

War and famine. Peace and milk. —Somali proverb

The “National Security and Transparency” Issue

“Conscience, if such we have, cannot allow us to ignore the poor either at home or abroad—to be less than concerned, less than generous. And it is thus, over time, that we will help to assure for others and for ourselves a better, more peaceful world.”

~John Kenneth Galbraith
(via Richard Holt, page 7)

Richard Kaufman:



A great amount of defense spending and overall national security policy is shrouded in secrecy, some of that warranted. But in a democracy, a high degree of transparency is necessary for appropriate oversight and accountability, to prevent corruption, and to avoid miscalculations about the potential uses of military power.

After 9/11, the Bush administration greatly increased secrecy in the name of national security, including doubling the number of classified documents, refusal to disclose the names of certain national security officials; refusal to comply with congressional requests for documents; and hiding many of the costs of the war off-budget.

Although the Obama administration’s secrecy policies have not been so sweeping nor arbitrary, at least some of the impulse to tighten security remains. Chelsea (formerly Bradley) Manning is serving a 15-year prison sentence for making public large numbers of intelligence materials. Edward Snowden remains in self-imposed exile to avoid prosecution for disclosing documents about our government’s domestic surveillance program—that is, its spying on Americans.

There have been some efforts by Obama to introduce greater transparency. Early in 2014, the president said that, for the intelligence community to be effective,

the trust of the American people must be maintained, and he promised to reform programs and procedures. Following on that, the director of national intelligence (DNI) released a report containing a number of ideas for developing a “transparency implementation plan.”

At about the same time, however, the Senate Intelligence Committee uncovered instances where intelligence officials who faced investigations for their roles in the abuse of prisoners were later promoted to higher office. The committee drafted legislation requiring intelligence agencies to report regularly the names of officials being promoted along with any information that would “suggest that the individual is unfit or unqualified.” The DNI succeeded in getting the committee to remove that language, presumably with the consent of the White House. Apparently holding intelligence officials accountable for their misdeeds is outside the bounds of the “principles of intelligence transparency.”

For all its shortcomings, the US does have probably the most transparent military spending policy of all nations. A highly detailed military spending budget is published annually, as are congressional hearings and floor debates of the House and Senate. Even so, there are gaps in US transparency, such as the lack of information about the full costs of war.

Other military spending problems that need to be addressed include the lack of completeness in budgetary reports; inadequate explanations for large cost overruns in weapons procurement; and the acquisition of weapons that are not necessary. Nevertheless, these problems are dwarfed by what takes place in many other countries where military spending reports are misleading or nonexistent, where corruption is rampant, where the press is highly restricted, and where parliaments do not have enough information or the political authority to oversee national security programs.

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PROGRAM

This issue is comprised of edited transcripts from a panel session held during the Allied Social Sciences Associations meetings in San Francisco, CA, January 3, 2016. Visit our website for links to video and complete transcripts of the panel. <http://epsusa.org/events/aea.htm>

Presenters:

Richard Kaufman is the vice chair of Economists for Peace and Security Board of Directors, and Director of Bethesda Research Institute, which he founded. He was formerly a staff economist and general counsel of the Joint Economic Committee of the US Congress. At the Joint Economic Committee he directed numerous investigations of the Pentagon and its spending and contracting practices.

Linda J. Bilmes is Daniel Patrick Moynihan Senior Lecturer in Public Policy, focusing on US budgeting and public administration. Bilmes served as Assistant Secretary and Chief Financial Officer of the US Department of Commerce under President Clinton. She currently serves on the US National Park System Advisory Board and the US Department of Labor Veterans Employment and Training Advisory Board as well as on several private and non-profit boards of directors, including EPS. She was co-author with Joseph Stiglitz of the New York Times bestseller "The Three Trillion Dollar War: The True Cost of the Iraq Conflict."

Ron Unz, theoretical physicist by training, serves as founder and chairman of UNZ.org, a content-archiving website providing free access to many hundreds of thousands of articles from prominent periodicals of the last hundred and fifty years. He was publisher of The American Conservative from 2006 to 2013, and previously served as chairman of Wall Street Analytics, Inc., a financial services software company. He holds undergraduate and graduate degrees from Harvard University, Cambridge University, and Stanford University, and is a past first-place winner in the Intel/Westinghouse Science Talent Search.

Richard P.F. Holt is an author currently editing the letters by John Kenneth Galbraith for Cambridge University Press, and writing a book about the political times and friendship of William F. Buckley, Jr. and J. Kenneth Galbraith. Two of his books, *The Changing Face of Economics* (University of Michigan 2004) and *Local Economic Development in the 21st Century: Quality of Life and Sustainability* (Routledge 2010), were named Choice Outstanding Academic Book Titles. He has published over sixty articles and book reviews in a variety of academic journals, along with serving on different editorial boards.

In the last 1950s and early 60s, **Daniel Ellsberg** served as a strategic analyst at the RAND Corporation; consultant to the Defense Department and the White House; Special Assistant to Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs); and at the US Embassy in Saigon. He returned to the RAND Corporation in 1967 to work on the top secret McNamara study of "US decision-making in Vietnam, 1945-68," known as the Pentagon Papers. In 1969, he gave the 7,000 page study to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee; in 1971 he gave it to the New York Times, the Washington Post and 17 other newspapers. His trial on 12 felony counts was dismissed in 1973 on grounds of governmental misconduct against him, which led to the convictions of several White House aides and figured in the impeachment proceedings against President Nixon. Ellsberg holds a PhD in Economics from Harvard and is the author of three books. He was awarded the 2006 Right Livelihood Award, known as the "Alternative Nobel Prize." He is a Senior Fellow of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation. Since the end of the Vietnam War, Ellsberg has been a lecturer, writer and activist on the dangers of the nuclear era, wrongful US interventions and the urgent need for patriotic whistleblowing. He is a trustee of EPS.

Linda Bilmes:



I'm very honored to have the opportunity to talk to you about a small corner of the overall issue of the tradeoff between secrecy and national security, fiscal transparency, of which we have not had enough during the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

The global push for transparency has led more than a hundred countries to enact right to information laws. The US has enacted a number of laws over the past two decades and is very much a leader in terms of nominal transparency concepts. Despite this, we've had no effective fiscal transparency in Iraq and Afghanistan. We still don't understand how much money has been spent or where it has been spent.

The absence of fiscal transparency matters; it's not possible to have real transparency in national security without fiscal transparency. The absence of fiscal transparency has led to profiteering, corruption, waste, poor provision for military veterans, and a widening gap between those who fought in the wars and the rest of us.

No one actually knows how much the US has spent in Iraq and Afghanistan to this day. Estimates range from about \$1.8 trillion to \$5.5 trillion. To quote the Congressional Research Service: "Even taking into account the known factors, such as operating tempo of the war, the size of the troop force, and the use of equipment and weapons, none of these factors appear to be enough to explain the size of and

continuation in increases in cost." And the GAO: "Neither the Defense Department nor Congress can reliably know how much the war is costing and details of how appropriated funds are being spent."

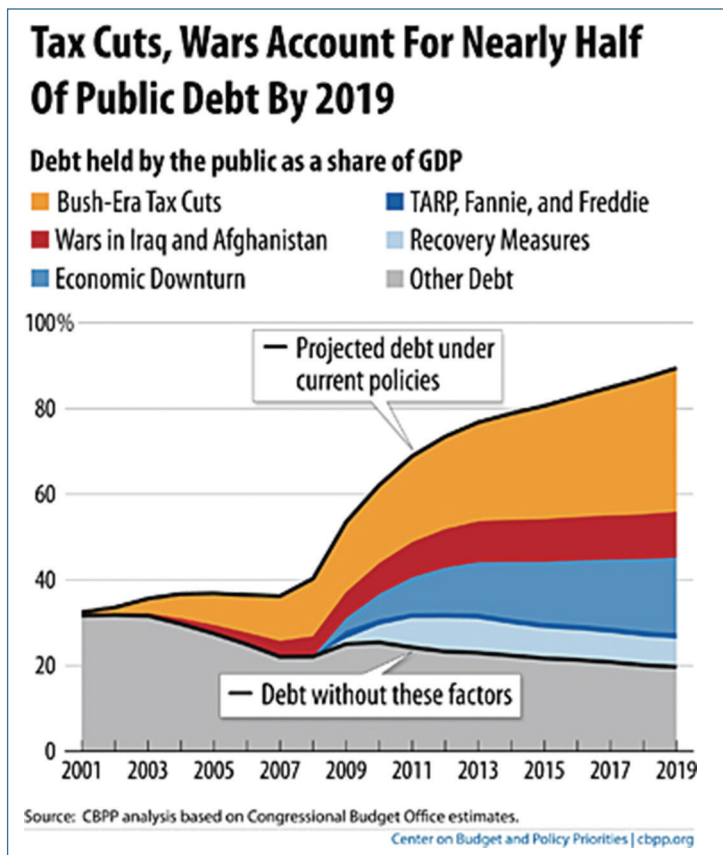
Joe Stiglitz and I attempted to figure this out in 2008 using a simple taxonomy for estimating the resources consumed in the war: direct costs such as military operations; plus indirect costs at the Pentagon, such as increased recruiting costs; as well as long-term costs, such as disability benefits for veterans. We filed more than 400 FOIA requests. We evaluated more than 600,000 individual veterans' disability claims, and we researched thousands of individual line items. Despite that, I would say that we were left with more questions than answers. To this day, we receive letters from military veterans and troops stationed in Afghanistan and elsewhere around the world mentioning other costs that we missed.

How did it happen that the costs of the longest and most expensive wars in US history have been effectively hidden from public view despite all of the nominal

improvements of the past half-century in transparency laws--FOIA and sunshine laws; the Federal Funding Accountability Law signed by President Bush in 2006; and the pledge by President Obama that his administration would be the most open in history? Three factors that reinforced each other were responsible:

First, the public really has not been engaged. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are the first major conflicts fought entirely by an all-volunteer force and private contractors. In addition, these are the first wars that have been paid for entirely by deficit spending; current taxpayers have not paid any of the costs. This has made the war costs effectively invisible to current citizens.

This low public engagement that results from not fighting and not paying enabled the second factor: a complete breakdown of normal budgetary process. The Defense Department, at least in theory, has a very open budget process. But we have paid for the wars almost entirely bypassing the regular budgetary



process, circumventing budget caps, enacting funding bills at different times of the year from regular budgets, and going around war and non-war appropriations. The wars have been funded entirely by emergency supplemental appropriations and contingency appropriations that have two salient features: One, neither Congress nor the public has to make any tradeoffs because these are not part of the regular budget caps; and secondly, supplemental appropriations do not require the same level of budget justification that regular budget submissions require, so the level of detail and scrutiny about what they're being spent on is much less rigorous.

[T]he war costs have been deferred to the next generation, adding trillions of dollars to the national debt...[and] there has been no national debate about who should shoulder the burden, or how the cost of this war should be paid for.

In addition, for most of the years since 2001, contractors outnumbered actual troops. The only way to get information that would be usable for accountability is in the details of the contracts. Unless contracts are written in such a way to provide that level of detail, they obscure the ability of the accountability agents to track where money has actually gone.

The third factor in hiding the wars' costs from view is the combination of the fact that the budget justification materials were not created in the first place; the fact that the budgets were comingled between regular, emergency, and supplemental

budget requests and buried in thousands of individual line items; and the fact that so much of the war was carried out through contractors. This created a situation in which our nominal accountability agents, such as the Congressional Budget Office, the inspector generals, the GAO, and so forth, were not able to do their jobs because they didn't have the inputs that would have enabled them to provide oversight. Oversight is an absolutely critical component in trying to balance the tradeoffs between national security and secrecy.

As a consequence of these three factors, the war costs have been deferred to the next generation, adding trillions of dollars to the national debt. Additionally, unlike previous wars, there has been no national debate about who should shoulder the burden, how the cost of this war should be paid for. And, since the costs have been buried, the costs that Congress are actually voting on have understated significantly the true costs of the war.

We have significantly underestimated the amount of money that will be required to treat veterans from these wars. In addition to raising the VA budget from \$50 billion to \$185 billion over the past decade, we also have at least one trillion dollars in accrued veterans' benefits that will come due in 30 or 40 years; but there's no provision anywhere to pay effectively for that additional entitlement program.

So finally, what does all this mean? I've tried to think deeply about how it is that we have had such a distortion of standard principal agent theory, where the agent-- in this case the executive and congressional branches of government--has created a war and hidden it from the view of the principal--the public. I've thought about whether it has something to do with fear, whether it has something to do with the way that we interact with the military today, whether it has mostly to do with the draft, whether it has more to do with the change within the military itself, where the military has effectively lost control of costs through its reliance on contractors. I put these out as discussion points; I hope this was thoughtful and provocative.

Ron Unz:



About a decade ago, during the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks and the Iraq War, I became the publisher of a small opinion magazine called *The American Conservative*, which opened its pages to a lot of prominent, even establishment people who were pushed out of the mainstream media for the doubts and the concerns they expressed over American military involvement in Iraq. During that process I became much more aware and involved in national security media reporting issues than I'd been before.

I've really been shocked at the degree of media silence, complacency, and outright cowardice on a whole range of national security and public policy issues.

My first inkling came in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, when, even though it was clear that there was no evidence that Saddam Hussein had been involved, a very strange and implausible case against Iraq was made that was not in the interests of American national security. Still, America went to war, and the cheerleading in large segments of the mainstream American media really shocked me. When you see elite media organs behaving in such a strange way in one case, it makes you really start to wonder whether the picture of reality you've formed over the decades is an accurate one.

As things moved on, I became aware of a few issues. I can't quite say these stories are true, but they seem plausible, and the people behind them seem credible. If only a fraction of these stories are true it really would be a very negative statement about the degree to which we live in a world where a lot of the things going on are things we're totally unaware of.

The first thing actually has nothing to do with national security policy. About a decade ago, there was a story in the media about Vioxx, a very popular pain-relieving drug that was marketed by Merck. Vioxx made billions of dollars for the company and was advertised very heavily on TV. It was suddenly withdrawn from the market because the FDA was about to come out with a study showing that Vioxx, aside from possibly being less effective than aspirin as a pain reliever, also tended to kill the people who took it—a serious side-effect. At least tens of thousands of Americans were killed over the years Vioxx was in circulation.

A huge lawsuit followed. For a week it was almost non-stop on the PBS *News Hour*, and there were a couple of front-page stories in *The New York Times*. But shortly it disappeared from the headlines. About six or eight months later, at the bottom of page A-23 in *The New York Times*, there were a couple of paragraphs about a mysterious drop in the American death rate. All the experts were very puzzled. The year that Vioxx was withdrawn from the market America saw its largest drop in fatalities in 50 years. Furthermore, the drop in fatalities occurred exactly among the age groups and the symptoms that Vioxx was involved in. If those figures are true, which obviously I can't say for certain, the number of people killed by Vioxx was probably well in the hundreds of thousands, rather than in the tens of thousands.

Furthermore, when I checked the records, the year Vioxx was introduced America saw its largest rise in the death rate in 30 or 40 years. So those are simply statistical facts; there may or may not be a correlation. At the least, tens of thousands of Americans were killed, possibly hundreds of thousands, and nobody in American society is aware of it. It's not that it was secret, but it didn't get a lot of media coverage. When something

like that happens you really have to wonder about the reliability of the picture that the American media portrays.

Another example concerns the Viet Nam POWs. In the '80s, I laughed at all the crazy fringe people, like Rambo and Ross Perot, who were so concerned with bringing them home. Well, based on what I've read in the last few years, as far as I can tell, all the stories were entirely true: There were very likely hundreds of American POWs left behind in Viet Nam, which certain leaders in the American government were totally aware of, and it was covered up.

When a story has appeared on the front pages of half the world's major newspapers, backed up by all this seemingly credible evidence, and it never gets into a single American newspaper, you really wonder what's going on.

When I first came across a link to this story I thought it was the craziest thing I'd ever heard. Then I noticed that the person who did the investigative reporting was Sydney Schanberg, who won a Pulitzer prize for *The Killing Fields*. He spent over a decade amassing very strong evidence that the stories were true, that there were POWs there for 15 to 20 years after the end of the Viet Nam War, and the government basically covered it up because it was a tremendous embarrassment.

I talked with two Republican congressmen who'd been on the Intelligence Committee. They confirmed it. Documents were found in the Soviet archives that confirmed the whole thing. Basically, in the aftermath of the Viet Nam War, America was negotiating a peace

treaty in Paris. The Vietnamese demanded \$3 billion in reparations in exchange for America having devastated their country. Nixon and Kissinger signed the agreement, but Congress never appropriated the \$3 billion. Hanoi had been suspicious about whether they'd ever actually get the money, so they kept half the prisoners behind to make sure that they would actually get the \$3 billion that America had agreed to pay them.

After the French Vietnamese War, the same thing happened. In other words, the Vietnamese said that they wouldn't return the French POWs unless France paid the reparation money. France gave them the money and got the POWs back.

Top people in the Nixon administration noticed that only about half of the known POWs were coming back. The chief of the General Staff said we had to start the bombing again unless they give us our people. Nixon overruled it because he needed the peace treaty. Obviously the intent was that, once things quieted down a little bit, Nixon would go to the top members of Congress, explain to them why the money had to be given to Hanoi, and the POWs would come back.

But then Nixon got tied up with Watergate. A few years went by, and now it would be a gigantic career-destroying scandal for all the leaders in the Nixon administration who were aware of what was going on. So he kept delaying it and delaying it.

Reagan firmly believed the POWs were still in Viet Nam. His administration made various efforts either to pay the money and get them back or possibly rescue them. And then, after a couple of decades, Viet Nam was sure that they'd never get their money, so probably they killed however many POWs were left.

Again, I'm not saying I'm 100 percent sure this is true; but there's massive evidence gathered by a celebrated journalist who specialized in Viet Nam, with confirmation from other many sources. So yeah, I'd say there's probably a 95-percent chance the story is really true. You can understand why it happened, the circumstances, the self-interest involved. America knew the POWs were there, deliberately made sure that none of them came back, lest the scandal destroy the

country. The government cover-up for all these years is utterly shocking.

Yet another example is the very bizarre case of Sibel Edmonds, a former FBI employee who was hired to translate some tapes in Turkish. She has sworn under oath that the tapes show that a top American government official was involved in making arrangements to sell nuclear weapons secrets from the US government to foreign spies and terrorists. At first I thought it was just another crazy Internet story, but eventually I started paying attention.

A former CIA officer, her FBI supervisor, and Senators Leahy and Grassley, who held related hearings, have all said she's a very reliable person and backed her up entirely; but none of this was ever reported in the American media. The story was on the front page of *The Times* of London and was picked up in newspapers all around the world. A tremendous story, a top American official selling nuclear weapons secrets, covered up by the government. When a story has appeared on the front pages of half the world's major newspapers, backed up by all this seemingly credible evidence, and it never gets into a single American newspaper, you really wonder what's going on.

There are about 20 things like this I could tell you. I'd say the odds range from 40 percent to 95 percent likelihood of being true. I'm sure there are many that I've never come across. Some of you may have seen recently a really outstanding film called *Spotlight*. It focuses on how *The Boston Globe* broke the scandal of Catholic priests molesting children. There had been rumors, hints, some prosecutions around Boston for decades. *The Globe* itself had actually published some small pieces. Then *The Globe* got a new publisher, less tied in with the influential local establishment, and it became one of the biggest international stories in the world. They ran 600 stories in the years that followed. The Catholic Church molestation scandal was a gigantic issue. But it only got out there because a few people were willing to write about it in the media. Otherwise it would be as if it didn't exist.

The problem is, when we assume that what we read in the American media is reliable and accurate and complete, our assumption might be wrong. I'm not sure which

of these things are true; but given how many of these stories are floating around and the evidence behind them, I think at least some of them are. And if even any of them are true, it really shows our media is much less reliable than we think it is.

Richard Holt:



For years Ken Galbraith had an ongoing dialogue with Joe Alsop, the American journalist who was a vocal supporter of America's involvement in Viet Nam. He realized that logic and facts were not going to work with Joe, so he turned to wit. In a letter to the editor of *The Boston Globe* written on November 6, 1969, Ken wrote: "Dear Sir, Your jolly old Joe now complains that I speak only to God, and so I don't understand American public opinion about the Viet Nam War. He's right, of course, but I only started doing it when I saw what happened to him from speaking only to generals. For myself, I wanted a better class of advice."

In another letter to *The Boston Globe* dated July 8, 1971, Ken defended Dan Ellsberg from a vicious attack by Joe Alsop:

Dear Sir,
I see that our gentle friend Joe wants Dan Ellsberg juggled for releasing all those papers. I hope as ever your readers will be tolerant with old Joe. He's been releasing military information true and contrived according to the needs and wishes of the generals for years and years and years, including all those

captured documents. He's had the next best thing to a monopoly in this line, and a nice thing too. Now comes a lousy amateur, Ellsberg, busting into his game. You wouldn't like it yourself.

For Galbraith, his criticism and concern with Joe Alsop and all those generals was that they were wrapped up in an ideology that led to one of the most dismal periods in American history. Official ideological vision of the 1960s was that the communist world was a political monolith which needed to be opposed at all costs. This Cold War vision, Galbraith argued, "owed much to the men of the establishment whose eminence in the American legal and business and academic pantheon substantially exceeded their information."

In both economics and foreign policy, Galbraith believed the United States was attempting to make decisions based on conventional wisdom, instead of the world as it is. The main problem with ideology, he believed, is that ignores historical change, which means it does not move in parallel with reality. His view was that the primary goal of a good liberal was to replace ideology with reality. As he put it, "Liberals need to be reminded that much that is called liberalism is and has been an elementary accommodation to historical change; while the problem of conservatives is being stuck in their visionary theorizing world view."

Galbraith strongly believed that the best way to combat the power structure that went along with ideology was by getting the truth out to the people. Give them the facts, he would say. This courage to speak truth to power is what Galbraith admired about Dan Ellsberg. In a draft letter to *The New York Times* written on June 17, 1971, Galbraith stated his outrage at how the American people were deceived by the American government over Viet Nam, and why the release of the Pentagon Papers was important for American democracy. Here are parts of the letter:

Dear Sir:
In 1964, with numerous others, I campaigned across the country for the Johnson-Humphrey ticket. I was

by then considerably concerned over our Viet Nam involvement. I spoke principally on the need for military restraint, of the irresponsibility of Senator Goldwater's talk about unleashing the air force. Johnson said to me he would not follow such a path of destruction. One now discovers that the plans for the bombing already existed and were awaiting an excuse that would, if necessary, be manufactured. Those of us who were making the speeches were patsies, serving usefully because of our ignorance. I do not reflect on such trickery with relish. I hope that all who were similarly involved have a like reaction.

But if one can contain his personal anger, there are further lessons. What we have learned is that a small group of professionally assured and intellectually myopic men have undertaken deliberately to mislead the Congress, the public, and the people of the world at large as to their intentions, and so far as might be possible, as to their actions. They would largely have escaped criticism if not for *The Times* and Ellsberg. Whatever the plea, the primary effect of the present court action is to protect what is still undisclosed of this mendacity and duplicity.

But this is not all. The further lesson is that we can no longer afford the secrecy which protects such conduct of our public affairs. For guess whom is such a secrecy

employed? It's not employed against the government of North Viet Nam. The papers are replete with references to our desire to make clear our intentions to that government, and the worse our intentions seem, the better. It was for protection from the Congress, our own people, and our friends that the secrecy was employed, as the most casual reading of the papers will make clear; and the thing it protected above all was the freedom to make catastrophic mistakes. For if the public had known that the administration was seeking a Gulf of Tonkin resolution in the spring of 1964, or had plans to bomb North Viet Nam that autumn, or intended putting a large number of troops with a combat mission in spring of 1965, there would have been a vigorous and bruising debate. Foreseeing and fearing such a debate, the administration might well have reconsidered the action; or in the wake of debate, it might have been forced to do so. And in the course of the debate the very great question, which as the papers show, none of the strategists, George Bull apart, ever thought to ask, Where does this policy lead us? It was a secrecy that made possible our silent and unhampered passage into the quagmire. Our safety lies, and lies exclusively, in making public decisions subject to the test of public debate; but cannot survive public debate as the experience in Viet Nam

shows we must not do.

So there you have it. A consequence of lack of transparency is having those that are wrapped up with their military ideology defending it by secrecy that can cause great harm to our country. It also leads to an arrogance with the implicit assumption that the American people cannot be trusted to debate what is in their interests.

In the 1980s, Galbraith wrote that the most frightening aspect of visionary theorizing is when you have two or more groups wanting to destroy each other over their vision. Galbraith saw both the United States and the former Soviet Union caught up in an ideological battle that was destructive to both and possibly the whole world. He mentioned the Kremlin's attempt to rescue the failed Marxist regime in Afghanistan, "a country as bitterly disastrous to intruders in the last 200 years as any in all the world."

He gave the examples of Indochina and Iran, where the destruction and hatred against both the former Soviet Union and the United States was based on their inability to see beyond their ideological struggles and come to grips with reality. It was a point that he made in 1961 to Kennedy, when he was sent to Viet Nam on a special mission for the president to find out what was going on. And in the private correspondence, which is just absolutely fascinating, Galbraith pointed out that in Viet Nam and what he called the Third World countries the difference between capitalism and socialism, the ideological question at that time, was profoundly irrelevant to the people living in those regions. But Galbraith



Panel L to R: Linda Bilmes, Daniel Ellsberg, Ron Unz, Richard Kaufman

argued that what remains vitally important for the people in these countries and regions is the desire for independence and survival, and that efforts for ideological indoctrination are deeply counterproductive.

Galbraith saw where ideological passion informed policy leading to another error: the creation of bureaucratic organizations and special interests to support that ideology. In the case of the United States, the organization was the military-industrial complex. The ideological rhetoric of politicians and special interests, large military bureaucracies, will do whatever they need to do to protect and sustain expenditures, even to the point of destroying each other with a nuclear exchange.

In a number of letters Galbraith expresses admiration for Dan Ellsberg, for his vocal opposition in the 1980s against the nuclear madness gripping the world, and Ellsberg's reaffirmation of an international peace movement as the human shield, as compared to Reagan's nuclear shield against what Galbraith called chaos and madness.

As Galbraith said,

We will not be protecting a way of life if there's no life. As between ashes of communism and ashes of capitalism not even the most ardent ideologist will be able to distinguish, among other reasons because he also will be dead. With such powerful entities to protect, ideologists will justify any type of behavior and will not tolerate those that question it. To keep its power it must remain in control and keep its secrets. Those that oppose must be destroyed. The consequence is that governments will pass laws to protect their bureaucracies and special interests for the sake of security to control behavior. In this case the control leads to annihilation of the human race.

Galbraith believed our only hope out of this madness is to have foreign policy guided by facts and transparency: "We're divided by ideology when we should be united by circumstance. And to resist controlling circumstance is to invite frustration, or in foreign policy, to risk destruction. Better—indeed essential—that we leave aside

labels to search for controlling theory and be guided by what seems to be practical, necessary, and above all, what is consistent with survival."

Well into his nineties, when George W. Bush took the United States to war against Iraq, Galbraith was still scolding us about foreign affairs and a lack of grasp on reality. And his words then might provide us with some insight for today, so let me end with them:

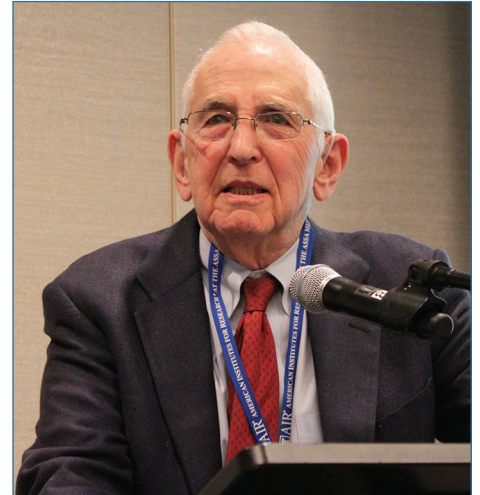
There's a larger issue here. In our time the economically fortunate countries live peacefully together. It is the poorer countries that are committed to conflict both internationally and at home. Modern industry, communications, travel, the arts, and entertainment all lead to a closer association between countries. For this reason the modern advanced economy is inherently transnational. Once capitalism was thought to be the source of international competition and conflict, and capitalists were thought the parents or progenitors of war. Now, no longer.

Instead it is the poor of the world to destroy each other. That is the tendency of people who have little for which to live. Religion, alas, also plays a part. If life in this world is deprived and painful, it can be believed that in the next life things will be better. This is the risk that the economically more favored and the rich are less inclined to run. The lesson is clear: The hope and reality of economic improvement is one of the pacifying influences of our time.

Accordingly, we in the fortunate countries must have strongly and effectively in mind those who live in the reverse of our well-being; and out of the resources and experience that so favor us we must extend help.

Conscience, if such we have, cannot allow us to ignore the poor either at home or abroad—to be less than concerned, less than generous. And it is thus, over time, that we will help to assure for others and for ourselves a better, more peaceful world.

Daniel Ellsberg:



Linda Bilmes discussed the emergency appropriations and lack of transparency, or, I would say, a deliberate obscuring and concealment of the costs of our current wars. We're being urged to continue and increase our involvement without knowing the future costs anymore than we've known the past costs.

I happened to be in on what were perhaps the beginning of such emergency appropriations, those for Viet Nam. In July of 1965, I was asked to craft a speech for Secretary McNamara to justify the president's decision to send 100,000 more troops to Viet Nam on top of the 70,000 that were already there. It was very clear that this next 100,000 was just an installment; the Joint Chiefs were saying that the need for troops in Viet Nam ultimately would be more like 500,000 or a million. Eventually, we did get up to 550,000, and virtually only because of the leaks in 1968 was the president stopped from adding another 206,000 to total 750,000.

I won't go into the problems I faced in explaining why we needed this second 100,000; but I did draft a speech, and it was okayed by Secretary of Defense McNamara, Secretary of State Rusk, and the National Security Advisor, McGeorge Bundy.

But it turned out that McNamara did not give that speech; rather the president himself announced the next installment of troops going over to Viet Nam. He chose to do it in the course of a press conference. The main focus of this press conference, we were rather surprised to observe, was Arthur

Goldbergs leaving the Supreme Court to become our representative to the UN.

When he came to the question of troops that were going to Viet Nam, the president announced that we were going to increase their number from 75,000 to 125,000 immediately. More would be sent if requested by Westmoreland. We all looked at each other. Fifty thousand? Had he changed the number?

I rushed down to the Joint Chiefs and asked, Has the president changed the next tranche? He said No, it's 100,000, but he announced 50,000 because he didn't want to give the Southern Democrats and Republicans an excuse to cut spending for the Great Society. McNamara strongly urged him to state what the expense was going to be for these extra troops, and that taxes should be raised under wartime measures; but the president forbade him to reveal to Congress the truth of what the costs were going to be.

With almost every request from then on, the president played the same game. Westmoreland would ask for 50,000 or 100,000, or in one case, in '67, 200,000 troops, and the president would announce that he was sending half of that. General Harold Johnson, the chief of staff of the army, was upset that the president was deceiving the public. He and the Joint Chiefs felt that the public, "should not be told that this was a penny-ante war, that it was going to be cheap; but that it was really going to be a very large and long war." They told the administration that the next small number of troops they were approving would not do the job. It could be done, but only with enough troops. With enough troops we would win.

They had no basis for saying that. They hadn't fought a war like this before; but they just felt, if the US really put all its measures into the war in Viet Nam, how could we not win against those pajama-clad savages over there? The Joint Chiefs knew we would not win with what the president was doing. It would lead to a stalemate at best..

So Gen. Johnson decided to resign. He said it wasn't right, it wasn't constitutional, actually, for the public to be misled to that extent. He called for his car to go to the White House. In the car he removed the four stars from each shoulder, and he held

them in his hand. At the White House, he asked the car to wait. He thought for a while, and then told the driver to go back to the Pentagon. Like everyone else who considered resigning during that period, he didn't do it. He said later that not resigning was the most shameful act of his life. But, you know, no one ever does.

Of course, as the corps got larger, the Great Society that the president had been protecting in '65 went down the toilet, as was absolutely predictable. Lyndon Johnson had no basis for believing that the war was not going to be extremely large by 1967, '68. Still, in order to get the war started and to insure an extra year of funding for the Great Society, he essentially misled the Congress and forewent the great debate that could and should have been taken place.

I've asked myself why I didn't resign. I knew the Tonkin Gulf was a lie, but I had just come into the job. To leave in literally the first week seemed peculiar. I came in to learn how the government worked, and I was learning something rather startling; but it wasn't something over which I was prepared to leave on the first day. But then why didn't I resign when the bombing started six months later? I knew the bombing would not win the war; it would only kill a lot of people. That's what my boss thought. That's what a lot of people thought. It was a disaster. I can't remember why I didn't resign then. It might have been some woman whom I was fond of, for whom I wanted to stay in Washington, something like that.

Anyway, I stayed. Six months later I wrote the speech. On a direct request from the Secretary of Defense McNamara, which seemed like orders from God, I helped find examples of terrorism and atrocities that would justify our bombing. It wasn't impossible to find those atrocities; they existed on both sides. I was against the bombing, but I did it. As I've said, that was the most shameful thing I ever did.

It did not occur to me to be a whistleblower in July 1965. I was a former marine company commander, and I volunteered to go to Viet Nam. I knew that winning the war was out of the question; but I would try to do better than we would otherwise, now that the president had committed us. I knew

the president was lying to the Congress. We all knew it. Of course I'm not the only one that didn't tell. Probably a thousand in the Pentagon knew that the Congress and the public had just been lied to.

Sometime after the Pentagon Papers came out, Ken Galbraith told me he had had some trepidation about their release. On the one hand he was quite thrilled that this stuff was made public, but he was worried because sooner or later his memos to President Kennedy were also going to come out. He said, "I'm not sure they will read as well as I remember them." But he was reassured when they did come out because, indeed, they were very good. I really revered Ken Galbraith. He was a man of wisdom on these matters and so often right. In the last two years of his life, I visited him three or four times. We had long talks in his study.

How is it, then, that the public has been so misled as to what they were getting into in Viet Nam, or Iraq, or Afghanistan, or Syria, or Yemen, or many other places that I could name? For the first time since the Cuban missile crisis 50 years ago there is a genuine possibility, in the Ukraine, of Russian and US troops shooting at each other. Each side is talking about its commitments-NATO commitments, Russian commitments in Eastern Ukraine. If Kiev renews its offensive against what they call rebels in Eastern Ukraine, Putin will almost certainly bring in troops. Then there will be heavy discussion of sending in NATO troops, including US troops, against them. Both sides have talked about the possibility of using nuclear weapons if necessary. They'd blow up the world over Ukraine.

The use of nuclear weapons was not much of a prospect in the earlier wars I mentioned, although the use of nuclear weapons that would not blow up the world was much more a matter of consideration than I knew at the time.

Why? As I said, we don't know. We don't have the Pentagon Papers from even the Nixon period in Viet Nam, let alone those concerning Afghanistan or Iraq. There is a documentary in which I figured called *The Most Dangerous Man in America*. It was nominated for an Academy Award. I was urged by the people who made it to go up with them onstage if it won the Oscar.

Had we won, I would have said that it is essential to have access to the Pentagon Papers concerning Iraq and Afghanistan right now, not 40 years from now.

We would not have had the Iraq War if there had been a Chelsea Manning or an Ed Snowden at the beginning. It would have been impossible to rationalize that war in the face of the truth-telling that could have been done. There were thousands of people in the Pentagon, the CIA, and the State Department who understood that this was going to be a disaster; but no one spoke. Chelsea Manning and Ed Snowden weren't at that level at that point, or they would have been willing, I believe, to go to prison, and we would not be facing the ongoing catastrophe for the people of Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere that we're facing now.

There are three movies currently on the screen about elephants in the room that were denied and lied about. *Spotlight* is one. It's a very important movie. Tens of thousands of priests, nuns, and bishops knew of the widespread, routine raping and sexual abuse of boys and girls. Not one whistleblower spoke outside the church. Many spoke to their bishops, and the bishops culpably bypassed them. Speaking out would have meant having to leave their order and probable excommunication.

Concussion is another of the films, although not quite as dramatic as *Spotlight*. It is about Dr. Omalu, who discovered the thousands of sub-concussion events suffered by NFL football players. He said they all have CTE (chronic traumatic encephalopathy), from which many will die or commit suicide. This was actively kept secret by the National Football League for many years.

The third film, *The Big Short*, is about the housing bubble, a fantastic, highly leveraged house of cards that almost brought down the capitalist system in this country and caused millions of people to be out of work. And was that totally unforeseeable? No, as you'll see from the movie; it was not.

What do these issues have in common? It's not just that they involve excessive secrecy and that these secrets were not kept from inadvertence, inertia, nor wastefulness. It's that these secrets were kept because certain people desperately

wanted them to remain secret and were willing to lie to any extent necessary to keep them secret.

Tom Paine said in *Common Sense* that "Nations should have no secrets because the secrets of courts"—meaning royal courts—, "like those of individuals, are ever their defects." We all know that there is some need for some secrecy. We need secrets in wartime or in the targeted surveillance of terrorists, for example. But how much secrecy is truly needed?

William F. Florence, who wrote most of the regulations for the Pentagon on classification, said that the fraction of documents that is properly classified—that needs to be secret in terms of national security—is about five percent. Now, five percent of a trillion pages is still a lot of secrets. He said that after three or four years only half of one percent needs to remain classified. After three or four years, 99.5 percent could safely be released.

So what about non-government secrets? Even without classification, nobody talked about Vioxx because their jobs depended on their not talking, and because corporate owners and managers were making billions of dollars in profit.

How about the Catholics? They weren't making billions. As a matter of fact, they were losing many tens of millions in lawsuits. Obviously, from the Church's point of view, there were other concerns such as authority and prestige. There were many conscientious and courageous nuns and priests for whom it wasn't worth it to reveal the abuse at the cost of their membership in the organization.

We could say the same in the other cases as well—Goldman Sachs and the others in the financial meltdown, for example. Same in the government. People act as if they can't conceive of taking an action that would expel them from their valued organization or compromise their status, their role as the president's man in the case of the national security apparatus, their careers, their children's education, no matter how many other lives might be affected. Just as I didn't think of doing it in July of 1965. We're herd animals, and our need to stay in a valued organization often outweighs the need to save other people's lives.

There's us and there are others, and most people are others. There are expanding levels of us-ness—Northerners, Jews, Americans, whatever—but however you define us, there's them. And if it's a question of the welfare of 'them,' which is for most people most everybody in the world, almost everybody will keep secrets that endanger the lives of others, no matter how many of them are at stake.

I've asked myself whether most humans have the ability to do otherwise. Humans in general don't act as though they do. I'd love to change that, to change it in such a way that people would entertain the option of telling a truth that they'd promised not to tell, the telling of which would subject them to serious, painful outcomes—ostracism, being called betrayers, being called traitors, losing their income. I'd like there to be the option to speak when keeping silent threatens the lives and welfare of hundreds of thousands, millions, tens of millions of people.

It's interesting that Galbraith was aware that I was anti-nuclear. Before I worked on Viet Nam, I had worked on nuclear war plans. The fact is, I don't believe that any president has ever been told what the full impact would be if he were to carry out any of the options in his general war plan. I drafted the options and a general war plan in 1961-62. We didn't know about nuclear winter then, but we've known about it for 30 years. I feel certain that Barack Obama has never been told what would happen if we carried out any of the major attack options. He has not been told of the smoke that would be wafted into the stratosphere for the next decade and that would kill nearly everyone. Probably one percent of humans would be left. All the other primates would be gone, as they don't have the adaptability we do.

In short, our human species has an ability for denial, for not looking at things that challenge us to do things we don't want to do. If there were a market for survival from climate change and nuclear war, I would advise going short on the human species, on America, on humans, on birds, plants, everything else. But then there'd be no one to get the payoff, and there'd be nothing to spend it on.

Can we possibly change this? I hope so.

Upcoming Events

- **June 15, 2016** The Future of Peace Summit will be held at The Ronald Reagan Building & International Trade Center in Washington, DC.
More information as it becomes available here:
<https://globalpeace.splashthat.com/>
- **June 16-17, 2016** Twentieth International Annual Conference on Economics and Security will be held at TED University, Ankara, Turkey.
More information as it becomes available here:
<http://ices2016.tedu.edu.tr/en/ices2016/>
- **June 20-22, 2016** The 16th Jan Tinbergen European Peace Science Conference, annual meeting of NEPS, will be held at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, Largo Gemelli 1, 20123 Milan.
More Information available here:
<http://www.europeanpeacescientists.org/jan.html>
- **June 20-July 4, 2016** The 3rd International Summer School in Sarajevo and Srebrenica, Learning from the past—Exploring the Role of Transitional Justice in Rebuilding Trust in a Post-conflict Society will be held at The International University of Sarajevo (IUS).
More information available here:
<http://lftp.ius.edu.ba/>
- **June 29-July 3, 2016** 91st Annual Conference: The Western Economics Association International will be held in Portland, Oregon.
More information available here:
<http://www.weai.org/AC2016b>
- **September 30-October 3, 2016** Disarm! For a Climate of Peace—Creating an Action Agenda IPB World Congress 2016 on Military and Social Spending will be held at Technische Universitat, Berlin, Germany.
More information available here:
<http://worldpeacecongress2016.com/>



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