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The Solari Report

AUGUST 22, 2013

**Strategic Issues Facing the
U.S. Military, Warfare in the
21st Century**
with Col. Lawrence Wilkerson



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C. AUSTIN FITTS: Well, it's my pleasure to welcome to *The Solari Report* Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson. This is the second that Colonel Wilkerson has joined us on *The Solari Report*. If you go back into the archive, you'll hear a great discussion on national security in May 2011. Today he joins us. I have been looking for someone to give us an overview from the point of view of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, what are the strategic issues facing the US military, and after much research I confirmed that indeed, Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson is the best person to do that.

He has served with Distinguished in the United States Army, and after retiring from the US Army, served as Chief of Staff to then Secretary of State Colin Powell. And since he has become a professor, he is teaching national security at the College of William and Mary, and prior to that time, lectured at George Washington University. So, without further ado: Colonel Wilkerson, welcome to *The Solari Report*.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: Thanks for having me on; I appreciate it.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Well, I'm going to ask you what the most important strategic issues are, but of course, I should probably say that you don't usually do this, but you do get to say you told us so.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: I used to try to refrain from doing that.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: No, you don't have to do that. I'll do that. So why don't you take us through – let's just start – give us an overview of your list of



the most important, but I would like to dive in and talk about sort of the wind down of the war in Afghanistan and Iraq, and get from the point of view of – you warned us not to go about it in this manner. So why don't I turn it over to you?

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: I would – you know, if I were talking in to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Office today the way I used to walk into Powell's office in the early '90s, and sit down and really talk substantively about the problems confronting the armed forces – and Powell was very good about allowing that to happen. We didn't always deal with them, but we talked about them. I'd put them in sort of three categories today. I'd say there are some immediate potentially disastrous, even soul destroying problems, and these are things like suicides; sexual assault, which is just off the charts; religious freedom in the ranks; and the dominionists in the ranks, the group that's trying to take over the armed forces. I know that sounds preposterous, but just Google dominionist and you'll see what their agenda is.

Getting more tactical, the withdrawal from Afghanistan, which is going to cost at least \$40 billion, is going to be extremely difficult; the potential for re-entry into Iraq; and war in Syria, or with Iran, or with both. And then I would – those are the immediate potentially disastrous problems, both professional and tactical/strategic. Then there's another category that I would say are future problems, several of which have the immediacy of today in terms – if we don't start to react, or maybe we should have reacted yesterday, they could loom large tomorrow morning.

And Chuck Hagel, the secretary of defense, has kind of summed this up in what he calls his strategic review, though I'm not saying what about – what's going to be the result of it. It looks more and more like a typical review rather than a real substantive review. I would also place in this deciding whether we're going to do a more or less offshore balancing strategy, which means, basically, naval forces; or are we going to do an in-your-face confrontational, which means land forces on the ground all around the world. Size, and balance, and nature of the armed forces; the nature of the military contractors, who are becoming increasingly



monopolistic, who support them; the fact there's no creative thinking in the military right now; and so forth.

And then there's a third category: defining the threats to US security. What are they, and in this strained economic time, how much risk are you willing to accept in building the capabilities in your armed forces necessary to confront those threats successfully, risk being defined as the gap between your assessment of the threat and your economic capability to build the tools you need to address that threat? That gap becomes risk, of course. So those are the areas that I would say really plague us Mr. Chairman, or Mrs. Chairman – someday we'll have one – and I would want to talk about those things with the chairman, because I think they're serious.

In fact, in 1989/90/91, we were dealing with Mikhail Gorbachev; the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and all that that meant a 29 percent, and then finally, with Clinton coming in, almost a 35 percent reduction in the Cold War armed forces, and in the budget, and so forth. I would say these times right now are far more serious than those times.

“The dissolution of the Soviet Union, and all that that meant a 29 percent, and then finally, with Clinton coming in, almost a 35 percent reduction in the Cold War armed forces, and in the budget, and so forth.”

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right, I agree. Well, how – take us back: how did we end up bogged down in a land war in the Middle East? How did that – what – why did we do it, and how do we pull back?

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: If I were looking back on it right now, I'd say, “Mr. Chairman or Mrs. Chairman, we should have beaten the heck out of Al Qaeda, given the Taliban a bloody nose, and left. That would have taken about a year and probably about a trillion and a half dollars less and probably some 1,500 to even 2,000, which is the total right now, casualties less. Had anything resumed in the way of danger to the United States, we could have gone back and done it again. Instead, we stayed there and chose to nation build: wrong country to do that in



par excellence.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: If you look at a map, you see that Afghanistan has no ports. It's surrounded. Now, one of our principle problems in withdrawing is not fighting as we leave – we might have to do that – but the principle problem is the money it's going to cost us as we have to pay those around across whose territory we need to retreat –

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: – whether it's Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Iran, wherever we go to get out of Afghanistan to haul this – some \$40 billion worth of equipment and other things is going to charge us an arm and a leg, because they know we're trapped. If I was looking at it today and I was strictly a military strategist, I would say, "Don't ever get involved in that country – terrible place to be." Compound that with the fact we have an illegitimate government; we still have massive sanctuary for the enemies that we're fighting there. That sanctuary is supported majorly by the Pakistani ISI, the intelligence services, because they want the Taliban to remain robust in Afghanistan as a counter to India. And we have more or less no way to say we've done anything, really, with regard to our major emphasis on nation-building, because there isn't a nation there.

So if you want to look at an article that really describes all of this, there's a *LA Times* piece that came out, actually, 13 August this week by an army colonel – and this must be a pseudonym. It's got to be a pseudonym, because he's still active duty. The pseudonym is Gian Gentile, and the title is "America's nation-building at gunpoint." What a title. You don't build nations at gunpoint, and we failed in Iraq and we failed in Afghanistan. Look at Iraq today. My prediction would be the civil war is going to get increasingly worse, Saudi Arabia will support the Sunnis with infinite money, and soon the Sunnis will resume power in Baghdad, and we'll probably have a truncated Iraq.



We'll have a Kurdistan in the north, a Sunni-dominated enclave in the center, including Baghdad, and perhaps in Iranian-dominated area around Basrah in the south. What an outcome.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: And what about Syria?

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: That is probably the potential great kept catastrophe in western Asia right now. You've got Russia involved. You've got China involved. You've got Turkey involved. You've got Iran majorly involved. You've got the United States becoming increasingly more involved – huge amounts of dollars going in there. You've got Israel involved. This could be – I know people shudder when I say this, but this could be the Archduke Ferdinand of 1914.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: We could ignite a spark in Syria that reaches into almost all of western Asia, and even out to Beijing, and up to Moscow, and certainly down to Tiran, and causes a regional if not a global conflict to erupt: one that would look very different – very different from past conflicts like World War II, and so forth. It would include economic warfare, political warfare; cyber warfare we call it. There are dimensions to it that could quickly get out of hand and we could wind up in a 30-year struggle.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: And then finally, Iran. You know, we keep – you know, over the last couple years we – suddenly the pressure is on to go to war with Iran, and to me it's inconceivable that you expand what's going on in the Middle East, and then it calms down and it's back and forth. What is the situation with Iran? I mean, what we seem to see is the leadership in Iran sending olive branches, but who knows?

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: I think guardedly, we – I'm guardedly optimistic. On the Iranian side, we do have someone now, President Rouhani, with whom – and his appointees, with whom we probably can deal. But on the Washington side – and I'm not totally forgiving of Tiran. I mean their obduracy and intransigence matches Washington



letter for letter, usually. But on the Washington side, I don't see the political and moral courage on the part of the President to defy what has become an almost unanimous attitude in the legislature or the congress about Iran, and sanctions, and so forth, making our diplomacy really equivalent to sanctions and sanctions equal to diplomacy.

So unless we're willing to offer some substantial sanctions, really, in exchange for the things we want from Iran, such as to cease enhancing or enriching uranium above 5 percent, to come clean on their previous program to the IAEA in regards to a nuclear weapons program they might have had – and we're pretty sure they did have something. We're also pretty sure they've stopped it – and taking the uranium they have enhanced above five percent and either using it under IAEA safeguards or getting rid of it, and guaranteeing the international community they won't enhance above 5 percent anymore, while the US recognizes their right to exist as a nation with all the responsibilities and privileges appertaining thereto, and expresses that its intent – its strategic intent, vis-a-vis Iran, is not regime change, which is what the Iranians think.

That's a huge plate to deal with, bilaterally or in the permanent five plus one, Germany. Either way, either venue is a very difficult one – those issues – to deal with, and then you throw on top of that Afghanistan, Iraq, terrorism, and so forth, all of which you need Iran to come to any kind of stability, and Afghanistan will never be stable without Iran. Iraq will never be stable without Iran. So it's a hugely important time, and as you said, maybe opportunistic for diplomacy, and yet, as I said, I'm very cynical about whether or not Washington's going to be able to muster the kind of political courage – or all courage it needs to make the diplomacy work.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Well, it seems like the great powerists are committed to bringing incoherence to the Middle East. You know, if –

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: You know, you say that – there is a group of people, and I know someone, who – for whom that's their strategy.



C. AUSTIN FITTS: Yes, I agree completely.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: They believe that if you separate Iraq – that is to say, if you got three little Iraqs it's not as bad as one big one. If you let Syria dissolve itself into chaos, Lebanon will follow. Egypt is already looking as if it's going to follow. If you get chaos all around that little enclave of stability called Israel, then not only do you preserve Israel's security, but you make your job a whole lot easier, because you divide and conquer. I personally think, from my study of history and my experience of 31 years in the military, that that is a preposterous theory, but it is one that many people, some of them with great wealth, maintain.

“If you get chaos all around that little enclave of stability called Israel, then not only do you preserve Israel's security, but you make your job a whole lot easier, because you divide and conquer.”

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right. If you look at the – Charlie Ferguson's documentary on Iraq, and you were interviewed, I think, extensively for it, you – what you really do see is an intentional effort to bring incoherence.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: It is a theory – it is a strategic theory. It has some lineage back in history.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: People like Charlemagne, the Genghis Kahn, and Alexander the Great from time to time; divide and conquer was a theory. I just don't believe with the volatility of today's issues, and the price of oil, and the free flow of oil particularly through the substrate, and all the economic and financial dimensions thereof, and all the people you could pull into this as I mentioned earlier. I think you're really playing with fire when you advance and try to pursue a theory like that.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Now, if you were Iran, would you – with the Israelis



having nuclear weapons – would you want nuclear weapons?

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: Pakistan has nuclear weapons. India has nuclear weapons. As you said, Israel has nuclear weapons – and by the way is not in the NPT, and is not responsible to the IAEA – yes. The simple answer to that question is: yes, I would, and I see no – right down to the brass tax, I see no problem were Iran to have a nuclear weapon. In fact, I think it would be probably a balancing effect rather than a disastrous disturbing effect. But I think we've made it – foreign policy, national security-wise – we've made it so clear now that it's unacceptable to use the government's language that if we back down we're sitting there looking as if we can't enforce anything that we want to, particularly in that region of the world where our power has been remarkably diminished, and ironically enough by our own actions, such as the invasion of Iraq.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: So let's turn to what you described as Secretary Hagel's sort of strategic issues. What I'm watching as a financial person is that every year for the last 20 years the power of the reserve currency depends ever more on the military. So it's almost as though the military scope of work from a financial point of view continues to get more and more important. And that begs the question: how in the world do you achieve that global force when you are facing budget cuts, and all sorts of complexities?

You know, you're facing a world where you're not just dealing with sovereign states, but relatively small groups can get very powerful weapons. So your global reach is being required to be greater and greater, whereas your resources are getting spread thinner and thinner. So what do you do?

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: Well, the first thing I think you have to do, as I said earlier, is you have to identify what is – what are the really serious threats. It's befuddling to me to sit back and consider what Powell and I, for example, used to look at in the Soviet Union, some 28,000 to 30,000 nuclear weapons, many of which were on missiles that could reach us from a Yankee submarine off Washington, for example, in



8 to 16 seconds – others certainly in 30 minutes to an hour, and we all knew would – Dr. Strangelove notwithstanding, we all knew would probably wipe out the United States in terms of 100 years.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: It certainly would end their lifestyle – existential threat, we like to call it. And then today, to think what we're doing with regard to an attack from Al-Qaeda that killed some Americans – fewer Americans, I might add, than are killed on the highways in a single year in this country. And now we have spent trillions of dollars, are going to spend trillions more under the AUMF, the Authorization for the Use of Military Force. We are still at war, and there is no end to that war in sight. Guantanamo is a perfect example of that. How did we get here? How did we get to the point where our assessment of the risk focuses on these tiny little groups around the world whose capability to really do harm to us is minimal, especially compared to the previous confrontation we had the Soviets and with communism? How did we get there?

We need to re-evaluate that swiftly, because there are some genuine growing threats in the world that we need to take care of. And with this diversion of our assets to what Powell has very eloquently, I think, called the military industrial terrorist complex, that we don't have those assets for the threats that might really be existential or formidable in the future. So that's the first thing we need to do, is to sit down and really say, "Why are we doing this? Why are we spending all of this money?"

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Well, I always just assumed that the war on terrorism was an excuse to – for the military industrial group to go global and reassert all sorts of command of resources.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: I think there's no question that that's an impulse, and that's a motivation, and certainly and influence, whether you're talking about Lockheed Martin or Halliburton, or whatever. But I think there's also a political exploitation of what I would call the



politics of fear. Go back to Joseph McCarthy and the House on American Activities Committee. Jenner, the senator, really was more formidable than McCarthy in the shadows, and you see what I'm talking about.

You can really get the American people, or at least a significant majority of them, worked up – get them scared, and you can spend all kinds of money in their name; in the name of national security. I think that's why we have this Draconian surveillance state right now. People have jumped into that. People – I'll name them: people like Michael Hayden, who's making a fortune off of it, former DNI. We have people who are plugged into this community now and are making a lot of money off keeping the American people scared about this threat, but we've got to wake up, our legislators in particular in the White House that –

C. AUSTIN FITTS: That the real threat's out there.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: Yeah, there're some real threats out there.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right, right.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: And you know, some of those –

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Well, you know, it's –

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: Some of those threats are not that coherent right now, and that very incoherence – that very chaos, if you will, in itself constitutes a threat. That really comes into a play, and I'm no expert on this – due diligence here, but that really comes into play, I think, when we talk about this kind of economic financial warfare, which I saw just little pieces of in a tiny cell in the NSA when I was at the State Department, which I can't talk about, because it was highly classified. But when I saw what those people could do, it was awesome. And then you realize that others can do it, like Paris, and Berlin, and Beijing, and Moscow; and it becomes very scary, and I'm not sure we're doing that much about that. We're just kind of frolicking down the lane thinking



everything will be okay.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Well, it's interesting you're – what you're watching – and I watch this because I work day-to-day as an investment advisor. So you're watching warfare move from land war, to economic war, to digital war, and the challenge for most investors is – it's no longer a financial market or a place to invest in financial assets. You're in the middle of a battle zone, or you're just trying to use your phone and your Internet systems and it's a battle zone. And so –

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: Well, you're right. I put it sometimes this way when we would have strategic conversations back in the early '90s: when you look at what the threats are, and what their potential might be in the future, and you assess risk, your biggest factor – first of all, you have to be very careful just like, I know you know this, with financial markets – Alan Greenspan, Larry Summers, Bob Rubin, and all those guys: they kind of became – they discounted uncertainty. Well, you can never, never discount uncertainty. As Lenard Kanis would say, it's probably the most prominent feature in the world in any walk of life, and it certainly is in threat assessment, capability building, force planning, and so forth.

“It's probably the most prominent feature in the world in any walk of life, and it certainly is in threat assessment, capability building, force planning, and so forth.”

So that's the real huge factor that increases risk exponentially instantaneously sometimes. And that's – that takes creativity to do it; entrepreneurship, you might call it. And I don't see that – you know, Bernard Shaw had a play, John Lark, where he has the Archbishop of Canterbury say, “Must the Christ die in every generation to save those with no imagination?” Wow, what a statement.

Well, we simply don't seem to have any imagination. The Pentagon –

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Well, let me –



COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: It must –

C. AUSTIN FITTS: I'll tell you –

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: Yes?

C. AUSTIN FITTS: My experience, which was a long time ago, but it certainly looks the same, is if you're the Joint Chiefs, or you're leading a leadership, you have a problem; and that is, a great deal of your infrastructure is much more focused on what makes their stock go up or their corporate profits and bonuses go up than they are on what optimizes the national security interest and the overall economy.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: You're absolutely right.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: So –

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: The very first thing – you've heard me say this before, I know, but the very first thing that Hagel should have done – and I worked for his confirmation. I know Chuck Hagel fairly well. I've known him for a long time. He's a good man, but the first thing he should have done was said to the congress, "You are organized wrong – wrongly, and we need to change that organization. And oh, by the way, I'm going to match it with change in the Pentagon. We need to look at national security from a holistic point of view.

We need to look at it from the point of view of everything we spend money on. In 2010, for example – fiscal 2010 we spent about – not what we professed we spent on the fits. We spent about \$1.2/\$1.3 trillion; 6, 7, even 8 percent of gross domestic product. That's a hell of an expenditure, but you have to put it all together. You put intelligence with veterans' affairs, with homeland security, with the 150 international relations account at the State Department, with the Defense Department, and with that humongous intelligence budget, which I think now, if the truth were told, was over \$100 billion annually. And ask yourself – open parenthesis, ask yourself: what are we getting for it, close parenthesis?



C. AUSTIN FITTS: As a person following mortgage fraud, I have to tell you I think your estimate is low.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: I mean, this is incredible, and we're not looking at it from that national security point of view. We're looking at it in stove pipes, and as you pointed out there are lots and lots of people who are making enormous amounts of money off those stove pipes and off the slop in between them.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: We need to stop that.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Well, I don't know. You're – to me, you're talking about a financial revolution, because what I've seen – I haven't sat with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, but I – what I've seen is very senior excellent line military who is not free to even think creatively in the invention room because something they say may cut the contracts for Contractor X, or cut the purchase of big equipment from Weapons Maker Y, and they can't even – they're – you feel nothing but fear from them. And part of that is simply the fear of keeping the stock market up.

So part of it is – I wouldn't say it's legitimate, but it's not necessarily just one guy making money. They are concerned about the overall presentation of the economics, but you literally have people who are not allowed to be creative, because everything is about this magical increase in the profits for the corporate infrastructure that the whole thing is financing.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: And what you just pointed out, in one fashion or another, depending on the context and the times, is one of the attributes of empire when it's in its final days, which is worrying – troubling.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Well, is it possible for –

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: The one I'm – go ahead. I'm sorry.



C. AUSTIN FITTS: Is it possible for a variety of leadership from many different parts of the leadership equation to get together and say, “Okay, we need a process that allows the military, at least at the top, to be able to creatively perform.” In other words, we’ve been able to get away with allocating the resources for corporate performance instead of military performance. Is there a way to bring it back into balance? Is there a way to bring it back into alignment? We need a process that can allow that to happen, if it’s only just to go to the invention room.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: I don’t disagree with you, and I would say the first ingredient you need is leadership. And I would point out that – what I teach is national security decision-making from World War II. So I look at all the presidents from Harry Truman, through Dwight Eisenhower, John Kennedy, Richard Nixon, all the way up to the current occupant of the White House. And I’m stunned sometimes how I see in that progression of leaders really only two or three who are very good. It’s not because they’re not good leaders in and of themselves before they come to the White House, or even good managers; it’s because this is an increasingly more complex and monumental challenge.

And so, where do you find people who are capable of meeting this kind of challenge, not being entrapped by the John Brennans, the Michael Haydens, the George Tenets, and the host of other ministers and truth tellers that come into the Oval Office and capture them immediately, especially with regard to national security. You need an Eisenhower. You need someone who is so experienced, so talented that he can say, “I don’t want to spend a penny more on defense than I need to,” and then turn to the Pentagon and for eight years, stiff them until they come up with something that works. I don’t –

C. AUSTIN FITTS: And he was rolling his eyes by the time he left.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. He –

C. AUSTIN FITTS: He was a great –

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: If Susan is right, and I’ve no reason to



doubt her, she said – I think I’m quoting her almost verbatim, “He said one day, ‘God help the United States of America if anybody ever sits in this chair who doesn’t understand the military the way I do.’”

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: Precious words.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: He – there’s a great story where one of the private contractors while he was president tried to persuade them to let them own – build and own nuclear weapons, and you can just see him rolling his eyes like, “These people are nuts.” Anyway, so let’s turn to some of the domestic issues. I don’t know if you saw it, but there was a – recently – a recent survey by Pew that published that showed the military as the most respected profession in the country. The military was – it’s up on my blog at solari.com. But military’s up at the top and lawyer is, not surprisingly, at the very bottom, but I –

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: I’m surprised that Congress didn’t beat them out – beat the lawyers out.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: I don’t – I have to go back and look. Congress was very – somewhere in there. It was very low.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: Well, that’s pretty much what I saw, they were – they had a 9 percent rating.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: When I sent you the list of strategic issues, I didn’t include sexual abuse in the ranks, and then you included it back in your list. And we had a wonderful young producer who’s from the national area, and she said to me, “No, this is really serious. You’ve got to look at this.” So I’ve spent some time –

“When I sent you the list of strategic issues, I didn’t include sexual abuse in the ranks, and then you included it back in your list.”

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: It’s – yes, it’s extremely serious. I just finished reading a manuscript by Sarah Bloom. It’s called *Women under*



Fire: Abuse in the Military. It's coming out in November, and – over 200 cases documented, and they're just gut-wrenching.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: I don't know if you listen to Jennifer Stevens at all – very articulate young lady. There was a *Business Insider* piece on 2 August in their military and defense section by Brian Jones. A female soldier brilliantly calls out military for blaming victims, and that's what they've been doing: blaming the victims. There's no leadership.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: I just –

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: She said something that echoed my own thoughts. She said, "If I hear zero tolerance one more time, I'll puke." Zero tolerance. That's what the chairman says, that's what General Odierno says in the Army, that's what everyone says in the leadership; zero tolerance my rear end. In 2012, there were 26,000 assaults by DODs on records, and only 3 percent – 3 percent resulted in any kind of punishment. It's epidemic.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: I just finished watching a documentary – just – I was looking for something on this called the Invisible War. I don't know if you've seen it, but here's why I realized how – one, I hadn't realized how rampant it was and how, sort of, the military has tried to sort of ignore it; but the other thing is, I live and you live in the South, and the South provides an extraordinary number of young – and very talented young people to the military.

And the military is a much respected profession in this culture, and the military depends on that whole population sending the best and the brightest of their young people, or some of them. And what I realized, listening to our producer, was, "Wait a minute. This could destroy that relationship. This could destroy the trust that the US population, particularly the ones who send their kids, could have in the military." And –



COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: I think you're right.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Yes.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: It also destroys the most important bond amongst soldiers, male or female, in the foxhole, and that's their willingness to die, and to be wounded, and to fight for one another. It's not mom and apple pie in the foxhole. It's not even patriotism in the foxhole. It's your buddies. That's the real –

C. AUSTIN FITTS: But it's a family.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: – real cohesive force. And what happens when your buddy rapes you? I mean, you destroy that bond. You – and oh, by the way, 11 percent – DOD figures in 11 percent of the sexual assaults are male on male.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Well, it's not – I – see, I think the problem is not just when your buddy rapes you; it's when you try and do something about it. So let's say you – the buddy who raped you was a – is your commander. You try and get transferred so that you can get away from the rapist, and no one will help you, and no one will do anything, and then you proceed to get raped in the process again. So the hierarchy as you try and do something about this or get help for medical attention or whatever – you get raped again, and it's often that second rape which is the biggest problem in terms of destroying – because then you've got the person – the person who was raped is destroyed, but then you've got a whole bunch of their colleagues and fellow soldiers who see that rape and then stop trusting the hierarchy.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: Right.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: And then you've got a break down.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: It's terribly damaging. I've called it soul destroying, and it – I think it is. It's – it just wreaks havoc throughout the ranks.



C. AUSTIN FITTS: Well, why is it the military's not able to come up with a way to effectively deal with this?

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: I heard one of the leaders who should have known better the other day say in a moment of off-hand candor that he probably regretted afterwards: "Well, it's just the youth culture of today." I think what we saw in Afghanistan, which is increasingly coming to drive young people out of the military – captains, and E-5s and E-6s, sergeants and staff sergeants – is this huge – you might call it a generation gap, but it's got to be multiple generations, in my view – between the young, creative, entrepreneurial, hard-charging officers and NCOs, and ultimately troops in the military, particularly the Army and Marine Corps, and its leadership.

Its leadership is sycophantic. Its leadership doesn't think strategically, let alone creatively. Its leadership has come up through the ranks, and Powell and I saw this every day, making sure it didn't get into trouble, making sure that it met all the requirements as it went along the way, kissing ass and taking names, and all the things that everybody knows how to do; and when it gets to the top, as Littelart said, it forgets what leadership is all about, if it ever knew.

So we've got a real strange group of flag officers in the military today. I'm not trying to brand them all, but many of them are incapable of taking serious action. They just don't know how, and they're also part of the old boy group. I'm sure – I don't know that they're not who -

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Well, they're not principles; they're poodles –

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: Oh, yeah, yeah.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: – you know?

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: And you get –

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Yeah, I call them attack poodles.



COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: And what's going to happen? And Jennifer Stevens, the young lady I was talking to you about, she's really pushing for this right now, and I'm not sure I'm not for her. Is the congress as eventually under pressure going to take that part of the Uniform Code of Military Justice away from the military and give it to a civilian body so that that civilian body can be autonomous and independent?

C. AUSTIN FITTS: I can't – that is so frightening to me.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: Well, I – if they won't do anything – we have things like a convening authority – I believe it was in Italy where you had a clear case of an officer having sexually assaulted not one, but several. And you had a conviction in the lower courts, and then the convening authority – the general who is the supervisor of that system, who reverses everything and let's the guy go. I mean, what – if I were in the congress on one of the armed services committee, I'd probably be asking some pretty serious questions right now. Do we need –?

“If I were in the congress on one of the armed services committee, I'd probably be asking some pretty serious questions right now.”

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right, but then you're –

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: Do we need to take this away?

C. AUSTIN FITTS: What you're doing is, you're creating a matrix structure on the line from top to bottom between the military and the civilian authorities. And the civilian authorities are just as corrupt and misusing it, and so –

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: I don't disagree with that, but I do think – it's almost like the checks and balances systems that our founders set up. You know, you let someone else's evil check someone else's evil, and you're never going to get that checked inside. It's sort of like President Obama coming out the other day and saying he was going to have a searching review of the surveillance program. Well, I mean, my God, in



another venue he condemned Edward Snowden. Edward Snowden is the man who made him say that.

And in the process of doing this, what does he do? He turns to the guy who's in charge of everything – Clapper, the guy who lied to the Congress of the United States and hasn't been punished for it, and says, "Investigate yourself. Come and tell me what you find." You need something on the outside to do that, and you – I know what's on the outside's probably going to be corrupt too, but at least it's going to have interest – a competitive interest if nothing else, in trying to show the other side up.

I don't know how you fix this otherwise, and I'm increasingly coming to believe we're going to need some kind of civilian body. This has happened before. It's happened in other areas. The congress, after all, by the Constitution is responsible for the armed forces of the United States. Actually, the congress – it's forgotten this in many respects – is more responsible for them than the Commander in Chief is.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right, right. No, that's true. Well, let's just turn now to taking care of the US veterans, because one of the results of the war in Afghanistan and Iraq is we have a significant number of veterans coming back who need to be integrated in, including a significant number of disabled veterans. And that is – I don't know, it's sort of a pig going through the snake of this society, and doesn't – it doesn't seem to me that we're doing a very good job of it; so maybe if you could comment on that.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: On the one hand, I'm really happy with some of the things that are going on. I just participated in a program called Project Healing Waters. It's where we take badly wounded vets and teach them how to fly fish. And you've not had your heart warm until you stand in a river and watch a young man standing there with no legs on his prosthetic devices fishing for a trout and not even thinking about anything but catching that trout. You watch the therapeutic affect on him, and so forth.



This didn't happen after my war, Vietnam – not really. Not across the country like it's happening now. So private citizens and private groups have stepped up to do a lot of things for veterans. It's –

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right, there are a lot of great groups doing a lot of things. That's good.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: Yes, tremendous, but you – back to your point, the official response is underfunded – massively underfunded, and doesn't look like it's going to ever get the right monies, and it's not very well orchestrated out of the VA department. You've got 900,000 cases in back log. I recently met with some veterans and heard their horror stories. One young sergeant, clearly badly wounded – he took – they took 625 days – 625 days to process his first claim. Another young lady tremendously impacted – intelligence official who had been tremendously impacted by post-traumatic stress – something like 900 days. That's three years before they did anything with her request. The backlog is humungous.

So the official response has been anything but terrific. The private response has been tremendous. That said – I was just in Oklahoma City. I met the mayor and some other people, talked to the rotary, and went out to Oklahoma University, and so forth, and I'm sitting in a dinner the first night with what turns out to be on my right the secretary of military and veterans affairs – retired Army two-star, and she turns to me, and she says, "You know who's populating our prisons in the greatest percentage now?" And stuns me and says, "Veterans." Veterans.

She says, "Our prisons are overflowing" – by the way, Oklahoma provides, on a per capita basis I think along with Maine, more soldiers than any other state – more soldiers and Marines. I didn't know that until she showed me the stats, and Maine really surprised me. But she says, "I go to the prisons, and I see these veterans, and they're great people. They usually own the prison. They're very well disciplined. They have groups that do things here. I've got to do something for them. What can I do?" How do I answer that? So I assume that that's probably true across the country – which it's – a considerable percentage



of the people overflowing from our prisons now are veterans. This is not good. It's not an indicator that we are, as you said, taking care of those who bore the burden.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Holy smokes. I did not know that. You just had the administration announce implementation of policies that are going to try to reduce the prison population. I think – and I assume part of it is the deficit reduction effort.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: I'm sure, and you know what's caused that? If you've see Eugene Jarecki's new documentary, *The House I Live In*, what a condemnation of the drug war. That's really – the drug war has, as he points out so vividly in there – you just grip your seat when you're watching this documentary – it's imprisoned or murdered 15 percent of the population over the last 30 years. It also has corrupted law enforcement – you hear police chief after police chief say, "I don't do anything with drugs. Murder, robbery, grand auto – you – if I have to, I'll go after it, but I do drugs, because that's where the monetary incentives are. That's where the bonuses are. That's where the credit comes from. I do drugs."

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Believe it or not, I read a book about this, so I'm going to send you a link to it, because it's online. And so –

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: Please do.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: My former firm on Wall Street financed a prison company, and it was when the – I ran into it, because the guy's financing a prison company, and is sort of starting them up and financing them – were lobbying to get the laws changed so that there'd be a lot more prisoners so they could get contracts. And it gets back to this question, because as you're describing the – sort of the problems with a hierarchy that's getting more and more political, you're describing it's the military, but I see this in the financial world, I see it in the corporate world, I see – you know, it's across our society.

And the interesting thing is, we've created a financial mechanism with



the US Treasury and the way we're financing that will allow us to run all of these various bureaucracies for political considerations instead of anything related to performance, because they can always get more money. But the reality is always getting that more money depends on the military performing. So at some point, performance really matters, and you ask yourself, "Is there any possible way we can get a revitalization performance without the entire empire collapsing?"

I mean, to me that's the big question here, because this is across the entire society, and you have throughout society – if you look at whom my subscribers are who are going to be listening to this – I call them the people of the line, they're the people who really know how to make the nuts and bolts go in oil and gas, in bank – they're just the people who care more about getting the job done than looking great.

And they're watching the politinization making – getting the – I hate to say it's like *Atlas Shrugged*, but it's like *Atlas Shrugged*, and we're all looking at each other saying, "Okay, how do we bring sanity back to this system, because we" – the problem is – if I have a company that's getting political and getting away from performance, it eventually goes bankrupt, but we've created a financial mechanism where nothing ever goes bankrupt. We can always kill more people and steal more money.

“If I have a company that's getting political and getting away from performance, it eventually goes bankrupt, but we've created a financial mechanism where nothing ever goes bankrupt.”

So that's – to me the big question is a society-wide question: how do we get back to some kind of sane performance? And I wanted to bring up – I don't know if you've seen the latest copy of *The Economist*, but there's a – the cover story says "Liberty's Lost Decade: From Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib to Bradley Manning and Edward Snowden," and there's an editorial, which is remarkable coming from the official organ of the Anglo-American Alliance saying we've gone too far. We're about to kill the goose that laid the golden egg.



And there are a couple paragraphs that sound just like you. So you might want to read it. They probably got it from your writing.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: I used to – I took *The Economist* for about 20 years, mainly because I just love their covers.

They have the best covers in the world.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Well, I want to know what the official – I – in my world, I need to know what the official story is, and *The Economist* is one of a number of periodicals that does a great job of telling you the official story on – of writing the economic matters. But I read it, and it sounded to me like they're saying the same thing, which is, "This has gone too far." So I –

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: I think that –

C. AUSTIN FITTS: And so – sorry, go ahead.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: I think the right – I don't have any answers. It's a – to me, it's – I harken back to the 1961 speech by Eisenhower and his farewell address, and not to the part most quoted about the military industrial complex, but back to the part where he says, "Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can take of this situation." And I – frankly, we have become anything but an alert and knowledgeable citizenry, and that's not to discount everybody across this country in 320 million or so of us now, I guess.

It's simply to say that if you don't function within the democracy in a way that keeps that democracy honest, and focused on performance as you said, and roughly egalitarian as much as can be, that is to say that distribution of wealth is not too grossly out of proportion. All the little things that make a nation great – indeed, from 1950 to 1972, made us the greatest power probably the world has ever seen. If you can't get that kind of focus from almost all your people all of the time or some of the time, you can't solve your problems. And the more complex they become, the more you get in a mess.



And – so I would – my – I tell my students this all the time: “We screwed up boys and girls, and you’re going to have a mess. You’re going to be the first generation in American history, as far as I can tell, that as a generation is going to have a lower standard of living than any that preceded it.” Let me tell you, that igs not something that registers with them in a positive way, I can assure you, but it gets their attention.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: I asked someone – a group of women – 200 women sorority members at William and Mary – I said, “Show me the hands of any of you who think you will draw social security when your time comes.” Not a single hand went up. That is an incredible of no confidence in your country, particularly in your government. And until you get these – and one of the reasons I teach is to try to do my little part in this – until you get these people energized and tap their talents for something other than Wall Street – I don’t mind some people going to Wall Street who are brilliant, but I like people going to the government who are brilliant, and to stay at government who are brilliant, and to local government who are brilliant, and not just interested in filthy lucre, as it were. These –

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Well, but I don’t think it’s just filthy lucre, because what I see is – there’s upside and there’s downside. If you’re a federal, state, or local official and you try to say no to certain interests, you’re talking about getting shot, you’re talking about getting poisoned, you’re talking about physical harassment of you and your children, and you’re talking about a violent – these people are not – they don’t buy or lobby with money. They buy or lobby with violence, and that – to me, that’s the piece that’s out of control. And so the question is always, in any system, if you’re going to make rules, then how are you going to enforce them. And we don’t have a way of enforcing up against an infrastructure that is – and I think that’s how the top-secret America expenditures have exploded, because the guys lobbying for them lobby with force.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: I don’t – I do not disagree with what you’ve just said, and in my darker moments I think it’s 1848, it’s 1790,



it's – you pick your year of revolution. Maybe the streets of Cairo right now are a reflection of what's coming more globally, but I – my Virginia friend Thomas Jefferson said the tree of liberty had to be watered with the blood of patriots from now and then. It's not inconceivable to me that we could – people forget that we've had these sorts of periods in our history before or lately – whatever. There were some pretty bloody strikes and some pretty bloody things in Pennsylvania, for example, and – I mean, we called it –

C. AUSTIN FITTS: We need the adults to return. We need adult supervision.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: We really do. We really do.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: We really do, yeah.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: You – it's funny you should use that expression. A congressman who had lunch with me recently was talking to me about Richard Bruce Cheney, and he said, "You know, there was no real change in Cheney when he became vice president. He was always that way. It's just, before, he had adult supervision."

So when I thought about it, it made a lot of sense.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: I'm – well, I think what we've seen is, we've seen the steady retirement or disgust of adults. And the problem is, in all these different walks of line, we don't have adult supervision. And to me that is an economic matter, because when that becomes as obvious and clear, then you lose the goose that laid the golden egg. Well, let me just turn to one last question. You said, 'the dominionists in the ranks', and this is an issue I don't understand, so I would love it if you would describe it for us.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: I'm not an expert on it either. I just joined a group called the Military Religious Freedom Foundation recently who've become major attack objects of some of the, what I would call, Leadites in the congress: those who have never read, for example, the most eloquent testimony on religious freedom in the world



in my view, Virginia's – it's – I forget the exact title of it. It's Virginian – Thomas Jefferson put it in notes on Virginian religious freedom, but – the *Virginia Act for Religious Freedom*, I believe it was. And they simply don't understand what religious freedom means. It means you can be an Atheist on the one hand, it means you can believe a – be a Zoroastrian, or a Jedi Knight on the other. You could do anything.

And when you bring into the military a particular religion, you're bringing that religion into the state – what we rebelled against in terms of Europe. When Thomas Jefferson swore eternal hostility to all forms of tyranny over the mind of man, I'm convinced his writing show – his number one object was the priest, his number two object was his own government, and his number three object, which moved up to number one about 1775, was George III. So tyranny comes from a number of different places, but when you put the church in the service of the state – and I don't care what church it is: it can be the Jews, the synagogue, it can be Muslims and the mosque, and it can be Christians and the church.

When you put them in the service of the state, you've ruined things, and the armed forces are an instrument of the state. So when you get commanders ordering people to go to prayer meetings on Wednesday night, ordering people to go to church, ordering people to go to particular churches – when you build mega-churches at federal expense on military reservations, you are wrong. And I had no idea that this was going on to the extent that it was until I got associated with this group and I began to learn some of the things that they had compiled, and it scared me.

“Tyranny comes from a number of different places, but when you put the church in the service of the state ... you've ruined things, and the armed forces are an instrument of the state.”

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Well, the other thing is, you also get a philosophy that is easily used by the guys trying to juice their stock prices to – people will come to me and say, “I just heard this insane reason why we're going to war here,” and they start – they believe that that's what we really believe.



And I say, “No, the guys” – the following defense contractors can’t say, “We want to make more money this year, so we’re going to engineer war.” They can’t say that.

So you’ve got to come up with something about, “The Lord has destined us” – that sounds much better than, “We want Lockheed stock to go up.” So, they –

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: It’s – it is a – it’s like the politics of fear. It is an emotion that resonates with a lot of people, and I understand that, and you play that. You opportunistically, and in an almost evil way in my view, you play that to increase your own power and your own money. It’s vicious.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right, and it plays in certain places.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: Yes, it does.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Well, if – you mentioned the house –

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: You should see some of the e-mail we get. You know, I usually answer with, “You know, Mikey, or John, or Bill, one of the most influential people in my life, if not the most influential people was my grandmother who taught Sunday school at a Baptist church for 60 years. She taught first grade for 61 years, because in those days, as long as you could stand up in front of the class you didn’t get retired. I said, “She taught me about Jesus Christ, and let me tell you, he would never have sent the e-mail you just sent to me.” It’s incredible. They want me to die, my wife to die, my children to die, to rot in hell forever and beautifully said in the most obscene language.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: They’re full of hate. It’s unbelievable.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: Yes.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: I – well, I spend a lot of time in the last 10 to 15 years going to churches. I’m a church – as I travel, I’ll go into different



churches, because I wanted to understand how we could be in such a primitive civilization and yet all say we were Christians.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: Yes.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: So –

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: It is a mystery. It is a mystery.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: It is a mystery. Okay, well you had mentioned – I always love to get recommendations for the best books, the best documentaries, the best movies; if somebody wanted to inform the more – themselves more about what you’ve been talking about, what are some of the best – let’s just start with documentaries – which you would recommend that they watch. You had mentioned *The House We Live In* on the drug war – anything that would inform us on the issues facing the Joint Chiefs.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: Wow, there’s – there’re a couple of documentaries that are working right now, and I’m not sure exactly when they’re going to come out. One of the – I haven’t seen it yet, but I’ve seen some outtakes from it. It’s coming out. It’s called *The Iraq War*, and it is interviews with Blair, with – I believe even Putin’s interviewed. These are the same people – I forget the name right now, but they’re the same people who did the one on the Balkans that included interviews with Milosevic, with Yeltsin, and so forth. And they’re also the people who did the one on Iran, which included the interviews with Ayatollah Khomeini, the new Kaminey, with Ahmadinejad, Rafsanjani, and a host of others.

But there are documentaries out there, mostly from this Paris-London-based group, on these wars that are very insightful in a lot of the ways we’ve been talking about. You pick it up sometimes between the lines, but – Tony Blair, for example, how he made himself with the Iraq War. I mean, you watch this documentary and you think to yourself, “Geez, it wasn’t just Dick Cheney that did this. It was Tony Blair too,” and there was this all over –



C. AUSTIN FITTS: Oh, yes. Think of all those grateful defense contractors and investors.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: Yes, yes, and what he's doing now. Look at what he's doing now. It's just extraordinary, and you – your first question, I think, is – was this witting, or was he just lucky? Did he just make some bad decisions that turned out to be good personally? Was he really – in his soul, did he believe that Iraq could, for example, use WMD in 45 minutes or less, which he once said? These are riveting documentaries in the sense that you begin to see the decay, I think, and the decadence in the world's leadership right now.

And then we can posit that with some of the other documentaries that are coming out on things like climate change, arctic ice melt, ocean acidification, and environmental degradation in general. And you begin to understand that we've got some really huge challenges confronting us in this century, and we've got this kind of leadership. It becomes pretty scary.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right. I just have to ask you two questions, because we didn't touch on the NSA brouhaha with Snowden. What do you think the effect of that is going to be on the military and the relationship between NSA and the other intelligence agencies in the military?

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: We have 17 now, and –

C. AUSTIN FITTS: I know. It's unbelievable.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: Yes, it's unbelievable. Like you said, over 100 billion, and we're looking at most of those being under the control of the secretary of defense. I'd say probably – if you want to do percentage, probably two-thirds, maybe even three-quarters of it: NSA, NRO, and CIA, and so forth, the CIA being the one everybody hears about, which isn't, of course. And now the DNI is supposedly over everything with no power over money or people, so all he is is really a figurehead, but I can show you the building he's built out here, and I can show you how he –



C. AUSTIN FITTS: He takes the blame.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: – oh, it’s incredible. It’s just incredible. I went over there for a retirement ceremony, and I thought, “What goes on here?”

The woman who was taking me into the room looked at me and said, “Oh, you haven’t seen anything. Most of it’s underground.”

And I think – to your question, I think we’re going to have more Snowdens. I think we’re going to have a whole – we’re going to have one every six months I think, because this is really bad, and we do have some young people, particularly – it’s interesting, particularly in this IT community, we have some young people who are really, really worried, alarmed, concerned. And they may not be articulate, they may not be operating always on a full deck – Bradley Manning comes to mind, but they are going to be concerned enough – alarmed enough that they’re going to say things. They’re the symptom – or they are symptoms. The disease is a perpetual force.

“They may not be articulate, they may not be operating always on a full deck – Bradley Manning comes to mind, but they are going to be concerned enough – alarmed enough that they’re going to say things.”

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Well I think what they see is that this – it’s not just – I don’t know. You’re watching an infrastructure that – one I don’t believe can hazard– can maintain the mandate of heaven, but the other thing the see is, this isn’t going to work. It’s just – it reminds me –

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: Exactly.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: – I used to have a pastor in Washington who used to say, “God does not bless a mess.”

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: Yes, and you said it. We’re killing the goose that laid the golden egg. I mean, it – we created – after World



War II, we created the greatest economic machine the world has ever seen. Manufacturing was incredible, and now we're just slowly choking it to death.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Well, I believe we're bring the manufacturing back. That's another conversation, but I think there may be a little twinkle of hope on that.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: I see hopeful signs.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Yes, I see hopeful signs, and I just have to –

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: And it's mostly just good old, hard, American work –

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Yes, yes.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: – and market sense.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: And great science – great science, and technology, and engineering. I just –

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: If we murder our universities like we've murdered our public schools, we will really regret that.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: I just watched something BBC did on the seven wonders of the industrial world. It's an old TV series, but it's on the great engineering feats, most of them in the 1900s. And it reminds you of – it takes you back to a culture where we really honored that, we believed we could do it, and unfortunately, I think that part of the problem is, our great engineering feats today, too many of them are secret. So we don't get to celebrate them, and we don't get to be inspired about them. So – well, I just have to ask you before we close about Putin, because Putin is the real stinker in the ointment on the international stage, and I would say that Putin's not a poodle, whatever he is. In other words, he's a principle. He's not –



COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: He's a Michael Hayden, he's a John Brennan, he's a former KGB guy, and that's what's running Russia today along with the so-called Siloviki and the tycoons, and so forth who sort of in a mutual exchange of profit.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right, but he's a real check, from what I see, on the US unless he's willing to just make deals.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: Well, it's become his *raison d'être*. That's how he survives. I saw the ratings the other day. They were pretty reputable I think: 66 percent. Yes, he's got the opposition movement, and he's got people in the Duma who want to throw rocks at him, but 66 percent of the Russian people support. That's all he needs to worry about, and the more he sticks a finger in Washington's eyes, the more they support him.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: It's called nationalism.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right.

Okay, well, Colonel Wilkerson, I can't thank you enough for joining us today. This has been unbelievably informative. Before we close, is there anything else you'd like to add, and also tell us how we can stay abreast of what we're doing?

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: I think what you're doing and in the kinds of things across the country that other people like you are doing are very important, because I do think that, unless we can wake up a considerable amount of the American people and get them really interested in their government again – in its being good in many respects, if not most, then we may be killing the goose that laid the golden egg.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: I agree, and – but unfortunately, our financial mechanism was too successful, so we're talking about something that was very big



and unwieldy.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: Yes, yes.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Okay, well you have a wonderful day, and someday I hope to get you back again.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: Thank you, and take care of yourself.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Have a great day.

COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON: You too. Bye-bye.

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