**Profiteers of wars (Part-I)**

[Mir Adnan Aziz](https://dailytimes.com.pk/writer/mir-adnan-aziz/%22%20%5Co%20%22More%20Articles%20by%20Mir%20Adnan%20Aziz)

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“War is a racket. It is the only one in which profits are reckoned in dollars and the losses in lives. I spent most of my time as a high class muscle man for Big Business, a gangster for capitalism. Looking back on it, I feel that I could have given Al Capone a few hints. The best he could do was to operate his racket in three districts, I operated on three continents. War is a racket. It always has been”.

This is an excerpt from a 1935 treatise aptly captioned “War is a racket”. Not the work of a peace activist, the booklet was penned by Maj Gen Smedley Butler. He was the son of Thomas Butler, a Congressman for over three decades and a longtime chair of the House Naval Affairs Committee and grandson of Smedley Darlington, again a Republican congressman.

Gen Butler’s military service spanned over 34 years. He commanded the US Marine Corps and was one of the only two Marines who received two Medals of Honor for outstanding heroism. Earning 16 medals and seeing action all around the globe, he remains one of the most respected and decorated marines.

A historically hushed up fact remains that Gen Butler thwarted a bid to take-over the White House. The plan envisaged President Roosevelt being replaced by a government financed by corporate giants and crafted on the fascism of Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini.

Among the coup planners were, Robert Sterling Clark (Singer Sewing), IreneeduPont (duPont family and Remington Arms), Grayson Murphy (Goodyear Tire and Bethlehem Steel), Gerald MacGuire (prominent Wall Street broker), the Pew family (owners of Sun Oil) and Thomas Lamont, great-grandfather of Connecticut governor Ned Lamont.

The Iron Tempest bill was a staggering 8.9 billion dollars of American tax-payer money. The operation itself was branded “a total waste of resources” in the SIGAR review report

The owners of Heinz, Bird’s Eye, Maxwell House and representatives of Rockefeller, Mellon and Morgan families along with Prescott Bush, grandfather of future President George W Bush were also the key conspirators.

Prescott Bush was a founding member of the Union Banking Corporation (UBC). Millions of dollars worth of gold, steel and fuel were bought and shipped by UBC to Germany to help Hitler’s war machine. After the war, UBC remained the vault where Nazi’s stashed their looted wealth.

These financiers and coup-plotters invested heavily in Hitler’s Germany. Profiteers of war, they were the financial architects of Nazism and fully supported the Nazis during World War II. General Butler refused a key role in their plot against Roosevelt. He appeared before the McCormack-Dickstein congressional committee with details of the plan.

The coup attempt, known as the “Wall Street Putsch”, fizzled out due to Gen Butler’s expose; the investigations too ceased mysteriously. Already disgruntled with his personal experience as to the ulterior motives of American wars, the coup attempt cemented General Butler’s belief that US wars were atrocities perpetrated to feed its ravenous capitalists.

A much quoted line from Eisenhower’s 1961 farewell address warns “against the unwarranted influence of the Military Industrial Complex (MIC)”. An oxymoron, Eisenhower was the architect of NSC 5810/1 declaring “nuclear weapons as conventional ones; to use whenever required to achieve national objectives”. Eisenhower’s inaugural address, “forces of good and evil are massed and armed as rarely before in history…” remains the maxim for Washington’s interventions and occupations.

With the documented brutalities of Washington wars starting with the genocide of Native Americans, Gen Curtis LeMay had napalm bombs dropped on 67 Japanese cities and towns during the 2nd World War. The harrowing aftermath saw 60 percent of the bombed population perish. In a single three-hour sortie, his bombers dropped 1,665 tons of incendiary bombs on Tokyo. Afterwards, aircrews reported the stench of burnt human flesh permeating the airborne bombers.

Subsequently, atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. After the war, Gen LeMay said: “I suppose if I had lost the war, I would have been tried as a war criminal”. The war was won and LeMay, otherwise a war criminal, ended up with 37 medals and decorations. He was hailed a hero and dubbed “Father of Strategic Air Command”.

Hitler, for his committed atrocities, remains the most demonized person in history. The mere denial of the Holocaust is a punishable crime. US corporate giants supported Nazism. Despite subsequent occupations, wars on cooked up evidence, extrajudicial killings, torture, kidnapping, renditions and killing millions of innocent people the US claims the mantle of the world’s virtuous champion of human-rights. No premise could be so false, dichotomous and so cruel.

The tenures of the scions of Nazi abettor Prescott Bush, wrought death and destruction of harrowing proportions, especially in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq. The Iraqi occupation alone saw 1,033,000 Iraqis perish, with 1,556,156 wounded; unofficial figures are far higher. Congenital disease and birth deformations will haunt generations because of the use of depleted uranium munitions by the coalition forces. The murderous rampage in Afghanistan bore the same deadly results.

In May 1996, correspondent Lesley Stahl asked Madeleine Albright, then the US ambassador to the UN, about the death of half a million Iraqi children due to US sanctions. Stahl asked: “We have heard that half a million children have died. I mean, that is more children than died in Hiroshima. Is the price worth it”? Albright’s reply epitomized heartless brutality; she said: “I think that is a very hard choice, but the price, we think, the price is worth it”.

Dr Justin Frank is a known psychoanalyst and Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the George Washington University Medical Center School. His 2004 bestseller ‘Bush on the couch’ reduces the George Bush persona to “a man shaped by rage and fear and afflicted with megalomania”.

The September 11 attacks, reportedly costing 250,000 dollars, evoked the costliest response both in terms of money and human lives. George W Bush initiated wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and forays into Pakistan costing around 3 trillion dollars and still counting.

John Spoko, Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), issued a report titled “Corruption in conflict”. The report reveals that despite Pentagon commanders at the highest level knowing that the Afghanistan war was failing, they criminally cooked up “false rosy pronouncements while hiding unmistakable evidence that the war had become unwinnable”. SIGAR also cited total lack of cooperation by the DOD and Pentagon which severely “hindered its review”.

Apart from feeding the defense industry hydra, Washington wars breed other ‘opportunities’. Frank Lucas was a Harlem-based drug kingpin. In the 1970s, Blue Magic, his signature brand of heroin, was the East Coast rage. When Lucas was apprehended, it came to fore that Blue Magic was being transported by US military personnel on military planes from Vietnam. It was the largest heroin smuggling operation in American history.

When US led forces invaded Afghanistan in October 2001, the Taliban had eradicated poppy cultivation, a fact acknowledged by international monitoring agencies. However, Washington launched Iron Tempest, a campaign that saw F-22 stealth fighters costing more than 60,000 dollars per flying hour and B-52 bombers about 70,000 dollars per hour dropping tons of munitions including 500-pound bombs on ‘processing labs and poppy fields’ just to ratchet up the profits of war.

The Iron Tempest bill was a staggering 8.9 billion dollars of American tax-payer money. The operation itself was branded “a total waste of resources” in the SIGAR review report. This indictment is cemented by latest figures showing poppy cultivation on 328,000 hectares – 1,266 square miles in Afghanistan.

The year 2018 alone saw Afghanistan produce 6,400 tons of opium production accounting for 90 percent of the world’s total heroin. UNODC puts the world’s annual heroin market at 55 billion dollars. Converted into dollars Afghanistan’s 90 percent drug haul is a staggering (approx) 50 billion dollars; the wages of Washington’s atrocious wars.

*to be concluded*

*The writer can be reached at miradnanaziz@gmail.com*