

The rift in the US military deepens. The stakes are higher.

By Horace Campbell

Introduction

For over two hundred years the eugenic debates about the intelligence of blacks and their ability to fight raged within the circles of military planning in the United States. The historical record noted the military ‘planners viewed black military service as necessary in an emergency or as a way of reducing the number of whites who had to serve.’ After the wars against the peoples of Southeast Asia, the recognition of the exploitation of blacks in military services forced concessions in recruitment and training of officers. Over forty years ago two historians examined the history of blacks in the US military and concluded that, ‘the general pattern of black service from the colonial period to the 1970’s was the refusal by whites to use blacks unless it was perceived as an absolute necessity to victory, minimum concessions towards favorable treatment during a crisis, and a retreat to outright oppression thereafter.” The historical rendering on ‘Military Service and the Paradox of Loyalty, established that the record that at the time of the War in Vietnam in 1969 ‘there was open warfare between black and white troops.’¹ That was a period of a major rift in the US military.

In this commentary, I seek to grasp the new conservatism of the white supremacists in the society and their base within the military and the contracting system. Of the more than US\$1 trillion that is doled out to military contractors across the society, this commentary draws attention to the new elements in the private equity arena who are energetic supporters of eugenic ideas and policies. Highlighting the rise of the Private Equity firms involved in the most lucrative contracts from the Pentagon to build models and algorithms for the military and intelligence services, this intervention seeks to highlight how the intellectual activism of elements such as Peter Thiel, Elon Musk, Stephen Millier, Christopher Rufo and Curtis Yarvin (also known by the pen name Mencius Moldbug) have an impact on the research and planning for artificial intelligence and machine learning. The intellectual poverty and cultural arrogance of these forces now call for banning books and the introduction of the culture that stated that some humans are slated to serve other humans as slaves. Florida and Texas are now laboratories for Make America Great Again (MAGA) ideas while absorbing billions of contracting dollars from the military.

The contradictions between the techniques of forces and the relations of force in the United States have matured from the Vietnam era with a clear requirement for end the genocidal and racist ideas that invigorated the US military apparatus. Instead of a serious interrogation of the armaments culture, the liberal-multiculturalist canard of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) was promoted with Black officers seeking parity in the contracting bonanza. Twelve years before I had written of the rift in the military as that of the differences between the ***Rocks and the Crusaders***. By 2024 the rift is laid bare with Col Earl Matthews and Brigadier General William Walker becoming the face of black officers willing to call out unmitigated liars. The blowback against Earl Matthews demonstrated that the MAGA supporters in the military are even better networked in 2024 than in 2021.

The conclusion draws from the experiences of fragging in Vietnam to highlight how drumbeats for war strengthen the MAGA elements while sharpening the contradictions about the future of society.

Revisiting The Rocks and Crusaders

It was thirteen years ago when I wrote the article [US Military and Africom: Between the rocks and the crusaders - Black Workers for Justice](#)

In that commentary I had discussed the tensions between those officers of the US military establishment **who wanted to follow the Constitution and those whose zeal in opposing Islamic terrorists** placed them in a special category inside the US military apparatus. In that submission, I deployed the description of the Crusaders as offered by the journalist, Seymour Hersh. Written in 2011 during the Obama Administration, Seymour Hersh revealed that there is a faction of the US military known as "Crusaders." Hersh asserted that these Crusaders are bent on intensifying a war against Islam, and saw themselves as protectors of Christianity. According to the article, Hersh maintained that these neoconservative elements dominate the top echelons of the US military. [New Yorker's Hersh sparks anger, puzzlement with remarks on military 'crusaders' - The Washington Post](#)

The careers of Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, and their corporate allies in the Carlyle Group, General Dynamics, General Electric, Lockheed Martin, Northrup Grumman and Cerberus spawned a world-wide web of conventional politicians, intellectuals, and militarists. Crusaders did not only disdain other cultures and religions, but they also have little or no regard for people of color. Dick Cheney and his wife, Lynne Cheney, were culture warriors who opposed the democratization of the curriculum in the school system.

The peace movement had upended the recruitment policies and war planning after Vietnam. Recruiting black officers after the fragging in Vietnam increased black officers from about 2% in 1990 to 9% by 2020. Colin Powell was emblematic of the black officers who rose in the military after the war in Vietnam. It was Colin Powell, in his book, *My American Journey* who coined the formulation *Rocks* to refer to African Americans and anti-hegemonic forces in the military. In that article I had identified the Rocks as 'senior officers in the military who are non-whites.'

This is not to say that there were no nonwhites among the Crusaders.

A retired nonwhite officer such as Lt Col Allan West could be labelled as a Crusader, though he was never in the ranks of the top generals and benefactors of the revolving door between Wall Street, the oil companies and the military, industrial, financial, technology gravy train. The competing organizational platforms of the gravy train for that relationship between the military contractors and the alpha militarists can be found in the Association of the United States Army, Flag and General Officers' Network (TFGON) the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) and other such podiums for former General Officers

In the thirteen years since the writing of the article the Rocks and Crusaders, the strength of the conservative military forces has changed considerably. There are two factors that has deepened this change. The first is the closer alliance between Private Equity and the Pentagon. The second is the boldness of the white supremacists after the elections of 2016.

Private Equity and the Military

The Carlyle Group, Lockheed Martin, GE, and other firms linked to industrial capitalism represented the old links between private equity and the military. That old model of Private Equity has been overtaken by Silicon Valley linked Private equity ventures that connected to drones, satellites, artificial intelligence

in the Zero Trust Architecture. <https://dodcio.defense.gov/Portals/0/Documents/Library/DoD-ZTStrategy.pdf>

The servile media used the formulation “Military revolution” to refer to the companies that are emerging in this new era of the Pentagon, silicon valley and venture capital. [Through Ukraine, Tech Start-Ups Make Their Move Into the U.S. Defense Industry - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](#)

While industrial companies still trudge along with weapons systems such as the F-35 and the B21 raider bomber, the focus of the military forward planners is now on the digital infrastructure that is being reinforced from devices to applications and cloud-based storage utilizing zero trust architecture to ensure that critical information cannot be compromised. Robust evidence of the strength of the alliance between private equity, Silicon Valley and the Pentagon can be located in the weaponization of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and technology products in the service of the algorithms of oppression- algorithms that promote and highlight racist ideas and intensive militarization. The principal branches of the US military apparatus : Army, air force, navy, Marines, Coast Guard, Space Force along with the 18 intelligence agencies have been involved in transformation programs for the past thirty years that seek to harness the latest technologies of the era of big data. In particular, the military intelligence agencies have been a closed shop of white males closely linked to Silicon Valley.

Private technology companies like Google, Amazon and Facebook have been competing for contracts with the military but this competition has intensified in the era where the Army is taking steps to build out the infrastructure that will support Project Linchpin -- the service's first pipeline for artificial intelligence and machine learning. Progressive scholars have written extensively on how the foundational white supremacist assumptions have been incorporated to build models and algorithms.² Eugenic ideas about the inferiority of blacks now flow freely from the platforms of Elon Musk who has questioned whether it is safe to fly with black pilots. Costin Alamariu, Christopher Rufo and Peter Thiel are to be counted among the 21st century promotion of eugenics.

Palantir and Peter Thiel

One important player in this new terrain of venture capital, artificial intelligence and machine learning is the Silicon Vally AI organization, Palantir. RTX and Palantir are competing for management of the Project Linchpin. Palantir is at the top of the food chain of a new wave of technology firms wallowing in defense contracts that have surged in the past ten years (Microsoft, Google, Meta, Space X). In late December 2023, the **New York Times** published a detailed study of ‘New Spin on a Revolving Door: Pentagon Officials Turned Venture Capitalists’. The subtitle stated, “Retired officers and departing defense officials are flocking to investment firms that are pushing the government to provide more money to defense-technology startups. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/30/us/politics/pentagon-venture-capitalists.html?searchResultPosition=3>

The same edition carried details of companies and retired military officials.

[The Pentagon Road to Venture Capital - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](#). In part this reporting noted,

“The New York Times has identified at least two dozen venture capital, government contractor financing or private equity firms that are run by or have hired former Pentagon officials or

retired military officers, with most of the hires having taken place in the last five years. They have also hired people with national security experience at the White House or other agencies. The roster of people who have cycled out of government positions and into venture capital firms that are backing defense-oriented startups numbers at least 50.”

In this detailed investigative report, The ***New York Times*** spelt out the preeminent role of organizations such as Palantir. From the public sources, we have learnt that,

“Palantir Technologies is a public American company that specializes in big data analytics. Headquartered in Denver, Colorado, it was founded by Peter Thiel, Nathan Gettings, Joe Lonsdale, Stephen Cohen, and Alex Karp in 2003. The company's name is derived from The Lord of the Rings where the magical palantíri were "seeing-stones," described as indestructible balls of crystal used for communication and to see events in other parts of the world.

The company is known for three projects in particular: Palantir Gotham, Palantir Apollo, and Palantir Foundry. Palantir Gotham is used by counter-terrorism analysts at offices in the United States Intelligence Community (USIC) and United States Department of Defense.”

We also learnt that Palantir's first backer was the Central Intelligence Agency's venture capital arm In-Q-Tel. The company steadily grew and in 2015 was valued at \$20 billion, with Peter Thiel being the company's largest shareholder. Peter Thiel first emerged in the national psyche as one of the founders of PayPal, one of the first major investors in Facebook, gaining notoriety in driving Gawker Media into bankruptcy. Also in 2017, Thiel was one of the first outside investors in Clearview AI, a facial recognition technology startup that has raised concerns in the tech world and media for its risks of reinforcing white racist stereotypes. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) noted in their commentary, [How Face Recognition Fuels Racist Systems of Policing and Immigration — And Why Congress Must Act Now | ACLU](#)

“Face recognition technology is racist, from how it was built to how it is used. It’s been used by police departments to wrongfully arrest Black men, by ICE and CBP to target and track immigrant families, and by the FBI to surveil Black Lives Matter demonstrators exercising their First Amendment rights. Face recognition massively expands the government’s power to track our movements and target people based on their race, religion, political affiliation, or speech — and while everyone’s rights are at stake, Black and Brown people are harmed the most when this racist technology collides with our racist systems.”³

The Venture capitalists are pushing ahead despite well documented studies that verify that ‘detailed studies by researchers at MIT and Microsoft Research and at the US National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) identified persistent inaccuracies in algorithms that were designed to detect and/or identify faces when applied to people of color. An in depth study of the Times reporting was the fact that of the fifty top executives of these defense contractors dealing with “A New Age of Technology, Warfare, and Deterrence,’ there was one African American.

General Lloyd Austin (former Board Member of RTX) had opened the TENTH REAGAN NATIONAL DEFENSE FORUM at the Reagan Library where these contractors had gathered. Of those in attendance included members of Congress, civilian and military leadership of the Department of Defense, former officials, scholars, defense industry leaders, and members of the press. What is interesting from those

following to contracting gravy train is the picture of General Charles Flynn at this event. Charles Flynn, Commanding General, U.S. Army Pacific spoke at a session - RNDP Panel 4 regarding working with Allies to ensure our own defense. The TENTH REAGAN NATIONAL DEFENSE FORUM was a space that brought together old and new Crusaders.

There was no evidence that elements such as Dick Cheney were present at the Forum present, but Karl Rove, one of the architects of the skullduggery of the previous crusaders was present. In the list of previous Crusaders elements such as Dick Cheney was in the Bush Administration as the Vice President. Dick Cheney and his wife Lynne Cheney had been the leading champions of a brand of US conservatism that promoted culture wars. Lynne Cheney, a cultural conservative who headed the National Endowment for the Humanities from 1986 through 1992 had achieved notoriety in promoting the narrative that all Western civilization is in danger from the left. Dick Cheney, as one of the principal architects of the militarization of Silicon Valley along with Donald Rumsfeld, their Star Wars project, and the integration of disruptive technologies into military planning had deepened the relationships between Silicon Valley and the Pentagon. DARPA was the intermediary to funnel the funds to these new Pentagon contractors. Among the contractors was a conservative like Peter Thiel who took the culture wars against 'wokeness' to new heights.

One newspaper that called Thiel a 'don' noted that "as an undergraduate, he had founded the conservative Stanford Review and in 1995 Thiel co-authored [The Diversity Myth](#), a book sought to question the impact of multiculturalism and "political correctness" at California's higher education campuses." In the current era, the ideas of the Crusaders are anchored in the thinking and writings of obscure thinkers such as Curtis Guy Yarvin. For Curtis Yarvin, Steve Bannon and Peter Thiel the erasure of the real history of the United States must be replaced with the celebration of the doctrine of discovery, genocide, enslavement and oppression of women. These forces have elevated the teaching of the real history of the United States as 'woke' ideology. Governor Dos Santis of Florida has channeled these ideas to the point of imposing bans on books in the state of Florida. AS outlined in a media feature on Yarvin, along with putting blacks and Africans in their subservient places, 'Congress is reviled; the court system is sclerotic; federal bureaucracies are frustratingly outmoded and buggy. So bring on the enlightened (or variably enlightened) despot!' <https://www.thenation.com/article/politics/curtis-yarvin/>

Through the financial resources of Thiel, these elements are a strong base for the new Crusaders. In turn, Palantir working with the Pentagon had launched the National Security Innovation Capital (NSIC) program, which awarded prototype development contracts to early-stage startups building dual-use hardware. In 2023 Palantir Technologies announced that the company had received a \$250 million contract from the U.S. Army to research and develop artificial intelligence and machine learning tools for U.S. military applications. Private Equity and the Military were in bed together and the marriage was finally consummated when the future of AI was being contested. The elevation of former U.S. Treasury Secretary Larry Summers to the board of *Open AI* provided one indication of the future of militarism, private equity, and conservative ideals. The most dramatic military/politico intervention of the current Crusaders was manifest in the Insurrection that culminated in the attack on the Capitol, January 6, 2021.

The second strand of the New Crusaders

On January 6, 2021, Col. Earl Matthews had served as the executive officer for then-D.C. National Guard Commander Maj. Gen. William Walker. Walker, former Capitol Police Chief Steven Sund and D.C. Metropolitan Police Chief Robert Contee have all publicly accused Pentagon generals of refusing to authorize the deployment of soldiers to assist overwhelmed police during the neo fascist siege of the Capitol. President Donald Trump had spoken at the Ellipse on Jan. 6 moments before the siege, urging his supporters to march on the Capitol as Congress was certifying the results of November's presidential election.

There is now historical evidence to fully document how the planned coup d etat unfolded. A blow-by-blow account of what transpired on January 6 can still be found on the pages of leading mainstream press outlets such as the *New York Times*, NPR, CNN, the *Washington Post* and *Newsweek* etc. At the height of the insurrection these news outlets provided information on the collaboration of members of the armed forces in the insurrection. The House Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the United States Capitol released their final report on December 22, 2022.

<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GPO-J6-REPORT/pdf/GPO-J6-REPORT.pdf>.

Generals Piatt and Charles Flynn (brother of former General Michael Flynn) have been accused of being “absolute and unmitigated liars” for their mischaracterizations of the events of that day during the subsequent investigation. The accusation was put forth by Major General William J. Walker, who served as Commanding General of the District of Columbia National Guard on January 6th, and former D.C. National Guard official Colonel Earl Matthews. In consultation with other D.C. National Guard officers, they wrote a 36-page memo detailing the cover-up of what transpired on that historic day. ['Absolute liars': Ex-D.C. Guard official says generals lied to Congress about Jan. 6 - POLITICO](#) These two high-ranking officials were on the conference call mentioned above and maintain that Piatt and Flynn were directly responsible for delaying the deployment of the National Guard. The memo of Matthews and Walker went on to add that “the Pentagon inspector general’s November report on Army leadership’s response to the attack was ‘replete with factual inaccuracies’; and that the Army has created its own closely held revisionist document about the Capitol riot” that is pure propaganda aimed at protecting the top brass of the military.

This accusation was one of the most public announcements of the deep split in the US military apparatus.

By October 23, 2021, the Washington Post reported of the command center being operated at the Willard Hotel on January 5, 2021.

[Willard hotel was Trump team 'command center' for denying Biden presidency ahead of Jan. 6 - The Washington Post](#). Media reports drew attention to elements such as QAnon supporter and retired General Michael Flynn who posed in pictures with Trump political crony Roger Stone at the Willard Hotel on January 5.

QAnon can now be counted as a political platform for the new brand of crusaders. Brigadier General Anthony Tata and Michale Flynn are two ex generals who have made their mark as the new Crusaders. ⁴Many progressives had dismissed QAnon as a fringe factor in US politics but former Labor Secretary Robert Reich has written about billionaires such as Peter Thiel, Phil Ruffin, Charles Kushner, Robert “Woody” Johnson, and other billionaires who promoted neo conservative ideas. The *New York Times* in

its portrait of Peter Thiel brought to the forefront how the wealth of Thiel accelerated the shift of views once considered fringe to the mainstream — while making himself a new power broker on the right.

[Peter Thiel, the Right's Would-Be Kingmaker - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](https://www.nytimes.com)

Herin lay the conundrum of the Crusaders writ large.

Lynne Cheney was with Dick Cheney at the forefront of the those fighting to preserve western civilization thirty years ago. The Carlyle Group and military contractors such as Haliburton, Dyncorp sealed the relationship between the Crusaders and the Pentagon. Thiel as an ideological child of the culture wars of the 1980's as the new-fangled defense contractor led the alliance of billionaires who opposed Liz Cheney. Liz Cheney, the daughter of Lynne Cheney had been one of two Republicans on the US House Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack. Cheney had been adamant about investigating former President Donald Trump and other top GOP players' roles in the insurrection at the Capitol on January 6, 2021 and in a recent book warned that the United States was “sleepwalking into dictatorship.” Liz Cheney who had served as a congressperson from Wyoming lost her seat in the House of Representatives after the MAGA forces organized a massive turnout in the elections against her.” Liz Cheney belonged to the family of the Crusaders of twenty years ago had now morphed into the defenders of the Constitution.

Black Generals without backbone

Colin Powell had represented that wing of the military who had been called the Rocks. Colin Powell joined the ancestors as a disgraced human being, exposed for presenting lies to the United Nations to justify the US led invasion of Iraq in 2003. Powell rose to prominence in 1968 when, as a young major, he had investigated the My Lai massacre, a mass murder of hundreds of unarmed South Vietnamese. Frank Carlucci and Caspar Weinberger were old line Republicans who had recognized the need to have servile black officers in the army. Powell served well undermining self-determination projects especially in Haiti and Panama. He had developed his own doctrine of why the US should deploy overwhelming force as he did in collaboration with Cheney and Rumsfeld in the war against Iraq in 1990.

Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, John Bolton Stephen Hadley, Douglas Feith among others were the civilian end of the Crusaders whose group think pushed wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and killed tens of thousands. The Obama Administration inherited the military faction of the Crusaders. Seymour Hersh had identified General David Petraeus as a Crusader whose advise on Iraq deepened the US quagmire in Asia. Jack Keane who has been represented in the media as the mentor of David Petraeus continued to appear on Fox News long after Petraeus and General Stanley McChrystal grasped that the old alliances were now in jeopardy from elements of Wall Street and the military who were ruthless. [General \(Ret.\) John M. Keane | American Corporate Partners \(acp-usa.org\)](https://www.acp-usa.org)

The consummation of the links between private equity and Wall Street was in evidence when in 2013 Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Co. L.P (KKR) announced that Retired General David Petraeus would become Chairman of the newly created KKR Global Institute. The more extreme crusader such as the head of Blackwater (later Xe and Academi LLC), decamped to settle in West Asia among the ideological soulmates of the Crusaders. Crusades may be opposed to Islam, but opportunism had drove many former generals to relocate to Saudi Arabia and the United Aran Emirates to work for neo conservative monarchs. [U.S. fought to keep veterans' jobs with foreign governments secret - Washington Post](https://www.washingtonpost.com) Black

officers at all ranks noted the difference in treatment of David Petraeus or General Carter Ham with that of ‘Kip’ Ward.

Despite their differences, ex generals made a mockery of the POST GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT RESTRICTIONS (PGE). A Study by the General Administration Organization of the US government documented the nearly two thousand senior officers who did not fully comply with the guidelines Related to Former Employees Working for Defense Contractors. [1,700 Former Acquisition Officials Moved on to Defense Contractors, Report Finds | Military.com](#). The arrival of the Trump Administration in 2017 had empowered the Crusaders to the point where General Michael Flynn for a short while was named National security advisor for the first 22 days of the Trump administration. Anthony J. Tata performed the duties of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy from November 10, 2020, to January 15, 2021 in the heat of the insurrectionary planning. Prior to this appointment in November, in June 2020, President Trump had named Tata to the top policy post, but could not persuade the Senate Armed Services Committee to usher him to the floor for a vote. Tata drew fire for falsely saying that former President Barack Obama was a “terrorist leader” and a Muslim.

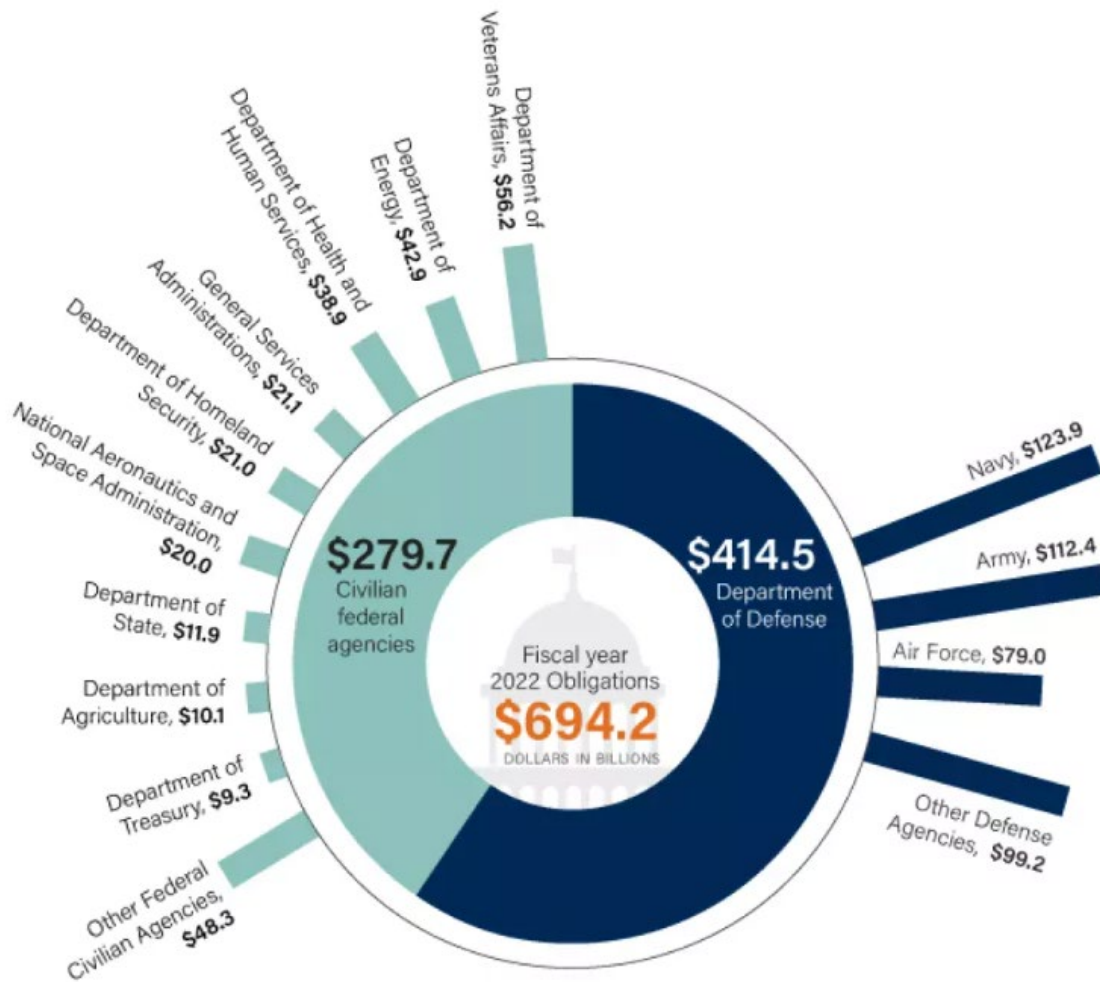
Liz Cheney, John Bolton and other Republican operatives supported the Republican Presidency of Donald Trump. Liz Cheney defended the war in Iraq, she had defended the use of “enhanced interrogation techniques” and refused to denounce those who promoted the conspiracy theory that Barack Obama had not been born in the United States. By the time Donald Trump ended his Presidency the old line defense contractors such as Lockheed Martin, RTX (formerly Raytheon Technologies) Northrup Grumman, AVIC, Boeing, General Dynamics and BAE systems faced stiff competition from the Silicon Valley contractors who provided Cloud services to Pentagon such as Joint Warfighting Cloud Capability (JWCC). One witnessed the amounts of money involved in the struggles between Microsoft, Google, Amazon and Oracle over who would get the contract for Joint Enterprise Defense Infrastructure (JEDI) project. Other billionaire conservatives such as Elon Musk of Space services space X – were big military contractors providing communications, cybersecurity, and information technology functions. Long standing contractors such Booz Allen Hamilton were not receiving the kind of contracts that were being handed out to those who were in the planning for revolutionized Warfighter System by the year 2025.

For the year 2019-2020 the GAO reported that the contractors had so much money available that they did not know how to spend the largesse. In FY 2019, the federal government spent more than \$586 billion on contracts, an increase of over \$20 billion from FY 2018. <https://blog.gao.gov/2020/05/26/a-snapshot-of-government-wide-contracting-for-fy-2019-infographic/>

By 2022 the amount available to contractors was \$694 billion.

“This increase is largely driven by spending on services for national defense. Our infographic shows more details on how federal contracting dollars are spent across the federal government—including which agencies obligated the most funds, what they bought, and whether the contracts were competed.”

WHICH AGENCIES WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MOST CONTRACT DOLLARS?



Source: Analysis of FY2022 FPDS-NG data.

• Comments on GAO's WatchBlog? Contact blog@gao.gov

[A Snapshot of Government-Wide Contracting for FY 2022 | U.S. GAO](#)

The annual reports from the Government Accounting office (GAO) offers one spotlight on the amount of money in the contracting world. Many citizens do not know that nearly 90 per cent of government functions are carried out by contractors. One can see that over 60 per cent of the 2022 contracting budget went to the Department of Defense, US 414.5 billion out of US 694.2 billion. These contracts in the Security and defense sector should include the funds in the Department of Energy for nuclear weapons. Republicans had since the 1980's dominated the contracting scheme. From the most lucrative

contracts for equipment and artificial intelligence, health services for veterans down to the simple task of providing food for the Defense Commissary Agency, Republican Operatives dominated the contracting gravy train.

For example, at a military base such as Fort Bragg in North Carolina the five counties surrounding the base were controlled by conservative Republicans who dominated the county governments and lived off the contracting business. It was not accidental that a busload of military and civilian conservatives had driven from North Carolina to Washington on January 6, 2021, with deadly outcomes for one intelligence officer. The military bases in Florida contribute over US \$70 billion to the state economy while in the counties around Tampa, home of MacDill Base, the Republicans are drawing up plans to dominate the politics of the counties to support the very conservative ideas of the current state government.

It is in the State of Texas where the conservatism lives off Federal largesse yet are pushing hardest against the Federal government. In 2022, Texas counted 622,000 direct and indirect employment from the military and over US\$114b to the economy. At the biggest military base, Fort Hood it is now well documented by Congressional reports that racism and sexual violence dominate the base and the communities around the base. As NPR reported, “Women at Fort Hood have a higher risk of being sexually assaulted than the average woman in the Army, according to a [RAND Corporation analysis](#). But the problem runs deeper than that particular base: Roughly [1 in 4 women](#) in the military have experienced sexual harassment, and 1 in 16 have experienced sexual assault.”

If there were markers of the end of the era of the old Crusaders of the George W. Bush era, then in 2023 failed impeachment trial of Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton exposed the strength of the MAGA elements. The senior Crusaders from Texas have been overtaken by an even more aggressive cadre who are seeking to review the ‘compact’ between the Federal government and states. Not by accident the 25 states that are the most conservative are among those receiving big military contracts and bases. The Republican forces around Trump boasted of their networks were more attuned to how the contracting system worked. It is reported how Donald Trump bragged about getting the old Post Office Building under the Obama Administration.

Different crusaders

If Seymour Hersh had identified Catholic conservatives as Crusaders in 2011, by 2020 after the elections a new wave of conservative forces had emerged in the body politic. Paramilitary formations such as the Proud Boys and Oath keepers had gained wide support within the armed forces. A study commissioned by the Pentagon in 2019 had reported that U.S. military personnel and veterans are “highly prized” recruits for supremacist groups, and leaders of those groups try to join the military themselves and get those already in their groups to enlist. Their goal is to obtain weapons and skills and to try to borrow the military’s bravado and cachet, the authors suggested.” The supremacists parroted ultraconservative, white nationalist, and other far-right ideologies that had been promoted by Lynne Cheney, Alan Bloom, Dinesh Desouza and right wing intellectuals. The difference between the Alan Bloom and Lynne Cheney generation was that a new crop of conservatives was willing to back up their ideas with military struggles. Hence the debacle of January 6, 2021.

'absolute and unmitigated liars'

The extent of the cleavages in the military over the new crusaders were on full display when the US Congress started to investigate the events of January 6, 2021. It is worth elaborating on the report from Politico on the rift in the armed forces. The reporting in Politico stated,

“Matthews’ memo, sent to the Jan. 6 select committee this month and obtained by POLITICO, includes detailed recollections of the insurrection response as it calls two Army generals — Gen. Charles Flynn, who served as deputy chief of staff for operations on Jan. 6, and Lt. Gen. Walter Piatt, the director of Army staff — “absolute and unmitigated liars” for their characterization of the events of that day. Matthews has never publicly discussed the chaos of the Capitol siege. On Jan. 6, Matthews was serving as the top attorney to Maj. Gen. William Walker, then commanding general of the D.C. National Guard. Matthews’ memo defends the Capitol attack response by Walker, who now serves as the House sergeant at arms, amplifying Walker’s previous congressional testimony about the hours long delay in the military’s order for the D.C. National Guard to deploy to the riot scene.”

[‘Absolute liars’: Ex-D.C. Guard official says generals lied to Congress about Jan. 6 - POLITICO](#)

“Matthews’ memo levels major accusations: that Flynn and Piatt lied to Congress about their response to pleas for the D.C. Guard to quickly be deployed on Jan. 6; that the Pentagon inspector general’s November report on Army leadership’s response to the attack was “replete with factual inaccuracies”; and that the Army has created its own closely held revisionist document about the Capitol riot.”

Such an open rift in the military had been present during the war in Vietnam, but not at the level of the dispute between generals. Prior to the charge that senior officers were liars, military and the media had been able to keep divisions in the military outside the public scrutiny. As far back as 1995, a study of the military for Congress has found that blacks are less likely to be promoted than their white counterparts, but it stopped short of attributing the difference to racism. Articles from the ***Program on Government Oversight (POGO)*** after the BLM uprisings in 2020 echoed the charges of the 1995 report about the white supremacist philosophies that dominated the military apparatus. One article entitled ‘racism in the ranks’ queried, *Why, in an active duty military made up of 1.3 million men and women, are [only two of its 41 four-star officers](#)—the highest rank—Black?* By the time these accusations were being made there were even great pressures on the military.

Helene Cooper from the ***New York Times*** had been channeling the frustrations of the black generals in her articles about racism in the US Military and wrote on May 25, 2020 that “African-Americans are highly visible in the military but almost invisible at the top. Seventy-five years after integration, the military's upper echelons remain the province of white men”. And so, what we've seen in the military, is that the segregation in the barracks, the segregation according to the forces and the public manifestation of this complaint is a question of the names of the confederate generals that formerly graced barracks such as Fort Bragg, Fort Hood and so forth.

Stirring the pot with DEI

On Feb. 5, one month after the January 6 insurrection, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin issued a memorandum that directed commanding officers and supervisors at all levels to “select a date within the next 60 days to conduct a one-day ‘stand down’” to address the challenge of right-wing extremism

in the military. Austin's office has issued a 13-page guide for commanders and senior civilians who would lead the stand down. It included talking points, procedures for small-group training and facilitated discussion, sample questions and answers, a series of case studies, a reading guide, and instructions for reporting the completion of training. The Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) operated out of Florida and there has been no report of the Pentagon standing up to the recent opposition to DEI in the state of Florida. Neither has the Pentagon investigated how some of its top contractors are at the forefront of the anti-D.E.I. movement. [‘America Is Under Attack’: Inside the Anti-D.E.I. Crusade - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](#). When the Pentagon ordered the stand down, a writer from the *Heritage Foundation* noted, the Defense Department “should instead focus its energy and resources on building a capable military posture that can counter the rise of authoritarian nations such as China and Russia.”

Stirring up white racism to fight against China.

The technical preparations for war against China in 2025 have been accompanied by equally robust racist depictions of China and their threat to the United States. More sophisticated versions of the Yellow Peril are being purveyed but these propaganda ventures to prepare for war with China has not taken root among black and brown soldiers. Among black veterans they are fond of quoting the statement popular during the war in Vietnam,

“Why should black folks fight a war against yellow folks so that white folks can keep a land they stole from red folks?”

These sentiments from the rank-and-file soldiers and sailors reinforce the complaints that were communicated to Helene Cooper that, ‘Black and Browns represent 43 percent of the military but only 9 per cent of the top military officers.’ And she may have added less than one per cent of the military contractors. This makeup of the military is currently being studied by organizations such as the Heritage Foundation that is actively planning **Project 2025** building for a ‘conservative victory through policy, personnel and training.’ Major media are now pontificating on what will happen to the military and US society “If Trump wins.” The message is clear that the next Trump administration will want a military comprised of Crusaders. [A Military Loyal to Trump - The Atlantic](#). These commentators looking for the future of the military under Donald Trump overlook how the military under Joe Biden is empowering the current companies that are influenced by Peter Thiel, Elon Musk and Curtis Yarvin.

Other journalists wrote, “The next US civil war is already here – we just refuse to see it.”

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jan/04/next-us-civil-war-already-here-we-refuse-to-see-it>

Scholarly articles and books were now all over the society predicting a Civil War in the USA. Barbara Walter in her book, *How Civil Wars Start: And How to Stop Them*, in 2022 noted,

“Modern civil wars aren’t fought on massive battlefields like Gettysburg or Antietam. They’re waged by decentralized militias using guerrilla tactics: bombings, assassinations, terrorism.

They typically aren’t started by the poor or by immigrants. They’re the work of once-dominant groups who are losing status and power — groups that believe the country is rightfully theirs and are willing to use whatever it takes (eroding Constitutional safeguards, weakening government institutions, deploying violence) to maintain their hold.”

As if the appointment of more black generals could blunt the power of the Crusaders, by the end of the first year of the Biden Administration there were two Blacks at the helm of the military establishment, Lloyd Austin as Secretary of Defense and Charles Q. Brown as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of staff. Their response to the rise of white supremacy in the military was to install Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives in the military. But these liberal-multiculturalist gestures simply exacerbated the tensions and contradictions with those elaborating on the white replacement theory. The contradictions between the techniques of force and the relations of force in the society had matured to a point where cosmetic changes in personnel could not placate either side. General William Walker who had been head of the DC National Guard at the time of the January 6 uprising retired and joined the board of advisors of SIMS Software.

General William Walker had refused to deploy the military in Washington DC in June 2020 when Donald Trump as President had marched into Lafayette Park. General Mark Milley, then Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff had walked with Trump and Attorney General, William Barr in that demonstration of white power. Later Milley apologized to the country for walking with Trump. In 2023, Donald Trump as the Republican candidate for the nomination of the Republican Party insinuated that America's Milley deserved to be put to death. So read the headline in the Atlantic magazine, Trump Floats the Idea of Executing Joint Chiefs Chairman Milley. [Trump Suggests That Mark Milley Deserves Execution - The Atlantic](#)

The Atlantic's publication of a profile of Milley, by the editor in chief Jeffrey Goldberg, had detailed the ways in which Milley attempted to protect the Constitution from Trump. General Mark Milley was not publicly identified with the Rocks or Crusaders in the previous fifteen years. In the aftermath of the January 6 insurrection, open warfare was being discussed in the media, in think tanks and on political platforms. Earl Matthews learnt that he could not present the kind of report that he had presented to Congress and remain as a soldier who would continue with promotion in the ranks. In December 2023, Col. Earl Matthews, accused Army officials of retaliating against him for exposing the role of pro-Trump generals in standing down National Guard troops as far-right militia forces and other fascists stormed the US Capitol on January 6, 2021. Col. Matthews accused "responsible management officials," or RMOs, associated with the US Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania of retaliating against him for refuting lying congressional testimony submitted by Lieutenant General Walter E. Piatt and General Charles A. Flynn to the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee in June 2021. This Whistleblower Reprisal Complaint is available.

https://whistlebloweraid.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/2023_1020_Matthews-WB-Complaint.pdf

Col Earl Matthews and Major General William Walker may not call themselves Rocks, but their effort to defend the constitution had been noted by the MAGA forces still in the military.

Can the rift in the military end peacefully?

Col Earl Matthews is at the center of the rift for now. The rift in the army has deepened. The Biden administration has intensified support for Wall Street and the military. Wars in Palestine and Ukraine strengthened the private equity and military elements in the USA. Many of the same private equity elements who profited from investing in China are now loud proponents of war against China by 2025. Racism and militarism at home propel militarism and racism abroad. The war against the people of

Palestine has complicated the relations between the Rocks and Crusaders. As Melvin Goodman noted in Counterpunch,

“Netanyahu and his war cabinet are making the key U.S. leaders, including Biden, Blinken, and Sullivan, look particularly weak as they make a public case for temporizing the military campaign against Hamas while Netanyahu and his defense minister, Yoav Gallant, emphasize that the heavy bombardment will continue for months. As long as the Biden administration does Israel’s bidding by blocking any attempt at a cease fire and by rushing delivery of military aid, there is no reason for Netanyahu to temper his policies.”

From the same pages of Counterpunch there are numerous accounts of how the Israeli military establishment manipulate the US military apparatus. The example of the tragedy of the USS Liberty is repeated. Black generals also know of the condescending attitudes of Israeli generals when dealing with blacks. Wars such as those in Palestine may be good business for the Crusaders and manufacturers of weapons but the outcomes of wars cannot be predetermined. War speeds up the processes of transformation and or regression. In another era when the rank-and-file blacks refused to follow the orders of the generals there was a form of dissent called fragging. (Fragging is the deliberate or attempted killing of a soldier, usually a superior, by a fellow soldier. U.S. military personnel coined the word during the Vietnam War, when such killings were most often committed or attempted with a fragmentation grenade to make it appear that the killing was accidental or during combat with the enemy). Military professionals as well as the Crusaders are familiar with the history of fragging. When William Walker refused to call out the National Guard in Washington on June 1, the MAGA forces understood that there was a need for decentralized militias using guerrilla tactics: bombings, assassinations, terrorism.

Will the elected government cease support for Crusaders who fund the militias? A military establishment is built for war. War is good for Wall Street and Private equity. But when the planning for war reaches the point where the relations of force are in contradictions with the techniques of force, only violence can resolve this contradiction. The US military faced these contradictions before in history. At that moment in history, it was the emancipatory ideals of Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass that provided intellectual leadership for the society. At the time of fragging and the war in Vietnam, it was the Civil Rights leaders who delegitimized the war in Vietnam. The words of Martin Luther King Jr in his speech, *Beyond Vietnam* still echoes across the peace and social justice movement in the USA. This movement surged again in the movement for Black Lives. The devaluation of lives in Palestine and in Africa is birthing another major antiwar force at the same time when MAGA is angling for power by whatever means necessary. The resolution will depend on the most ideologically and politically organized section of the US population. At this moment this organized section does not include the Rocks nor the Crusaders. Will the rank and file and junior ranks opposed to neo fascism break with those whose aspirations within the military do not go beyond being equal to those who serve on the most lucrative corporate boards?

It is now a moment to bring to the attention of the youths the ideas of Seymour Melman on the dismantling of the military and the conversion of the military, financial AI complex to place scientific research in the service of saving the planet earth.

Horace G. Campbell

¹ Mary Frances Berry and John W. Blassingame, *Long Memory: The Black Experience in America*, Oxford University Press, 1982, See Chapter 9

² Two important books that highlighted the linkages between white supremacy and AI are Safiya Noble's *Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism* and Ruha Benjamin's, *Race After Technology: Abolitionist Tools for the New Jim Code*.

³ ACLU, , [How Face Recognition Fuels Racist Systems of Policing and Immigration — And Why Congress Must Act Now | ACLU](#)

⁴ Will Sommer dealt with these new forces on the political landscape in the book, *Trust The Plan: The Rise Of QAnon And The Conspiracy That Unhinged America*. Harper, 2023