

**THE CONTEMPORARY CONFLICT INSTITUTE**

by

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## ABSTRACT

The Contemporary Conflict Institute (CCI) is a research organization I created in October 2009 to better understand the many hues of institutionalized, globalized and multi-authored violence and oppression that color our daily American lives: whether it is the reciprocal engagement of war; the belligerence of occupation; the passive acts of surveillance, reconnaissance, and espionage; the aggressive stance of militarism; or the protectionist caution of homeland security.

In this paper I examine the inspirations guiding my creation of the Contemporary Conflict Institute. They are thorny and dichotomous. My longtime fascinations with radio, public policy, and World War II history rub against my rejection of the political systems that shape these technologies, structures, and events. Also, the wondrous interpretive displays of the Smithsonian Institution directly inspired the creation of the CCI. This inspiration though, is tainted by the Smithsonian's fear of truly activating the public's engagement with the world.

I also reflect on the creation of the Contemporary Conflict Institute and the research, planning and execution of its two exhibitions *Speculative Technologies Research 2009* and *Aural Indicators*.