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[www.peaceactioncleveland.org](http://www.peaceactioncleveland.org)

# Cleveland Peace Action

## A Message to Our Members and Supporters

As winter approaches, the board of Cleveland Peace Action wishes all members and friends of peace and justice the warmest and happiest of holiday seasons. This past year has been a challenge for us as we've continued our education and advocacy work under the constraints of COVID-19 protocols. Nevertheless, we have enjoyed continued financial support from our members and friends like you. Thank you.

For more than forty years, Peace Action and its local affiliate Cleveland Peace Action have worked tirelessly to realize a world free from the tyranny of nuclear weapons. There remain more than 13,000 nuclear weapons in the world today, with the United States and Russia owning the lion's share. Our annual military budget has surpassed \$700 billion and continues to rise every year. With billions of dollars in unnecessary defense spending, there are critical health, education, and infrastructure needs that have gone un-addressed for decades. In Cleveland, activists from Cleveland Peace Action have worked hard to support human rights for the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza. We have also advocated an end to the U.S. policy of no-strings-attached annual aid to Israel while refusing to demand change in Israel's military occupation of the land of indigenous Palestinians.

As we continue our campaign against war and injustice into another calendar year, we again turn to you for your support. We have reduced our internal expenses, continuing as an all-volunteer organization. Nevertheless, our voice needs to be heard and our presence felt. We depend on you.

You can use the enclosed envelope to donate to Cleveland Peace Action Education Fund, a 501(c)3 organization, by mail. Donations are tax-deductible. Also, secure online donations can be made at [www.peaceactioncleveland.org](http://www.peaceactioncleveland.org).

As always, thank you for your support.

Mark Weber, President

*Peace Action is the country's largest grassroots peace and disarmament organization, with more than 100,000 members. Cleveland Peace Action is one of*

## “War, Peace, and Propaganda: U.S. in the Middle East” illustrates the causes and effects of U.S. interventionism

*By Carole Gilchrist*

Cleveland Peace Action hosted Oliver Boyd-Barrett, Professor Emeritus at Bowling Green University, Department of Journalism & Public Relations, on September 14, 2021. Dr. Boyd-Barrett is an expert in communications, media, and U.S. foreign policy, and spoke on the topic “War, Peace, and Propaganda: U.S. in the Middle East.” He defined how taxpayers, Congress and world leaders have been manipulated into supporting wars and occupations globally.

Dr. Boyd-Barrett first stated that he was really impressed by the mission statement and goals and objectives of Cleveland Peace Action. “I endorse it wholeheartedly,” he said.

He addressed U.S. involvement in the Middle East, Afghanistan, Syria, Libya, Iraq, and Iran and put it into a framework of U.S. interventionism in foreign policy and military policy. The history goes back before World War II. He said that U.S. interventionism “was not confined to the Third World, but the First World as well,” referring to U.S. post-war interference in both France and Italy to keep the European Communists under control and coup d’états in the First World among U.S. allies. Dr. Boyd-Barrett stated that there was an attempt to show this in the Netflix series, “The Crown” when a coup was staged against the Labor government of U.K. prime minister Harold Wilson (1968-1976). There was a coup in Greece, against the democratic leader in favor of a military junta that controlled Greece from 1967-1974, under the watch of U.S. intelligence and the CIA. There have been around 100 instances of U.S. or NATO interventions since the end of World War II, Dr. Boyd-Barrett stated.

**“U.S. [postwar] interventionism [in foreign policy and military policy] was not confined to the Third World.”**

**Dr. Oliver Boyd-Barrett**

Dr. Boyd-Barrett argued that **these interventions were so significant, that had they not occurred, the world would be significantly different.** Significant among them he mentioned the assassination/death by firing squad of Patrice Lumumba, first Prime Minister of the independent Democratic Republic of Congo, from its former status as a colony of Belgium. He also mentioned the overthrow of Sukarno, who led Indonesians in resisting Dutch re-colonization, founding an independent Indonesia declared 1945 until 1966, followed by the killing of over 500,000 leftist citizens of Indonesia. He also mentioned the ‘shoo-in’ of Saddam Hussein in 1980, which was within a few months of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, followed, conveniently for the U.S. foreign policy establishment, by Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Iran.

As we’ve recently mourned the 20th anniversary of the events of September 11, 2001, he said “we also must remember the significance of the Pinochet coup of September 11, 1973,” which some regard as the first major experiment of neoliberalism and the success of the Chicago School of Economics and all that implies.

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## U.S. Spending Priorities: Social Investment or Military Waste

By Elizabeth Kravanya

The B-2 Spirit bomber carries a cost of \$2.1 billion each; 21 were built. The F-35 stealth fighter's estimated cost is \$1.5 trillion over its lifetime<sup>1</sup>; it is still incomplete after 18 years of development. These are the symbols of wasteful military spending often cited to resist increasing the military budget. Wasteful as these weapons systems are, they pale in comparison to that cost of health insurance for the lifetime of our veterans; that figure is a quarter of the defense department annual budget. The military industrial complex employs millions of Americans, which partially explains why Congress continues to increase funding. Could we trade in the B-2 Spirit and the F-35 to reorient our priorities to create a more balanced society? Not since Jimmy Carter has any administration made any serious attempt to reel in military spending.

The budget appropriations for military spending 2020 total \$935.8 billion, which includes \$71.3 billion in Overseas Contingency Operations, a cost directly budgeted for foreign wars. As of 2001 the cost of the war on terror has exceeded \$2 trillion<sup>2</sup>. The proposed military spending bill in the Senate is \$778 billion; that is \$38 billion more than last year and \$24 billion higher than the amount requested by President Biden. As distressing as these figures are, the fact that the 2021 military budget includes \$71.3 billion in the OCO budget, *and we are not at war*, further demonstrates military waste.



America can change this. The Senate has an opportunity to reorient our society by passing the Build Back Better bill. *The cost of the Build Back Better plan, \$1.75 trillion over a ten-year time span, dwarfs the wasted spending for 365 variants of the F-35 since 1995. Build Back Better challenges the notion that the military-industrial complex must remain the bedrock of the American economy.* An investment of \$1.75 trillion over a ten-year span would mean historic investments in families, childcare, healthcare, housing, and fighting climate change. The social programs in the BBB bill would benefit all Americans working in the military-industrial complex and some of the plans would make it a more humanitarian force.

Funding to address climate change is already in the Pentagon budget. The U.S. military could transform from the world's worst polluter to an innovator in fighting climate change. Climate change and the global instability it fosters are real and fully recognized challenges to military planners. Build Back Better offers a proactive response to supplement the military plans as an investment in our future.

Ironically, unused military bases have been used to house immigrant children and Afghan refugees lately. Unused military bases were prevented from closure by Congressional action in 2013 but converting them into settlements with affordable housing could be permanent. Eventually the military will shed the cost of these bases as the built environment transitions to civilian communities.

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## What if there were no military? “A Bold Peace” tells Costa Rica’s story

By *Dena Magoulias*

On October 18, 2021, Cleveland Peace Action sponsored an online viewing party to watch the movie, “A Bold Peace.”

In 1948, Costa Rica dissolved its military. Its progressive president, Jose Figueres Ferrer, stated that “the army is a thing of the past. War is not normal in human life. Peace is normal.” He decided to spend the money instead on health care, education, and the environment.

Before this decision, Costa Rica had a low literacy rate; they now have 97.9 percent literacy. Costa Rica has universal health care, and their system is ranked above the United States health care system. Costa Rica has also taken steps to protect their natural resources and developed ecotourism.



Even when President Reagan tried to force Costa Rica to allow the U.S. to build bases to fight Nicaragua in the 1980s, Costa Rica did not budge. Its president Oscar Arias turned to Europe and international laws for help. He won the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts in ending the crisis in Central America.

There are many lessons that we can learn from the Costa Rican experience. Even U.S. presidents have agreed that our military budget has grown too large. As President Eisenhower once said, “Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, is a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those that are cold and are not clothed.”

If you missed our screening, you can rent or buy the film at <http://aboldpeace.com/buy-the-film/>.

## War, Peace, and Propaganda *Continued from Page 2*

Dr. Boyd-Barrett asked, what was the “Cold War” really? Was this truly a propaganda battle between communism and capitalism? Or was it a struggle, as A.J. Stockwell argues, between the U.S. and the Soviet Union for the Third World? That might help us to understand why the struggle didn’t come to an end. Dr. Boyd-Barrett hypothesized that the Cold War and subsequent events may be a long drive toward “the elite? the dark state? the plutocratic corporate class?” or as Ray McGovern calls it, “the Military-Industrial-Congressional-Intelligence-Media-Academia-Think-Tank Complex (MICIMATT) state?”

He concluded by stating that the Cold War was and is a struggle for hegemony driven by a lust for profit, money, and power – the real driving force at work when we try to understand U.S. interventionism for the last fifty years or more.

## U.S. Spending Priorities

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Social spending is a perceived expense in the United States when it might be better viewed as an investment. Healthcare benefits are universal for veterans. Expanding healthcare for all Americans can be bridged with a change in how we value healthcare for our veterans and the population who have not served in the military directly.

Military spending is considered a mandatory investment in the national security. There has been limited political will to change; however there are signs of skepticism. On the F-35, House Armed Services Committee chair Adam Smith (D-WA) has stated that he's tired of pouring money down the F-35 "rathole."<sup>3</sup> If ending American "forever" wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are possible, it is also possible to change the priorities in the federal budget. We can have a country where the future and wellbeing of our children are our most important priority. The global pandemic revealed social issues in a way that is impossible to ignore. Do we want a country where the most vulnerable are our most important priority? Or one where we spend thoughtlessly and wastefully on war, without it truly making us safer? It is incumbent on each of us to push for smart social spending and against military waste and excess.

1 Amadeo, K. (March 3, 2020). *Why military spending is more than you think it is*. The Balance. Retrieved November 12, 2021, from <https://www.thebalance.com/u-s-military-budget-components-challenges-growth-3306320>.

2 Ibid.

3 Gregg, Aaron . (March 5, 2021) "Powerful lawmaker calls F-35 fighter jet a 'rathole,' suggests Pentagon should cut its losses." The Washington Post.

### *Words of Wisdom*

*"If you want peace, you don't talk to your friends.  
You talk to your enemies." - Desmond Tutu*

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