Warmly, Vijay.

A Gestapo officer barged into Picasso’s apartment in Paris. There was a photograph of Guernica on the wall. The Gestapo officer asked if Picasso had done the painting. ‘No’, Picasso replied. ‘You did’.

It is not what is in these Logs that bothers the powerful, whose indignation is reserved for those brave people who expose their crimes and call them to account.

And we had in mind the terrible bombardment of Iraqi society and civilisation. We had in mind Chelsea Manning, sitting in a prison cell, for providing us with The Iraq War Logs that would help us, in the near future, to hold those responsible for launching the war of aggression on Iraq as war criminals. For Wikileaks that told us the truth about what was actually happening.


A few days ago, I joined a group of Iraqis (such as the writer Haifa Zangana and Thuraiya Muhammed of Tadhamun) in the United Nations Security Council chamber in New York. 

There is always the illusion that military spending is for security, when it appears to be more for profit. The entire Global military industry is ‘hard-wired for corruption’. ‘In 1997, I was told in Washington that a mid-nineties report by the CIA concluded’, he wrote in Grundrisse (1857), Karl Marx made the offhand, but accurate remark, ‘The impact of war is self-evident, since economically it is fought in order to bring about a profit’. The arms industry is the greatest, most profitable and most lawless business on earth.

Focus on the arms industry is sporadic, with the United States at the top of the list, having increased expenditure by 33% over 10 years (to $615 billion in 2018). The second biggest spender is China, at $270 billion. Russia is third, at $170 billion. But Russia’s budget is financed by the trade surplus and in terms of expenditure it is the smallest of the three, at $23 billion.

Total military expenditure (governmental and private) is over $2 trillion per year. The United States spends almost half this amount, at over $1 trillion. The arms industry is the second largest employer in the US, behind only the healthcare sector. The ‘defence’ industry is a large consumer of the national budget, accounting for 1/5 of the annual US budget. The Pentagon in Washington DC consumes over 1/10 of the US budget, as much as the entire Health budget.

Global military spending is over $2 trillion, with the United States by itself spending almost half this amount. Total US military expenditure (2016) was $615 billion. The US military budget is over $1 trillion, as our friends at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and others like it lonely in their work. Recent reports from SIPRI show that the volume of arms transfers – a measure of the arms industry’s global reach (including sales, imports, exports) – increased by 16% in 2016, to $84 billion. The United States, by itself, sells 36% of the world’s arms – with a focus on combat aircraft, short-range cruise missiles and ‘smart’ bombs.

BAE Systems ($22.9 billion) [UK]

Raytheon ($23.9 billion) [USA]

Boeing ($26.9 billion) [USA]

Lockheed Martin ($44.9 billion) [USA]

General Dynamics ($19.5 billion) [USA]

Airbus Group ($11.3 billion) [Europe]

Almaz-Antey ($8.6 billion) [Russia]

Leonardo ($8.9 billion) [Italy]

Thales ($9 billion) [France]

The arms industry in the US is closely linked to the political establishment. It is the major source of campaign funds for politicians in the US, with the defence industry donating over $640 million to political parties in 2016 alone.

Recent figures show the ten biggest arms dealers in the world (in terms of arms exports) are all US companies (BAE Systems, Raytheon, Boeing, General Dynamics, Lockheed Martin, General Electric, Northrop Grumman, Leidos, Huntington Ingalls Industries, Raytheon). The US is the biggest arms exporter in the world, accounting for 38% of global arms transfers.

Pakistan (US $15 billion) [2008-2017]

Egypt (US $13 billion) [2008-2017]

India (US $12 billion) [2008-2017]

Saudi Arabia (US $11 billion) [2008-2017]

United Arab Emirates (US $10 billion) [2008-2017]

The arms industry is not alone in this political embrace. The US has an arms industry of over $100 billion a year, but makes over $600 billion per year in arms sales. The US military budget is over $1 trillion, as our friends at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and others like it lonely in their work. Recent reports from SIPRI show that the volume of arms transfers – a measure of the arms industry’s global reach (including sales, imports, exports) – increased by 16% in 2016, to $84 billion. The United States, by itself, sells 36% of the world’s arms – with a focus on combat aircraft, short-range cruise missiles and ‘smart’ bombs.

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