showed how dangerous complacency can be. Clearly Hamas had plotted their operation for years. Their network of 300 miles of tunnels spanning all of Gaza was built with one goal in mind: to suck the IDF into an urban quagmire in order to maximize carnage and casualties, of both Palestinian civilian and Israeli soldiers. But why not flood the tunnels with seawater using Texas precision drilling technology? The tactic would have obviated the need to bomb urban areas containing civilians and the terrible suffering that this tactic entails. Flooding the tunnels would have destroyed all underground weapons storage, prevented maneuver, and would have forced Hamas to move or lose their hostage human shields.

In fact, an entire package of drilling/pumping and technical support for precisely this tactic was offered by donors to the IDF. Yet the IDF - under pressure from the Pentagon diktats - instead chose bombing. The result has seen a wave of global sympathy generated for the Palestinian cause and left Hamas in charge of uncleared southern Gaza: a double nightmare scenario far from being resolved.

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In 2011, Hillary Clinton, chief Neocon of the Obama Administration, proudly declared of Libya's US-sponsored revolution: “We came. We saw. He died.” Colonel Qaddafi may not have been perfect but Libya under him was politically stable. Now? For 13 years the country has been wracked by civil war and chaos. Rife with Russian and Turkish PMCs fighting for regional hegemony, the country is now a major exporter of weapons and one of the biggest channels to Europe for drugs and human trafficking.

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US Democratic presidential nominee Senator Barack Obama (D-IL) and Senator Hillary Clinton (D-NY) attend a campaign rally in Orlando, Florida, in this file image from October 20, 2008. Clinton has accepted an offer from President-elect Barack Obama to become U.S. Secretary of State, the New York Times said on November 21, 2008. REUTERS/Jim Young

[*Link to Image*](https://cdn01.dailycaller.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/2009-01-22T120000Z_20254023_GM1E51N0I4001_RTRMADP_3_OBAMA-scaled.jpg)

U.S. President Barack Obama smiles along with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton as she makes remarks at the State Department in Washington January 22, 2009. REUTERS/Kevin Lamarque

[*Link to Image*](https://cdn01.dailycaller.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/2016-11-06T120000Z_738874016_HT1ECB60GUK06_RTRMADP_3_USA-ELECTION-CLINTON-PROFILE.jpg)

U.S. Democratic presidential candidates Senator Barack Obama (D-IL) and Senator Hillary Clinton (D-NY) pose for photographers prior to the CNN/Los Angeles Times Democratic presidential debate in Hollywood, California January 31, 2008. REUTERS/Brian Snyder

Further east, Iran, with Hamas, Hezbollah, Hashd al shaabi (Iraq), and the Houthis in Yemen, have built a powerful network of regional proxy forces, now extending even into South America through the Lebanese diaspora in the narcotics and weapons trade. In Yemen, the Houthis have developed into effective pirates, shutting off Red Sea shipping traffic with long-range anti-ship weapons hidden in Yemen's rugged terrain. As a result, an already economically struggling Egypt - a key American ally - has suffered a 40% blow to their GDP from lost Suez transit fees of $800mm/month and everyone else has seen punishing supply chains inflation from dislocated transit routes and runaway insurance premiums.

Why are Iranian surrogates in Iraq and Yemen being permitted to fire hundreds of precision drones, cruise and ballistic missiles at US forces on land and sea, largely without meaningful response from Washington? What response there has been has mainly consisted of announcing a coalition named 'Prosperity Guardian' to protect shipping which collapsed almost immediately after multiple vessels were struck and destroyed. Why are US policymakers and the Pentagon unable to innovate effective military solutions?

It doesn't have to be this way. In the 1960s, Egypt, then a Soviet client, seized half of Yemen and deposed the Yemeni monarch. In response, Britain and Saudi Arabia hired SAS founder David Stirling's PMC Watchguard International. Within months they had sufficiently amplified the Yemeni Tribesman fighting capabilities to force Egypt to withdraw. Stirling actually received a medal from the IDF for engaging so many Egyptian troops that it assisted the IDF victory in the 1967 Six-Day War. Fast forward to 2017, Saudi Arabia and the UAE were trying to battle Iranian surrogate Houthis who seized control over half of Yemen. They request PMC support to replicate the successful Stirling model from the 1960s, and once again they are blocked, this time by Neocon Secretary of Defense Mattis serving under President Trump. The Houthis remained unchecked and ascendant, and eventually strong enough to shut off one of the world's major trade routes.

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U.S. Secretary of Defense James Mattis attends a joint news conference in Helsinki, Finland November 6, 2017. Lehtikuva/Heikki Saukkomaa via REUTERS

Meanwhile this same approach is still failing in Africa. There have been a staggering *nine* coup d'etats across Africa in the last 4 years, mainly in ex-colonial French regions, where decades-long insurgencies have exploded following the destruction of Libya. The looting of massive Libyan state arsenals following the overthrow of Qaddafi flooded the region with weapons. Long insufficient COIN operations by France and their USG partners reached the end of the road; local militaries ousted their Paris-sponsored leadership. The current US humiliation in Niger and Chad where US forces are being forced to vacate new multi-billion dollar facilities built to support drone operations across Africa is the result.

Compare this to Russia. Having embraced PMC capabilities, Russia is currently running a successful playbook in Africa against ineffective Western-friendly governments by showing a firmer hand against jihadists. This cycle will continue unabated so long as the State Department and the CIA restrict their thinking to coming up with PR strategies while America's rivals implement military solutions.

The Central African Republic, rich in buried mineral wealth, suffered a descent into civil war in 2014 and the empowerment of criminal gangs; the Seleca and Anti Balaka. In 2017, the CAR government requested Western PMC assistance to build a robust mining police force in order to choke out the gangs. Contracts were even signed and funding-ready. But once again this solution was blocked by the NeoCons at the State Dept and their pet, the UN, refusing to waive their sanctions against CAR for the purchasing of small arms to equip police. But Russia had no such issues and sent 400 Wagner personnel immediately. Now multiple Wagner units run mines that net the Russian PMC billions of dollars per year, funding many of their other operations across Africa.

Somalia has been a geopolitical problem since the early 90s, sucking up tens of billions in ineffective foreign aid, killing hundreds of thousands, exporting terrorism, sheltering pirates, and flooding America with hundreds of thousands of migrants. In the spring of 2020, Kenyan President Jomo Kenyatta reached out for private sector assistance to finally tourniquet this endless bleeding. Every terror attack in Kenya costs Kenya more than $1B in tourist revenue. The PMC offer was made, and Kenyatta asked President Trump for financial assistance to run this private sector solution. Trump agreed and funding was passed into law by Congress. But Team Biden took over before the already-appropriated funds were released. As a result, they were used instead on the same failed approach - the surgical decapitation strategy which has repeatedly failed globally for 20+ years. Today, Somalia still bleeds and still drains funds, while America is stuck with culturally incompatible migrants that we “cannot deport” because Somalia remains a failed state.

When does Western incompetence end?

The Syrian Civil War saw Neocons funding a radical Sunni insurgency to depose Bashar Al Assad. This force quickly morphed into ISIS and promptly conquered half of Iraq by appealing to a Sunni population repressed by Iranian Shia proxies. The point is worth repeating. ISIS emerged directly from Neocon meddling in the Syrian Civil War. Today, in the aftermath, US forces occupy eastern Syria as some sort of ill-defined buffer between various Kurdish factions, Turkey, and the Syrian government, at a cost of billions per year and for no tangible benefit to American citizens.

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Syrian President Bashar al-Assad (L) during talks with Iranian deputy Foreign Minister Mohamed al-Sader in Damascus October 31, 2000. Al-Sader carried a message to President Assad from Iranian president Mohamed Khatami, and they talked about the Israeli-Palestinian situation in the region. (REUTERS)

Cui Bono? Who benefits? And who is benefiting from the ongoing tragedy of the [*war in Ukraine*](https://im1776.com/tag/war-in-ukraine/)? Since historical perspective in conflicts is always useful, I invite readers to consider the staggering costs in manpower borne by the USSR to defeat the Wehrmacht: over 22 million lives lost compared to US losses of 250,000 troops. While the US was invading North Africa in a warm-up to the invasion of Europe, the Soviets were killing 1.2 million Axis soldiers at Stalingrad, while losing almost twice that number themselves. That loss is genetically imprinted on surviving generations, and strategically imprinted in the thinking of the Russian state.

The effect of the eastward expansion of NATO culminating in a proposal to include Ukraine despite clear red-line language expressed by the Kremlin was highly predictable. Yet the Neocons kept pressing the issue, even after assisting in the overthrow of a pro-Russian President. One should take note of how upset the US Government was when the USSR began emplacing missiles in Cuba during the early 1960s.

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US marine fires a machine gun during a joint military exercise with NATO members, called “Agile Spirit 2015” at the Vaziani military base outside Tbilisi, Georgia, July 21, 2015. Georgian soldiers along with U.S. marines and platoon-size units from Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania and Romania are taking part in the exercises at the Vaziani military base outside Tbilisi. REUTERS/David Mdzinarishvili

[*Link to Image*](https://cdn01.dailycaller.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/2015-07-21T120000Z_1377790654_GF10000165660_RTRMADP_3_GEORGIA-MILITARY-scaled.jpg)

US marines take part a joint military exercise with NATO members, called “Agile Spirit 2015” at the Vaziani military base outside Tbilisi, Georgia, July 21, 2015. Georgian soldiers along with U.S. marines and platoon-size units from Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania and Romania are taking part in the exercises at the Vaziani military base outside Tbilisi. REUTERS/David Mdzinarishvili

At the outbreak of WWII, in Britain's greatest hour of danger, America sent them 50 surplus Navy destroyers, combat aircraft, and weaponry. Meanwhile, in the Chinese theater, combat aircraft were purchased by a Nationalist government which needed American Volunteer Group Contractor support to stop the Japanese from bombing Chinese cities. Similarly, as tensions rose in Ukraine in late 2021 and a Russian invasion looked imminent, a combination of Lend Lease and the Flying Tigers was offered to the White House. For fiscal year 2022, 200+ fully functional combat aircraft including 50 F-16s, 50 F-15s and 42 A-10s explicitly designed for destroying Soviet tanks were set to be retired, flown to the desert, and parked forever.

These are not state-of-the-art aircraft but entirely adequate when flown by well-trained contract pilots filling the gap for 18 months while Ukrainian crews could be readied. Team Biden could have made a grand announcement before the invasion stating Ukraine would never join NATO but would have the means to defend itself. This airwing deployment with weapons crews and fuel would have cost less than $800mm compared to the hundreds of billions and incalculable deaths on both sides. Announcing no NATO expansion and instant deployment of a robust air wing could have prevented the largest war in Europe in eighty years. Or did the Neocons want a war?

Which brings us to Taiwan. Taiwan, and China's claim on it, remains the flashpoint in the ultimate cold war in the final stages of warming. Clever deterrence measures have been offered and rejected. The Pentagon wants to fight by our own playbook, but as always in war, the enemy gets a vote. A hot war between China and the USA would see US cities annihilated and a death toll in the tens of millions, at minimum. This apocalyptic carnage can only be averted by looking back through history at what has worked and what hasn't worked in the conveyor belt of failed Washington foreign policy approaches which have dominated the last thirty years. We owe it to our children to get this right but course changes must be made immediately, before it is too late.

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What we should do?

The current policy model of US security assistance is broken and counterproductive. The US military is the most expensive organization in 3,000 years of human history and has degenerated into an instrument for selling or grifting overpriced military hardware to countries that struggle to use it, let alone maintain it. The US military mows the lawn with Lamborghinis, when Kubota tractors is what our allies need.

[*Link to Image*](https://cdn01.dailycaller.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/2021-05-22T143419Z_238917800_RC21LN9AWEJ9_RTRMADP_3_USA-GRADUATION-WEST-POINT-scaled.jpg)

U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III arrives for graduation ceremonies for the class of 2021 at the United States Military Academy (USMA) West Point, in Michie Stadium in West Point, New York, U.S., May 22, 2021. REUTERS/Mike Segar

The dozens of developing countries that suffer from narco crime, gangsterism and chaos urgently need real help. When troops are sent for advisory missions too many are sent and they don't stay long enough to provide real assistance; while they are there they are hamstrung by lawyers into ineffectiveness.

Building lasting capability in countries takes time. Doing a three-week exercise while delivering new gifted equipment is a waste of energy and money every time. Send experienced advisors to dwell long term - for years, not months. Give advisors a path to really learn a region and culture.

The Russians are not ignorant of history and the Wagner group has stepped into the void created by US incompetence. In the Sahel and other parts of West Africa they've quickly become the power behind the throne. The best way to beat Wagner is to outcompete them. The same principle also applies to reforming Washington more generally. Policymakers must allow competition to flourish.

The military does not need to be so inherently governmental. If, in 1969, during the summer of Woodstock and Apollo 11, someone said that in 50 years the only way the USG would be able to get people into space would be on a SpaceX rocket, you'd be laughed out of Johnson Space Center. Before the creation of FedEx, a politician would have proclaimed government as the only entity robust enough to deliver packages overnight globally, yet today “FedEx” is a verb. It hasn't totally replaced the US Postal Service, but it has made it run more efficiently. The same logic can be applied to the military.

The American taxpayer is paying far too much for much too little. The cozy cartel of defense contractors must be broken up, and the military made competitive again. Anti-trust enforcement and competitive tenders will stop the corruption of the thousands of lobbyists in Washington milking congress like a cow while delivering overpriced and ineffective products. The current status is unacceptable. The more consolidated the defense base, the more it behaves like the Pentagon bureaucracy: exactly what America cannot afford.

Our Founding Father's instincts for empowering market capacities in military power are explicitly articulated in the Constitution. Before discussing “Congress shall raise a Navy” in Art 1 Sec 8 it directs Congress to mandate the private sector with a letter of Marque and Reprisal - effectively a hunting license for private contractors to interdict enemy shipping.

The litany of failures listed above supplies ample evidence that the current military status quo is ineffective. A “government-only” approach abroad is calamitous and undermines US credibility and deterrence. The foreign policy of the United States should be that our friends love us, our rivals respect us, and our enemies fear us. Instead, our friends fear our self-immolation while our rivals consume us and our enemies fire upon us without consequence.

America's private sector has always outperformed government in solving problems. It is time to unleash America's entrepreneurs in foreign policy to cut costs and restore American credibility.

Erik D. Prince is a former Navy SEAL officer and the founder of private military company Blackwater. Among his current projects is the [*Unplugged*](https://unplugged.com/) phone, a privacy-focused smartphone. He can be followed [*@realErikDPrince*](https://twitter.com/realErikDPrince).

The views and opinions expressed in this commentary are those of the author and do not reflect the official position of the Daily Caller.

**Graphic**

U.S. President Barack Obama (2nd L) and Vice President Joe Biden (L), along with members of the national security team, receive an update on the mission against Osama bin Laden in the Situation Room of the White House, May 1, 2011. Also pictured are Secretary of State Hillary Clinton (2nd R) and Defense Secretary Robert Gates (R). In the decade since the Sept. 11 2001 attacks, U.S. Special Operations Command personnel numbers have doubled, its budget tripled and deployments quadrupled. The Bin Laden takedown is simply the tip of an iceberg of fast-growing, largely hidden action by the United States and its allies. Those with knowledge of such operations say this changing state of warfare could spark a range of unintended consequences, from jeopardizing diplomatic relationships to unwanted, wider wars. Please note: A classified document seen in this photograph has been obscured at source. Picture taken May 1, 2011. To match Analysis CONFLICT/COVERTOPS REUTERS/White House/Pete Souza/Handout/Files (UNITED STATES - Tags: ***POLITICS*** CIVIL UNREST MILITARY) FOR EDITORIAL USE ONLY. NOT FOR SALE FOR MARKETING OR ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS. THIS IMAGE HAS BEEN SUPPLIED BY A THIRD PARTY. IT IS DISTRIBUTED, EXACTLY AS RECEIVED BY REUTERS, AS A SERVICE TO CLIENTS

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