

“War is a racket...in which the profits are reckoned in dollars and the losses in lives.”
--Major General Smedley Butler

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If all you have is a hammer, then everything looks like a nail. The primary problem that must be addressed when discussing the Iraq War is the fact that we have a standing military that consumes half a trillion dollars every year. When we make matters of public defense a vessel for private gain then we effectively have vested interests in war as a business. When companies profit from military contracts then they are profiting from the loss of human life. Like the Roman Empire, the British Empire and the Soviet Union, countries that make war a business will constantly look for reasons to start a war that they can profit from. But the profits come at the highest price of all: the price of human suffering and death. There are companies that profit from every bullet fired, every bomb dropped and every soldier or civilian that dies.

When decorated military officers, like General Butler, come out and denounce the war they have actively served in, it is a sure sign that we are in this war for the wrong reasons. Slapping a bright yellow “Support the Troops” bumper sticker on the back of a car doesn’t do a thing for the young men and women who put their lives on the line so Exxon can make another couple million. Supporting the troops would mean sending them to battle to protect the people of America instead of the interests of a few wealthy military investors. Our armed forces deserve better than being used as pawns for commercial benefit. We, as responsible, intelligent citizens have a responsibility to bring the truth to light. We stopped fighting the War on Terror when we made Saddam Hussein’s oil fields a higher priority. We stopped fighting for our country when we started fighting for ourselves. War is meant to be an ugly necessity, not an enterprise that can be profited from.

Every country that has made war an industry (Rome, Soviet Union, and The British Empire) has suffered when their resources couldn’t keep up with their lust for war. So too will our nation fall if we put personal gain over public good. The fact of the matter is that 60 percent of Americans do not support the War in Iraq and most of the 40 percent that does has something to gain from it. How can we let a minority of the population steer the rest of us down a path littered with death and decay? There is nothing in this world more precious than human life and war is a racket that makes a practice of squandering our most valuable resource.