

BUILDING WEALTH IN CHANGING TIMES



---

# The Solari Report

---

MAY 7, 2015

**National Security:  
Looking Ahead**  
with Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson





# National Security: Looking Ahead

May 7, 2015

---

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Ladies and gentlemen, I'm welcoming to The Solari Report someone who needs no introduction, Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson, who has served the United States with great distinction as a military leader. He has also served as Chief of Staff to the Secretary of the State, and is now a professor at William & Mary and beyond. I think he is one of the most balanced, intelligent voices.

I'm always interested, Colonel Wilkerson, not only in how many requests we get to get you back on The Solari Report, but it's invariably from our most intelligent and curious subscribers.

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** Wow!

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** The higher the IQ, the more they want you.

Anyway, we have many questions for you today because clearly national security is front and center, but I'd like to start with the future of NATO. Certainly the events in Europe and the Ukraine has really put NATO front and center in a lot of people's minds. If you could give us two minutes on: What is NATO, and then where do you think it's going?

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** My appreciation of NATO for Secretary Powell and earlier for Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Powell when I was Special Assistant to him in the early 1990s was that it was an anachronism. It didn't need to be around anymore. No alliance, no matter how successful – politically and militarily, and NATO could be argued to be one of the most successful in human history – could survive, and indeed would do more harm than good after its threat was gone.



Obviously virtually everyone disagreed with me and said, “No, we must find an external purpose for NATO,” that is to stay out of area operations – which was the term of ours at the time. So we started finding things like the Balkans, ultimately Afghanistan, and so forth.

I still adhere to my original forecast, if you will, that NATO no longer has a reason for existence, and we seem to be scratching around hard in Ukraine and elsewhere trying to find one. That’s a dismal prediction, perhaps, especially since it’s been so successful, but I think it’s a realistic assessment.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Okay. Now we’ve also heard a great deal about the pivot to Asia with increased economic interests in the South China Sea and Asia rising. It’s clear the military is planning or is in the process of shifting more resources out to Asia. What is the pivot to Asia?

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** So far, as my Japanese, Korean, and even Chinese colleagues will tell me and do tell me, not much. As a matter of fact, I was just talking with a good friend who used to be head of a very large Japanese enterprise in the United States. He’s now back in Tokyo. We had lunch the other day, and he was talking to me about the Japanese Prime Minister Abe coming to address the joint session of Congress. We were discussing what Prime Minister Abe might say that would resonate with Americans and yet still be true to the message that he wants to deliver for Japan.

We got into a conversation about how the pivot to Asia was not felt in Asia. That is to say that there hasn’t been much change, and in Seoul and Tokyo and I think probably in Beijing, too, and other capitals – Cambra being one of them – people think that the focus on the Middle East is still there. It’s bifurcated now, if you will, with another focus on Ukraine – as you pointed out earlier. So the United States is still looking that way.

The one thing I think, and Patrick Cronin has a good piece this morning on this, that would change that is if the Trans-Pacific Partnership and TPA along with it were given real credibility, were put in force by the



Congress, was fined as it were, and we got this massive trade agreement with the Pacific region, which has really become more of a security agreement than it is a trade agreement. Of course, it's got the trade aspects to it, too, but for Japan at least this has become a statement of what the United States means in terms of staying in the Pacific.

We can't be seen, in other words, by friends and foes alike as just a military power or as just interested in the hard power; we've got to be interested in regaining – many would say, and the Japanese included – our prominence in the Asia-Pacific region in economic and financial matters.

Our screwed up approach to the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank is a great example. We should have welcomed that with open arms. We should have been right there saying, “Yes, we're going to be a member, too,” and encouraged Britain and Germany and Australia and others to be members.

This is China growing up to be a responsible, regional, and global takeover, and we should be right there with them. We shouldn't have given this message of negativity.

**“This is China growing up to be a responsible, regional, and global takeover, and we should be right there with them.”**

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** There's no doubt the world needs more infrastructure. If you look at all the projections of infrastructure development, the question is: How are we going to do it? If we're not going to do it, then they need to do it.

Clearly if you look at the size, everybody is going to have to be a part of this if it's going to happen.

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** Absolutely. As Patrick pointed out this morning in his article, my goodness – if you're talking about not being a member or you're fighting it or you're saying, “You will only take money from us,” and you've got no money to give, you're in a hard place.



**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Right. Speaking of that, we see Japan committing to increase their military spending in coordination with us, and an indication that other Asian allies will. Is this us being willing to collaborate and let the others in because we need them to pick up the tab?

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** I think that's part of it, but part of it also is we have to face the realities of what's happened in the way of success of our post World War II policies – whether it's Germany and Europe in general or whether it's Asia and Japan in specific. Our policies have been remarkably successful. As a consequence of that, others' power has increased relative to our own. At the same time, ours has inevitably decreased.

I say 'inevitably' because it was inevitable that we would lose some power; we were the new Rome post World War II with 50% plus of the world's GDP. We couldn't possibly hold onto that.

Lately, we've done a lot through really bad leadership to decrement our own power. The case in point most prominent being the strategic mistake in invading Iraq and releasing all the things we've released there by having destroyed the balance of power which we painstakingly maintained ever since FDR with the Shah first and then with this standoff between the Persians and the Arabs after the Shah fell.

We destroyed that balance of power and made a mess. We decremented our own power, but it is inevitable that the power situation in the world is going to become more equitable, if you will, and in that situation we need to be more cooperative, more collaborative, and we need to help.

Japan and other allies need to do the same thing. I think Prime Minister Abe realizes that and is trying to do it.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Given that the mistake is made so we are where we are, given where we are, do you think the Iran deal that the administration is trying to organize will help get us out?



**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** I don't know. I haven't seen the full details of it; no one has. I'm not even sure that Rouhani and Zarif on the Iranian side and Obama and Kerry on the American side even know what the final deal will look like. But there's enough now that's perspective to tell me that if we can put this together, if the technical details as per brief can be worked out, this is a far better alternative to war. And war is the only other real alternative.

People will say that containment is an option. We can just keep the sanctions on and so forth. Well, Iran is not going to sit there and twiddle their thumbs while we do that. They're simply going to make the decision and they're going to go nuclear. We're going to be able to do nothing about it except bombing.

Bombing at best, even combined with the Israelis, would set Iran's program back five to seven years and make them nationally cohesive in terms of what they wanted to do after that bombing, and that would be to build a nuclear weapon and never have it happen again.

You then have the option and the sole option, and if you find that unacceptable – and we said we do – to invade. That's 500,000 troops, ten years, \$2 - \$3 trillion, and as Anthony Zinni, former Commander of Central Command, said so eloquently, "If you like Iraq, you'll love Iran."

We're talking about 75 million people, 51% of whom are Persian, very cohesive, demographically and geographically and militarily far superior to Iraq. It would be a really hard nut to crack. I'm not saying it couldn't, but it would look like Iraq or worse at the end of that decade, so what have you gained?

This is the best deal we can get if we can get it.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** If you look at what's happening with Cuba and what's happening with Iran, it almost looks like the US realizes it's overextended, made mistakes, and now it's just trying to close the open door so that it can manage that which it can manage. It's overextended



and it needs to back down and it needs to shift resources to being a protective global citizen.

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** I think you're right, and if it's done wisely and it's done judiciously I think that's the best course of action. I'm alarmed that my party, the Republican Party – and I listened to Marco Rubio yesterday – seems to think mostly through platitudes, which are meaningless and there is no substance to them. They seem to think that they can reach back into the past and resurrect the old America that is the henchman of the world – the power that did exist in 1945, and even then began bleeding its power on the day the war ended.

I think that's very dangerous to think that way, but it's resonating with the American people – or at least a significant portion of them. It's sad to say that the apathy in this country and the ignorance in this country and the general indolence about the political process concerns me as much as people like Rubio and like others in my political party who seem to think that the golden days of the past are just that – golden and resurrectable.

I don't even know if they were golden in the true sense of that term, but they certainly featured us being the dominant power in the world.

I think that those days are over, and I think we need to get used to it. After all, we lived in a world where two of the greatest empires in the world at the time – for at least our first 50 years – were trying to rape, pillage, and plunder us in any way they could. And Spain wasn't doing too bad of a job either.

This isn't anything new; this is just kind of returning to being not promise into parries but just a whole lot of powers that are trying to get along in the world, trying to meet the challenges of climate change, for example, and other huge challenges we have like nine billion people by mid-century.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Right.





**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** These are huge challenges, and we're not going to meet them individually, and we're not going to meet them with bombs, bullets, and bayonets either.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Right. I couldn't agree more. The Iran deal – what does it mean for Europe?

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** I think for Europe, as France, Germany, and the UK have demonstrated by their more or less soft approach to it with Poland and Paris being somewhat different at times, wanting to keep the Saudi contacts warm and keep the Israelis warm, I think they have been very important to this process. They've given it solidity, they've given it legitimacy, and I think they're looking forward – as are China and Russia – to better relations with Iran, particularly in the area of trade and commerce.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Right. Smack dab in the middle.

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** Yes. No missiles, please. Just money.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** What about Israel? It looks to me like the Israelis have gotten their head handed to them, something I'd love to have seen happen much sooner. Am I right in that assessment?

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** I hope you are. My own view is that Bibi Netanyahu and his clan – his clique – the one in five Israelis that's now a settler, the greater Israel people, the Russian émigrés to a large extent. I hope they're getting it handed to them, and I hope they don't do something that's going to be a strike in the dark but nonetheless very dangerous. For example, do something vis-à-vis Iran themselves. I think that would be catastrophic.

I see Bibi's whole posture as being threatening in the mid- and long-term to the state of Israel, both physically and spiritually in terms of its Jewish

**“These are huge challenges, and we're not going to meet them individually, and we're not going to meet them with bombs, bullets, and bayonets either.”**





state-ness. I don't see that he can maintain either physical security or a Jewish state doing what he's doing.

It seems to me to be absolutely self-evident, so I have to believe that what Bibi's doing is he's staying in power, and that's it. He doesn't care about the future because he's endangering Israel's future by the policies he's promoting and the policies he has promoted to this point.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Well, it certainly looks to me like he's losing a lot of support among the American Jewish population which has normally been very supportive of Israel.

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** I find that to be true. I find anywhere between 60-65% of the American Jewish community wishing him gone.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Right. So you almost wonder where his base is.

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** Sheldon Adelson, the Macau casinos, billions of dollars, Paul Singer, and a few others. He's got a hugely, hugely well-financed base. Let's put it that way.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Right. Well, the hypocrisy of it because Israel is a nuclear power.

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** Yes.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** The Iranians didn't try to do this to the Israelis when they developed nuclear capacity.

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** And it's really not about nuclear weapons; it's all about who's going to be the power in the gulf. It's that way with the Saudis, it's that way with Tehran, it's that way with Tel Aviv, and who's going to be the individual leader – the country ultimately – backed by the United States from time to time when the United States feels its interests are being impacted. Israel does not want that to be anybody but them, Riyadh does not want that to be anybody but them, and Tehran is looking for [*indecipherable*] that might put



them back in the seat they were in for 25 years when the Shah ran the place and the United States and Iran got along pretty well. I don't think they want that close of a relationship, but they would like to have a much better relationship which they feel – the Saudis the Israelis – threatens the US relationship with them.

The nukes are really a surface matter. I know that sounds crazy, but they are. It's all about who's going to be the power in the gulf.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** And part of it is as the trade between Asia and Europe grows, everybody in the middle is competing for a bigger flow.

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** Yes. You look at the pipelines under construction – gas and oil – the pipelines contemplated and the pipelines already pumping, and look at how they are going to create the conflict of the future and you understand what this is all about viscerally in terms of who gets what from whom and when and who makes money off of it.

The pipelines are sort of analogous to fleets, navies, the old coaling stations, and so forth. Put that and water together, and you've got the next 50 years of either well-led, reasonably managed peace, or you've got – as Haas has pointed out – increasing disorder.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** If energy supplies start flowing from Iran to Europe, what does that mean to Russia?

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** I think it means that Europeans and specifically right now, at this moment, Ukraine and maybe the Baltic countries and others that might eventually suffer the little green men from Putin have a lot more independence and a lot more capability to stand up to it and to not be so cowed by his ability to bring energy into the picture and threaten their very existence.

I think that's what we're looking at, at least partly, in terms of us seeking *[indecipherable]* with Tehran because we can build pipelines. Some are already contemplated. One, as I recall, being in Exxon Mobil's rooms going out of Iran and up to India, and of course you can go further. You



can branch off also. So you're going to get these lines running east and west and these lines running north and south, and you're going to look at them and you're going to see China is trying to gain some independence from single-sourcing, India is trying to gain some independence from single-sourcing, Russia wants everybody but isn't going to get everybody and is fighting this change from single-sourcing to what others are trying to do, and Iran is in the middle with lots of gas and a quite a bit of oil.

So this is the future of how these all play out in terms of handling and managing them in a peaceful way – a cooperative, collaborative way – or fighting over them.

I pointed out before that the strategic group at Shell for whom I have a lot of respect – Royal Dutch Shell – briefed me a couple of years ago. Part of their plan was to put aside some money to fund private security forces to protect their pipelines because they didn't think the governments were going to do this very well.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** The Swedish Institute that tracks global military expenditures just came out with their latest announcement. In 2013 we spent \$1.7 trillion, which is essentially constant since 2007, a year. You look at that number and you look at the exploding debt and you say, “We can't afford this!”

The reality is if we could build a cooperative way for everybody not to be energy dependent but to have multiple and diversified basis, maybe we could spend a lot less on security. The idea that all these companies have to do private security forces is just terrifying.

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** It is. I just read this morning a bright light in an otherwise dismal picture. I don't know if your listeners or you saw this. The Nisour Square had horrific killings in Iraq by Blackwater guards. Those four guards, the instigator – the one who fired the first round – was given life and the other three were given 30 years each.

As I said, that's some justice, I guess, in the middle of what was really a



catastrophe.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** I saw the headline, but I was very curious because with so much of the private contracting structure my understanding is that it's been put into place to shield private companies from liability. So I'm amazed at how they engineered that.

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** I think the human cry was just so great that legal authorities – especially in this country – dared not back away from it without figuring out some way to punish them.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Who was the prosecutor? Do you know?

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** I haven't read the article completely. I downloaded it, but I want to read it and see how they did this because, as you might suspect, I have very deep concerns about how we prosecute people for doing things – even if they're powerful.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Right. Well, I will say this. The non-accountability created by contractors and the contracting infrastructure was, to me, particularly frightening so I find this very curious.

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** But DOD aided and abetted. I have to admit I was there when we started this process, and it does a number of things for DOD. It gets them around the in-strength restrictions on the armed forces placed by the Congress. We could never have done Afghanistan and Iraq simultaneously without 200,000 plus contractors.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Right.

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** And it does what you just said. It gives you a body of men and some women whom you can employ in ways that are almost immune from prosecution so you don't get tied up in either the uniform code of the military justice on one hand or whatever host

**“The human cry was just so great that legal authorities – especially in this country – dared not back away from it without figuring out some way to punish them.”**



country's laws or your laws on the other hand. They are sort-of immune and can do things that military and others can't do.

It's a very nice deal for DOD, although they're discovering that the cost of it is just out of this world, and they're trying to cut back on the contracts now because the cost is not advertised.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Here's a bigger problem, and I won't hang on it, but if you look across the entire economy – and defense is far from alone on this – what we've done is we've created a private sector which is entirely organized and dependent on government mandates and can't function outside of government mandates. You're having a real problem with the private sector now vested in getting government to create more mandates because they don't believe in markets.

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** You're absolutely right, and prison is one of the places where I point at all the time. We actually have lobbyists now who are lobbying the congress for more coding and laws so that people stay in jail longer. I mean, it's absurd. We have the most full prisons in the world.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Well once upon a time my company was a government contractor, and what I learned was we should fire most of them and make them government employees if we're going to do it.

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** We've privatized some of the ultimate public functions, even war.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Right. So at the end of last year, Richard Haas, head of the Council and Farm Relations, published an article called *The Unraveling* which I thought was a very interesting overview of the struggle by the US to maintain the Bretton Woods system and the challenges and political goings on within the United States among the leadership.

I sent it to you and discovered you're going to teach in Italy shortly, and you're using it as part of your coursework. Maybe you could talk a little bit about what is the *Unraveling* and what it means for what is going to



happen over the next few years.

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** I think Richard's point, well-taken in one respect, is that what we have is not a New World Order to replace the more or less bipolar order of the Cold War where two great powers – the Soviet Union and the United States – confronted each other and everybody else subscribed to one or the other or became a member of the non-aligned movement. It was relatively peaceful.

What we have now is the New World Disorder, and that disorder is probably going to persist for some time to come. It involves a number of factors, some of which we've already talked about – the dissipation of power of the great powers and the equalization to a certain extent of that power amongst others like Brazil, Russia, India, China, and the so-called BRIC countries and so forth, but there are others, too.

The scramble that's occurring over what could in many respects be dwindling resources like water, oil, gas, and so forth, and is going to intensify, and the lack of state entities to deal with that. What started with Westphalia in 1648 and probably came to its fruition with the creation of the United Nations to manage that state's structure even better, especially in times of warfare and development and so forth, and the International Financial Institutions better to fund the building and the flourishing of these state structures and so forth.

What we have now, as Richard would say, is lots of structures out there – if you can even call them structures – that aren't like that. They aren't state structures. Of course, the most prominent ones are Al-Qaeda and ISIS and groups like them which seem to be blooming all over the world.

I would take a little bit of exception to that prognosis, especially that it persists for a long time, simply because of the things that, for example, I heard this morning on a TED Talk by none other than the head of the chief of the Dutch defense force.

He walked on the stage with a rifle and he started talking about a gun and what a gun does. He doesn't like guns. He doesn't like what guns



do. But he understands that guns – in other words, armed forces – are necessary from time to time and that they can be a force for positive, a force for good. I would say the Dutch armed forces sort-of aim at that.

It is a really great talk because it sort of hits the United States and its use of force and its possession of guns up the yin yang. At the same time, it's saying that such security forces he represents and as the United States represents in huge form are necessary, and that they're necessary for protection of this state structure. And I think he's right.

I think if it's done wisely and smartly, if it's done efficiently – which is to say not too much blood and treasure expended in doing it – then we can arrest this tendency within a decade or two, and we can go back – if you will – to the kind of peaceful state structure that seems to, through the state's control of force, do a better job of maintaining an equilibrium in the world or stability under which people can become more prosperous, more successful, exercise their creativity and entrepreneurial rights, and so forth, and ultimately spread people power.

I know that sounds a little utopian, but I think this chief of the Dutch defense force makes sense.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** That's a great speech. I've seen him.

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** I think he's right to a certain extent, and I love the way he was throwing the barbs out as well as the kudos because it's clear that he was saying, "You haven't done that very well. You happen to be the biggest policeman on the block – the United States – but lately you've been shooting people in the back when they were running away with no weapons in their hands."

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Well, I would say it another way as well. Once upon a time I got very interested in understanding the legal and economic nuts and bolts of the Salem witch trials. You know what stopped the Salem witch trials?

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** Tell me.





**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Everybody was so busy going to court that they stopped planting and running their farms. Finally as a group they realized that they were going to starve to death in winter if they didn't grow some food.

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** Wow! That's good! That's the way life works. I like that.

I'm just reading this book by this woman from Roanoke about the furniture guy. It's about the Bassett furniture guy and how the Chinese murdered furniture making in the United States. You know, that's the same thing. Get up off your rear-end. Go out and figure out a way to still survive.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Right.

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** You can't be fighting and getting subsidies and protectionism and tariffs and all this other stuff because all you're doing is creating more pollution and more corruption and more rip-offs. Get up and go to work!

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Right! Exactly.

One other interesting point on the Salem witch trials is the thing that kept it going so long was spectral evidence. Do you know what spectral evidence is?

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** Yes.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** So it was kind of interesting to see what kept it going and then what got it stopped. At some point you have to be useful!

The 2016 elections. What do you think? I always get very frustrated because I think presidential elections in this country take up a huge amount of time and energy, and I have real questions about whether it's

**“You can't be fighting and getting subsidies and protectionism and tariffs and all this other stuff because all you're doing is creating more pollution and more corruption and more rip-offs.”**



productive.

But, it is a time when we can at least get Americans to think about the important issues and talk about them. So what do you think are the national security issues that are going to emerge in these elections? Is there any hope that we'll get an intelligent discussion on a national level?

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** I would hope so, but I don't think so. And what would that consist of? In my mind, first and foremost it would consist of articulating some type of what I'll call – because I'm a military guy – a grand strategy to which the United States is going to hook up its economic engine. That would also include necessarily a revival of that engine.

What you've got to do is say, "What are we wanting to do in the world, and how are we going to refurbish our economy to do it?" You aren't going to do anything of note or of consequence until you have done just that – refurbished your economy. That means \$2, \$3, or \$4 trillion worth of expenditure on infrastructure, it means not building the old infrastructure but building the new infrastructure, and there's where your grand strategy comes in.

What is that new infrastructure? It's got to be sustainable, it's got to be resilient, and it's probably got to be metro-plex oriented – that is urban-oriented and not vast sprawl across the country or in it – and it's got to be light rail oriented, walkable, and bicyclable community oriented, it's got to be light energy footprint oriented, it's got to do away with automobiles and highways and so forth, and it's got to tax waste instead of wealth – at least for an interim period. It's got to do all these things that are going to prepare the US economy to be looked up to this strategy and make this strategy work.

I don't see Marco Rubio, Jeb Bush, Hillary Clinton, or anybody as capable of doing that – or, worse, wanting to do that.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Right. From what I've seen – and I don't really follow it – they're much more interested in the people who believe in monopoly,



not markets.

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** They're more interested in power. Period. And they think that's where the power is. I've got news for them: I've just sat on the Climate Security working group now for a year. I switched over from a collaborative institute on oceans and climate security at UMASS, Boston, and we've been working with DOD. We just did some sea rise charts for coastal installations like Norfolk and Mayport, San Francisco, San Diego, and so forth. Let me tell you, these entities are either going to spend billions of dollars for Netherlands-like water abatement apparatuses, walls, and so forth, or they're going to relocate. This is billions and billions of dollars.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Right.

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** Miami is going to have to do this. We've already got a problem in Norfolk, and we've already got a problem with Langley Air Force Base, which you wouldn't think you would have, where TAC headquarters is because the runways are being flooded.

This is serious. This is real, and it's not mid-century; it's just a few years away.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** I am a regular reader of *The Economist*. I don't know if you ever read their article *The American Aristocracy is Calcifying?* It was the cover about two months ago.

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** I love *The Economist* covers. They are just wonderful!

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** But for the British just looking back and taking a whack that big and hard, front and center, at American leadership, I thought, "Okay, now we're getting somewhere."

There's a recent poll we put up on the site about a month ago from the AP and some associated academics. It shows the only institution in America that has maintained its popular support is the US military.



When surveyed and asked, “Who do you have a great deal of confidence in?” 50% said the US military, 23% said the Supreme Court, and then it went down from there with major media at 10% and 7%.

If you look at Congress and the administration, essentially they’ve lost the support of the population, who is quiet about it, but I would say that American institutions have lost popular support of any kind with the exception of the military.

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** I think to a certain extent you’re right, and I wonder about how much longer the bulk of the people are going to remain quiet about it. I think real unemployment in this country right now, factoring everything, is probably more like about 15%, and probably amongst 30 and below it’s probably somewhere around 18-19%.

How high does it have to get, how bad does life have to get before people start reacting? In some way, unlike Occupy Wall Street, a really well-led effort to change the situation – not unlike that which we saw from people like Eugene Debs and others in the labor movement, as it initially got going against the Tritus of the 1929 fall and so forth.

I’m somewhat perplexed that we have 330 plus million people and we don’t have more visible disquiet in the country. I think it’s simmering.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** I would tell you that the reason is that after defense the biggest investment by government is managing discontent.

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** Yes. Keeping people quiet. You’re right.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Yes, keeping people quiet. Relational database marketing has contributed massively to preventing any effective organization, but I think that the place the effective organization is going to come from is it’s going to come from what I call ‘people on the line’ – people in business and people in government at all levels – who know that we have to be productive.



What's interesting is the issue at the international level is becoming the same at the domestic level, which is people who know how to get things done day to day – the people on the line – know that we have to be productive. They know that we have to be useful. We can't just sit around and waste and insist on more government money. That's not going to work anymore. That game is up.

Who knows what happens, but one of the things I know is we either grow food or we starve, one way or another.

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** I think you're right. This effort now relocated from Washington and out to Case Western Reserve called the Strategic Innovation Lab, which is trying to do some of the things I referred to earlier, I think they've given up – not totally, but to a certain extent. They're going after governors, they're going after mayors, and they're going after CEOs, and the bigger the business the better in terms of its power and its money and everything, and they're attracting them now.

**“Who knows what happens, but one of the things I know is we either grow food or we starve, one way or another.”**

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Right.

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** The latest catch, I guess, was Exxon-Mobil. They're beginning to understand what you just said, that something needs to be done. Otherwise, we're going to have to stop eating.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** I'll tell you one of the insights. Dr. Joseph Farrell and I were at a workshop last year. He stood up and he said, “Bach, when he wrote music, would generally compose on 28 tracks.” He said, “If you listen to Bach's harpsichord music, you're listening to 28 tracks. If you listen to a lot of music in America, you're listening to one track.”

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** Yes.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** He said, “If you look at the political discussion and



education in this country, Americans have been taught to think in one track or a few tracks, and yet we're living in a 28-track world."

What I keep hearing our allies come back and say to us is, "Look, we're managing a 28-track situation. Will you guys get out of your one-track spin? Let's get to work."

If you look at what needs to be done, it's lots of different kinds of stuff. It's complex. It's 28 tracks.

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** Yes. Those military analogies with multiple chess games going on at once, you've got to play in at least ten. The picture we drew is of what you might call a ceramic tower, and there was a chess game going on at each level of that tower – about 30 chess games – and you had to play in each one of them all the time.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Right. Okay. Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson is an educator. Clearly if we're going to make a turn, one of the things we have to do is help young people understand what's going on and what the issues are coming into that turn.

You've been teaching. So you've dealt with this in a military leadership position, and you've dealt with it at the highest levels of government. Now you're trying to teach the kids. What do we do to help young people assume their leadership role in this situation?

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** I think one of the most important things we can do, and the infinitesimal contribution I'm making to this I hope is nonetheless along these lines, is to teach them to teach themselves. That's the most important thing I've learned in education. When you get to this level in seminars with eight to ten students, they've got to teach themselves more than you lecturing to them that what they need to become is responsible citizens.

Responsible citizens means a number of things. It means they are not apathetic, it means they are concerned about serious issues confronting their country, it means that they are willing to do public service and to



change the public service that they criticize and see so much wrong with.

It means that they go into the Peace Corps for a year and get some experience before they come back and get a master's degree in whatever it might be, and then go and do something, which is what most of my students are doing. Or they're going into the National Security Agency, or they're going into the CIA or they're going into the FBI, and they're going in with their eyes open.

"I'm going in here to reform – as much as it is in my power to do so – this organization. I'm going in here with the idea that the National Security Agency is going to obey the law or I'm going to rat on them." It's that sort of thing.

You can call it rebellion. You can call it revolutionary. I don't look at it that way. I look at it as training, and mostly educating because training is skills enhancement and educating is critical thinking. It's developing the kind of critical thinking that these young men and women need, and they've got the energy. They've got the dynamism and they've got the capability – intellectual and otherwise – to change what we've been talking about for the better, and to convince them that it can be done.

Whether they're going to be small business operators or like one young person who I just sent off to Goldman Sachs, he's already gone to New York and he's already making about \$150,000 a year and he's feeling good about it.

I said, "Harrison, you're going to come back and you're going to do public service. If you stay at Goldman I'm going to find you and hang you."

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** You know, it used to be – once upon a time – that on Wall Street there was a tradition of public service and people were expected to cycle through, not so they could come back and make more money but because they could serve.

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** Not like Hank Paulson and Bob Rubin





and Timothy Diker and go back to make the playing field better for their rape, pillage, and plunder when they leave.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** You know, it's really funny. I grew up in a culture – both in my family and on Wall Street – where important people competed. My father reinvented the emergency room system for the country. I had an uncle who introduced transplants to South Carolina, and another grandfather who brought penicillin to Tennessee. The whole competition was, “Well, what important thing have you done? How is mankind better?” We competed about really big things.

If you came to the dinner table and said, “I got a bonus check,” everybody would look at you like, “What a wienie!”

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** Wow! You had one heck of a family!

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Oh, you know, I had a heck of a family, but no one ever heard their name; they were invisible. You know what I mean? You didn't try to get fame. You didn't try to get money. You tried to have the biggest impact.

Looking at this culture now, I think, “Oh my God! If I was a young person growing up in this culture, if the only thing somebody can come up with is for me to go off and make a whole bunch of money, what a pathetic life!”

I've run companies, and when you tell people, “Our goal is to make money,” they don't know what to do. They get depressed and tired. Do you know what I mean? It's a measurement.

It's like telling a home builder that his goal is to get the most hammer as possible.

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** Right. I had a debate. Actually, I won't call it a 'debate'. We had a discussion in my seminar yesterday. John Henry Cardinal Newman's original conception of the university I put forward. I said, “Think about it for a moment. This flat-hat article here,”



which is the William & Mary student paper, “about choosing your university based on how much money you’re going to make and how much money it costs you to go to your university. I’m not going to defend tuition, but I am going to stand up here and tell you that the purpose of learning to think critically is not to make money, and that’s a parable.”

**“You’ve got to have an educated public to have a democracy. Period.”**

You’ve got to have an educated public to have a democracy. Period. If you don’t have an educated public, you don’t have a democracy.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Well, you don’t have a civilization.

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** On a broader scale you are absolutely right.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** So I’m going to tell you my weak spot. If you want to make me spitting mad to the point of incoherence, all you have to do is ask me the question, “Why is nobody doing anything?”

When you get under my skin that way, you get a big speech about how that is the most ridiculous thing I’ve heard. And the one example I always use is for people who are fearless in Washington and in the country for policy issues is Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson.

So I have to thank you because you have been my battering ram for many years when somebody says, “Nobody is doing anything.” Frankly I don’t know how you get away with being as fearless as you do, but thank God you do. Keep it up, and if there is anything we can do to help...

When we allocate more money for infrastructure, put some of it in for telecommunication systems.

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** Oh, don’t get me started on that!

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** No, no. Notice I didn’t even go there! There are some of us



who would like a telecommunication system that served the customer and small business.

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** Yes.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Anyway, Colonel Wilkerson, I can't thank you enough. In closing, just give us a few words about how we keep up with you and keep up with your work.

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** Oh, wow! I hope everyone will buy my book when it comes out. I'm trying to finish it. I hope I finish it this year. I don't even know what the title is going to be yet, but it's going to be all about how Black Eisenhower, if you will, rose to the pinnacle of military and then diplomatic power in the United States, and at the same time aided and abetted – along with his friend, the army colonel – the completion of the state-building effort that followed World War II and culminated in what we have today, the National Security State.

Other places where you might hear about me with regard to Cuba, with regard to Iran and negotiations and so forth, and from time to time I'm going to New Hampshire next week. Actually I'm leaving tomorrow for New Hampshire and then Iowa and then Texas to talk about the military-industrial complex and what it's doing to our economy and to our world. The most prolific myth in this country promoted by everyone who has anything to do with that complex is that spending on the military is economically productive. That's nonsense; it isn't. It's necessary, to a certain extent, for our security and we should accept that, but it's not productive for the economy and we should try to trim it when and where we can, and we should particularly try to trim things that aren't even productive for the military.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Right. Absolutely. Well, Colonel Wilkerson, thank you again and have a great day. And let us know as soon as the book is available for order.

**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON:** I'll do that. Thank you.



#### **DISCLAIMER**

Nothing on The Solari Report should be taken as individual investment advice. Anyone seeking investment advice for his or her personal financial situation is advised to seek out a qualified advisor or advisors and provide as much information as possible to the advisor in order that such advisor can take into account all relevant circumstances, objectives, and risks before rendering an opinion as to the appropriate investment strategy.