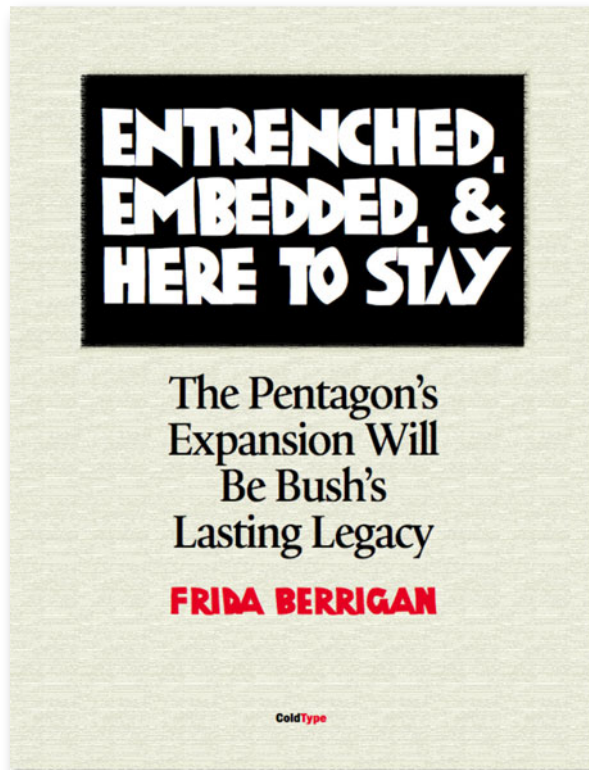


**ENTRENCHED,
EMBEDDED, &
HERE TO STAY**

The Pentagon's
Expansion Will
Be Bush's
Lasting Legacy

FRIDA BERRIGAN



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This essay originally appeared at www.tomdispatch.com

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A FULL-FLEDGED COTTAGE INDUSTRY is already focused on those who eagerly await the end of the Bush administration, offering calendars, magnets, and t-shirts for sale as well as counters and graphics to download onto blogs and websites. But when the countdown ends and George W. Bush vacates the Oval Office, he will leave a legacy to contend with. Certainly, he wills to his successor a world marred by war and battered by deprivation, but perhaps his most enduring legacy is now deeply embedded in Washington-area politics – a Pentagon metastasized almost beyond recognition.

The Pentagon's massive bulk-up these last seven years will not be easily unbuilt, no matter who dons the presidential mantle on January 19, 2009. "The Pentagon" is now so much more than a five-sided building across the Potomac from Washington or even the seat of the Department of Defense. In many ways, it defies description or labeling.

Who, today, even remembers the debate at the end of the Cold War about what role U.S. military power should play in a "unipolar" world? Was U.S. supremacy so well established, pundits were then asking, that Washington could rely on softer economic and cultural power, with military power no more than a backup (and a domestic "peace dividend" thrown into the bargain)? Or was the U.S. to strap on the six-guns of a global sheriff and police the world as the fountainhead of "humanitarian interventions"? Or was it the moment to boldly declare ourselves the world's sole superpower and wield a high-tech military comparable to none, actively discouraging any other power or power bloc from even considering future rivalry?

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The attacks of September 11, 2001 decisively ended that debate. The Bush administration promptly declared total war on every front – against peoples, ideologies, and, above all, “terrorism” (a tactic of the weak). That very September, administration officials proudly leaked the information that they were ready to “target” up to 60 other nations and the terrorist movements within them.

The Pentagon’s “footprint” was to be firmly planted, military base by military base, across the planet, with a special emphasis on its energy heartlands. Top administration officials began preparing the Pentagon to go anywhere and do anything, while rewriting, shredding, or ignoring whatever laws, national or international, stood in the way. In 2002, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld officially articulated a new U.S. military posture that, in conception, was little short of revolutionary. It was called – in classic Pentagon shorthand – the 1-4-2-1 Defense Strategy (replacing the Clinton administration’s already none-too-modest plan to be prepared to fight two major wars – in the Middle East and Northeast Asia – simultaneously).

Theoretically, this strategy meant that the Pentagon was to prepare to defend the United States, while building forces capable of deterring aggression and coercion in four “critical regions” (Europe, Northeast Asia, East Asia, and the Middle East). It would be able to defeat aggression in two of these regions simultaneously and “win decisively” in one of those conflicts “at a time and place of our choosing.” Hence 1-4-2-1.

And that was just going to be the beginning. We had, by then, already entered the new age of the Mega-Pentagon. Almost six years later, the scale of that institution’s expansion has yet to be fully grasped, so let’s look at just seven of the major ways in which the Pentagon has experienced mission creep – and leap – dwarfing other institutions of government in the process.

1. THE BUDGET-BUSTING PENTAGON

The Pentagon’s core budget – already a staggering \$300 billion when George W. Bush took the presidency – has almost doubled while he’s been parked behind the big desk in the Oval Office. For fiscal year 2009, the regular Pentagon budget will total roughly \$541 billion (including work on nuclear warheads and naval reactors at the Department of Energy).

The Bush administration has presided over one of the largest military buildups in the history of the United States. And that’s before we even count “war spending.” If the direct costs of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the Global War on Terror, are factored in, “defense” spending has essentially tripled.

As of February 2008, according to the Congressional Budget Office, lawmakers have

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appropriated \$752 billion for the Iraq war and occupation, ongoing military operations in Afghanistan, and other activities associated with the Global War on Terror. The Pentagon estimates that it will need another \$170 billion for fiscal 2009, which means, at \$922 billion, that direct war spending since 2001 would be at the edge of the trillion-dollar mark.

As New York Times columnist Bob Herbert has pointed out, if a stack of bills roughly six inches high is worth \$1 million; then, a \$1 billion stack would be as tall as the Washington Monument, and a \$1 trillion stack would be 95 miles high. And note that none of these war-fighting funds are even counted as part of the annual military budget, but are raised from Congress in the form of "emergency supplementals" a few times a year.

With the war added to the Pentagon's core budget, the United States now spends nearly as much on military matters as the rest of the world combined. Military spending also throws all other parts of the federal budget into shadow, representing 58 cents of every dollar spent by the federal government on "discretionary programs" (those that Congress gets to vote up or down on an annual basis).

The total Pentagon budget represents more than our combined spending on education, environmental protection, justice administration, veteran's benefits, housing assistance, transportation, job training, agriculture, energy, and economic development. No wonder, then, that, as it collects ever more money, the Pentagon is taking on (or taking over) ever more functions and roles.

2. THE PENTAGON AS DIPLOMAT

The Bush administration has repeatedly exhibited its disdain for discussion and compromise, treaties and agreements, and an equally deep admiration for what can be won by threat and force. No surprise, then, that the White House's foreign policy agenda has increasingly been directed through the military. With a military budget more than 30 times that of all State Department operations and non-military foreign aid put together, the Pentagon has marched into State's two traditional strongholds – diplomacy and development – duplicating or replacing much of its work, often by refocusing Washington's diplomacy around military-to-military, rather than diplomat-to-diplomat, relations.

Since the late eighteenth century, the U.S. ambassador in any country has been considered the president's personal representative, responsible for ensuring that foreign policy goals are met. As one ambassador explained; "The rule is: if you're in country, you work for the ambassador. If you don't work for the ambassador, you don't get country clearance."

In the Bush era, the Pentagon has overturned this model. According to a 2006 Congressional report by Senator Richard Lugar (R-IN), Embassies as Command Posts in the

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Anti-Terror Campaign, civilian personnel in many embassies now feel occupied by, outnumbered by, and subordinated to military personnel. They see themselves as the second team when it comes to decision-making. Even Defense Secretary Robert Gates is aware of the problem, noting as he did last November that there are "only about 6,600 professional Foreign Service officers – less than the manning for one aircraft carrier strike group." But, typically, he added that, while the State Department might need more resources, "Don't get me wrong, I'll be asking for yet more money for Defense next year." Another ambassador lamented that his foreign counterparts are "following the money" and developing relationships with U.S. military personnel rather than cultivating contacts with their State Department counterparts.

The Pentagon invariably couches its bureaucratic imperialism in terms of "interagency cooperation." For example, last year U.S. Southern Command (Southcom) released Command Strategy 2016, a document which identified poverty, crime, and corruption as key "security" problems in Latin America. It suggested that Southcom, a security command, should, in fact, be the "central actor in addressing... regional problems" previously the concern of civilian agencies. It then touted itself as the future focus of a "joint interagency security command... in support of security, stability and prosperity in the region."

As Southcom head Admiral James Stavridis vividly put the matter, the command now likes to see itself as "a big Velcro cube that these other agencies can hook to so we can collectively do what needs to be done in this region."

The Pentagon has generally followed this pattern globally since 2001. But what does "cooperation" mean when one entity dwarfs all others in personnel, resources, and access to decision-makers, while increasingly controlling the very definition of the "threats" to be dealt with.

3. THE PENTAGON AS ARMS DEALER

In the Bush years, the Pentagon has aggressively increased its role as the planet's foremost arms dealer, pumping up its weapons sales everywhere it can – and so seeding the future with war and conflict.

By 2006 (the last year for which full data is available), the United States alone accounted for more than half the world's trade in arms with \$14 billion in sales. Noteworthy were a \$5 billion deal for F-16s to Pakistan and a \$5.8 billion agreement to completely reequip Saudi Arabia's internal security force. U.S. arms sales for 2006 came in at roughly twice the level of any previous year of the Bush administration.

Number two arms dealer, Russia, registered a comparatively paltry \$5.8 billion in deliver-

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ies, just over a third of the U.S. arms totals. Ally Great Britain was third at \$3.3 billion – and those three countries account for a whopping 85% of the weaponry sold that year, more than 70% of which went to the developing world.

Great at selling weapons, the Pentagon is slow to report its sales. Arms sales notifications issued by the Pentagon's Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) do, however, offer one crude way to take the Department of Defense's pulse; and, while not all reported deals are finalized, that pulse is clearly racing. Through May of 2008, DSCA had already issued more than \$9.1 billion in arms sales notifications including smart bomb kits for Saudi Arabia, TOW missiles for Kuwait, F-16 combat aircraft for Romania, and Chinook helicopters for Canada.

To maintain market advantage, the Pentagon never stops its high-pressure campaigns to peddle weapons abroad. That's why, despite a broken shoulder, Secretary of Defense Gates took to the skies in February, to push weapons systems on countries like India and Indonesia, key growing markets for Pentagon arms dealers.

4. THE PENTAGON AS INTELLIGENCE ANALYST AND SPY

In the area of "intelligence," the Pentagon's expansion – the commandeering of information and analysis roles – has been swift, clumsy, and catastrophic.

Tracing the Pentagon's take-over of intelligence is no easy task. For one thing, there are dozens of Pentagon agencies and offices that now collect and analyze information using everything from "humint" (human intelligence) to wiretaps and satellites. The task is only made tougher by the secrecy that surrounds U.S. intelligence operations and the "black budgets" into which so much intelligence money disappears.

But the end results are clear enough. The Pentagon's takeover of intelligence has meant fewer intelligence analysts who speak Arabic, Farsi, or Pashto and more dog-and-pony shows like those four-star generals and three-stripe admirals mouthing administration-approved talking points on cable news and the Sunday morning talk shows.

Intelligence budgets are secret, so what we know about them is not comprehensive – but the glimpses analysts have gotten suggest that total intelligence spending was about \$26 billion a decade ago. After 9/11, Congress pumped a lot of new money into intelligence so that by 2003, the total intelligence budget had already climbed to more than \$40 billion.

In 2004, the 9/11 Commission highlighted the intelligence failures of the Central Intelligence Agency and others in the alphabet soup of the U.S. Intelligence Community charged with collecting and analyzing information on threats to the country. Congress then passed an intelligence "reform" bill, establishing the Office of the Director of National

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Intelligence, designed to manage intelligence operations. Thanks to stiff resistance from pro-military lawmakers, the National Intelligence Directorate never assumed that role, however, and the Pentagon kept control of three key collection agencies – the National Security Agency, the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, and the National Reconnaissance Agency.

As a result, according to Tim Shorrock, investigative journalist and author of *Spies for Hire: The Secret World of Intelligence Outsourcing*, the Pentagon now controls more than 80% of U.S. intelligence spending, which he estimated at about \$60 billion in 2007. As Mel Goodman, former CIA official and now an analyst at the Center for International Policy, observed, "The Pentagon has been the big bureaucratic winner in all of this."

It is such a big winner that CIA Director Michael Hayden now controls only the budget for the CIA itself – about \$4 or 5 billion a year and no longer even gives the President his daily helping of intelligence.

The Pentagon's intelligence shadow looms large well beyond the corridors of Washington's bureaucracies. It stretches across the mountains of Afghanistan as well. After the U.S. invaded that country in 2001, Defense Secretary Rumsfeld recognized that, unless the Pentagon controlled information-gathering and took the lead in carrying out covert operations, it would remain dependent on – and therefore subordinate to – the Central Intelligence Agency with its grasp of "on-the-ground" intelligence.

In one of his now infamous memos, labeled "snowflakes" by a staff that watched them regularly flutter down from on high, he asserted that, if the War on Terror was going to stretch far into the future, he did not want to continue the Pentagon's "near total dependence on the CIA." And so Rumsfeld set up a new, directly competitive organization, the Pentagon's Strategic Support Branch, which put the intelligence gathering components of the U.S. Special Forces under one roof reporting directly to him. (Many in the intelligence community saw the office as illegitimate, but Rumsfeld was riding high and they were helpless to do anything.)

As Seymour Hersh, who repeatedly broke stories in the *New Yorker* on the Pentagon's misdeeds in the Global War on Terror, wrote in January 2005, the Bush administration had already "consolidated control over the military and intelligence communities' strategic analyses and covert operations to a degree unmatched since the rise of the post-Second World War II national-security state."

In the rush to invade Iraq, the civilians running the Pentagon also fused the administration's propaganda machine with military intelligence. In 2002, Undersecretary of Defense Douglas Feith established the Office of Special Plans (OSP) in the Pentagon to provide "actionable information" to White House policymakers. Using existing intelligence reports "scrubbed" of qualifiers like "probably" or "may," or sometimes simply fabricated ones, the

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office was able to turn worst-case scenarios about Saddam Hussein's supposed programs to develop weapons of mass destruction into fact, and then, through leaks, use the news media to validate them.

Former CIA Director Robert Gates, who took over the Pentagon when Donald Rumsfeld resigned in November 2006, has been critical of the Pentagon's "dominance" in intelligence and "the decline in the CIA's central role." He has also signaled his intention to rollback the Pentagon's long intelligence shadow; but, even if he is serious, he will have his work cut out for him. In the meantime, the Pentagon continues to churn out "intelligence" which is, politely put, suspect – from torture-induced confessions of terrorism suspects to exposés of the Iranian origins of sophisticated explosive devices found in Iraq.

5. THE PENTAGON AS DOMESTIC DISASTER MANAGER

When the deciders in Washington start seeing the Pentagon as the world's problem solver, strange things happen. In fact, in the Bush years, the Pentagon has become the official first responder of last resort in case of just about any disaster – from tornadoes, hurricanes, and floods to civil unrest, potential outbreaks of disease, or possible biological or chemical attacks. In 2002, in a telltale sign of Pentagon mission creep, President Bush established the first domestic military command since the civil war, the U.S. Northern Command (Northcom). Its mission: the "preparation for, prevention of, deterrence of, preemption of, defense against, and response to threats and aggression directed towards U.S. territory, sovereignty, domestic population, and infrastructure; as well as crisis management, consequence management, and other domestic civil support."

If it sounds like a tall order, it is.

In the last six years, Northcom has been remarkably unsuccessful at anything but expanding its theoretical reach. The command was initially assigned 1,300 Defense Department personnel, but has since grown into a force of more than 15,000. Even criticism only seems to strengthen its domestic role. For example, an April 2008 Government Accountability Office report found that Northcom had failed to communicate effectively with state and local leaders or National Guard units about its newly developed disaster and terror response plans. The result? Northcom says it will have its first brigade-sized unit of military personnel trained to help local authorities respond to chemical, biological, or nuclear incidents by this fall. Mark your calendars

More than anything else, Northcom has provided the Pentagon with the opening it needed to move forcefully into domestic disaster areas previously handled by national, state and local civilian authorities.

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For example, Northcom's deputy director, Brigadier General Robert Felderman, boasts that the command is now the United States's "global synchronizer – the global coordinator – for pandemic influenza across the combatant commands." Similarly, Northcom is now hosting annual hurricane preparation conferences and assuring anyone who will listen that it is "prepared to fully engage" in future Katrina-like situations "in order to save lives, reduce suffering and protect infrastructure."

Of course, at present, the Pentagon is the part of the government gobbling up the funds that might otherwise be spent shoring up America's Depression-era public works, ensuring that the Pentagon will have failure aplenty to respond to in the future.

The American Society for Civil Engineers, for example, estimates that \$1.6 trillion is badly needed to bring the nation's infrastructure up to protectable snuff, or \$320 billion a year for the next five years. Assessing present water systems, roads, bridges, and dams nationwide, the engineers gave the infrastructure a series of C and D grades.

In the meantime, the military is marching in. Katrina, for instance, made landfall on August 29, 2005. President Bush ordered troops deployed to New Orleans on September 2nd to coordinate the delivery of food and water and to serve as a deterrent against looting and violence. Less than a month later, President Bush asked Congress to shift responsibility for major future disasters from state governments and the Department of Homeland Security to the Pentagon. The next month, President Bush again offered the military as his solution – this time to global fears about outbreaks of the avian flu virus. He suggested that, to enforce a quarantine, "One option is the use of the military that's able to plan and move."

Already sinking under the weight of its expansion and two draining wars, many in the military have been cool to such suggestions, as has a Congress concerned about maintaining states' rights and civilian control. Offering the military as the solution to domestic natural disasters and flu outbreaks means giving other first responders the budgetary short shrift. It is unlikely, however, that Northcom, now riding the money train, will go quietly into oblivion in the years to come.

6. THE PENTAGON AS HUMANITARIAN CAREGIVER ABROAD

The U.S. Agency for International Development and the State Department have traditionally been tasked with responding to disaster abroad; but, from Indonesia's tsunami-ravaged shores to Myanmar after the recent cyclone, natural catastrophe has become another presidential opportunity to "send in the Marines" (so to speak). The Pentagon has increasingly taken up humanitarian planning, gaining an ever larger share of U.S. humanitarian missions abroad.

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From Kenya to Afghanistan, from the Philippines to Peru, the U.S. military is also now regularly the one building schools and dental clinics, repairing roads and shoring up bridges, tending to sick children and doling out much needed cash and food stuffs, all civilian responsibilities once upon a time.

The Center for Global Development finds that the Pentagon's share of "official development assistance" – think "winning hearts and minds" or "nation-building" – has increased from 6% to 22% between 2002 and 2005. The Pentagon is fast taking over development from both the NGO-community and civilian agencies, slapping a smiley face on military operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and beyond.

Despite the obvious limitations of turning a force trained to kill and destroy into a cadre of caregivers, the Pentagon's mili-humanitarian project got a big boost from the cash that was seized from Saddam Hussein's secret coffers. Some of it was doled out to local American commanders to be used to deal with immediate Iraqi needs and seal deals in the months after Baghdad fell in April 2003. What was initially an ad hoc program now has an official name – the Commander Emergency Response Program (CERP) – and a line in the Pentagon budget.

Before the House Budget Committee last summer, Gordon England, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, told members of Congress that the CERP was a "particularly effective initiative," explaining that the program provided "limited but immediately available funds" to military commanders which they could spend "to make a concrete difference in people's daily lives." This, he claimed, was now a "key part of the broader counter insurgency approach." He added that it served the purpose of "complementing security initiatives" and that it was so successful many commanders consider it "the most powerful weapon in their arsenal."

In fact, the Pentagon doesn't do humanitarian work very well. In Afghanistan, for instance, food-packets dropped by U.S. planes were the same color as the cluster munitions also dropped by U.S. planes; while schools and clinics built by U.S. forces often became targets before they could even be put into use. In Iraq, money doled out to the Pentagon's sectarian-group-of-the-week for wells and generators turned out to be just as easily spent on explosives and AK-47s.

7. THE PENTAGON AS GLOBAL VICEROY AND RULER OF THE HEAVENS

In the Bush years, the Pentagon finished dividing the globe into military "commands," which are functionally viceroyalties. True, even before 9/11, it was hard to imagine a place on the globe where the United States military was not, but until recently, the continent of Africa largely qualified.

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Along with the creation of Northcom, however, the establishment of the U.S. Africa Command (Africom) in 2008 officially filled in the last Pentagon empty spot on the map. A key military document, the 2006 National Security Strategy for the United States signaled the move, asserting that "Africa holds growing geo-strategic importance and is a high-priority of this administration." (Think: oil and other key raw materials.)

In the meantime, funding for Africa under the largest U.S. military aid program, Foreign Military Financing, doubled from \$10 to \$20 million between 2000 and 2006, and the number of recipient nations grew from two to 14. Military training funding increased by 35% in that same period (rising from \$8.1 million to \$11 million). Now, the militaries of 47 African nations receive U.S. training.

In Pentagon planning terms, Africom has unified the continent for the first time. (Only Egypt remains under the aegis of the U.S. Central Command.) According to President Bush, this should "enhance our efforts to bring peace and security to the people of Africa and promote our common goals of development, health, education, democracy, and economic growth in Africa."

Theresa Whelan, assistant secretary of defense for African affairs, continues to insist that Africom has been formed neither to facilitate the fighting of wars ("engaging kinetically in Africa"), nor to divvy up the continent's raw materials in the style of nineteenth century colonialism. "This is not," she says, "about a scramble for the continent." But about one thing there can be no question: It is about increasing the global reach of the Pentagon.

Meanwhile, should the Earth not be enough, there are always the heavens to control. In August 2006, building on earlier documents like the 1998 U.S. Space Command's Vision for 2020 (which called for a policy of "full spectrum dominance"), the Bush administration unveiled its "national space policy." It advocated establishing, defending, and enlarging U.S. control over space resources and argued for "unhindered" rights in space – unhindered, that is, by international agreements preventing the weaponization of space. The document also asserted that "freedom of action in space is as important to the United States as air power and sea power."

As the document put it, "In the new century, those who effectively utilize space will enjoy added prosperity and security and will hold a substantial advantage over those who do not." (The leaders of China, Russia, and other major states undoubtedly heard the loud slap of a gauntlet being thrown down.) At the moment, the Bush administration's rhetoric and plans outstrip the resources being devoted to space weapons technology, but in the recently announced budget, the President allocated nearly a billion dollars to space-based weapons programs.

Of all the frontiers of expansion, perhaps none is more striking than the Pentagon's sorties into the future. Does the Department of Transportation offer a Vision for 2030? Does the

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Environmental Protection Agency develop plans for the next fifty years? Does the Department of Health and Human Services have a team of power-point professionals working up dynamic graphics for what services for the elderly will look like in 2050?

These agencies project budgets just around the corner of the next decade. Only the Pentagon projects power and possibility decades into the future, colonizing the imagination with scads of different scenarios under which, each year, it will continue to control hundreds of billions of taxpayer dollars.

Complex 2030, Vision 2020, UAV Roadmap 2030, the Army's Future Combat Systems – the names, which seem unending, tell the tale.

As the clock ticks down to November 4, 2008, a lot of people are investing hope (as well as money and time) in the possibility of change at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. But when it comes to the Pentagon, don't count too heavily on change, no matter who the new president may be. After all, seven years, four months, and a scattering of days into the Bush presidency, the Pentagon is deeply entrenched in Washington and still aggressively expanding. It has developed a taste for unrivaled power and unequaled access to the treasure of this country. It is an institution that has escaped the checks and balances of the nation.



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