

## PM: Known Knowns and Known Unknowns

By Polly Mann

According to a September 2016, report of Dr. Neta Crawford, professor of political science at Brown University, the U.S. military interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan have cost taxpayers nearly \$5 trillion (“Costs of War,” Watson Institute of International and Public Affairs, Brown University). This is in addition to a widely reported astounding fact: a recent Inspector General's audit report showed that \$6.5 trillion in “defense” spending could not be accounted for. How much housing, food, medical care, and education could have been provided for with these trillions?



*Dr. Neta Crawford, Brown University.*

In addition, separate reporting by the U.K.-based, Action on Armed Violence, found that the Pentagon could only account for 48% of the small arms shipped to Iraq and Afghanistan since 9/11 meaning that more than half of the approximately 700,000 guns the U.S. sent overseas in the past 15 years are now missing. On October 30, Canadian-based Global Research published documentation showing how the Pentagon and U.S. allies channel weapons and ammunition through the illicit arms trade to “moderate” terrorists working to overthrow the government of Syria.

Then there is the known weapons trade. in foreign sales. Israel couldn't expect that the U.S. cash cow was going to go on ad infinitum. President Obama found a way to stay on the good side of Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and keep faith in the U.S. weapons industry as well as the Israeli lobby, both of which, by and large, determine U.S. foreign policy. While Israel's government continues a brutal siege on Gaza and continues to bulldoze Palestinian homes for land grabs, Obama allocated \$38 billion for 10 years to that benevolent bastion of the Middle East (\$3.8 billion per year beginning in 2018), effectively giving the Israel government even more money in U.S. foreign aid. However, there's a little catch: Israel must spend the money on arms which have to be manufactured in the U.S. Altogether, this is quite a coup, resulting in the good will of the U.S. weapons manufacturers while the Zionist lobby may be placated till 2028.

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