

# U.S. Army Claims to Be Full of Liars

By [David Swanson](#)

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“Lying to Ourselves: Dishonesty in the Army Profession” is the title of a new [paper](#) by Leonard Wong and Stephen Gerras of the U.S. Army’s Strategic Studies Institute. Its thesis: the U.S. Army is full of liars who habitually lie as part of a lying culture that has internalized and normalized lying to the point of unrecognizability.

Finally a claim from the Army I’m prepared to take seriously!

But the authors aren’t interested in the Army’s lying press releases or lying Congressional testimony or lying sound bites promoting each new war, predicting imminent success, and identifying each dead adult or child as an evildoer. In fact, it seems pretty clear that the authors are in fact lying to themselves about the nature of the Army’s lying.

To hear them tell it, the Army’s lying problem could be the same as in any other institution. They don’t compare the Army to any other institutions, except to say that their analysis applies to the whole U.S. military, and the implication is that other institutions do not have it so bad. But the root of the problem, as they see it, is impossible demands placed on members of the military. To meet the impossible demands, people lie. And this — not the mission of mass murder — makes them “ethically numb.”

Members of the Army, we’re told, engage in “ethical fading,” using euphemisms and obscure phrases to disguise the immorality of what they are doing — namely overstating the supplies shipped or understating their own weight or some other “ethical” matter, not burning families to death in their homes with million-dollar missiles.

All of this unethicalness, the authors maintain, can create hypocritical leaders who hide billions in the “Overseas Contingency Operations” slush fund or cover up sex scandals. Really? Immorality enters an institution of mass murder that routinely deceives the public and much of the government from the bottom up? Excessive demands on troops creates a culture of lying than infects the good generals at the top? Are you kidding me? No, of course you aren’t. You’re *lying to yourselves*.

Soldiers realize pretty quickly that they’re not benefitting the people of Iraq or Afghanistan or whatever country they’re terrorizing. They understand that the entire mission is a lie. They learn to lie about their own actions, to plant “drop weapons,” to invent justifications, to provide support for their commanders’ efforts to believe their own lies.

Matthew Hoh, a State Department whistleblower, said today: “The culture of lying that is endemic and systemic in the Army, as found by researchers with the Army War College, finds its expression in America’s pointless wars, a one trillion dollar-a-year, pork-filled and inauditable national security budget, chronic veteran suicides, an expanded and more

globally robust international terrorist movement, and untold suffering of millions of people and political chaos throughout the Greater Middle East perpetuated by our war policies.

“However, listening to our military leaders, and the politicians who adore and deify them rather than oversee them, America’s wars and its military have been a great patriotic success. This report is not a surprise for those of us who have worn the uniform, nor should it be surprising to those who have watched and paid attention with a modicum of critical and independent thought to our wars these past thirteen plus years. The wars are failures, but careers must prosper, budgets must increase and popular narratives and myths of American military success must endure, so the culture of lying becomes a necessity for our Army at a great physical, mental and moral cost to our Nation.”

In other words, [War Is A Lie](#).

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