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# The DoD's Cultural Policy: Militarizing the Cultural Industries

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## Abstract

In pursuit of this Special Issue's goal to "push the traditional boundaries of cultural policy studies," this article conceptualizes the US Department of Defense (DoD) as a cultural policy agency. All cultural policy is goal-oriented and aims to act within and have effects upon "the cultural." Cultural policy scholars examine how State agencies, policies, and regulations act upon to influence: the cultural industries; cultural texts; and, national identities and citizen-subjects. Although the US Federal government has no official cultural policy agency like Canada (the Department of Heritage) or France (the Ministry of Culture), this article conceptualizes the DoD—one of the largest US Federal government agencies—as a cultural policy agency and explores how it uses cultural policy to act within and upon the cultural field. It presents a study of one important DoD cultural policy agency (the Public Affairs Office's Special Assistant for Entertainment Media) and one significant DoD cultural policy doctrine (DoD Instruction 5410.16 DoD Assistance to Non-Government, Entertainment-Oriented Media Productions). This particular DoD cultural policy formation acts upon the cultural field, and in effect, supports and legitimizes the current and ongoing militarization of the cultural industries, popular culture and national identity.

## Keywords

cultural policy, US cultural policy, cultural industries, popular culture, national identity, militarism, war, militainment



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# The DoD's Cultural Policy: Militarizing the Cultural Industries

## **Cover Page Footnote**

The author would like to thank the two anonymous reviewers for their helpful revisions suggestions.

## Introduction: Bringing the DoD into Cultural Policy Research

From 1945 to the present day, the rise of the United States (US) as a world superpower has been tied to war—preparing for it, waging it, and legitimizing it, culturally.<sup>1</sup> In response to the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001 (9/11), the US launched a Global War on Terror (GWOT). Today, the GWOT continues without clear boundaries, territorial or temporal, and war seems to be a permanent facet of US society. US Congress concomitantly allocates tremendous public wealth to the US Department of Defense (DoD), which, at the GWOT's forefront, instigates of all kinds of militarizing economic, technological and media-cultural developments.<sup>2</sup> The DoD's 2016 budget was about \$611 billion, a sum that accounts for 36% of the world's total defense expenditure and which is much larger than the globe's next top four spenders combined.<sup>3</sup> As the GWOT continues, the ideology of militarism pervades society, glorifying the US state's use of violence not diplomacy to achieve security in a world divided between a righteous American "us" and an evil and threatening "them," representing war as the first and most appropriate solution to every problem that vexes America, and reducing patriotism to unquestioning support for each and every incursion.<sup>4</sup> The US-based globalizing cultural industries play a significant role in producing and circulating cultural commodities that carry the ideology of militarism to publics in the US, and around the world. From World War I to the present day, the DoD has tried to influence the way the cultural industries represent the DoD and the wars it fights to trans-national publics, so as to boost approval for DoD outlays and organize consent to its forays.<sup>5</sup>

Significant research on the DoD's militarization of the cultural industries exists,<sup>6</sup> but scholars have not yet addressed the DoD's influence in the cultural

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<sup>1</sup> John Dower, *The Violent American Century: War and Terror Since World War II* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2017).

<sup>2</sup> Nick Turse, *The Complex* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2008).

<sup>3</sup> SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute), "[World military spending: increases in the USA and Europe, decreases in oil-exporting countries](#)" (24 April 2017).

<sup>4</sup> Andrew Bacevich, *The New American Militarism: How Americans are Seduced by War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Chalmers Johnson, *The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004)

<sup>5</sup> Tanner Mirrlees, *Hearts and Mines: The US Empire's Culture Industry* (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2016).

<sup>6</sup> Matthew Alford, "The Political Impact of the Department of Defense on Hollywood Film," *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 33 (4) (2016): 332-347; Matthew Alford and Tom Secker, *National Security Cinema* (Independent Publishing, 2017); Robin Andersen, *A Century of Media, a Century of War* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006); Robin Andersen and Tanner Mirrlees, "Special Issue: Watching, Playing and Resisting the War Society," *Democratic Communiqué* 26 (2014): 1-186; Carl Boggs and Tom Pollard, *The Hollywood*

industries and the often symbiotic relationship between the DoD and the cultural industries as a cultural policy formation. In pursuit of this Special Issue's goal to "push the traditional boundaries of cultural policy studies," this article contends that the DoD is a tacit cultural policy agency that influences the cultural industries, the texts of many cultural products, and the ways people may imagine America when they consume cultural goods. It shows how the DoD is a cultural policy agency that uses cultural policy to act upon the cultural industries by way of a small and specific study of one tremendously important DoD agency (the Public Affairs Office's Special Assistant for Entertainment Media) and one significant DoD cultural policy doctrine (Instruction 5410.16 DoD Assistance to Non-Government, Entertainment-Oriented Media Productions). The article argues that this particular DoD cultural policy formation acts upon to influence the cultural field—the cultural industries, texts and ways of life—and in effect, pushes the militarization of American capitalism, popular culture and national identity.

This article has four interrelated sections. The first section distinguishes between the DoD and the cultural industries, outlines the development of the DoD and cultural industries policy connection, and then focuses in on two key DoD agencies that influence the cultural industries: the DoD's Public Affairs Office (PAO) and the DoD's Special Assistant for Entertainment Media (DODSAEM). The second section analyzes DODSAEM's "Instruction 5410.16 - "DoD Assistance to Non-Government, Entertainment-Oriented Media Productions" as a cultural policy doctrine and highlights the DoD actions toward the cultural industries this policy enables. The third section contends that DoD cultural policy militarizes the cultural industries (by giving companies economic incentives to produce and service militarizing cultural productions), militarizes cultural texts (by encouraging firms to produce cultural goods that carry stories and symbols that put the DoD at war before the public in a positive light), and militarizes the American way of life (by making a militarized national culture and cultivating citizens that may imagine themselves to be always already and necessarily, at war). The conclusion evaluates the DoD's cultural policy with regard to the values and principles of democratic cultural policy and finds it to be lacking.

This article's study of DoD cultural policy is important because the DoD tends to be absent in cultural policy research. Generally, "cultural policy is the branch of public policy concerned with the administration of culture" and it

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*War Machine: Militarism and Popular Culture* (London: Paradigm Publishers, 2007); James Der Derian, *Virtuous War: Mapping the Military Industrial-Media-Entertainment Network* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2001); Geoff Martin and Erin Steuter, *Pop Culture Goes to War* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010); Roger Stahl, *Militainment Inc.* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

“encompasses what governments choose to do or not do to do in relation to culture.”<sup>7</sup> Cultural policy scholars tend to examine how State agencies, policies, and regulations act upon to influence: the cultural industries (the sectors and firms engaged in the production, distribution and exhibition of cultural goods and services for markets); cultural texts (the stories about and symbols of “nations” carried by cultural products); and, the national identities and citizen-subjectivities of populations (ways of life).<sup>8</sup> Research on US cultural policy usually focuses on the US Federal Government cultural agencies that partner with private foundations, philanthropists and companies to support non-profit cultural producing organizations with grants, endowments and tax incentives.<sup>9</sup> Yet, when researchers focus exclusively on “explicit” US cultural policy agencies (e.g., the National Endowment for the Arts) that support or shape certain types of cultural expression (e.g., dance, theatre, visual art, music), they lose sight of the ways that “implicit” cultural policy agencies (e.g., the DoD) may act upon to influence other forms of cultural expression (e.g., commercial TV shows, films, ads, sports, and video games). As result, the DoD is a “blind spot” in current research on US cultural policy.

This article aims to fill a void in cultural policy research by showing the DoD to be a cultural policy agency that acts upon to influence the cultural field. The article’s conceptualization of the DoD as a cultural policy agency relies upon a heuristic distinction between “explicit” and “implicit” cultural policy.<sup>10</sup> The former term refers to government agencies and policies that are explicitly labelled

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<sup>7</sup> David Bell and Kate Oakley, *Cultural Policy* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015): 45-46.

<sup>8</sup> Bell and Oakley, *Cultural Policy*; Stuart Cunningham, “Trojan Horse or Rorschach blot? Creative industries Discourse Around the World,” *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 15 (2008): 375-386; Terry Flew, “Sovereignty and Software: Rethinking Cultural Policy in a Global Creative Economy,” *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 11 (2005): 243-260; David Hesmondhalgh and Andy Pratt, “Cultural Industries and Cultural Policy,” *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 11(2008): 1-13; Jim McGuigan, *Rethinking Cultural Policy* (Open University Press: England, 2004); Toby Miller and George Yudice, *Cultural Policy* (London: Sage, 2002); Justin Lewis and Toby Miller, *Critical Cultural Policy Studies: A Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003); David Throsby, “Modelling the Cultural Industries,” *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 14 (2008): 217-232; David Throsby, *The Economics of Cultural Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

<sup>9</sup> Tyler Cowen, *Good & Plenty: the Creative Success of American Arts Funding* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006). Frederic Martel, *Culture in America* (Paris: Gallimard, 2006); J. Mark Schuster, “Sub-national Cultural Policy: Where the Action is,” *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 8 (2002): 181-96.

<sup>10</sup> Jeremy Ahearne, “Cultural Policy Explicit and Implicit,” *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 15 (2009): 141-53.

as “cultural”; the latter denotes agencies and policies that are not categorized as “cultural,” but nonetheless work to influence culture.<sup>11</sup> The article conceptualizes the DoD as an “implicit” cultural policy agency that directly and indirectly acts within and upon the cultural industries, cultural texts and ways of life, to change them. Also, it conceptualizes DoD cultural policy doctrine as the DoD directives, instructions and statements that rationalize DoD action toward the cultural industries, texts and citizen-subjects. By conceptualizing the DoD as a cultural policy agency and analyzing DoD cultural policy, this article brings the DoD into the field of cultural policy research.

The article’s study of DoD cultural policy is also important because it shows how cultural policy can support the production and circulation of war propaganda in the guise of commercial entertainment. Propaganda is “the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist.”<sup>12</sup> This article contends that the DoD’s cultural policy enables the DoD to deliberately and systematically attempt to shape cultural products into tools of war propaganda. The DoD’s cultural policy regime enables links between the DoD and the cultural industries to form while encouraging cultural co-production relationships between DoD public affairs officers and corporate media elites and cultural workers. The result is a hybrid mixture of war propaganda and commercial entertainment, and these militainment goods<sup>13</sup> flow to the public through ostensibly apolitical market networks controlled by media corporations, not the DoD. The DoD’s propaganda is camouflaged by the cultural commodity form, and this disguise may enhance the DoD’s power to influence public perceptions of its personnel, policies and practices and direct behavior to ends it decides. To the publics targeted and potentially manipulated by it, DoD propaganda is not obviously propaganda, but commercial entertainment, apolitical cultural products designed in response to consumerist tastes and preferences and created to turn a profit.

This article aims to contribute to greater public knowledge about the political and economic organizations that produce and circulate propaganda at the present time. The analysis of the DoD’s cultural policy arrangement with the cultural industries that undergirds the production of war propaganda it offers is a purposeful way of trying to draw attention to and counter the DoD’s power to effectively propagandize. By shedding light upon the DoD’s cultural policy regime and scrutinizing the existence of a symbiotic war propaganda co-production relationship between the DoD and the cultural industries, this article aims to make

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<sup>11</sup> Ahearne, “Cultural Policy Explicit and Implicit,” 141.

<sup>12</sup> Garth Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell. *Propaganda & Persuasion* (New York: Sage Publications), 7.

<sup>13</sup> Stahl, *Militainment Inc.*

the DoD-corporate attempt to influence the hearts and minds of millions of people, transparent. Public knowledge about the concrete organizational sources of war propaganda is the prerequisite for beginning to challenge the policies and practices that create propaganda and the starting point for building movements that counter propaganda's role in militarizing culture and managing democracy.

To avoid a monolithic and generalizing view of DoD cultural policy, though, this article is limited to a small and specific study of one DoD cultural policy formation. It explicates one DoD cultural policy doctrine that guides DoD conduct toward the audio-visual entertainment sectors of the US cultural industries. The article focuses in on specific DoD cultural policy agencies, doctrines and practices to provide as much granular detail as possible about the political determinations that militarize culture. As a consequence, it pays far less attention to the role of corporate cultural producers in shoring up or contesting the arrangement. The economic forces and relations that drive the production of commercial war propaganda are significant, but they are not addressed in detail here. However, research on how DoD influence campaigns are responded to and creatively negotiated by Hollywood cultural producers points to a generally amicable relationship.<sup>14</sup> The DoD issues directives and cultural producers sometimes flout them; the DoD responds by strengthening its directives and doing more rigorous surveillance of the productions it assists to ensure that the imagery and messages conveyed by the resulting cultural products align with its goals. Also, those who economically benefit most from the ownership and sale of militainment frequently court and comply with the DoD. Instances of financiers, CEOs, executive producers, directors and celebrities questioning or debating—let alone dissenting against—the DoD's militarization of the cultural are scarce and do not seem to be forthcoming. The liberal and conservative owners of the cultural industries and the high-salaried above-the-line cultural workers who coordinate and participate in the militarization of cultural production help the DoD sell itself to the world.

To better understand the relationship between the DoD's cultural policy regime and the commercial directors of cultural production, more empirically grounded case studies of specific cultural products forged in the nexus of the DoD and the cultural industries are needed. At the present time, there is a dearth of such

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<sup>14</sup> Matthew Alford and Tom Secker, *National Security Cinema* (Independent Publishing, 2017); David Robb, *Operation Hollywood: How the Pentagon Shapes and Censors the Movies* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2004); Lawrence Suid, *Guts & Glory* (The University Press of Kentucky, 2002); Tanner Mirrlees, "Transforming Transformers into Militainment: Interrogating the DoD-Hollywood Complex," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 76 (2) (2017): 405-434.

studies.<sup>15</sup> This is likely due to the difficulties researchers encounter when trying to access materials about the DoD's cultural work. The DoD does not keep in-depth records of its dealings with the cultural industries, and this makes it onerous for scholars looking to gauge the DoD's precise influence upon specific cultural products. Another problem faced by researchers is the DoD's lack of transparency. To gain access to the documentation the DoD keeps about its role in assisting cultural productions, researchers must submit Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests to the DoD. But in addition to being cumbersome, the FOIA process can be futile. The DoD sometimes rejects requests<sup>16</sup> or will only release documents pertaining to select cultural products, or covering certain periods of time, or related to separate branches of the DoD.<sup>17</sup> Also, the DoD can be quite selective about what requests it approves and who it releases its documents to. Between 1976 and 2005, the DoD gave privileged access to the paucity of information about its Hollywood co-productions to Lawrence H. Suid, a military historian whose research does not seem to take issue with the DoD's propaganda. Also, Suid is said to infrequently open his Georgetown University archive of DoD documents to critical researchers.<sup>18</sup> Another source of information about the DoD-cultural industries arrangement is the trade press agencies that sometimes report on DoD cultural productions. But the DoD manages this information too, so entertainment journalists can only report on what DoD public affairs officers choose to feed them. In sum, it is very difficult for scholars to know the precise effects of DoD cultural policy upon specific cultural products. Nonetheless, a few important scholars have excavated the depths of the DoD's power to influence cultural productions. However, the aim of this article is not to apprehend or assess the specific effects of DoD cultural policy on particular cultural products. Instead, it analyzes the DoD cultural policy formation that enables the DoD to influence cultural products in general.

### **The DoD and the Cultural Industries: The Cultural Policy Connection**

The DoD is a US Federal Government agency headquartered at the Pentagon in Washington, DC, but its hundreds of military bases and installations are spread across the globe. The DoD is headed by a Secretary of Defense, who is a key national security policy advisor to the US President. The DoD controls the Department of the Army, the Department of the Navy, and Department of the Air

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<sup>15</sup> Suid, *Guts & Glory*; Robb, *Operation Hollywood*; Alford and Secker, *National Security Cinema*; Tricia Jenkins, *The CIA in Hollywood: How the Agency Shapes Film and Television* (Texas: University of Texas Press, 2012).

<sup>16</sup> Sharon Weinberger, "Hollywood's Secret Meet," *WIRED* (16 March 2007).

<sup>17</sup> Alford, 2016, 343.

<sup>18</sup> Alford, 343.



Force. It also runs the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), the National Security Agency (NSA), and research and development agencies that often partner with universities and corporations, such as Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) and the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA). The DoD also operates services schools including the National Defense University (NDU) and the National War College (NWC). The DoD employs approximately 1.3 million active duty personnel and 742,000 civilian personnel. The DoD's mission "is to provide the military forces needed to deter war and to protect the security of our country." The DoD spans the planet, waging war to secure land, air, sea and space against threats to America while buttressing capitalist (and sometimes liberal democratic) interests.

The "US cultural industries" refer to the privately owned media companies that coordinate and aim to turn a profit from the financing, production, distribution, promotion and exhibition of cultural commodities for markets in the US and elsewhere. The cultural industries are "most directly involved in the production of social meaning" because they "deal primarily with the industrial production and circulation of texts"<sup>19</sup> that communicate meaning about the world and are open to interpretation by audiences. Much of the US cultural industries are owned by vertically and horizontally integrated and US-based yet trans-nationalizing media conglomerates (TNMCs). Walt Disney, Comcast-NBC-Universal, News Corporation and Time-Warner are kings of the US and global audio-visual media market while Verizon Communications and AT&T are two of the world's largest telecommunication firms. Microsoft rules the computer software supply, Apple holds court over hardware and online retail is Amazon and eBay's turf. Hollywood presides over the big screen while Netflix streams to millions of smaller ones. Web 2.0 giants like Google, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter hold sway over digital capitalism. The US is home to the biggest and most powerful cultural industries.<sup>20</sup>

The DoD and the cultural industries are different types of organizations with different structures and goals. The DoD is part of the political sphere (the US Federal Government) and the cultural industries, the economic one (US and trans-national capitalism). They DoD wages war in world affairs; the cultural industries make cultural commodities and services to be sold in global markets. The DoD serves US national security goals, as authorized by the president (and sometimes Congress); the cultural industries pursue profit, as expected by financiers, CEOs and shareholders. The DoD does not own or exert direct control over the cultural industries, and the cultural industries' products do not always already promote and legitimize the DoD at war. Some cultural products offer subtle or full-blown criticisms of the DoD and war. For example, documentaries like *Fahrenheit 9/11*

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<sup>19</sup> David Hesmondhalgh, *The Cultural Industries* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2007).

<sup>20</sup> Mirrlees, *Hearts and Mines*, 103-30.

(2004) lambast the Bush Administration's GWOT. *Redacted* (2007) and *Green Zone* (2010) represent the 2003 invasion of Iraq as a crime with terrible human consequences; and, *Team America* (2004) and *Tropic Thunder* (2008) parody war as a media spectacle. TV shows like *Homeland* (2012) offer complex depictions of the CIA's clandestine operations. Digital games like *Special Ops: The Line* (2012) grapple with war's many horrors and indignities.<sup>21</sup> As demonstrated by the cultural products that critique war and encourage spectators to contemplate dissent, the DoD and the cultural industries do not always march in lockstep.

The DoD and the cultural industries are separate organizations and popular culture's content is relatively autonomous from direct control by corporate CEOs and military propagandists. Nonetheless, from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present day, the DoD and the cultural industries have routinely converged and collaborated. War after war, the DoD has combined instruments of persuasion and censorship to shape the conduct of the cultural industries and the content of many of the cultural products it manufactures. Routinely, the cultural industries have helped the DoD to manufacture public consent to war and extol militarism as a normal way of life. During WWI, the DoD strengthened ties with the cultural industries with help from George Creel's Committee on Public Information (CPI), a war-time propaganda agency.<sup>22</sup> Throughout WWII, the Office of War Information (OWI) formed the Bureau of Motion Pictures (BMP) to network with Hollywood, which it regarded as an "Essential War Industry." "The motion picture," said OWI head Elmer Davis, is "the most powerful instrument of propaganda in the world, whether it tries to be or not."<sup>23</sup> He continued, "The easiest way to inject a propaganda idea into most people's minds is to let it go through the medium of an entertainment picture when they do not realize that they are being propagandized."<sup>24</sup> By working with the OWI, the cultural industries became "the preeminent transmitter of wartime policy" and its cultural products ensured that "when workers left the factory, they did not leave the war."<sup>25</sup> At the outset of the Cold War, the DoD's Public Affairs branch opened the Motion Picture Production Office (MPPO) and hired Donald Baruch, a former New York theatre producer to head it. Baruch was the DoD's liaison to the cultural industries, reading, vetting and co-producing war scripts with numerous private

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<sup>21</sup> Nick Morwood, "War Crimes, Cognitive Dissonance and the Abject: An Analysis of the Anti-War Wargame *Spec Ops: The Line*," *Democratic Communiqué* 26 (2014): 107–21; Matthew Payne, "WarBytes: The Critique of Militainment in *Spec Ops: The Line*," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 31 (2014): 265–82.

<sup>22</sup> George Creel, *How We Advertised America* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1920), 120.

<sup>23</sup> Clayton Koppes and Gregory Black, "What to Show the World: The Office of War Information and Hollywood, 1942–1945," *Journal of American History* 64 (1): 88.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>25</sup> Thomas Doherty, *Projections of War: Hollywood, American Culture and World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 5.

media firms until the Soviet Union fell.<sup>26</sup> Baruch oversaw the DoD's support for war films such as *From Here to Eternity* (1953), *The Caine Mutiny* (1954), *The Longest Day* (1962), *In Harm's Way* (1965), *The Green Berets* (1968), *Patton* (1970), *Stripes* (1981), *The Right Stuff* (1983) and *Top Gun* (1986).<sup>27</sup> From the globalizing 1990s to the present GWOT, Philip Strub has been at the head of the DoD's cultural policy regime and administered many militarizing co-productions with the cultural industries.

The historical synthesis of the geopolitics of war and the economics of the cultural industries and the organizations of war-making and cultural production undergirds the manufacture and marshalling of an army of military-glorifying cultural products. These products are designed to make money and build popular support for the DoD, normalize war readiness and buildup as a civic virtue, and promote each old and new war as right and good. To ensure the cultural industries will continue to produce and circulate militainment, the DoD operates a massive Public Affairs Office (PAO) whose mandate is to coordinate "public information, internal information, community relations, information training, and audiovisual matters" for the DoD and provide "defense department information to the public, the Congress and the media." Between 2006 and 2015, the DoD took in 60 percent of all Federal Government public affairs monies. Each year, the DoD spends anywhere from \$521 to \$868 million promoting itself. With these massive outlays, the PAO and its thousands of military-cultural workers run the Defense.gov News and Defense.gov News Photos; the Defense Media Activity; the American Forces Radio and Television Service broadcasters; the American Forces Press Service; the DoD News Channel; the Stars and Stripes news service; and, DoD websites. These units produce and circulate content about the DoD across media platforms, source news firms with this prepackaged content in hopes that they will pass it on unfiltered to their audiences, and outsource content-generation jobs to media firms with no apparent connections to them, camouflaging their influence.<sup>28</sup> The PAO also runs the DoD's Special Assistant for Entertainment Media (DODSAEM) to support the cultural industries' production of militainment: war-themed TV shows, movies, music videos, sporting spectacles and interactive games.

As a whole, the PAO is a Federal government funded and administered means of producing and circulating militarizing media and cultural content about the DoD and America at war to the world. Yet, each PAO unit is an important part of the totality of DoD cultural policy. To offer a micro-level analysis of one PAO unit, the next section examines the structure, policies, procedures and effects of the

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<sup>26</sup> Suid, xii.

<sup>27</sup> Doug Galloway, "Donald E. Baruch," *Variety* (18 April 1997).

<sup>28</sup> Mirrlees, 131-63.

DODSAEM, the PAO unit most deeply embedded in the entertainment wing of the cultural industries.

### **DoD Cultural Policy Exposé – The DODSAEM's Instruction 5410.16**

The DODSAEM is headed by Philip Strub, whose office is located in the Pentagon, Washington, DC. The DODSAEM oversees the Office of Army Chief of Public Affairs, the Navy Office of Information West, the Air Force's Office of Public Affairs–Entertainment Liaison Office, the Marines' Public Affairs Motion Picture and Television Liaison, and the Coast Guard's Motion Picture and TV Office. Located in Los Angeles, these offices are the go-to place for firms looking to get the DoD to assist their productions of military-themed popular culture. When deciding whether or not to assist a company's manufacture of militainment, the DODSAEM abides by the principles of a significant doctrine: "Instruction 5410.16 - DoD Assistance to Non-Government, Entertainment-Oriented Motion Picture, Television and Video Productions," issued on January 26, 1988, and re-issued as "DoD Assistance to Non-Government, Entertainment-Oriented Media Productions" on July 31, 2015.

Even though the DoD does not frame "Instruction 5410.16" as a cultural policy, it should be conceptualized as such because it proscribes procedures that enable the DoD to act upon the cultural industries and the production and circulation of cultural goods. The purpose of 5410.16 is "to establish policy, assign responsibilities, and prescribe procedures for DoD assistance to non-Government entertainment media productions such as feature motion pictures, episodic television programs, documentaries, and electronic games." It "Does not apply to productions that are intended to inform the public of fast-breaking or developing news stories." 5410.16 sheds light on how the DoD shapes script development, review and production.

5410.16 outlines *five criteria* that shapes whether or not the DODSAEM will help the cultural industries produce popular culture. First, "DoD assistance may be provided to an entertainment media production, to include fictional portrayals, when cooperation of the producers with the Department of Defense benefits the DoD, or when such cooperation would be in the best interest of the Nation." For the DoD, the texts that are in the "best interest of the Nation" and therefore eligible for assistance are those that present a "reasonably realistic depiction of the Military Services and the DoD, including Service members, civilian personnel, events, missions, assets, and policies"; are "informational and considered likely to contribute to public understanding of the Military Services and the DoD; or, "may benefit Military Service recruiting and retention programs." Second, 5410.16 stipulates that the cultural production must "not deviate from established DoD safety and environmental standards" or "impair the operational readiness of the

Military Services.” Third, the company must reimburse “the Government for any expenses incurred as a result of DoD assistance.” Fourth, it must use “service personnel” and “official DoD property, facilities, and material” in accordance with the instruction’s procedures. And fifth, it must not reuse or sell “footage shot with DoD assistance and official DoD footage” without DoD approval.

The DOD’s 5410.16 cultural policy does not qualify the meaning of “reasonably realistic depiction” of the Military Services and the DoD. Nor does it stipulate what specifically about the Military Services and the DoD the cultural product should depict to help the public understand the DOD. Given that 5410.16 supports cultural productions that “may benefit Military Service recruiting and retention programs,” it is unlikely that the DoD would willingly cooperate with a studio on a cultural product that puts the Military Services or DOD in a negative light. Strub is quite candid about his bias. “There’s no question: I will plead guilty to bias in favor of the military. I wouldn’t be able to look myself in the mirror and go to work every day if I didn’t believe the military is a force for good,” Strub said. “If a script comes to us portraying the military as a malign force, we won’t provide support.”<sup>29</sup> For Strub, it seems that texts that are in the national interest and eligible for assistance are those that convey exclusively *positive* depictions of the DoD at war.

According to 5410.16, the company seeking assistance from the DoD must follow a textual development and review procedure, as follows. First, before a cultural producer officially submits a script to the Office of the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (OATSD-PA), they may be assisted by Strub or one of the branch-specific entertainment liaison officers to “develop a script that might ultimately qualify for DoD assistance.” The DoD’s war script development support might “include guidance, suggestions, answers to research queries for technical research, and interviews with technical experts.” Once the war text is completed, the producer must officially submit it and a request for assistance to the OATSD-PA. The OATSD-PA then reviews it and the request for support “with each Military Service depicted in the script.” If the script is not to the liking of the OATSD-PA, its head “may provide, or authorize the Military Services to provide, further guidance and suggestions for changes that might resolve problems that would prevent DoD assistance.” If the script meets the DoD criteria for support (as stipulated above) and the assistance requested is feasible, the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (ATSD-PA) notifies the producer of the decision.

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<sup>29</sup> Abraham Riesman, “Bombers in Hollywood: The Price of Military Tech Assistance in Movies,” *VICE* (22 May 2012).

If the script is approved, the DoD assigns a “project officer” to the company to oversee the production. When filming begins, the project officer works as the DoD’s principal liaison to the company and is responsible for a bunch of tasks. For example, the officer advises the studio “on technical aspects and arranges for information necessary to ensure reasonably accurate and authentic portrayals of the DoD” and may provide “on-scene assistance to the production company.”

The project officer also may do additional tasks such as:

- “Ensuring proper selection of locations, appropriate uniforms, awards and decorations, height and weight standards, grooming standards, insignia, and set dressing applicable to the military aspects of the production”;
- “Supervising the use of DoD equipment, facilities, and personnel”; “being available during rehearsals to provide technical advice, and being present during filming of all scenes pertinent to the DoD”;
- “Arranging for appropriate technical advisers to be present when highly specialized military technical expertise is required”;
- “Attending pertinent preproduction and production conferences”; and
- “Ensuring that the production adheres to the agreed-upon script and list of support to be provided.”

Importantly, the project officer monitors the cultural production to ensure the company complies with DoD policy. They may interrupt it with a “notice of non-compliance” and suspend “assistance when action by the production company is contrary to stipulations governing the project.”

When making cultural products with the DoD, the company must also fulfill a number of contractual obligations prior to the film being released to the civilian market. 5410.16 stipulates that the studio must arrange a special DOD screening or playing, at the Pentagon or another DoD location, “to allow the DOD to confirm military sequences conforms to the agreed upon script,” “to preclude release or disclosure of sensitive, security-related, or classified information,” and to ensure “that the privacy of DoD personnel is not violated.” If the DOD determines that the cultural product’s representation of the DoD “compromises any of the preceding concerns,” the “DoD will alert the production company of the material, and the production company will remove the material from the production.”

Furthermore, the DoD requires that the companies it assists fulfill a number of additional obligations. Companies must give “Special Thanks” to the DoD personnel and units that assisted the production in the credit roll. They must provide the DoD with “copies of all promotional and marketing materials” and copies of the completed cultural product “for briefings and for historical purposes.” They must reimburse the DoD “for additional expenses incurred” as result of assistance. These include the cost of flying and steaming, except when air and naval activities

“coincide with and can be considered legitimate operational and training missions.” Additional reimbursable expenses include petroleum, oil, and lubricants for equipment, equipment moved, lost or damaged, civilian overtime, energy for facilities, and infrastructure clean up services following the shoot.

In sum, 5410.16 is a DoD cultural policy doctrine that crystallizes the DoD’s attempt to influence the cultural industries, the texts about the DoD produced, and their effects.

### **DoD’s Cultural Policy Effects: Militarizing “the Cultural”**

The article’s previous section identified the DODSAEM and DoD 5410.16 Instruction as a DoD cultural policy formation. Taking it as axiomatic that “cultural policy is a doing” that aims to “produce effects,”<sup>30</sup> this section considers how this DoD cultural policy formation acts upon the cultural field, and contemplates some of the real effects that it may have upon the business of the cultural industries, cultural texts, and the meanings and imaginings of American national identity. This DoD cultural policy formation will be assessed with regard to some of the general goals and effects of cultural policy (as identified by current research). I argue the DoD acts upon the cultural field in three ways: by making militarized cultural industries, making militarized texts, and making a militarized way of life.

*Making militarized cultural industries.* The first way that the DoD militarizes “the cultural” is by giving the cultural industries economic incentives to produce militarizing cultural products for markets. For at least three decades, governments around the world have used cultural policy tools to achieve economic as opposed to distinctly cultural objectives.<sup>31</sup> The “culture industry” was once a pejorative concept coined by Frankfurt School critical theorists to critique the capitalist industrialization and commodification of culture,<sup>32</sup> but in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, politicians, policy-makers, and economists laud the cultural industries as capitalist generators of intellectual property, prosperity, gross domestic product (GDP), jobs and taxable revenue. Neoliberal cultural policy infrequently supports art for art’s sake, but instead, facilitates and legitimizes the development of cultural

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<sup>30</sup> Bell and Oakley, 72.

<sup>31</sup> Bell and Oakley, *Cultural Policy*; Cunningham, “Trojan Horse or Rorschach blot?”; Flew, “Sovereignty and Software”; Hesmondhalgh and Pratt, “Cultural Industries and Cultural Policy”; McGuigan, *Rethinking Cultural Policy*; Miller and Yudice, *Cultural Policy*; Lewis and Miller, *Critical Cultural Policy Studies: A Reader*; Throsby, “Modelling the Cultural Industries.”

<sup>32</sup> Max Horkheimer and Theodore Adorno, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception,” *The Dialectic of the Enlightenment* (New York: Continuum, 1995), 120-167.

industries to serve national economic policy goals and capitalist development. One cultural policy tool that governments use to support the development of profit-oriented cultural industries is the subsidy.<sup>33</sup> A “direct subsidy” is when a government transfers public wealth to the cultural industries in the form of a grant (it allocates a sum of public money to a media company) or a tax credit (it refunds a portion of a media company’s production costs). An “indirect subsidy” is when a government encourages the development of certain kinds of media companies and the production and circulation of certain kinds of cultural commodities by establishing an economic environment that incentivizes and supports them.

The DoD’s cultural policy does not support the US cultural industries with direct subsidies, but its wars and assistance program amount to an indirect subsidy that propels cultural-industrial developments that express and perpetuate militarism.

Generally, the DoD’s wars contribute to and sustain an economic environment that incentivizes and supports the cultural industries’ roll out of militarizing cultural products. The US has the world’s largest military, the biggest defense budget, and fights the most wars, as well as being home to cultural industries that make the most military-promoting cultural products. This is no coincidence, but the result of a longstanding and mutually beneficial relationship between the DoD and the cultural industries, which fuses the geopolitics of war-making to the economics of cultural production. Each and every time a new militarizing cultural product is made, the cultural industries are responding to and reproducing a culture of war. It is not unusual that a State which has been at war for more than seven decades in a row is home to cultural industries that turn a profit by selling to consumers commercialized stories about the past, present and future of America’s wars. Since at least 1945, a state of permanent war has induced the cultural industries to produce military-themed cultural products that express and respond to the permanently percolating war hopes and fears, securities and insecurities, of civilians. The military-industrial-complex’s companies depend upon wars, security threats and defense outlays to stay in business;<sup>34</sup> the cultural industries mine these wars for ideas, develop them into cultural products, and then sell them as commodities to markets of consumers. Security threat after threat and military violence begetting more violence prime the cultural industries to address and amplify the anxieties of a war-ready and war-weary public with cultural products that turn war into something to be consumed for cash, not deliberated about for democracy.

While the DoD’s permanent state of war encourages the militarization of the cultural industries, the DoD’s assistance program presents the cultural industries

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<sup>33</sup> Cowen, *Good & Plenty*.

<sup>34</sup> Turse, *The Complex*.



with a concrete economic incentive to create war-themed products with DoD support. When making cultural products about war with DoD assistance, companies get to shoot DoD installations, personnel, and importantly, capital-intensive hardware (i.e., bases, troops, battleships and jet fighters). This opportunity to film hardware, often at minimal to zero cost, presents a substantial cost savings to the cultural industries. In the absence of this DoD assistance, a studio could employ computer generated imagery (CGI) specialists to simulate jets, battleships and tanks. Alternately, it could rent or purchase this hardware from defense companies. While the former option diminishes “realism,” the latter option is not financially feasible. The average war film budget slides between \$75 million and \$200 million, but the cost to acquire one F-22 Raptor jet fighter (\$150 million per unit) or standard US Navy battleship (\$100 million per unit) from a defense company would exceed the production’s budget. Instead of simulating or acquiring DoD hardware, the cultural industries pursue a real partnership with the DoD in hopes of securing an opportunity to film the DoD’s real jets, tanks and ships, in action. “We’re certainly no less busy than we were [before CGI], and it seems to me it’s not just a matter of cost” says Strub. “There’s something intangible they get from being surrounded by real military men and women and equipment and installations.”<sup>35</sup> So, the DoD’s cultural policy incentivizes collaboration with its advisors, and the executive producers of the cultural industries consent to partner with the DoD to achieve spectacular reality-effects and stay within budget. While the DoD’s assistance program encourages cultural producers to make entertainment with its support, the DoD sometimes directly initiates the production of militainment. One notable result of the DoD’s filmmaking initiative is *Act of Valor* (2012).<sup>36</sup>

Another way the DoD’s intervention drives the militarization of the cultural industries is by spinning off a growing network of companies run by former DoD personnel turned entrepreneurs that surround the DoD’s liaison offices and seek to capitalize on opportunities presented by the cultural industries’ production of militarizing entertainment. For example, Capt. Dale Dye, a retired US Marine and Vietnam War veteran, is founder and owner of Warriors, Inc. (<http://www.warriorsinc.com/>), a company that sells “technical advisory services to the entertainment industry worldwide,” including “performer training, research, planning, staging and on-set advisory for directors and other key production personnel.” Warriors, Inc. worked on blockbusters such as *Saving Private Ryan* (1998) and World War II TV shows such as HBO’s *Band of Brothers* (2001) and *The Pacific* (2010), as well as the *Battlefield 2* (2005) video game. Another firm that services the cultural industries’ production of war entertainment is “MUSA:

<sup>35</sup> Jamie Tarabay, “[Hollywood and the Pentagon: A relationship of mutual exploitation](#),” *Al Jazeera* (29 July 2014).

<sup>36</sup> Robin Andersen, “*Act of Valor*: Celebrating and Denying the Brutalities of an Endless and Global U.S. War,” *Democratic Communique* 26 (2) (2014): 23–38.

Military Entertainment Consulting” (<http://musaconsulting.com/>). Founded in 2009 by Brian Chung, a former US Army captain, and Greg Bishop, a former US Army lieutenant-colonel, MUSA is “owned and operated by seasoned military veterans with modern tactical combat experience and broad entertainment experience” and sells “strategic, tactical and modern military consulting services to the film, television, gaming, advertising and technology industries.” MUSA claims to “bridge the gap between the military and entertainment,” help firms “enhance productions” by “achieving accurate and authentic portrayals of military personnel and equipment,” and saves companies “time, money and stress by navigating” them through the DoD’s “military support approval process.” MUSA has cashed in on DoD-Hollywood film productions such as *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (2008), *G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra* (2009), *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen* (2009), and *Battle: Los Angeles* (2011); reality TV shows including *Army Wives* (2009) and *Coming Home* (2011); and, digital first-person shooter war games from the bestselling franchises *Battlefield 3* (2011) and *Medal of Honour* (2012). Spun out of the nexus of the DoD and the cultural industries, Warriors Inc. and MUSA are two of the many firms now competing to profit on making militarizing culture.

*Making militarized texts.* A second way that the DoD militarizes culture is by directly supporting the production of texts that put the DoD at war in a positive light. Cultural policy researchers highlight how governments sometimes use cultural policy to “politicize” culture by supporting certain types of texts while withholding support from others to achieve political goals.<sup>37</sup> A related concern is that a government’s cultural policy agency will only support texts that express the tastes and preferences of “cultural policy elites” and an “audience with requisite cultural capital,” not everybody, especially not the working poor.<sup>38</sup> In the past, cultural policy often supported texts identified with “high culture” (avant-garde art, opera, ballet, classical music and so on) instead of those associated with middle or low culture (comic books, TV shows, movies and sports). As result, the aesthetic tastes of upper class audiences were privileged at the expense of the presumed cultural preferences of working class and middling audiences. Cultural policy regimes around the world still allocate public monies to support systems for propping up high culture, but they also assist organizations involved in the production and circulation of popular texts that address and get sold to larger audiences. Much cultural policy has moved from a narrow focus on civilizing the masses with “high arts to a broader concern with a variety of modes of expression and entertainment.”<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Bell and Oakley, 126.

<sup>38</sup> Lewis and Miller, 3.

<sup>39</sup> Bell and Oakley, 41.

The DoD's cultural policy does not support the production of bourgeois "high arts" to civilize the working masses, but instead, facilitates the development of hundreds of popular cultural texts that socialize millions of Americans—rich and poor—to support the DoD at war. The DoD has backed numerous popular cultural texts to ensure they carry positive stories about and symbols of the DoD at war. Between 1911 and 2017, the DoD assisted over 800 movies and 1000 TV shows.<sup>40</sup> "Special Thanks" to the DoD are given in the credit roll of at least 33 Hollywood films released between 2001 and 2015: *Pearl Harbor* (2001); *Jurassic Park III* (2001); *Behind Enemy Lines* (2001); *Black Hawk Down* (2001); *The Day After Tomorrow* (2002); *Windtalkers* (2002); *Tears of the Sun* (2003); *Stealth* (2005); *Flags of Our Fathers* (2006); *Transformers* (2007); *I Am Legend* (2007); *Eagle Eye* (2008); *Iron Man* (2008); *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen* (2009); *Iron Man 2* (2010); *Battle: Los Angeles* (2011); *Transformers: Dark of the Moon* (2011); *Battleship* (2012); *Man of Steel* (2013); *Captain Phillips* (2013); *Lone Survivor* (2013); *Godzilla* (2014); and, *Bridge of Spies* (2015).<sup>41</sup> Between 2010 and 2015, the Army—one DoD branch—assisted hundreds of cultural products. The Army resultantly appeared in reality TV shows (*American Idol*, *America's Got Talent*, and *The X-Factor*); day-time talk shows (*The Oprah Winfrey Show*); music videos (Katy Perry's "Part of Me" and Joseph Washington's "We Thank You"); professional sports events and broadcasts (NBA, NFL, NHL and UFC); and, first-person shooter games made by Electronic Arts and Activision-Blizzard. These DoD-supported cultural productions suggest that the DoD's cultural policy is engaged in the politicization of culture and the politics of cultural distinction making.

The DoD's cultural policy is a way by which the DoD politicizes culture, supporting certain types of popular texts and instrumentalizing them to achieve political goals while withholding support from others that are not useful to its goals. Apropos the criteria outlined in the 5410.16 Instruction, DOD cultural policy supports popular texts that the DoD itself determines to be in the best interest of the nation, convey what the DoD decides are reasonably realistic depictions of the DoD, carry information that the DoD surmises will likely contribute to a public understanding of the DoD, and transmit stories and images that the DoD believes to benefit the DoD's ongoing drive to recruit and retain personnel while priming public morale for war. In effect, the DoD favors certain types of cultural products over others, supporting texts that fulfill the criteria of 5410.16 while withholding support from texts that don't.<sup>42</sup> For example, the DoD has denied assistance to critically acclaimed Vietnam war films such as *Apocalypse Now* (1979), *Deer*

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<sup>40</sup> Alford and Secker, 1.

<sup>41</sup> "[Phillip M. Strub](#)," IMDb.com (29 August 2016).

<sup>42</sup> For more examples, see: Alford and Secker; Robb, and Suid.

*Hunter* (1978), *Platoon* (1986) and *Full Metal Jacket* (1987).<sup>43</sup> The DoD even refused to support the *Valley of Elah* (2007), a modestly critical Iraq war film.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, the DoD stretches the meaning of “reasonably realistic” depiction in absurd directions, as it has supported flicks with totally unrealistic stories. The DoD has never fought a war against invading robots, aliens or monsters, but it has assisted blockbuster science fiction flicks in which it does (and wins!) such as *Transformers* (2009), *Battle: Los Angeles* (2011), and *Godzilla* (2014). Additionally, the DoD has demanded script changes during the production process. In the original script for *Iron Man* (2008), a soldier was supposed to say: “People would kill themselves for the opportunities I have.” On set, Strub objected to the line and compelled director Jon Favreau to remove it. Strub perhaps saw this militarized Marvel comics-inspired film as a means for recruiting teenagers to the ranks. But in the same year in which *Iron Man* was shot, 150 soldiers—likely suffering untreated PTSD—committed suicide following their return home from the battlefields of Iraq. Strub likely had the line removed to avoid the possibility of the film reminding youthful filmgoers of the reality of soldier suicide and deflating the film’s projection of the soldier as a near invincible superhero.

If DoD cultural policy were fair and balanced, assisting hawkish DoD-promoting *and* dovish DoD-criticizing scripts, and if DoD cultural policy supported the scripting of wars, “warts and all,” there wouldn’t be as much concern. But this is not the case. The DoD privileges some scripts for support over others and changes the scripts it supports using a self-generated criteria to guide its cultural distinctions. The DoD’s cultural distinctions do not rely upon old fashioned categorizations of high, middling or low aesthetics (and value judgements about the tastes or deficiencies of the audiences slotted into corresponding cultural class categories), but makes political judgements about the quality of scripts with regard to their potential utility to the DoD’s self-promotion and propaganda goals. Popular texts that show signs of making the DoD look great get assistance while those that criticize the DoD or put it or the wars it fights in an unfavorable light do not. By allocating assistance to certain types of popular texts and withholding it from others, the DoD encourages the cultural industries to put their capital behind cultural productions that put the DoD in a positive light and discourages them from greenlighting less savory and potentially counter-hegemonic texts. In this regard, the texts selected to be supported by the DoD’s cultural policy regime are partial to the tastes and preferences of the DoD elites administering it, reflective of the judgements of PAO officers and exclusive to an audience that presumably has no

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<sup>43</sup> Duncan Campbell, “[Top Gun versus Sergeant Bilko? No Contest, Says the Pentagon](#),” *The Guardian* (29 August 2008).

<sup>44</sup> Julian E. Barnes, “[Calling the Shots on War Movies](#),” *Los Angeles Times* (7 July 2008).

interest in being exposed to texts that encourage critical thought about the DoD, the downsides of war, and the real consequences of US foreign policy.

*Making militarized national identities and cultivating militarized citizens.* A third way that the DoD cultural policy regime militarizes culture is by making militarized national identities and cultivating citizen-subjects that are to imagine themselves as always already and necessarily, at war. National identity is “a group’s sense of belonging to a particular collectivity with shared attributes (of place, language, culture) and a sense of exclusivity.”<sup>45</sup> Cultural policy researchers highlight how governments sometimes use cultural policy to “mobilize culture into a resource of making nations” and put culture to use “to create, and continually reiterate, national identity.”<sup>46</sup> Further to making national identities, cultural policy aims to cultivate citizen-subjects that are affectively and imaginatively attached to these identities and bound together by them within a state’s territorial borders as a national collective.<sup>47</sup> At the same time, the investments these citizens make in the idea of themselves as part of a big national collective are reproduced through day-to-day exposures to or rituals of consuming the nationally-inflected stories and symbols carried to them by cultural products.<sup>48</sup> While cultural policy creates national identities and cultivates citizen-subjects, cultural products address and remind these subjects, in the most earnest and banal of ways, that they belong to something much bigger than themselves: a national community.

The DoD’s cultural policy constructs and differentiates American national identity from internal and external enemy others that supposedly pose existential threats to it—threats that the DoD must, for the nation’s security, contain, neutralize or eliminate with violence. In addition to making a militarized national identity, the DoD’s cultural policy is engaged in the work of cultivating citizen-subjects for its purposes, directly, as the new citizen-soldiers it recruits into the ranks for war, and indirectly, as citizen-spectators, who daily watch, hear or read about the those actually fighting wars, at a distance from them. DoD cultural policy mobilizes the cultural industries as a strategic instrument for making and reproducing a militarized American national identity and militarized citizen-subjects. While DoD cultural policy cultivates citizen-soldiers to willingly fight and die for the virtue of the nation, it prompts citizen-spectators to feel a kinship to those doing the fighting and dying, even though most of these subjects likely will never meet or know one another. The DoD’s cultural policy supports cultural products that address citizen-subjects as members of militarized national community, always at war. Militarizing TV shows, films, sporting events and video games address citizen-subjects as

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<sup>45</sup> Denis McQuail, *Media Performance* (London: Sage, 1992), 264.

<sup>46</sup> Bell and Oakley, 110-112.

<sup>47</sup> Lewis and Miller, 1.

<sup>48</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York: Verso, 1991); Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995).

lacking security due to the existence of enemy threats within and outside of the US territorial state and invite these subjects to imagine national security being realized in the DoD's power to wage war. They cultivate a citizenry morally fit for waging and watching wars, but not one capable of democratic self-governance with regards to matters of war and peace. Democracy requires a citizenry that is informed about and able to join with and meaningfully participate with others in making the big decisions that shape their lives and communities. But the DoD cultural policy regime short circuits the possibility of participatory public decision-making surrounding the State's use of violence in world affairs by creating products that mobilize citizens for actual and fictional wars.

### **Conclusion: A Critique of DoD Cultural Policy, for Democratic Cultural Policy**

The DoD does not represent itself as a cultural policy agency and does not author obvious cultural policy documents. It is not recognized by the public as a Ministry of Culture as its culture-shaping policy doctrines and actions fall under defense, not culture. Yet, when explicit cultural policy agencies and doctrines become privileged sites for analysis, attention is deflected away from the agencies and doctrines that, while not framed as "cultural," still act upon it. This article has shown the DoD to be a significant cultural policy agency that uses a cultural policy doctrine to shape the cultural field in significant ways. Indeed, the DoD acts within and upon the cultural industries, the texts of cultural goods and American culture and citizen-subjects, militarizing them all. The conclusion offers a critical assessment of some of the general principles and values of the DoD's cultural policy as distinct from the principles and values of democratic cultural policy. Democratic cultural policy derives from principles and values such as diversity, access, quality and fairness,<sup>49</sup> but DoD cultural policy does not reflect any of these.

Democratic cultural policy seeks to: 1) encourage a diversity of cultural expressions, while the DoD's cultural policy supports one-dimensional cultural expressions (none that are anti-war, pacifist or critical of the DoD); 2) provide all citizens in a democracy with access to cultural expressions, while DoD cultural policy teams up with the cultural industries to co-produce militarizing cultural products that aim to sell to consumers in markets, and manipulate the minds of those who pay for them; 3) make value judgements about the quality of cultural expressions based upon what citizens need to function as informed participants in deliberative democracy, while DoD cultural policy makes value judgements about

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<sup>49</sup> Philip Napoli, "Bridging Cultural Policy and Media Policy in the U.S.: Challenges and Opportunities" (Working paper, The Donald McGannon Communication Research Centre, 2006).

expressions based on their strategic value to the DoD's public affairs campaign; 4) be committed to fairness, whereas DoD cultural policy unfairly supports the profit-interests of the cultural industries using public resources to transform commercial culture into war propaganda.

Furthermore, democratic cultural policy making is bottom-up, participatory, and inclusive, while DoD cultural policy is top-down, elitist, and exclusionary. Democratic cultural policy making relies on a deliberative process that includes many diverse social groups in decision-making, but the DoD's cultural policy is made by and for an exclusive DoD elite; the civilian public is excluded from DoD cultural policy as it does not decide what texts the DoD supports, why they are selected or to what ends they are put. DoD cultural policy supports cultural expressions that represent the American Way of Life in partial and selective ways, and projects a militarized idea of America to the world. It is administered by DoD personnel who possess the power to decide what America is and what America is not in the cultural expressions they support and sanction. The majority of US civilians do not represent themselves, but are represented to themselves and to the world in the fictional stories and spectacles spun out of the DoD-cultural industries nexus.

The global ramifications of the DoD-cultural industries arrangement are presently unknown, but here is a conjecture. The DoD's militarization of culture might contribute to or reinforce existing anti-American sentiments within and between publics around the world. When the content of popular cultural products glamorizes unpopular US wars and extols the virtue of the DoD, the primary agent of war, trans-national populations that are already skeptical of US war policy or who are concretely suffering as result of US-led wars, may come to further resent or develop a hatred for US culture, identity and foreign policy or "America" as a whole. The DoD's embeddedness within the cultural industries ensures that many cultural products will double as DoD-serving propaganda media, but the stories about and images of America at war they convey may exacerbate as opposed to mitigate fear and loathing of US military might and pour fuel on the raging fires of anti-Americanism. Paradoxically, the DoD cultural policy regime's attempt to strengthen US cultural imperialism or "soft power"<sup>50</sup> around the world may in some instances, undermine it.

At this antagonistic juncture in US and global history, what is to be done in response to the DoD's cultural policy regime? The DoD's cultural policy supports the maintenance and growth of DoD-securing cultural industries, popular texts and ways of life. It serves the interests of the military brass and corporate rich, but it need not always be this way. In this period of social upheaval and intensified

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<sup>50</sup> Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).

inequality, a portion of the public monies currently allocated to the DoD's cultural policy regime could be re-allocated to support the development of cultural policy for the many. A pittance of the DoD's centralized, commercially-oriented and war-serving cultural policy budget could support a diversity of federally de-centralized, state-by-state and city-level cultural policy initiatives that might foster pacifist, bottom-up and public cultural productions that express the real material conditions, lived experiences, troubles and aspirations of the American working class.

By interrogating the DoD's large and growing cultural policy regime and opening up some new space for critical cultural policy research on this topic, this article encourages scholars, policy-makers and activists to push for democratic cultural policy by and for the American people, instead of permanent war. The prospect of democratic cultural policy will necessitate the formation of a multi-faceted coalition consisting of a revitalized anti-war movement that aims to demilitarize society; a communications reform movement that presses the Federal Government to shift public resources away from the DoD's PR budget and put them toward people's culture; and, a diversity of researchers that might clarify and craft solutions to the problems and perils of DoD cultural policy. In the absence of a broad-based and coordinated challenge to the DoD's cultural policy regime, the DoD and the cultural industries will likely march forward and overshadow whatever minor cultural resistances to the official culture of militainment that arise.

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