

## A Culture of Violence

A country that glorifies wars and violence in the name of peace

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

Region: [USA](#)

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What do you call a country that glorifies wars and violence in the name of peace. One that's been at war every year in its history against one or more adversaries. It has the highest homicide rate of all western nations and a passion for owning guns, yet the two seem oddly unconnected. Violent films are some of its most popular, and similar video games crowd out the simpler, more innocent street play of generations earlier. Prescription and illicit drug use is out of control as well when tobacco, alcohol and other legal ones are included.

It get's worse. It's society is called a "rape culture" with data showing:

- one-fourth of its adult women victims of forcible rape sometime in their lives, often by someone they know, including family members;
- one-third of them are victims of sexual abuse by a husband or boyfriend;
- 30% of people in the country say they know a woman who's been physically abused by her husband or boyfriend in the past year;
- one in four of its women report being sexually molested in childhood, usually repeatedly over extended periods by a family member or other close relative;
- its women overall experience extreme levels of violence; an astonishing 75% of them are victims of some form of it in their lifetimes;
- domestic violence is their leading cause of injury and second leading cause of death;
- statistically, homes are their most dangerous place if men are in them as millions experience battering by husbands, male partners or fathers;
- for most women with children, there's no escape for lack of means and because male assailants pursue them causing greater harm;
- adding further injury, its society is often unsupportive; it affords women second class status, privileges and redress when they're abused so many suffer in silence fearing coming forward may cause more harm than help;
- its children are abused as well; millions suffer serious neglect, physical mistreatment and/or sexual abuse; many get relief only through escape to dangerous streets; they end up alone, more vulnerable and at greater danger away than at home where there, too, families act more like strangers or predators forcing young kids to flee in the first place.

What country is it where things like these are normal and commonplace; where peace, tranquility and safety are illusions; where they're crowded out by foreign wars and violence at home in communities, neighborhoods, schools, throughout the media and in core families. What kind of country glorifies mass killing, assaults and abuse; one that looks down on pacifist non-violence as sissy or unpatriotic, yet claims to be peace loving. It's not in the third world, under dictatorship or controlled by religious extremists. It's the "land of the free and home of the brave, America the Beautiful" where human rights, civil liberties, common dignity and personal safety are more illusion than fact. More on this below.

### War As "the Ultimate Economic Shock Therapy"

Mahdi Nazemroaya writes in his August 29 "War and the 'New World Order' " article on Global Research.ca that war is "the ultimate (and most effective) economic shock therapy (that can) change societies and reshape nations," and that America today is embarked on achieving a long-standing vision for "global ascendancy" and supremacy. For the Trilateral Commission of "powerful" US, EU and Japanese "elites," its operative 1973 founding goal was a "New International Economic Order." For George HW Bush it became the "New World Order," and for GW Bush a permanent state of war for global hegemony.

Nazemroaya writes America's "foreign policy is based on economic interests" with military might used to enforce them. He states various US administrations have pursued "An (unbroken) agenda of perpetual warfare and violence (for) global domination through economic means." George Bush's current "war on terrorism" in the Middle East and Central Asia are just "stepping stones" toward that "global order" unipolar Pax Americana vision under which no nation is exempt.

It's nearly always been this way in a nation addicted to war and a culture of violence that's as commonplace at home as in foreign conflicts. It's in our DNA, our schools and reinforced through the media with seductive symbols and slogans glorifying wars for peace, their warriors, and righteousness of waging them. They're packaged as liberating ones, promoting democracy, and spreading the benefits of western civilization.

We're taught our essential goodness and what Edward Herman calls our status as an "indispensable state" that lets us do what no other nation may - wage perpetual wars for an elusive peace in the name of freedom and justice for all we preach but don't practice. We manipulate false notions of exceptionalism and moral superiority giving us the right to spread our ways to others while hiding our darker imperial side delivered through the barrel of a gun. It shames the notion of a "government of the people, by the people, for the people."

### Expansionism and Militarism: An American Tradition

Expansionism has always been our way and militarism our method. It's been since winning the West meant taking it from the millions there thousands of years earlier. No matter. "Manifest Destiny" meant a divine right for settlers only to enjoy the nation's "spacious skies....amber waves of grain....and purple mountain majesties....from sea to shining sea." Others already there had to go, and mass slaughter was the method.

Our forefathers loathed Native Indians, and George Washington showed it in his language. He called them "red savages," compared them to wolves and "beasts of prey," and aimed to exterminate the Onieda people who aided him in his darkest hours at Valley Forge. He also

dispatched General John Sullivan and 5000 troops against the noncombatant Onondaga people with orders to destroy their villages, homes, fields, food supplies, cattle herds, orchards and then annihilate them and seize their land.

Hitler modeled his "Final Solution" on the "American Holocaust." He targeted Untermenschen (subhumans) and Slavs he called "redskins." We know what happened. Raphael Lemkin called it "genocide" as he first defined it in 1944 to mean:

"the destruction of a nation or of an ethnic group" that corresponds to other terms like "tyrannicide, homicide, infanticide, etc." Genocide "does not necessarily mean the....destruction of a nation, except when accomplished by mass killings....It is intended....to signify a coordinated plan (to destroy the) the essential foundations of the life of national groups" with intent to destroy them. Genocidal plans involve the disintegration of....political and social institutions, culture, language, national feelings, religion....economic existence, personal security, liberty, health, dignity, and" human lives.

Throughout our history, it's been our way, and since 1990, three US Presidents waged genocidal war in Iraq to erase the "cradle of civilization" and remake it in our own image. Two and a half million are dead and counting from it, the country is plagued by out-of-control violence, one-third of its people need emergency aid, millions go hungry, and a once prosperous nation is now a surreal lawless occupied wasteland with few or no essential services like electricity, clean water, medical care, fuel and most everything else needed for sustenance and survival. That's the ugly face of "genocide" in real time.

Native peoples were its earlier victim. Puritans saw them as "brutes, devils" and "devil-worshippers" in a godless, howling wilderness filled with evil spirits and "dangerous wild beasts." They were targeted for removal as settlers moved west. They cleansed the land through violence, bloodletting and 40 Native Indian wars from 1622 - 1900 to win the West, North and South. Wars became our national pastime, and we've waged them like sport ever since in an endless unbroken cycle.

We fought four imperial ones as well from 1689 to 1763 with England, France, Spain and Holland. Throughout the period, numerous settler outbreaks and insurrections arose that were also put down along with dozens of riots. Then there were the major wars we know by name. First was the American War of Independence (or Revolutionary War) from 1775 - 83. A minority of colonists supported it, little changed, and the outcome repackaged Crown rule under new management.

The so-called War of 1812 (to early 1815) was more about American expansionism than Brits impressing our seamen. "Manifest Destiny" then became a catch phrase when Jacksonian Democrats proclaimed it in 1845 as the nation's "destiny" for all the land "from sea to shining sea." It was packaged as a noble mission, propagated as ruling orthodoxy, and used to justify other acquisitions.

We then headed south of the border from 1846 - 1848 in what Mexicans called "la invasion estadounidense" that easily self-translates as the US invasion. It was our Mexican War that began after the annexation of Texas and ended with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. It forced Mexico to cede half its country to avoid losing it all in what's now Texas, California, Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, and parts of Wyoming and Utah. The country is still cursed the way former Mexican dictator, Porfirio Diaz, meant when he said: "Poor Mexico, so far from God, and so close to the United States." Today that holds for all nations with a rogue

superpower on the march and liberty and justice nowhere in sight.

Nor was it earlier when wars had similar aims as now with one exception. The Civil War from 1861 – 1865 was sort of a family squabble. Some squabble. Before it ended, it was our bloodiest ever. Three million were in it and over 600,000 died at a time the total population was 31 million, including 4 million slaves. That was double the battle deaths from WW II when 12 million fought from a population of 132 million, and if the same proportionate number had perished it would have been around 2.5 million.

Next came the Spanish-American War against Spain. In 1897, Theodore Roosevelt (as Assistant Secretary of the Navy and later 1906 Nobel Peace Prize laureate) wrote a friend...."I should welcome almost any war, for I think this country needs one," and the next year it began. We won, they lost and America had its coming out party on a world stage. A half century later, we control much of it, want the rest, and plan, as a birthright, to take it as disdainfully as our forefathers.

The war with Spain was quick and little more than a skirmish for three and a half months. It was our first offshore imperial foray netting us control of Cuba as a de facto colony for starters. Following the war, Congress passed the Platt Amendment in 1901. It granted us jurisdictional right to intervene freely in Cuban affairs and ceded Guantanamo Bay (as a coaling or naval station only) to the US in perpetuity (provided annual rent is paid) unless later terminated by mutual consent of both countries. It was just the beginning.

We also took the Philippines (slaughtering 200,000 of its people), Hawaii, Haiti, Guam, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Samoa, assorted other territories later and the Canal Zone from Colombia to fulfill Theodore Roosevelt's dream to link the Atlantic and Pacific with a canal across its isthmus.

Woodrow Wilson was reelected in 1916 on a campaign promise: "He Kept Us Out of War." He lied. He wanted war and established the Committee on Public Information under George Creel in 1917 to get it. It turned a pacifist nation into raging German-haters, America declared war in April, 1917 and was in it until it ended in November, 1918. This writer's dad fought in France and returned unharmed. The US empire was on a roll.

Today, mainstream historians perceive Wilson as a liberal Democrat. He was quite opposite, and his imperial record alone proves it. He occupied Haiti in 1915 beginning 20 hellish years for its people until Franklin Roosevelt withdraw US forces in 1934. He sent US troops to Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, and in 1914 invaded Mexico, occupying its main seaport city of Veracruz. It was a dress rehearsal for WW I and might have become a full-scale war had Wilson not pulled US forces out ahead of the greater conflict he aimed for in Europe.

The defining event of the 20th century was WW II from which the US emerged the only dominant nation left standing. We became the world's unchallengeable superpower as though we planned it that way, which we did. From it emerged our "imperial grand strategy" under the Truman Doctrine as well as a plan for US global military and economic dominance. The Cold War began with "containment" the policy. The US empire was on a roll and would never look back.

## US Imperialism Post-WW II

When the Cold War ended in 1991, George HW Bush's Defense Secretary Dick Cheney and

undersecretary Paul Wolfowitz were tasked to shape a new strategy that emerged in 1992 as the Defense Planning Guidance or Wolfowitz Doctrine. It was so extreme, it was kept under wraps, but not for long. It was leaked to the New York Times causing uproar enough for the elder Bush to shelve it until the neoconservative think tank Project for a New American Century (PNAC) revived it in a document called "Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategies, Forces and Resources for a New Century." It was an imperial plan for global dominance for well into the future to be enforced with unchallengeable military power. It became the blueprint for the "war on terror" and all the hot ones planned to wage it.

WW II was more a beginning than an end to war. The US kept Korea and Vietnam divided and targeted independent-minded leaders. It was part of our imperial designs on East Asia that included containing Soviet Russia as well as China. It led us to incite civil wars in Korea and Vietnam expecting both times to prevail but were stalemated in one and lost the other.

North Korea's Fatherland Liberation War began June 25, 1950 when the DPRK retaliated in force following months of US influenced Republic of Korean (ROK) provocations. It ended in an uneasy cease-fire July 27, 1953 and is still unresolved to this day. The North and South are technically at war, the US refuses to negotiate an honorable peace, and 57 years later 37,000 American forces are in the South with no intention to leave.

Korea taught us nothing. Vietnam was next, and now we're embroiled in Iraq and Afghanistan with a potentially disastrous war looming against Iran. It proves Ben Franklin right that "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over, expecting different results." Adventurism in Vietnam began under Truman and Eisenhower supporting France. It expanded full-blown under Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon before ending in a humiliating final pullout from the US Saigon Embassy rooftop April 30, 1975.

The 1980s brought more conflict with Ronald Reagan's war against "international terrorism." He invaded tiny Grenada in 1983 against a left-leaning regime for a pro-western one we installed. Scorched earth proxy wars then upped the stakes in Central America, Afghanistan, Africa and the Middle East. We tread lightly nowhere, and these conflicts left hundreds of thousands dead and immiserated in the name of democracy, humanitarian intervention, and the benefits of western civilization by our method of choice - gun barrels blazing.

GHW Bush then followed with Panama his prey. He deposed its leader, then targeted Saddam for the only crime that mattered - disobeying the lord and master of the universe and its rules of imperial management, especially Rule No. 1: We're boss, and what we say goes.

The Gulf war followed with 12 crushing years of sanctions its legacy. They left 1.5 million Iraqis dead and the living devastated. The current cycle of permanent wars began post-9/11 in October, 2001. First came the Taliban with Iraq ahead as the prime target of choice. It's huge oil reserves made it the most sought after real estate on earth with a plan to seize them simple at its core - a bold new experiment to erase a nation and create a new one by invasion, occupation and reconstruction for pillage. It would transform Iraq into a fully privatized free market paradise with blank check public funding for profit but none for Iraqis for essential needs, a sustainable economy or critical local infrastructure.

It's been a disaster with the toll on Iraqis horrific - an inferno of uncontrolled violence throughout the country with new British O.R.B. independent polling data estimating 1.2



million Iraqi deaths since March, 2003 on top of the 1.5 million others since 1990. The war is now longer in duration than WWs I or II and will likely exceed the latter one in inflation-adjusted cost before it ends. It's not in sight thanks to a complicit Democrat-led Congress that's long on theater but short on action it can take but won't. Allied with the administration, it flaunts public demands to end the war, bring home the troops, and will shortly accede to another Bush supplemental request for billions more in funding.

Public sentiment might be stronger if Jeff Nygaard's June, 2007 Z Magazine article titled "The Secret Air Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan" got wider play, so here's hoping this article gives it some. He explained US Central Command Air Forces (CENTAF) posts its daily "airpower summaries" online that makes for horrifying reading "aside (from) the blatant propaganda." Nygaard explained "relentless" air attacks against Iran and Afghanistan have gone on for years - on average 75 - 100 each day against both countries. It's a huge unreported story in the dominant media. The death toll is unknown, he says, "but a reasonable estimate" is between 100,000 - 150,000 in Iraq alone, and it's anyone's guess in Afghanistan. That's on top of all other war-related deaths estimated in both countries.

Further, these attacks exclude "guided missiles and unguided rockets fired....cannon rounds (and) munitions used by some Marine Corps and other 'coalition' aircraft or any of the Army's helicopter gunships (plus) munitions used by the armed helicopters of the many 'private (mercenary hired gun) security contractors' flying their own missions in Iraq." If the true human toll were known, it might be shockingly above the most gruesome current estimates and growing daily.

The public has a right to know this, and Congress is obligated to find out, tell them, cut off all funding and end two illegal wars of aggression. Instead, Democrats and Republicans back a further administration aggression against Iran in spite of silenced high level opposition to it. It may come from two large nuclear-armed US carrier strike groups conducting provocative exercises near Iranian waters in the Persian Gulf and Eastern Mediterranean.

Washington makes no secret it wants regime change in Iran, and time is running out for the Bush administration to get it. For months, covert black operations have been ongoing inside the country. It's aimed to incite internal ethnic and political opposition, and CIA operatives have also been sending Baluchi tribal warriors from neighboring Pakistan on terror raids into neighboring Iranian areas. Now 350 British forces have been provocatively sent from Basra to the volatile Iranian border, and the Pentagon announced it's building a US base and fortified checkpoints nearby as well. General Petraeus also implied to Congress he'll act inside Iranian territory to stop its "proxy war" against US Iraqi forces. In the meantime, Iran claims Washington backs Israeli-trained Kurdish Party for Free Life (PJAK) as well as Arab, Azeri and Baluchi incursions inside their territory to undermine its leadership, provoke a response, and provide cover for a US attack.

Without a touch of irony, US Ambassador Ryan Crocker and Iranian Ambassador Hassan Kazemi Qumi held four hours of face-to-face talks in Baghdad in May that was the first official bilateral meeting between the countries in almost three decades. It amounted to nothing more than the usual US duplicity that pointed to what's now happening and likely to escalate. Earlier, George Bush demanded and will soon get harsher US-imposed sanctions through the Iran Counter-Proliferation Act of 2007 that's designed to strangle the country economically. He earlier signed off on a commitment of economic destabilization through media-driven propaganda, now heightened, as well as manipulation of Iran's currency and international transactions. That, in turn, just prompted Tehran in response to demand

foreign energy companies do business in euros and yen.

So far, it's anyone's guess what's ahead with war a real possibility. The Bush administration is pounding Iran with menacing claims of meddling in Iraq and covertly advancing a nuclear weapons program despite having no proof of either. Whatever's planned could be devastating to the region (and world economy if oil shipments are disrupted), and the kinds of options being considered may cause dire unintended consequences if the worst of them involving nuclear weapons are used.

Bill Clinton's 1990s Balkan wars took their toll earlier at a time most people shamefully bought the US-led NATO propaganda of a good war against a demonized enemy and a well-intentioned intervention to remove him. It divided and destroyed a country under the guise of humanitarian intervention that provided cover for naked imperialism. Most observers on the left got it wrong and still don't know NATO (meaning the US) committed illegal aggression to expand into Central and Eastern Europe.

The Balkan wars kept predatory capitalism on a roll for more new markets, resources and cheap exploitable labor by the same ugly methods of choice - wars, subversion or coercion with "uncooperative" leaders like Slobodan Milosevic playing fall guy. He ended up abducted to the Hague and hung out to dry by the ICTY US-run kangaroo court that silenced him (like Saddam in Baghdad) so his secrets went to the grave with him.

So much for democracy in a nation stained by a near-unblemished record of illegal aggression throughout its history and in every post-WW II conflict fought. The only exception was the so-called 1991 Gulf war. It was authorized, as required, by the Security Council but only through bribes and coercion. The US public opposed it until a lot of Kuwaiti government PR massaging turned it around, and the rest is history.

### The Harmful Effects of Imperialism at Home

The price at home has been high as well with democracy here just as fake as wherever we leave our imperial footprint. Ordinary Americans are the losers. Repressive laws and crumbling social services are their reward for patriotism. Then there's the military and what's diverted to fund it. Annual Pentagon budgets are soaring with the FY 2008 DOD one calling for an astonishing \$648.8 billion plus an additional \$147.5 billion war supplemental and around \$50 billion or more now requested. The final total will likely top out over \$850 billion with the usual pork factored in and Congress ready to authorize whatever more is needed.

Then come the 16 US spy agencies and their secret off-the-books budgets. CIA, NSA and the others get tens of billions more without accountability. The CIA is an especially out-of-control, rogue agency accountable only to the President. Post-WW II, it began intervening throughout the world covertly and overtly. No dirty trick is off the table, and CIA invented their fair share of them. It uses them spying, fomenting and supporting wars, deposing foreign heads of state, and now they're in play on US soil against American citizens. Noted academic and administration critic, Chalmers Johnson, calls the agency "the president's private army" serving in the same capacity as imperial Rome's praetorian guard.

The agency is secret and lawless, unaccountable to the public, Congress or the courts with intelligence gathering a sideline operation at most. Since it was created in 1947, but especially now, CIA has an appalling record of toppling democratically elected governments,

assassinating foreign heads of state and other key officials, propping up friendly dictators, and now snatching targeted individuals for “extraordinary rendition” to secret torture-prison hellholes from which many won’t emerge or ever get justice.

It takes lots of cover-up and myth-building to create the illusion America wants peace, is “beautiful,” and respects the law and rights of people everywhere. The truth is quite opposite abroad and at home where essential needs go unmet and violence is a way of life.

It recently showed up in the newly launched Global Peace Index’s (GPI) ranking of 121 nations. It was prepared by the Economist Intelligence Unit, an international panel of peace experts from peace institutes and think tanks, and the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Sydney, Australia. It aims to “highlight the relationship between Global Peace and Sustainability (stressing) unless we can achieve” a peaceful world, humanity’s major challenges won’t be solved. GPI ranked nations by their relative internal and external “peacefulness” using 24 indicators. They include its:

- military expenditures as a percent of GDP and number of armed service personnel per 100,000 population;
- number of external and internal wars including the estimated number of deaths from them externally and internally;
- relations with other countries;
- respect for human rights;
- potential for terrorist acts;
- number of homicides per 100,000 population including infanticide;
- level of violent crime;
- aggregate number of heavy weapons per 100,000 population and ease of access to small arms and light weapons;
- number of jailed population per 100,000 population; and
- number of internal security officers and police per 100,000 population.

The US was a shocking 96th in the overall rankings – to the naive and innocent, that is. Norway, New Zealand and Denmark scored best in that order while Iraq ranked lowest followed by Sudan and Israel, that should be a wake-up call for its supporters.

### Violence in America – A Way of Life at Home and Abroad

This article began with a snapshot account of our violent history and culture. So much is in our communities and homes that it’s easy selling foreign wars to people used to settling disputes confrontationally, not calmly. It may start with bloody noses in school yards or playgrounds. It’s then made to seem commonplace in films and on prime time TV where assaults, violent crime, murder and even torture are everyday forms of entertainment. Then there’s sports. The most popular ones involve contact, often brutal, with one played on ice once described as a fight with occasional hockey breaking out.



Television features sports of all kinds, the more violent the better. Studies show nearly every home has at least one TV set, and 54% of children have their own in their bedrooms. They spend 28 hours a week on average watching, double the time spent in school, so they learn more about life through the media than anywhere else. Before age 18, the average American child sees 200,000 acts of violence on TV including 16,000 murders, and studies show homicide rates doubled 10 – 15 years after television was introduced.

They also link the following potential adverse effects to excessive media exposure:

- increased violent behavior;
- impaired school performance;
- increased sexual activity and use of tobacco and alcohol; and
- decreased family communication among other negative influences unrelated to violence.

A National Television Violence Study showed two-thirds of children's programming had violence, three-fourths of it went unpunished, and most often victims weren't shown experiencing pain. Even more disturbing, the study identified nearly half the violence children see is in TV cartoons. They're most often portrayed in humor with victims hardly ever experiencing long-term consequences. There's more:

- Unsurprisingly, it's no different on the big screen as film studios produce entertainment for theater viewing and at home.
- There's a great, but unmeasurable, amount of different types of violence online, including pedophile cyber-seduction on unsuspecting, vulnerable children leading to sexual assaults.
- Studies show violent video games like Doom, Wolfenstein 3D and Mortal Kombat can increase aggressive thoughts, beliefs and behavior both in laboratory settings and real life. They're even worse than TV or films because they're interactive and engrossing. They get players to identify with aggressors since they act like them while playing. These games teach violence. Many young people play them often and parents allow it. It's no wonder they become aggressive and continue the same behavior later as adults for real.
- Music also teaches violence. The Parents Music Resource Center reports teenagers hear an estimated 10,500 hours of rock music between grades 7 and 12 alone or nearly as much time as they spend in school. Entertainment Monitor reported three-fourths of popular CDs sold in 1995 included profanity or lyrics about drugs, violence and sex with some popular rap artists' music glorifying guns, rape and murder.

With this as backdrop after 500 years of belligerency, it's no wonder violence in the country and attitudes toward it are out of control. The record includes harsh private and government homeland crackdowns against dissidents, labor, minorities, street protesters, rioters, ethnic or religious groups and others plus all the one-on-one confrontations as well. For centuries, violence was monstrous against our Native peoples and nearly exterminated them all. It was used against black slaves as well with whippings, other beatings, rapes, mutilations, forced family separations and even amputations as punishment for runaways. Post-slavery, the pattern continued, mostly in the South, under forced Jim Crow segregation that enforced white supremacy over blacks that played out violently for those "stepping out of line."

A snapshot of recent data on violent crimes provides more evidence. It comes from the Department of Justice (DOJ), other sources, and shows the following:

- 960,000 violent acts against a current or former spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend and up to three million women physically abused by their husband, male partner or boyfriend annually;
- in 2001, more than half a million American women (588,490) were victims of nonfatal violence committed by an intimate partner;
- intimate violence is mainly a crime against women accounting for 85% of these incidences;
- women are up to eight times more likely than men to be victimized by an intimate partner;
- in 2001, 20% of violent crimes against women were by intimate partners;
- up to 324,000 women experience intimate partner violence during pregnancy;
- women of all races are about equally vulnerable to intimate partner violence;
- women are up to 14 times more likely than men to report suffering severe physical assaults from an intimate partner;
- 20% of female high school students report being physically and/or sexually abused by a dating partner and 40% of 14 - 17 year old girls report knowing someone their age struck or beaten by a boyfriend;
- in a national survey of 6000 American families, 50% of the men who frequently assaulted their wives also abused their children;
- studies show up to 10 million children witness some form of domestic violence annually;
- over half a million women report being stalked annually by an intimate partner while 80% stalked by former husbands are physically assaulted and 30% sexually assaulted by that partner;
- the FBI divides violent crime into four categories: “murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.” It uses the International Association of Chiefs of Police Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program’s definition of violent crime as involving force or threat of force. The annual data show these crimes topped one million in 1975 and from the mid-1980s ranged from around 1.5 - 1.9 million annually;
- since 1975, annual violent crimes of murder and reported rape ranged from around 100,000 - 130,000;
- Every year over the past century, 10% or more of all crimes committed were violent ones; and
- More Americans killed other Americans at home than the total death toll from all foreign wars in our history combined.

Violence, of course, becomes ingrained in the culture. It leads to crackdowns against society's least "worthy" victims of state-sponsored repression. It made America the incarceration capital of the world with over 2.2 million in our homeland "gulag" prison system today, a greater number than in China with four times our population and a history of governments not known for gentleness toward those breaking its rules. Here 1000 new inmates weekly join others locked in cages, most for non-violent offenses. They're brutalized by prison guards and other inmates while there and become more likely to exact revenge on release for society's unjust treatment. Many, in fact, do and end up back in prison for longer sentences.

This kind of information and our national predilection for violence isn't taught in schools or explained in the media. Instead we accept the illusion of "American exceptionalism," moral superiority, and innate goodness in a nation chosen by the Almighty to lead the world. That's provided it's by rules made in Washington with people everywhere told accept them, or else. Going to war, we're told, is a last resort choice and one never taken lightly. It's to liberate the oppressed, bring democracy when we arrive, and target "national security" threats too great to ignore. It takes powerful propaganda persuasion convincing people to accept this, but it's made easier if they're already predisposed to violence and receptive to more of it.

Five centuries at home and abroad add up to potent conditioning, but the dangers were less threatening earlier than now. Today's super-weapons make older ones look like toys. They leave no margin of error, and if we slip up we'll endanger what Noam Chomsky calls "biology's only experiment with higher intelligence." Unless we confront the threat to our survival from foreign wars and a violent culture accustomed to them, we face what Albert Einstein and philosopher Bertrand Russell warned 50 years ago saying: "Shall we put an end to the human race, or shall mankind renounce war" and a culture of violence and live in peace because no other way is possible.

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