

## A Devil's Dictionary

Just in time for Halloween, with apologies to Ambrose Bierce, comes this glossary of our nation's military-diplomatic terms, complete with the devil's own definitions. These terms describe our country when it's led into temptation, even as we acknowledge the existence of similar language and practice in other heavily armed nations. Keep in mind, though, that the US alone accounts for thirty-nine percent of the world's military spending and has 800 overseas military installations spread across the globe, several times more than the rest of the world's nations combined.

In distilled form, this dictionary is a vaccine against war propaganda, though it may require booster shots as new variants of the war virus appear. As readers of this column know, the effects of this virus have been all too visible and appalling in Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan, Yemen, and the Ukraine. Meanwhile, our military pumps more greenhouse gas into the atmosphere than any other organization in the world, leaving our country open to an invasion from climate change and collapse, which have already established a beachhead here. Unless our military breaks that habit, it will by itself make the planet uninhabitable for human beings, even if the rest of us stop using fossil fuel right now. For further details, consult Mark Twain's, "The Mysterious Stranger," Dalton Trumbo's Johnny Got His Gun, Joseph Gerson's Empire and the Bomb, Thomas Lee's Battlebabble, Thomas Merton's poem, Love of the Sultan, the second and fourth books of Gulliver's Travels, Andrew Quilty's article, "When The Raids Came," in the September 2021 issue of Harper's Magazine, and anything by William Hartung, Ray McGovern, Scott Ritter, and Helen Caldicott. Readers of this column could add to the list.

defense department

war department

secretary of defense

secretary of war

Veterans' Day

once called Armistice Day in hopes of peace, this national holiday now blesses endless war

defense contractors

weapons makers, whose product is death

rules-based order

a system of commandments which the US creates and expects other nations to obey, created as an alternative to the Golden Rule

American exceptionalism

the concept that the US, as the world's best nation, is exempt from the demands of its own rules-based order

expansionist ambitions

the complaint the US, with a record-demolishing 800 military bases around the world, files when another country disobeys the rules-based order

behaviors	the term used when another nation ignores the US rules-based order
humanitarian intervention	a military adventure in violation of international law and excused as kindness, resulting in the deaths of innocent civilians and the creation of a failed state
unilateral sanctions	economic warfare which violates the UN Charter and international law
war against terrorism	the current standard rationalization for endless war
collateral damage	innocent human beings from another country killed by US military action; customarily excused as unintentional or unavoidable
US national security; we or us; American interests; a threat to America; our enemy	a bundle of terms whose definitions shift at the pleasure of US government and business leaders
he has no soul	a standard assertion used to create an enemy
winning a nuclear war	wiping out an enemy while killing off the rest of humanity and poisoning the entire planet