

830 War Machine *(this is an edited version of my blog 830)*

We watched a Netflix movie, War Machine, with Brad Pitt. It is meant to be a satirical movie, one probably could call it an anti-war movie. It is the story of an American general, totally out of his depth in Afghanistan. A seminal scene in the movie has the general assure an audience of European military personnel and officials that America is in Afghanistan to bring freedom and prosperity. A German politician (played by Tilda Swinton) gets up and delivers a monologue of restrained power. She makes the point that what she sees in front of her is a righteous, well-intentioned man, who nevertheless - while he is ambitious - also is ignorant enough to believe the preposterous propaganda he is promulgating. She sees before her a man who is beholden to his ego and whose career goal is to win, regardless of what that means for the people of Afghanistan; who, incidentally, don't want him - or any of the American armed forces - in their country. While I cannot recommend the movie (neither can The Guardian's critic), I found the politician's interchange with the general telling: Well written and acted, a sobering display of the disconnect between what the War Machine is fighting to achieve and what the country needs for its people. I am struck by the parallels to reality ... in Afghanistan as well as in Iraq and Syria War Machines are tearing the countries apart. The people are suffering. What is achieved? Destruction. Death. Not much more, at least nothing that will advance the prospect for peace. Typical is a (feeble) fighting scene toward the end of the movie: A few grenades are fired at a position held by the enemy ... when a soldier checks the result, he realizes all that's achieved is the death of a child. This is the story of the wars that are currently fought with the goal of defeating ISIS and terrorism. The War On Terror is costly in the extreme and all the while it seems obvious that it is politicians' and generals' egos that are driving the war ... as well as the providers of weaponry and supplies. Another term for War Machine is the Military-Industrial Complex (see WEAPONRY). In the book *War is a Racket*, its workings are described: "*War is a racket. It always has been. It is possibly the oldest, easily the most profitable, surely the most vicious. It's the only one international in scope. It is the only one in which the profits are reckoned in dollars, and the losses in lives.*" (S. D. Butler) Often the war efforts have gone so far, it is impossible to pull out. Yet, while it is acknowledged that the conflicts can't be won militarily, the world's leaders can't look beyond the perceived need to secure an immediate military advantage in order to bolster their positions at the negotiating table ... War Machines are deemed the most sure-fire means to deal with the world's crises. But at the same time the reasons why we have gotten ourselves into these wars are ignored. What would it be like to look beyond the need to feed the War Machines? At the root of the War on Terror are the causes for terrorism ... why do radical Islamists wish to destroy the West? One reason is obvious: In 1948 it was decided to create Israel in Palestine. Palestinians were shoved into camps and their right for their own homeland has been denied. Peace will be elusive until world leaders come together and resolve the injustices that motivate suicide bombers.