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# The Solari Report

March 29, 2018

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What's Next?  
With  
Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson**





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**C. Austin Fitts:** Ladies and gentlemen, I want to welcome back to The Solari Report a man who really needs no introduction. His name is Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson. He served with great distinction in the military, both in line military and administrative, and then in the Bush Administration he served as Chief of Staff to Colin Powell as Secretary of State. So, he certainly knows the US State Department well, and is now a professor of government and public policy at the College of William and Mary, and has spoken very forthrightly for many years on what is happening with the National Security State.

Before I bring him on, I want to say that he made the most prescient comments during the campaign. He described the extent to which the entire US economy and global economy is dependent on the US National Security State and the war machine. The question was: Could any candidate make a difference?

I must say that in watching what is happening this is extremely pertinent to his comments. So, Colonel Wilkerson, welcome back to The Solari Report.

**Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson:** It's good to be back with you, Catherine.



**Fitts:** We've had a tremendous number of personnel changes, and I would love to walk through them and discuss with you about what your impressions are. We see Tillerson leaving the State Department yesterday, having essentially been fired the week before, and we see Pompeo from the CIA nominated to be the new Secretary of State, and now Bolton coming in as National Security Advisor. McMaster is out after many rumors about that happening.

What does this offer for both the CIA and State Department? What do these changes mean?

**Wilkerson:** I said earlier in the Trump Administration's first year, that when we started seeing sane and sober people leave the Administration, we should grow even more concerned. I think that is true, and I think the people who are coming in should deepen the concern.

That said, I think what we are seeing is, if I'm judging this individual correctly and, by 'this individual' I mean President Trump – and we have debated this in seminar after seminar at William and Mary-if we're judging him rightly, he is one of the most brutish, brutal, arrogant, narcissistic, egomaniacs ever to occupy the White House.

So, what we are probably viewing if that is our interpretation of this individual is him doing a number of things here with this personnel perturbation and turmoil.



First of all, he is attempting to keep his base titillated. In that respect, he is doing a grand job because he has everyone from MSNBC and, even some commentators on Fox, laughing up the things that he is putting out there, and that is fulfilling everything he desires, which is to bash the US media constantly and consistently, no matter who they are – with a little preference for Fox, of course.

The second thing that he is doing is trying to get Stormy Daniels and the other array of women who are after him full force – and, of course, the Russia scandal and Bob Mueller and others associated with it – off the TV screens and keep the TV screens full of these other personnel changes and so forth, which the media, as they did during his campaign, is accommodating him with their own acquiescence in this. He is playing them as Anne-Sophie Mutter plays the violin, and they are, more or less, helping him in this process.

I'm not quite as concerned as I might be by the likes of John Bolton coming into the Administration because I see Trump, and Bolton so similar in their brutish arrogance. I know John Bolton very intimately. Very soon John Bolton will be without any listeners in the White House, including the President.

The only way the actual security advisor has any influence over anything is if he has the President's ear, and he has almost equal to or more than anyone else similar to Kissinger or a Brzezinski or even a mild-mannered Brent Scowcroft.



John Bolton is not going to have this President's ear for very long because this President is not going to want John Bolton's competition. So, I'm not quite as worried about Bolton being there as I might be with someone else who would be able to manipulate staff and so forth underneath Trump. But it is a sad situation that we have the array of characters that we have.

**Fitts:** I think also the way that Tillerson's firing was handled is enough to chill any thinking person from wanting to work in this Administration.

**Wilkerson:** That's Donald Trump, the quintessential Donald Trump.

**Fitts:** Although, I have to say that I started off the 2016 campaign having spent eleven years in New York just infuriated that anybody would seriously consider voting for Donald Trump. But the reality is that the reason we have Trump is because the American establishment thought that Clinton was an alternative. For the life of me, I cannot understand if it was the Bush's or the Clinton's trying to push the same old same old. So, I really blame the establishment for ending up with Trump.

I voted for Trump because, for many, many years I've written in a candidate, but I finally voted for Trump because the idea of another four or eight years of Clinton was unacceptable.

The person who persuaded me was Michael Moore. I don't know if you heard his presentation, but he said that voting for Donald Trump would be the biggest FU in the history of Western civilization, and the feeling in the heartland was that if you can't fix it, you might as well break it.



**Wilkerson:** I think many people in that sort of 10-20% middle ground – many of them Independent and some of them disenchanting Democrats and some disenchanting Republicans – did the same thing. I don't discount the value of 'breaking it'. I would have never voted for Hillary Clinton. I thought that she was a warmonger.

I hate to say this, but being a woman and being the first female President, I thought that she would think she had to prove her cojones, if you will, right off the bat. So, we would have found ourselves in a war really quickly – one of her choosing and picking. That did not appeal to me at all.

I don't think that we had any choice in 2016 except, perhaps, as you just defined it. "Let's break it and see what happens."

I think that we are on a path right now that may very well do that; I'm just not certain that we have the skill, the talent, and the institutional architecture remaining to fix it. So, I am very worried about it being broken and staying broken for a long time.

**Fitts:** I saw a presentation of yours that was quite brilliant. You talked about how many fronts you could fight a war on, and I was very much reminded of George Hume's statement that the ultimate privilege of the man who believes that the world is his enemy will prove himself right. Right now, it appears we're picking a fight with Russia, China, North Korea, Syria, and Iran – among others – and alienating all of our allies. How do you win a war on this many fronts?



**Wilkerson:** You don't. We are violating the first precept of the international relations. It's called Conservation of the Enemies, and it simply means that you don't want to have any more enemies at one time than you can handle. That is a very dangerous precept to violate. As I said, we are doing it profoundly.

At the same time, I don't believe that this President or the group around him, even supplementing the present idiocy with Mike Pompeo, Gina Haspel, – the bloody Gina, the torture master of the secret prison in Thailand – John Bolton, and so forth, are going to do anything that Donald Trump doesn't want to do in his heart of hearts, wherever that is.

I'm a bit encourage by the fact that I don't think he is, at root, a warmonger. Not for a moment do I think that he wouldn't hesitate to start a little war somewhere in order to continue to get some of these other issues off the TV screen, but I don't think that he is, fundamentally, a warmonger. So, it is going to be very interesting to see, for example, a clash in personalities that is going to occur.

I know that John Bolton is probably one of the living, breathing, most warmongery people on the face of this Earth. I've sat in an office with John Bolton and had him tell me how we ought to attack North Korea, the DPRK, and went on about how they will collapse in a minute, and all we need to do is bomb them. They will fall apart and so forth.

My response, being both from a military professional perspective as well as a diplomatic perspective at the time, because I was under the Secretary of State department, was to say, "John, you don't understand war. There will be 100,000 casualties, many of them Americans.



There are over 200,000 Americans living in the Seoul area alone. There will be all of these casualties. We will win, but it will be a Pyrrhic victory, John, and it's not necessary."

John looked at me and said, "You do the military things; I don't."

That's John Bolton. "Let's send all these young men and women out there to die for John Bolton."

**Fitts:** I've never worked with Bolton, but I worked with people like him in the Bush Administration. They have a two-track mind and can't fathom a 26-track world. They are immune to being able to feel or understand or intellectualize the real consequences. It's almost as though they are living in a videogame.

**Wilkerson:** You are absolutely right. I used to recoil when people would say derisive things about Bolton or, perhaps, more balanced things about him. Whether they were derisive or balanced, they would inevitably say at the end, "But he's a really brilliant man."

I look at them and say, "Where is that brilliance? He's a dumb man." That is all I could detect.

**Fitts:** Sometimes if you are in the position like the President, you love people who make it simple, but, of course, it's never going to work in the real world.

We've seen two speeches – including a much more detailed one – from Putin in his Presidential address.



It was a week or two before the elections, and he was laying out the development of weapons in Russia. Then we saw Trump give a speech to the military in San Diego, implying that we have these miraculous, mysterious weapons that he can't talk about.

From both Russia and America, you see posturing about their new, incredible, fantastic weapons. Putin is obviously putting much more meat on the bone than Trump.

What is all of this promise of mysterious, magical weapons?  
What does it mean?

**Wilkerson:** There are motivations on both sides that are so long, in terms of the history of their development and so forth, that I won't go into them. Suffice to say right now, what is happening, I think, is that both of these leaders are drawing some sort of political string from the posture they take towards one another – and Trump's is the most convoluted here because of the so-called 'Russia scandal – and are maintaining their domestic positions politically by what they do to one another or what they say about one another.

What that is doing – and here is the scary thing about it – is causing, for example, Prime Minister Abe to decide that the United States is no longer trustworthy. He's not about to turn to Russia. So, what he's doing is rapidly destroying everything that we did to post-war Japan.



In other words, he is going to create a full-up, fully armed, selling its arms on the world market to submarines, fighter planes, ships, and so forth, fully nuclearize Japan, and is going to go his own way.

That is going to start a race in Northeast Asia – still one of the most dangerous regions of the world – with China and Japan and possibly a reunified Korea that we are going to regret having started. China is already looking at discarding Mao Tse Tung's philosophy that nuclear weapons were really worthless because no one would ever use them, and all China needed was a few in order to deter any crazy state's use against them. They are discarding that and discussing in the politburo how they should be a full-up nuclear state that has all types of nuclear weapons on submarines, in bombs, in missiles, and so forth, and should be able to even ride out a first strike and to strike back.

This means a much more robust nuclear arsenal in China and Japan will match that. Then China will match that, and so on. We are looking at a massive arms race starting in the world with the world's most dangerous weapons at a time when we should be continuing the path of a post-Cold War bringing those weapons as close to zero as we can. This is very dangerous.

**Fitts:** It was actually the second Bush Administration and the neocons who started waving around the idea that we could pull off a first strike. Clearly Putin's address was meant to deter the notion that we could pull off a first strike.



**Wilkerson:** It's always been discussed in the more elitist circles of nuclear scholarship and, what I would call, 'nuclear weapons use'. It goes way back to the very beginning when Eisenhower wanted the Atoms for Peace program, and he wanted everyone to be able to share in atomic energy without the weapons dangers associated with it.

There has always been this element on the other side of the road that faults this idea and wants to use nuclear weapons to reinforce even more powerfully American hegemony in the world.

You are right: They're back, and they're back with a vengeance. They are talking about things like first use of nuclear weapons. You saw this astonishing hearing with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee a few months ago where Senator Risch from Idaho stands up and states that the Constitution of the United States is an anachronism, and that with regard to nuclear weapons, "Of course the President should have the right to push the button, and should have the right to push the button first, only consulting those immediately around him at the time – giving an instantaneous nature to nuclear obliteration."

This is Risch of Idaho, a Republican Senator, saying that the Constitution, with regard to the war power and where that war power should belong in the Congress, is an anachronism. So, Trump has support out there.

**Fitts:** Every day I see a new ridiculous concept on why we need to change the Constitution. Cynthia McKinney just received a mailing from someone who said that there was a group of women getting together to reinvent the Constitution to include feminine concepts.



It's funny, but it's not funny.

The people who would love to tear up the Constitution are looking for any angle that will benefit them.

The general population is so ignorant of what the world would be like if we didn't have the Constitution that they are in the process of committing political suicide by supporting these notions.

I thought of you very much the other day when I watched testimony from Marine General Robert Neller. He said that their biggest obstacle to recruitment was that 70% of young Americans do not qualify for recruitment for moral, emotional, or physical reasons.

**Wilkerson:** This is true. What you have about every year is 4.5 million Americans – both male and female – passing through, what I would call, the 'Selective Service vulnerability period'. Of that, 4.5 million, fully one-third, are too obese to serve in the Armed Forces, and another third are intellectually incapable of passing the Armed Forces qualification test. So, you only have one-third of that 4.5 million that are vulnerable to being recruited for an all-volunteer force, and you can discount automatically the graduates of Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Cornell, and so forth.

So, what you have now is, for example, 40% of the United States army coming from seven states – and you can name all of those states.

**Fitts:** I live in one of those states.



**Wilkerson:** Yes. You have recruiting in Alabama, for example, which produces more recruits every year than New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles combined. Alabama has about 4.5 million people, and those city areas have about 30 million people in aggregate.

So, you see what is happening to the demography of the Armed Forces. We have symposia across the country. We've had one in Kansas, one at William and Mary, and we're having one at Ohio this month on the 29<sup>th</sup>, and we're going to have one at Stanford next year. We are looking at the all-volunteer force and how it is falling apart around the very precepts on which it was created.

We have the poorest people in America bleeding and dying for the other people in America. Less than one percent of the population is bleeding and dying for the other 99+%. It is untenable, it is immoral, it is unethical, and most powerfully of all, it is also physically unsustainable.

Last year the Army paid \$455 million in bribes just to meet its recruitment bills.

**Fitts:** I live in the heartland. I moved to Tennessee in 2000, and I've watched the steady deterioration in the health of the general population and the young people. It's very clear what is causing it.

I've never been able to understand what the plan is. When I read Mattis and Trump's new National Security Plan, they are describing something that requires human personnel.



I'm watching the government policies that are intentionally producing a population that is very unhealthy, and there is a disconnect between what we are doing to produce an unhealthy population and the plans that they are making for human personnel. I don't get it and don't get the disconnect.

**Wilkerson:** I don't get it either. The Department of Defense – if Congress approves these programs, because they are very, very intrusive programs – will pay a large amount of money in order to go into the high schools, the middle schools, junior highs, and even elementary schools across the country and do things like try to improve nutrition.

As a citizen, I don't have a problem with DOD spending money that way, but I do have a problem with what signal that sends. For one thing, only DOD is competent to do this? That is saying that the rest of the government is so dysfunctional that it can't do it. We have cabinet departments and agencies that should be looking over these things and spending their money to do this.

The second thing that alarms me about it is that we are militarizing this country in such significant ways that I would not be surprised at all to wake up one morning and find a four-star general standing in the Oval Office over the prostrate body of Donald J. Trump, for example.

**Fitts:** You can understand why they must be very frustrated.

**Wilkerson:** Yes. One recruiter told me recently that he had just left the largest recruiting district in the United States, which at that time was headquartered in Little Rock, Arkansas.



He said, “I’ll tell you why we don’t go to Harvard or Princeton or Cornell or any of those places. It’s not because we couldn’t get a recruit here or there, but it’s not easy. It’s extremely difficult. We go to places like Selma, Alabama where it’s simple.

That young man who walks out and sees the contract that the Army recruiter hands him with a \$40,000 bonus for putting his signature on the paper is the most money he’s ever seen or probably thinks he’ll ever see in his life at one time.

**Fitts:** What I see in Tennessee are families who are over the barrel, and their son or daughter has to help – whether it’s the student loans or the family credit card debt. They are basically helping their family get out of the predatory machinery by going into the military. That predatory machinery is, as far as I’m concerned, the governments getting them into debt so that they will go into the machinery. It’s a very snake and snake system on the ground when you look at it.

One of the biggest problems we have politically in this country, and we’ve had for a long time, is Israel, and you are one of the most eloquent explainers of that problem. Israel has been a very big problem. Now that we’ve spent trillions in war and gotten ourselves bogged down in the Middle East thanks to Israel and the Zionists and the neocons, Israel seems to be evermore ascendant .

Sometimes I wonder if the people who got Donald Trump elected – forget Russia – was the Israeli intelligence.



I'm going to post one of your recent speeches about this in the commentary for The Solari Report. It's a complex problem, but do you see Israel as having more power in this Administration? I think that one of the reasons people voted for Donald Trump was because they were very afraid of how much power they would have in the Clinton Administration, but it appears that all this did by voting for Trump, is delay the effect for about three months. Now we're back to the same Israel-dominated plan in the Middle East.

**Wilkerson:** I'll tell you how the Israelis perceive it, at least from the point of view of *Haaretz*, which is one of the few newspapers left in Israel that isn't bought by Sheldon Adelson for Bibi Netanyahu and his propaganda. The editorial staff there, Gideon Levy in particular, thinks that the only place Donald Trump has unanimity of opinion that is favorable is in Tel Aviv, and the only place Bibi Netanyahu does is in Washington. That somewhat explains the dilemma.

We are as close to Israel as we have ever been in the dangerous ways that closeness might rebound to our disinterest, one of which is we recently raised the first flag over a US base in Israel since 1948. That means that when something happens – whether it's Hezbollah raining missiles on Israel, or maybe even the RGC or the Goods Force infiltrating and doing something inside Israel proper, or maybe the occupied territories of the West Bank, or whatever –we will be able to say that we were impacted. You don't have to think for very long about what that will mean regarding our coming to Israel's defense. "We have been attacked because the stars and stripes were flying over this little Air Force Base we've created in Israel."



So, the relationship is as one-sided as it's ever been. Avigdor Lieberman, the Defense Minister of Israel who has on the floor of the Knesset called duly elected members of the Knesset – who happened to be Arab – 'war criminals' is giving a speech at the Jerusalem post-conference in New York in April. The title of that speech is, 'The Coming War with Iran' and that is where we are headed.

**Fitts:** Tillerson and Mattis talked Trump out of cancelling the UN deal. Tillerson clearly was not on board for war with Iran. With Tillerson out and Pompeo or Bolton in, I'm assuming where this is headed – war with Iran.

I have no expertise in this area, but my assessment is that this is a war we are going to lose.

**Wilkerson:** It's a war that is going to be an interminable war, like the war in Iraq was and even more so, probably. Iran is four times bigger than Iraq. It's 75 million people, not 27 million people. It's not a number of sects and different groups who don't even recognize themselves as Iraqis, which Iraq was. It's a group of 75 million people who, fundamentally, recognize themselves either as Persians – which is about 52% - or as beholden in some way to the Persians and to the 5,000-year history of Persia and to Tehran.

This is not going to be a country that falls apart when we attack it; it's going to be a country that unifies itself in a major way. We're going to have to put 500,000+ troops on the ground. We'll have to go back to the draft, of course, in order to create that size, and we're going to have to go all over the country, take ten years, and spend \$2 to \$3 trillion.



During that time, we are going to have a red bull's eye on the back of every Marine, every soldier, and every American in the region because every Arab and every Muslim in the region, and probably some from outside, will unite and attack us in a guerrilla war. If we think Iraq was bad, hold on to your horses, Iran will be ten times worse.

**Fitts:** So why do this? It's grand stupidity. What Israel is saying is, "To get our way, we are willing to destroy America."

**Wilkerson:** I think that what Israel's strategy is that they want to keep the Arab countries – and Syria is a perfect case in point right now – so involved in internecine struggle that they cannot unify in any way as a single state or as a combination of states and bring some power to bear on Israel. That is their strategy.

I don't think Israel wants a massive war with any of these states in collection or individually; it wants the United States to bash them and bomb them and to keep them at each other's throats. It thinks that it can manage that kind of a very difficult, complex strategy over time.

I think that what Israel is doing right now, with Netanyahu as the leadership in particular, is sealing the doom of the state of Israel. I would not be at all surprised if within the few years I have left on this earth, Israel ceases to exist. If it doesn't cease, then it will become an apartheid state increasingly isolated on the world scene, and it will look much like South Africa in a decade or so with the world condemning it. Everyone will boycott Israel; everyone will sanction Israel; everyone will disinvest from any Israel-connected investment. It will shrivel and die.



It already has apartheid in the West Bank; it already has apartheid in Gaza; it already has apartheid largely in Jerusalem.

You could, as Carter intimated in his book, call it an ‘apartheid state’ today. It is certainly not a democracy. As long as it maintains the brutal occupation that it does and maintains control over the Golan, which is not its territory, then it is not a democracy.

We’re seeing a development in the Middle East that we never anticipated in 1948, except on the Joint Staff. You would be surprised to read the Joint Staff’s recommendation to Truman. They were unanimous in telling President Truman that he shouldn’t recognize Israel in 1948 and in telling him why. The ‘why’ was very prescient. It more or less forecasted what is happening today. “You would be sitting in a country of 5-7 million, and you would have 400 million around you who wanted to kill you.”

**Fitts:** I was at a conference about 15 years ago, and some professor, who was a complete stranger met with me. He proceeded to explain to me that the Vatican’s goal in the Middle East is to end up controlling Jerusalem, and the way that they were going to do that was to let Israel do whatever they wanted, and Israel would proceed to commit suicide and do exactly what they have done. When it was all over, the State of Israel would not exist.

I thought that the person was completely nuts, and I had to excuse myself, but these days I think back to that, and I wonder if he really knew something.



**Wilkerson:** I've had a number of people from the region actually talk that way. When Powell was visiting Arafat in Ramallah I had one of the heads of the Christian church – and I believe his location was Jerusalem at the time – who looked across the table and said to me, “You know, the biggest threat that I have and the biggest threat that my Christian flock has in this region is not the Arabs, not Islam, not the Muslims. The biggest threat is Israel,” which was somewhat counterintuitive, but I understood what he meant.

**Fitts:** Let's talk money for a moment. I know that's not your area, but it certainly looks as though the National Security State has become progressively more and more expensive and progressively less and less economic and able to produce enough money to cover itself.

Every year it gets hungrier and hungrier. It's rather like a tapeworm that is growing bigger and bigger and killing the host. It cannot conceive of a way to get back into any type of economic structure or stop eating its host.

Why has the National Security State literally become out of control in its financial and political demands?

**Wilkerson:** I think that there are a number of reasons. I'm not an economist, but I've read Piketty religiously. I've read a number of Noble Prize winning economists' books and papers. I'm not necessarily an idiot with regard to finances and economic matters.

I look at it from a number of perspectives, and the one that disturbs me most, of course, is the historical one.



That says the empires of the past have all perished on overextension of their empire and military power to support that overextension which, of course, consumes the treasury. A very famous Scot writer once said, “Democracy has a real problem in the fact that once you teach your people that they can attack the treasury with abandon, they will do so until the treasury is empty.”

So, we have both sides of these problems that we’ve given institutional fabric to in America. The one that scares me the most, though, is the one that I know the most about, and that is the National Security State that you just elaborated on.

I see it providing – since 1945 – the public good called ‘security’ to a number of countries, not the least of which were the North Atlantic Treaty countries – Germany, France, England, and so forth. Actually, it was Germany all along in its West German form. Japan, Korea, and other countries of lesser weight, and New Zealand, Australia, and even Indonesia, and Southeast Asian nations have benefitted from it. Even Vietnam, since the close of a war, has benefitted from it.

This is a public good that the United States has provided, and that public good – at the very peak, of course – is a nuclear umbrella.

The consequence of doing this and spending the amount of money in order to carry this out, not only shorted our own infrastructure and our own domestic environment in every field virtually – from education to water – but we have also incurred this enormous debt that such an enterprise like this would require in order to continue it over time.



So now we are looking at interest payments on the debt equaling the defense budget, and that is with the low-interest rates right now – which I think are going to start rising –and when they go up, the interest payments annually on the debt are going to be bigger than the defense budget. Many projections now, including CBO, show that by about 2027 or 2030 or somewhere in that time, there may not be any discretionary money left in the Federal budget; it will all be consumed. Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security, the Defense Budget, and so forth are all fixed costs.

You can forget about the \$20+ trillion debt, but it's very difficult to forget about those interest payments every year.

The National Security State has aided and abetted – in a very formidable way – the untenable economic situation we're in right now. In a very profound way, I think that worries me as much as bad leadership in the current White House.

**Fitts:** I recently published a big overview on the pension funds. If you step back and look at the economics at a very high level, what you realize is that the pension funds are the biggest buyers of Treasury and have been for a long time. Essentially, that money is going into the government. The government has refused to obey the financial laws related to how it manages its money. There is \$21 trillion of undocumented adjustments – money that is literally missing – from DOD and HUD. It's about \$20 trillion from DOD alone.

So, the undocumented adjustments are now bigger than the debt. If you step back and look at it from the point of view of a pension fund trustee, you're buying Treasury.



That money is going into the Federal government, but it's not being managed according to the law. Some of it – even a great amount of it – may be disappearing, which means it's not on the balance sheet to pay back the debt you've put in. The only thing you get back for that is a liability and an IOU from a group of taxpayers, many of whom includes your beneficiaries.

It's a double-whammy. The US government has become a money-laundering device to steal your savings.

**Wilkerson:** I'm a novice at this, but what I see us doing periodically in order to camouflage much of what you've just described, is printing billions of dollars. It just doesn't make sense when the only thing behind those dollars is military power, which we talked a bit about, and perhaps the fact that the Saudis still denominate oil sales in dollars, but that could change at any moment.

**Fitts:** Here is the thing:. We print dollars, and one reason is because we are providing that umbrella. If instead of providing that umbrella, we have Donald Trump running around the world convincing everybody they're all on their own and they have to build their own arsenal, why will they take our dollars? Well, they will only take our dollars if we have sufficient force, but it appears that we can't spend fast enough.

If the Japanese are going to take us on concerning arms sales, I don't see how the economic model works.

**Wilkerson:** I don't either. Even more profoundly, I don't see how the world absorbs all these armaments without great potential for conflict.



Russia and us together, and the last figures that I saw, we led Russia, but we were approaching \$150 billion total between the two of us and looking towards \$200 billion with all this high-tech missile defense and everything.

Incidentally, most of this missile defense – some hundred-billion-dollar price tag so far for us – is probably not going to work. That is one of the most farcical things about this. Bill Perry, Clinton’s middle Secretary of Defense and the only engineer to ever be Secretary of Defense, once told me, “We’ve never achieved more than 2%.”

That means that when ten missiles are coming in, we are going to get two of them. The other eight are going to hit. If they have nuclear warheads, we haven’t accomplished much.

**Fitts:** What we have done is created globally, an infrastructure that makes money from almost having a war but not having a war. I don’t see how you maintain ‘almost having a war’ on a perpetual basis with high media excitement – which I call the ‘shriek-o-meter’ – without having an accident.

**Wilkerson:** I couldn’t agree with you more, and I will tell you that some of the most profoundly disturbing conversations that I heard in 2002 and 2003 in the Pentagon and elsewhere, were people like John Bolton talking seriously about how good it would be and how ‘cleansing’ it would be to have such a war. I’m talking about a global war.



It's almost like Steve Bannon-type thinking. "Let's break it all and pick up the pieces afterward."

**Fitts:** I hate to say this, but with the neocon group that I worked with in the Bush Administration, it was as if they had an actual need to destroy something, and then they would be satiated for a while. The desire would build, and then they would look for somebody else to destroy or something else that they could break. It was almost similar to a demonic impulse.

My job came to be only protecting the career people trying to get their work done. They just kept hunting them and wanting to destroy them. I hate to say it, but it was almost demonic. They needed to be destroying people and things.

**Wilkerson:** I think you've just described some of the philosophical underpinnings of many of the so-called neoconservatives that I have met and worked with.

**Fitts:** I always recommend Charles Ferguson's documentary on Iraq. You were interviewed for that about this group going into Iraq and doing everything they could do to destroy the civil infrastructure of the country on the theory that they could bring in their contractors and have big contracts, and how completely insane the entire thing was. It was thoroughly destructive and wildly expensive, and all they ended up doing was pouring considerably more money into big corporate contractors but then had a dysfunctional infrastructure that needed more contracts and more wars.



**Wilkerson:** And no one more exemplified that than Halliburton, whose total figures on Iraq and Afghanistan, which I think ending in 2014 for Afghanistan, was \$40 billion in profit.

**Fitts:** It's interesting. A radio show called me after the Iraq war started, and were interested in asking me about Iraq. I did a couple of numbers, and realized, in looking at Halliburton in the stock market, and 100% of their stock market value was coming from the amount of money that they were generating from that war. They were quite dependent on that whole affair.

**Wilkerson:** Lockheed Martin, probably the largest defense contractor in the world, falls in that same boat.

**Fitts:** I don't know if you know this, but when I had Lockheed Martin run the payment systems, I was the Assistant Secretary of Housing and under the law I was responsible in the single family fund. I was required by law to run it on a self-supporting basis. To do that, I needed the data on what was going on at the time.

By the time I left we had financial statements, but when I first got there, we didn't. So, they controlled the payment systems and the information systems, and I needed the data to know how we were doing, and they refused to give it to me.

**Wilkerson:** One of the things that people don't know is that Lockheed Martin is the number one defense contractor for the Pentagon, but it's also number two, number three, and number four for half the cabinet.



**Fitts:** From what I can tell, they ran the main payment information systems that the \$21 trillion went missing from. At the end of 2015, the biggest year of undocumented adjustments, it was \$6.5 trillion in one year. Right after that, before the financials were announced, Lockheed Martin spun their government-contracted division off to a new company that SAIC had done the same thing with. I said, “Oh, they’re trying to get the liability off the balance sheet to cut and run.”

I know they’re a piece of work. What most people don’t know about the ‘data beast’ is that you have the big defense contractors running the information payment systems for all of the government agencies.

**Wilkerson:** As I understand it, Lockheed Martin was also the principal contractor responsible for the census in 2013 or 2014. That’s astonishing if you think about that.

**Fitts:** That’s why I call them the ‘data beast’. What I found is that you had Lockheed Martin sucking up all the data from the government – the whole operation – and it was rather frightening what was happening.

So, what do we do? The question comes down to you and me. We are watching a society really go insane, and whether it’s insane financially or economically, this can’t go to any good place, or having a nuclear war world-wide. What do we do?

**Wilkerson:** I’ve been telling people across the country different things, depending on the demographics of my audience. If it’s older people, I know they vote. So, when they ask me that question –



and they do almost inevitably in every Q&A for every talk I've given from Notre Dame to Stanford to the University of Wisconsin to San Angelo, Texas – I say, “If you're like I see you out there right now, I know you vote. There's a lot of grey out there, a lot of hair like mine. You vote, so go vote, and vote every son-of-a-bitch out of the Congress until you get someone who feels more about the country than he does his own political power or she does about her own position in the Congress. Vote them out.”

If it's a young audience, I'll look at them and I'll say, “My generation and the one before it and after it have screwed the pooch. We have messed this country up. We're leaving you with more debt on your shoulders than any human civilization in history has ever been left with. You are going to have to fix it right now. Set your cap because you're going to have to fix it. You're going to have to go into the CIA, the NSA, the Federal government – whatever – and you're going to have to fix it.”

I don't know any other way to look at it because, ultimately, the answer is the American people, and if the American people don't step up to the task, then they deserve what they get.

**Fitts:** Here is the thing: The American people, in my experience, are exhausted. They have been struggling for years with expenses that are rising at a much faster rate than inflation and stagnating or falling income. They are trying to make things work.



If you look at the predatory targeting that they are subject to and the incredible deterioration and all of the things that make up their physical health, it's extraordinary.

**Wilkerson:** I do find in both demographics – the older people to whom I talk to about 40% of the time and the younger people that I talk to the other 60% of the time – that there are positive stories.

I'll give you one from Penn State a couple of days ago. A young man in the back of the room who had sat there rather quietly until the moment he raised his hand, and said, essentially, what you just asked me. He said, "Professor, what do we do given the dismal scene you've just painted for us?"

I said, "Well, what do you think should be done? Let me tell you a story," and I told him about Colin Powell as a lieutenant driving on his first trip in uniform from the Boston area down to Fort Benning, Georgia. He was packing a flock of chickens in the trunk of his car because he could not stop anywhere along the way without embarrassing himself greatly by going to the back door for 'colored people' in order to get something to eat, let alone stay anywhere.

I said, "That's no longer the case. He became the most powerful military man in the country and later the first cabinet officer as Secretary of State."

So, we can improve. If we stay at it and drive forward, we can bring the myth more into reality. This young man said, "I was hoping you would say that. My God! That's the way I feel."



I said, “You can join my army any day then, young man.”

He said, “I’ll sign up tomorrow.”

I find that spirit across the country, and I’m encouraged by it. In fact, it’s the only reason I keep teaching and the only reason I feel any optimism at all.

**Fitts:** That’s certainly what I see. What I’m dealing with pertaining to The Solari Report is there is 5-10% of the population that really cares and wants to do something, and they understand that part of this is going to have to be consciousness and cultural. We’re all going to have to lead.

The notion of making America great again was very inspiring for many people in the heartland. Frankly, if you look at what was coming down concerning the social engineering, just having that end or almost end was an enormous relief for many people in the heartland. I think the fear of what was coming from a Clinton Administration is at least stopped.

I was driving back from Denver in October 2016, and stopped at a Flying J truck stop to go to the bathroom. The truck stations have these large bathroom complexes, and I walked in and looked at one, and it had the sign for both ‘men and women’. I was very confused. Then I looked at the other, and it was just ‘women’. I realized, “Oh my God! This is the transgender bathroom thing, and now the truckers don’t even have a men’s room that they can use.”



This is how Flying J has reconciled the tension. So, the only option to go to the bathroom for the men is a coed restroom. I hate to say this, but I'm not a very sentimental person – as you probably realize – but I started to cry. I thought it was the biggest insult to the truckers that there was.

**Wilkerson:** I don't blame you.

**Fitts:** How could our country do this?

**Wilkerson:** I was just reading this really fine expose, or a documentary in narrative form, in *National Geographic* about the historically black colleges and universities and how, what had been a very declining student population, – even to the point of causing some of these colleges that were historical like Fisk and Howard and others – to contemplate disappearing in the future, and now it's all reversed. Now it's up 109% in the Clark Atlanta University complex, as well as Spelman and Morehouse in the Atlanta area. It's up 40-50% in all of the other historically black universities.

I'm thinking, "This is very positive," and then read it and thought about what sort of thing you were just discussing. This is adding to the division in this country. It may be positive for black Americans, and that is great. It's terrific that they are maintaining their culture, but when you read the comments of the young people and the comments of the faculty and the staff; yes, we should know our history; yes, we should know where the myth is tainted as it were; yes, we should know that 4,400 people were lynched in the South, and that they were lynched under very despicable circumstances. How could we even call ourselves a democracy, let alone care about human rights?



Yes, these things are important, but they are also extremely divisive if the educational process is not handled properly.

I see us handling it abysmally. What we're doing is going into 'Me Too' and 'Black Lives Matter' and so forth, and we're creating these divisions that are going to lead us to blood in the streets I'm afraid.

**Fitts:** I see incredible effort top-down trying to do divide and conquer, and I came to the conclusion that if you could heal the male/female divide and conquer, you could get the rest of them, but it's interesting. One of the things that I've learned as an investment advisor is that oftentimes my initial clients were couples coming to me where the men and women were fighting abysmally because the women would see what was going on in the economy, and it was harmful to human and intellectual capital, but they didn't understand finance, etc.

What I discovered was that it was very easy to trick a woman, and it was very easy to trick a man, but it was almost impossible to trick them if they were working together. So, it became my job to simply teach terminology back and forth until they could start to understand and hear each other and work together, and then they were off to the races.

I think it's the same thing with us. We are very easy to divide and conquer, and that is one of the things that has to be overcome.

I think that leadership is going to have to come bottom-up, and it's going to have to be young people, as you just described. I see leaders over the country; they finally had to realize that enough was enough, and they had to realize, "I'm the leader. I can't wait for anybody else."



It doesn't mean that I don't vote or I don't care, but I see much more willingness to take responsibility, including at the state and local level, and I think that is positive.

**Wilkerson:** To support your previous anecdotal information, I read this longitudinal survey that was so fascinating. When women approach 20-30% of the composition in a decision-making environment, they are very subdued and they are usually quiet, and men harass the 'hell' out of them. This was a particularly vivid study of our Senate and our House of Representatives.

But when women approach 50% and higher, the decisions are much better, and the outcomes are better.

**Fitts:** That was my experience in business, and it was perplexing because I always had to be a dictator. The men always wanted to work with the men, and the women always had to work with the women. I had to force them to work together, but we would always get better economic results when there was a balance.

I also wanted to inform you that I'm going to be road tripping with Amy Benjamin when I'm down under. I'll be in New Zealand in May, and she and I are going road tripping thanks to you and your introduction to me of her article.

**Wilkerson:** Terrific! I'm glad to hear that.

**Fitts:** Yes, I want to thank you.



If there is anything that we can do, please let us know. Keep doing what you're doing; you're doing a great job. It's much easier to understand the world when we can log in and listen to Lawrence Wilkerson.

**Wilkerson:** I really enjoy reading your material, too.

**Fitts:** I don't know how you do it, but you seem to be healthy and well and speaking everywhere. It goes to show you that you can tell the truth and say alive and you're the proof.

We wish you well, and thank you for joining us on The Solari Report.

**Wilkerson:** Take care, and thank you for having me.



## **MODIFICATION**

Transcripts are not always verbatim. Modifications are sometimes made to improve clarity, usefulness and readability, while staying true to the original intent.

## **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.