

THEY WON'T EVEN CREATE JOBS IN THE MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX ANYMORE

You know how I have argued that our country does have an industrial plan, one that is commonly called the Military-Industrial Complex? The government dumps seemingly unlimited amount of money into selected projects. Defense companies make sure to spread the jobs created by defense contracts around, so members of Congress support those contracts in bipartisan fashion. And then we export things like jets—one of the few things we export anymore.

Only, if we allow defense contractors to use prison labor, then the whole scheme sort of breaks down.

This spring, the United Arab Emirates is expected to close a deal for \$7 billion dollars' worth of American arms. Nearly half of the cash will be spent on Patriot missiles, which cost as much as \$5.9 million apiece.

But what makes those eye-popping sums even more shocking is that some of the workers manufacturing parts for those Patriot missiles are prisoners, earning as little as 23 cents an hour. (Credit Justin Rohrlich with the catch.)

The work is done by Unicor, previously known as Federal Prison Industries. It's a government-owned corporation, established during the Depression, that employs about 20,000 inmates in 70 prisons to make everything from clothing to office furniture to solar panels to military electronics.

One of the company's high-tech specialties: Patriot missile parts.

“UNICOR/FPI supplies numerous electronic components and services for guided missiles, including the Patriot Advanced Capability (PAC-3) missile,” Unicor’s website explains. “We assemble and distribute the Intermediate Frequency Processor (IFP) for the PAC-3s seeker. The IFP receives and filters radio-frequency signals that guide the missile toward its target.”

The missiles are then marketed worldwide – sometimes by Washington’s top officials.

Funny. Obama told me that government can’t create jobs.

I guess that’s because they’re too busy undercutting private manufacturers with prison labor.