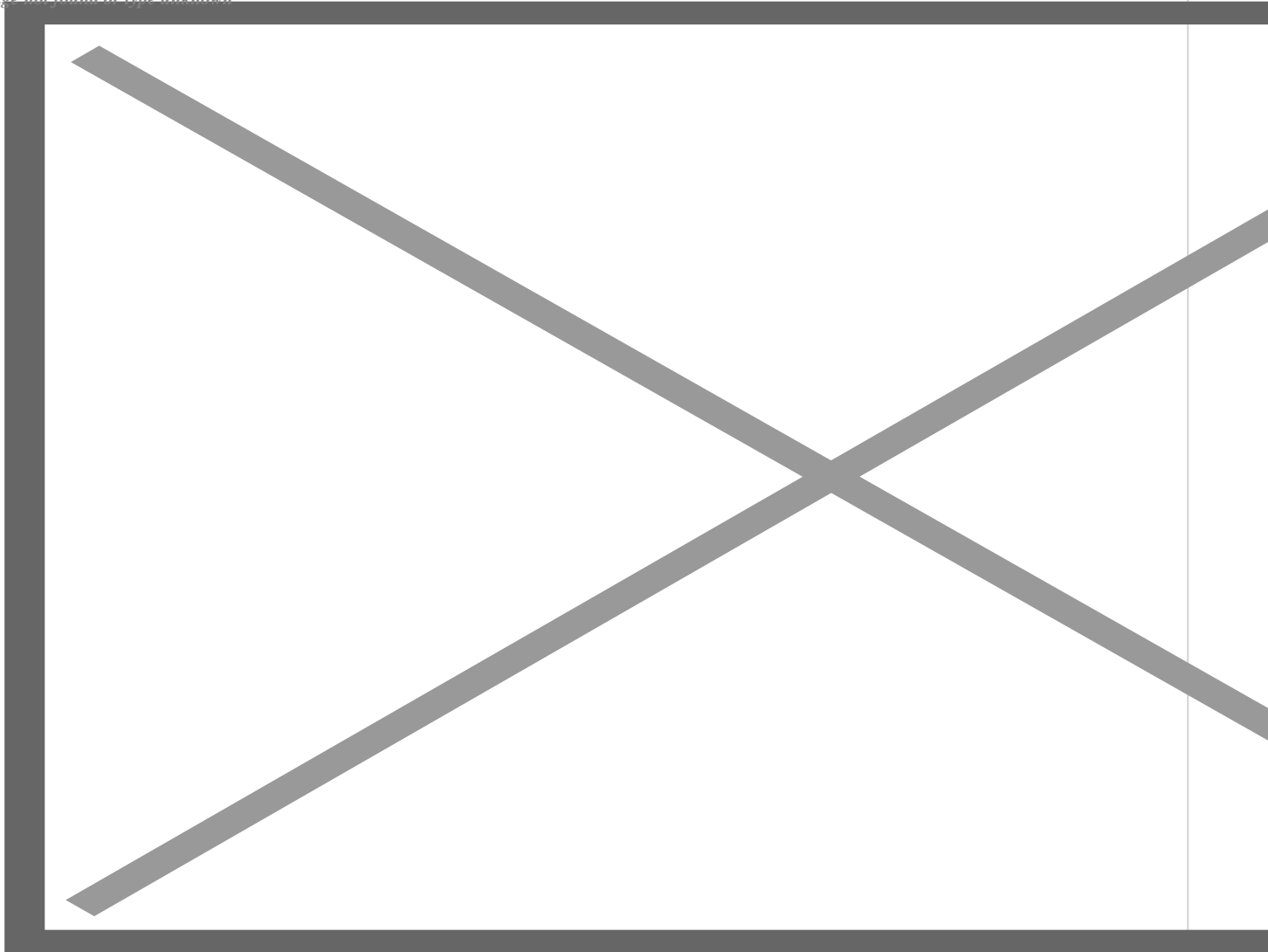


Former Bush official says U.S. is a "state of war"

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Lawrence B. Wilkerson, former chief of staff to US Secretary of State Colin Powell. (Photo: Internet)

New York, February 12 (RHC)-- Lawrence B. Wilkerson, former chief of staff to U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell, believes that the United States is a "state of war" as the country has been engaged in numerous wars during the past 30 years.

“The U.S. has engaged -- publicly -- Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Pakistan, Syria, Iran, and Yemen and, non-publicly, some 6-9 other countries with drones, special operations force, or covert operations, ranging from Mali to Venezuela. That is a warfare state,” Wilkerson said in an interview with Press TV.

In September last year, Wilkerson told CBC Radio the Pentagon’s ever-expanding military budget is ruining America. The US sold more weapons than any other country in the world, at a greater total billion-dollar figure than ever before. Wilkerson also told Press TV that it was not easy to stop the U.S. wars in the region because of the high amount of money military contractors make “in Saudi Arabia, in Kuwait, and in Bahrain, and Qatar.”

Since around the mid-1990s, something like over \$21 trillion supposedly for national defense went down a black hole of waste, fraud, and abuse, Stephen Lendman has said. He went on to say that much of what shapes the US foreign policy behavior towards the Middle East is Israel.

The U.S. Military-Industrial-Congressional Complex is “in control of the Executive and the Legislative branches of government, and even -- through the FISA Court -- in control of a part of the Judicial branch,” he stated. “This control shows up particularly profoundly in US policy and actions toward the Levant. Much of this is because of Israel, but it is augmented greatly by the sums of money being made by military contractors in Saudi Arabia, in Kuwait, and in Bahrain, and Qatar.”

“With so much money pouring in it is difficult to stop and to recall the military apparatus. Ironically, since this money is going largely into private bank accounts, the US aggregate debt is now closer to \$27T than to \$22T,” he added. Elsewhere in his remarks, he pointed to some domestic issues including white supremacy and rampant racism as well as misdistribution of wealth in the country which should be resolved.

“The U.S. has to defeat the cultural defects now showing their ugly heads once again in its midst -- white supremacy, fundamentalist Christianity, and rampant racism. “It also must reshape its hyper capitalist economy, now having created the worst misdistribution of wealth in America’s history, so that its current inequality regime is ameliorated and the middle classes are saved. Without these critical improvements, the U.S. will never meet the challenges of the climate crisis, the existential threat confronting us all.” He also said that the U.S. is “perilously close” to losing its democracy.

Lawrence Wilkerson's last positions in government were as Secretary of State Colin Powell's Chief of Staff (2002-05), Associate Director of the State Department's Policy Planning staff under the directorship of Ambassador Richard N. Haass, and member of that staff responsible for East Asia and the Pacific, political-military and legislative affairs (2001-02). Before serving at the State Department, Wilkerson served 31 years in the U.S. Army. During that time, he was a member of the faculty of the U.S. Naval War College (1987 to 1989), Special Assistant to General Powell when he was Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (1989-93), and Director and Deputy Director of the US Marine Corps War College at Quantico, Virginia (1993-97). Wilkerson retired from active service in 1997 as a colonel, and began work as an advisor to General Powell. He has also taught national security affairs in the Honors Program at the George Washington University. He is currently working on a book about the first George W. Bush administration.

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