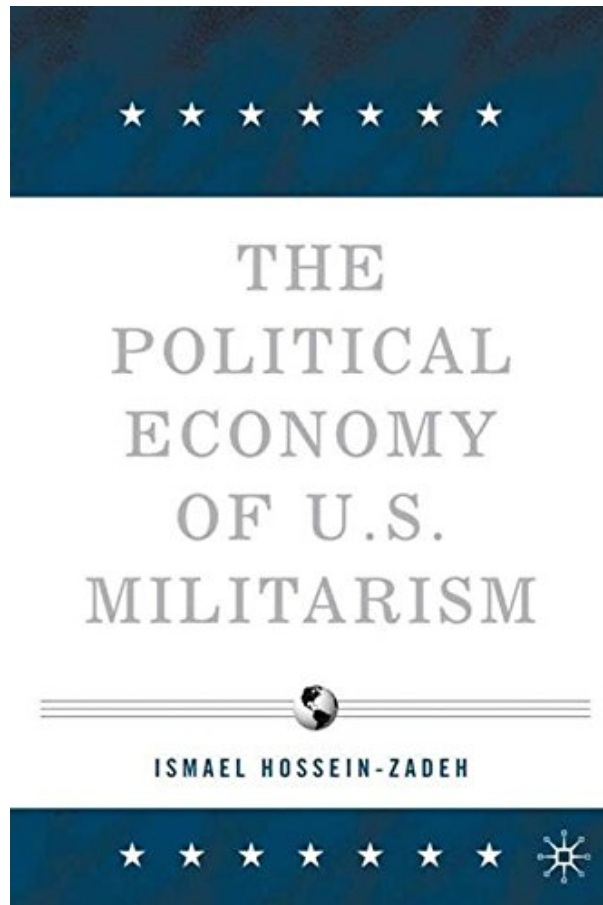


POLITICAL ECONOMY OF U.S. MILITARISM BY ISMAEL HOSSEIN-ZADEH



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ISMAEL HOSSEIN-ZADEH



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'This is an interesting and timely book...a fine mixture of analysis and detailed research, as well as being an entertaining read.' - Lobster

About the Author

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This wide-ranging, interdisciplinary analysis blends history, economics, and politics to challenge the prevailing accounts of the rise of U.S. militarism. While acknowledging the contributory role of some of the most widely-cited culprits, this study explores the bigger, but largely submerged, picture: the political economy of war and militarism.

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A Critical Book For All Americans

By Gabe

It is a difficult task to write a succinct review of a book such as Ismael Hossein-Zadeh has produced, and do justice to its critical pertinence in the daily lives of every American. But its relevance even to each occupant of planet Earth cannot, and should not, be dismissed or underestimated, for to do so is an invitation to the disaster so eloquently implied and presaged by its content.

This immensely well documented and compiled work embodies a compendium of facts, brilliant writing and logical assumptions that will indeed lend credence to Chicken Little's exclamation - but not, however, that the sky is falling; rather that it indeed already has.

The one misfortune of its publication is that it is priced at a level that seems to aim at academics with university expense accounts. If the publisher, Palgrave Macmillan, desires to best serve its readers beyond academia, they and the public would be very well served by its reprint in a paperback edition. To not do so would be akin to pricing smoke alarms beyond the budget of the average home owner.

In this work, Mr. Hossein-Zadeh tracks the pre-WWII norm of antimilitarism that unofficially mandated the reduction of manpower to its prewar size after each conflict, to the emergence of current policy which established a doctrine supporting "1.5 million military personnel in 6,000 domestic bases and 702 bases in 130 countries." Including "about a dozen carrier task forces in the oceans and seas of the world." In this, he clearly describes the militarist's economic principle that peace is a curse that must have the stake of war driven through its heart - and not just once, but on a regularly recurring basis. This is accomplished by maintaining the citizenry in a constant state of fear and anxiety over manufactured and imaginary threats to national security.

The author very adroitly sets forth a stunning array of damning (or encouraging - depending on your political/economic persuasion) data that clearly penetrates the mythology of America being a peaceful "democracy" - or its intention of spreading democracy peacefully.

Being driven by 85,000 private contracting firms, he covers how DoD has co-opted an appalling number of educational institutions (350 colleges and universities) for Pentagon research programs that one can logically assume are not focused on creating a better soufflé.

The author shows that, unlike war efforts of the past, with more clearly established justification, the current military behemoth "tends to undermine the economic base it is supposed to nurture. Furthermore, control of the massive amounts of national resources by the military-industrial complex tends to undermine democratic values, pervert republican principles, and curtail civil liberties [ala Guantanamo Bay, Extreme Rendition, et. al.]. It also tends to corrupt both policy and politics at home and abroad."

For all of his impressive research and comprehensive documentation on a military industrial complex run amok, Mr. Hossein-Zadeh presents a very flowing and remarkably readable treatment on the subject. What could very well have been a dry treatise by a university professor of economics, is in reality so packed with remarkable and historically documented data that no open-minded reader can but stand in awe at what this nation has perpetrated under the camouflage of "national security." The author clearly presents, in a markedly unbiased manner, the inescapable reality that this professed lamb of alleged democracy speaks and acts as a dragon. His conclusions are eminently logical, and fortified with over 125 sources and 379 carefully documented citations.

This book should occupy several places in any academic or public library: Reference; History; Economics and an as-yet nonexistent section labeled "Wakeup Call."

Mr. Hossein-Zadeh documents:

- the penetration of the Pentagon into the deepest and highest levels of government and education.
- the nearly pervasive invasion of former high-ranking military officers and defense contractor executives into upper level policy making of the Bush and previous administrations.
- how, unlike world military empires past and over 150 years of American history, the present US martial adventurism is not stimulated by the military sector, but rather by market-driven forces on the business side of the Military/Industrial Complex - an economic calculus of death for money.
- that the "Blood for Oil" myth is essentially a red herring created by the neocons to the intent of diverting public attention from the genuine purposes of the current war, i.e., the exsanguination of the American taxpayers bloodstream into the pockets of the enormous beast of industrial militarism.
- that peace is anathema to the ideals of current American policy simply because militaristic proponents believe there is more money and economic growth in war.

The above and very many more findings are clearly not extracted, whole-cloth, from the author's imagination. Each is fortified with either direct quotes from the principals, or extensive documentation from official and/or credible sources. Liberally scattered amongst those well-ordered and factual citations are many logically deduced and thought provoking conclusions such as, "...not all militarists don military uniform. In fact, business and ideological beneficiaries and promoters of war, who do not have to face direct

combat and death, tend to be more jingoistic and trigger-happy than professional military personnel who will have to face the horrors of warfare." And "Despite its apparent complexity, reducing international acts of terrorism and fostering global peace and stability would not be very difficult in the absence of this perverse dynamics of the business of war."

In other words, take the profits out of war, and peace is the default.

The author quite agilely connects the dots in an almost incomprehensibly interconnected web of neoconservative, military/industrial and militant Zionist players, all of which are virtually household names for anyone tuning in to mainstream media news. But he takes these players and vividly portrays the incestuous components of American militarism in a way that brings to sharp focus their pernicious, inbred, self-referencing purposes - intents that have literally sacrificed America on the alter of its own cannibalistic consumerism.

This book could be a wakeup call, but it appears to be such that would awaken one to a burning house in which all the exits are blocked. It illustrates that the military-industrial complex has become not so much a case of the tail wagging the dog, as the tail bludgeoning the dog into oblivion.

Oh, and if I haven't already mentioned this: PUBLISHER, you must make this work available in paperback at a price those who really need to read it can afford.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Five Stars

By Steven Barnes

Good

27 of 29 people found the following review helpful.

Empire's Pricetag

By Helen L. Brunikowski

Ismael Hossein-Zadeh's *The Political Economy of U.S. Militarism* will greatly surprise readers who imagine that what lies between its covers is an abstruse economics argument or a rant against the war in Iraq. This accessible, lucid, and generously documented approach to the history of military engagement by the United States since World War II clearly is written with a mainstream audience in mind although its hardcover price of \$80 is out of the average reader's ballpark. Hopefully libraries will pick up the title since every taxpayer deserves the chance to consider Hossein-Zadeh's thesis. In short, he demonstrates that although the economic gains of imperialism might have supported required military outlays for a period, there comes a time in every empire's life when further expansion no longer is cost-effective for the metropole and becomes a drain on the national economy. At this point, the war industry becomes "parasitic" as the dividends of empire fall more and more disproportionately into the laps of those associated with military efforts. Hossein-Zadeh considers the current period in U.S. history such a time.

Readers may have heard this claim before. But few if any will have met such a persuasive presentation of it. The book is extremely helpful in how it identifies and then dismantles what Hossein-Zadeh considers weak explanations for why the United States continues to engage in military intervention and expansion abroad. The first is the widespread theory among liberals that the neoconservative element of the U.S. political scene is attempting to take advantage of the absence of a comparable world power in order to spread American values and free market economics. The second is that George Bush is spearheading military adventurism as a result of the need to pose as a "war president" so as to mask the failings of his administration. The third is that America's Zionist lobbyists are championing the war on Iraq in order to shore up U.S. support of Israel. The fourth (and Hossein-Zadeh considers this the most widespread assumption of all) is that the United

States is engaging, in the case of Iraq and other Middle Eastern adventures, in military action in order to better control the world's oil resources. Hossein-Zadeh acknowledges and discusses each of these theories, ultimately discarding them as the driving force behind continued U.S. military imperialism.

Instead, he suggests that the military imperialism we are witnessing today "can be seen largely as reflections of the metaphorical fights over allocation of the public finance at home, of a subtle or insidious strategy to redistribute national resources in favor of the wealthy, to cut public spending on socioeconomic infrastructures, and to reverse the New Deal reforms by expanding military spending." Survival of the working man and woman aside, also at stake is the question of which cabal of capitalists will come out on top--the neoliberal multilateralists who favor globalization--that is, the expansion of free markets throughout the world in order to make way for the products of multinationals largely unconnected with war, or the unilateralists, who tend to be linked to the military industry and to other industries that are not competitive in the international marketplace.

In addition to providing engaging economic explanations and political commentary such as those already mentioned, Hossein-Zadeh offers a number of other helpful analyses. He makes a distinction between the military bureaucracies of past empires--e.g., Rome--and America's present-day military industry, which reflects the imperatives of an advanced capitalist economy. Bearing in mind this distinction, he suggests, unlike many who see the United States as declining in the mode of Rome, that decline of the United States more likely would follow that of the British Empire. He points out that multilateralists have in no way been eliminated by unilateralists; rather, leading capitalist countries tend to experience alternating periods characterized by resurgence and diminution of the importance of these two poles. He also acknowledges the benefits of the military industry on an economy such as that of the United States. Finally, as an Iranian-American he offers a unique perspective in terms of political economy on the issue of religious fundamentalism and the fraught relations between the West and the Muslim world. Ismael Hossein-Zadeh's *The Political Economy of U.S. Militarism* is a fascinating text and one that deserves to be as accessible to the average pocketbook as it is to the average reader.

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