

"We will abolish war crimes when we abolish war — which is a crime in itself!"

"Exposing  
the true costs  
of war"

# The War Crimes Times

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Donations Welcome



Image by Mark Runge

# American Exceptionalism

# Letters

## Mothering and the Military

I am thankful for Sharon Doubiago's piece "Mothering and the Military" (WCT, fall 2013). I had just watched *The Hobbit* with my children. As the mother of a son, I was overwhelmed with the virtue of violence/war/bravery is combat/union with others is battle united message of the film. (I googled *The Hobbit*; it was released in September of 1937, just in time for wall to wall violence—maybe not unlike, as Sharon points out, the timing of Robert Bly's *Iron John* during the first Gulf War.) I arrived the next morning in the office to find her article on my desk and it was very fitting to what I was struggling with post movie. Her call for books and fairy tales of another model of bravery/masculinity is clear and compelling.

Jessica Curl Rose  
Mendocino, CA

## WCT Distribution and Appreciation

Those papers went in a hurry!! There's a counter at D'Angelo Sandwich Shop which routinely lays out a free paper, the *Laconia Daily Sun*, for customers to read and take if they desire. I asked permission the day before and laid some WCTs out. The next day they were gone. Then the next day I had scheduled an oil change across the street, dropped my car off, went to the D'Angelo's while the oil was being changed, and laid out another long row of the *War Crimes Times* on the counter. By the time the oil change was completed, half of that row of papers were gone!! Several managers were glad I dropped them off. If you have any more bundles, I know I can distribute them.

Denny Lintz  
Laconia, NH

Your issues are flying off very rapidly in the town of Pahoia where I distribute most of them. I much appreciated having received your publication while I was in Nicaragua and thus they were ready for distribution as soon as I arrived.

Paul Patnode  
Volcano, HI

May I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your bravado in speaking up on the waste of human lives and precious other resources due to the temerity and lack of vision by our politicians, and the militia who do their legwork.

Karen Ashley  
Pahoia, HI

In appreciation for your exceptionally good works, spreading the true worth of Humanity in Unity.

Hollis Higgins  
Spokane, WA

I appreciate the *WCT* because these seem to be things nobody wants to talk about; it's informative; and it's got good journalism. This is the second copy I've got, and I got it from the library. But the librarian said they only receive three copies at a time. Can you send some copies free? I will give them to my neighbors or whoever.

Brandy Lomax  
Puyallup, WA

Dear Brandy,

*We sent free copies to you and to your library. We get many requests for free copies and we've not refused any of them. We want to get the paper to as many readers as we can. So far we've been able to honor these requests because we have a number of generous donors who give more than the suggested amount for their own copies. But please understand that the not-for-profit WCT is produced, distributed, and funded entirely by volunteers. The volunteers cover expenses out of their own pockets and are recompensed only when enough donations have accumulated to cover the costs. We operate at the break-even point, plus or minus a few dollars, each issue. So, as you distribute the free copies, please encourage the recipients to donate to the cause.*

—Ed.

## WCT Online

It looks like the current issue is not available online [as of early October]. I would suggest that you put it up on line in current time. Now is when people are reading it—and some of us would pass on articles if we could. If I could get at the "Moral Disengagement" article [Fall 2013, by Kathie Malley-Morrison and Ross Caputi], I would pick out some of the really pithy and insightful portions and pass them on to two lists that I am on, with credit to *WCT*.

You folks are doing a really great job; I think baring the truth to the light of day and making truth available to the human community is right at the cutting edge of our evolutionary journey. So thanks very much.

Dana Visalli  
Twisp, WA

Dear Dana,

*Thank you and all the readers above for your kind words and your support. Links to PDFs of every issue can be found at WarCrimesTimes.org. We purposely delay a bit in putting the latest issue online so as not to compete with the print issue.*

—Ed.

## In this issue:

To emphasize our exceptional theme we chose to use an exceptional page one: Mark Runge's image with no text at all. What's your reaction? Does the graphic have potential as a poster? Let us know at editor@WarCrimesTimes.org.

The theme is addressed in these pages from many different perspectives by Brian Willson, Mike Ferner, William Blum, Tom Engelhardt, and others.

Also: We devote a page to Quaker House whose



## American Exceptionalism

activists have been working for peace and GI rights since 1969; Pepe Escobar explains the motivation behind U.S. Afghanistan policy; David Krieger reviews *Zero*; Marjorie Cohn reports on the recent "Drone Summit" and homeland-security-degree.org provides some drone graphics; Mike Hastie offers a photo and free verse report from his recent trip abroad; and U.S. and UK veterans honor Armistice and Remembrance Day.



Veterans For Peace UK coordinator Ben Griffin negotiates with police in London on Remembrance Day. For the outcome, see page 19. (Photo © Guy Smallman.)

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Please note that our contributors' viewpoints may not always be entirely consistent with those of the *War Crimes Times*, but their topics address our concerns.

**Editorial team:** Kim Carlyle, Susan Carlyle, Lyle Petersen, Mark Runge, and Robert Yoder. **Distribution team from VFP Chapter 099 includes** Chris Berg, Ed Brown, Jim Brown, Claire Hanrahan, Ronald Harayda, Susan Oehler, Bruce Roth, Charlie St.Clair, Coleman Smith, and Gerry Werhan.

# American Exceptionalism — A Survey

by William Blum

The leaders of imperial powers have traditionally told themselves and their citizens that their country was exceptional and that their subjugation of a particular foreign land should be seen as a “civilizing mission,” a “liberation,” “God’s will,” and of course bringing “freedom and democracy” to the benighted and downtrodden. It is difficult to kill large numbers of people without a claim to virtue. I wonder if this sense of exceptionalism has been embedded anywhere more deeply than in the United States, where it is drilled into every cell and ganglion of American consciousness from kindergarten on.

If we measure the degree of indoctrination (I’ll resist the temptation to use the word “brainwashing”) of a population as the gap between what the people believe their government has done in the world and what the actual (very sordid) facts are, the American people are clearly the most indoctrinated people on the planet. The role of the American media is of course

indispensable to this process—try naming a single American daily newspaper or TV network that was unequivocally against the U.S. attacks on Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan, Yugoslavia, Panama, Grenada, and Vietnam. Or even against any two of them. How about one? Which of the mainstream media expressed real skepticism of The War on Terror in its early years?

Overloaded with a sense of America’s moral superiority, each year the State Department judges the world, issuing reports evaluating the behavior of all other nations, often accompanied by sanctions of one kind or another. There are different reports rating how each lesser nation has performed in the previous year in the areas of religious freedom, human rights, the war on drugs, trafficking in persons, and counterterrorism, as well as maintaining a

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list of international “terrorist” groups. The criteria used in these reports are mainly political, wherever applicable; Cuba, for example, is always listed as a supporter of terrorism whereas anti-Castro exile groups in Florida, which have committed literally hundreds of terrorist acts, are not listed as terrorist groups.

- “The causes of the malady are not entirely clear but its recurrence is one of the uniformities of history: power tends to confuse itself with virtue and a great nation is peculiarly susceptible to the idea that its power is a sign of God’s favor, conferring upon it a special responsibility for other nations—to make them richer and happier and wiser, to remake them, that is, in its own shining image.” —Former U.S. Senator William Fulbright, *The Arrogance of Power* (1966)

- “We Americans are the peculiar, chosen people—the Israel of our time; we bear the ark of the liberties of the world. ... God has predestined, mankind expects, great things from our race; and great things we feel in our souls.” —Herman Melville, *White-Jacket* (1850)

- “God appointed America to save the world in any way that suits America. God appointed Israel to be the nexus of America’s Middle Eastern policy and anyone who wants to mess with that idea is a) anti-Semitic, b) anti-American, c) with the enemy, and d) a terrorist.” —John le Carré, *London Times*, January 15, 2003

- “Neoconservatism ... traded upon the historic American myths of innocence, exceptionalism, triumphalism and Manifest Destiny. It offered a vision of what the United States should do with its unrivaled global power. In its most rhetorically-seductive messianic versions, it conflated the expansion of American power with the dream of universal democracy. In all of this, it proclaimed that the maximal use of American power was good for both America and the world.” —Columbia University Professor Gary Dorrien, *The Christian Century* magazine, January 22, 2007

- “To most of its citizens, America is exceptional, and it’s only natural that it should take exception to certain international standards.” —Michael Ignatieff, *Legal Affairs*, May-June, 2002

- Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Peters, U.S. Army War College, 1997: “Our country is a force for good without precedent.”

- Thomas Barnett, U.S. Naval War College: “The U.S. military is a force for global good that ... has no equal.” —*The Guardian* (London), December 27, 2005



NEW BEDFORD, Mass. (Nov. 10, 2011) Specialist Alicia Parker, assigned to the Massachusetts Army Honor Guard, left, and Airman Sang Nguyen, assigned to USS *Constitution*, recite the Pledge of Allegiance with preschoolers to recognize and honor the symbolism of the National Ensign. Service members also talked about their experiences in the military and responded to students’ questions during the visit. (U.S. Navy photo)

- John Bolton, future U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, writing in 2000: Because of its unique status, the United States could not be “legally bound” or constrained in any way by its international treaty obligations. The U.S. needed to “be unashamed, unapologetic, uncompromising American constitutional hegemonists,” so that their “senior decision makers” could be free to use force unilaterally.

Condoleezza Rice, future U.S. Secretary of State, writing in 2000, was equally contemptuous of international law. She claimed that in the pursuit of its national security the United States no longer needed to be guided by “notions of international law and norms” or “institutions like the United Nations” because it was “on the right side of history.” —*Z Magazine*, July/August 2004

- “The president [George W. Bush] said he didn’t want other countries dictating terms or conditions for the war on terrorism. ‘At some point, we may be the only ones left. That’s okay with me. We are America.’” —*Washington Post*, January 31, 2002

- “Reinhold Niebuhr got it right a half-century ago: What persists—and promises no end of grief—is our conviction that Providence has summoned America to tutor all of humankind on its pilgrimage to perfection.” —Andrew Bacevich, professor of international relations, Boston University

- In commenting on Woodrow Wilson’s moral lecturing of his European colleagues at the Versailles peace table following the First World War, Winston Churchill remarked that he found it hard to believe that the European emigrants, who brought to America the virtues of the lands from which they sprang, had left behind all their vices. —*The World Crisis, Vol. V, The Aftermath*, 1929

- “Behold a republic, gradually but surely becoming the supreme moral factor to the world’s progress and the accepted arbiter of the world’s disputes.” —William Jennings Bryan, U.S. Secretary of State under Woodrow Wilson, *In His Image* (1922)

- *Newsweek* editor Michael Hirsch: “U.S. allies must accept that some U.S. unilateralism is inevitable, even desirable. This mainly involves accepting the reality of America’s supreme might—and truthfully, appreciating how historically lucky they are to be protected by such a relatively benign power.” —*Foreign Affairs*, November, 2002

- Colin Powell speaking before the Republican National Convention, August 13, 1996: The United States is “a country that exists by the grace of a divine providence.”

- “The U.S. media always has an underlying acceptance of the mythology of American exceptionalism, that the U.S., in everything it does, is the last best hope of humanity.” —Rahul Mahajan, author of: *The New Crusade: America’s War on Terrorism, and Full Spectrum Dominance*

- “The fundamental problem is that the Americans do not respect anybody except themselves,” said Col. Mir Jan, a spokesman for the Afghan Defense Ministry. “They say, ‘We are the God of the world,’ and they don’t consult us.” —*Washington Post*, August 3, 2002

- “If we have to use force, it is because we are America! We are the indispensable nation. We stand tall. We see further into the future.” —Madeleine Albright, U.S. Secretary of State, 1998

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*William Blum is an author, historian, and U.S. foreign policy critic. This page was excerpted from “The Anti-Empire Report #100” at <http://williamblum.org>.*

Obama plays the pivot

# Digging in: Why U.S. won't leave Afghanistan

by Pepe Escobar

It was high drama

**W**e came, we saw, we stayed. Forever. That's the essence of the so-called Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) to be struck between the Obama administration and Afghanistan—over 12 years after the start of the never-ending War on Terror.

President Obama and U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry define it as a “strategic partnership.” If that's the case, it's one of the most lopsided in history; Afghan President Hamid Karzai is no more than a sartorially impeccable American puppet.

Kerry announced the so-called BSA in Washington on Wednesday, November 20, even before a Loya Jirga (“Grand Council” in Pashto) of 2,500 Afghan tribal leaders, clerics, members of parliament, and merchants started their four-day deliberations in a tent on the grounds of the Polytechnical University in Kabul on Thursday.

But then Karzai, probably in his last major speech as president, pulled off a fabulous stunt. He knows he is, and will be, accused of selling Afghanistan down the (Panjshir) river. He knows he is sacrificing Afghan sovereignty for years to come—and there will be nasty blowback for it.

So once again he channeled Hamid the Actor, and played his best honest broker impersonation, stressing the BSA should be put off until the Afghan presidential elections in April 2014, and be signed by his successor.

***There's nothing “residual” about a U.S. occupation to be disguised as “forces” necessary to train and “advise” the roughly 350,000 soldiers and police which are part of Afghan National Army.***



U.S. Army Pvt. Glen Rathwick, from Paso Robles, Calif., serving with 3rd Platoon, A Company, 3rd Special Troops Battalion, 1st Armored Division, provides security at the main gate of an Afghan Uniformed Police station, in Khoshi district, Logar province, Afghanistan, Jan. 25, 2012. (U.S. Army photo.)

“There's a mistrust between me and the Americans. They don't trust me and I don't trust them. I have always criticized them and they have always propagated negative things behind my back,” he claimed.

I have been to Jirgas in Afghanistan; even looking at those inscrutable, rugged tribal faces is a spectacle in itself. So what were they thinking in Kabul? Of course they did not trust the Americans. But did they trust Karzai? Could they see this was all an act?

A consultative Loya Jirga cannot veto the BSA. Even the Jirga chairman, Sibghatullah Mojadeddi, stressed Karzai may sign without any consultation. Yet Karzai insists he will not sign without the Loya Jirga's approval.

Many members of the Afghan parliament and the entire Afghan opposition already voted with their feet, boycotting the Jirga. Not to mention the Taliban—essential to any agreement on the future of Afghanistan—and the still fully weaponized Hezb-e-Islami. Everyone is eagerly waiting to hear Taliban supremo Mullah Omar's take on the whole kabuki.

### Counter-terror free-for-all

The BSA “negotiation” has been like an extended Monty Python sketch. Washington has always insisted U.S. soldiers can break into Afghan homes at will and



Chinese Vice Premier Wang Qishan, center, holds the basketball given to him by President Barack Obama following their Oval Office meeting Tuesday, July 28, 2009, to discuss the outcomes of the first U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue. Looking on at left is Chinese State Councilor Dai Bingguo. (Official White House Photo by Pete Souza)

remain immune to any sort of Afghan prosecution. Otherwise the Americans will leave for good at the end of 2014, leaving just the poorly trained and largely corrupt Afghan National Army (ANA) to fight the Taliban.

Up until Karzai's latest stunt, the Obama administration considered the deal was in the bag. Just look at the letter Obama sent to Karzai. [*President Obama's November 20 letter to President Karzai began, “I am pleased that we have reached agreement on the text of a Bilateral Security Agreement that will enable the United States and Afghanistan to implement the promise of our Strategic Partnership.”*]

And by the way, no apologies. National Security Advisor Susan Rice said Washington does not need to apologize for killing and injuring tens of thousands

of civilians in Afghanistan since 2001, not to mention occupying vast swathes of the country. Earlier, a Karzai spokesman said that would be the case.

If in doubt, just listen to super-hawk U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham, who told Reuters, “I'm stunned. Apologize for what? Maybe we should get the Afghan president to apologize to the American soldiers for all the hardship he's created for them.”

There's nothing “residual” about a U.S. occupation to be disguised as “forces” necessary to train and “advise” the roughly 350,000 soldiers and police which are part of ANA, built from scratch over the last few years.

And what we're talking about here is a deal starting in 2015 and in effect up to 2024 “and beyond.”

The final agreement is not much different from the previously leaked working

...the Afghan government has asked President Obama to write a letter apologizing for U.S. operations that have killed or injured Afghan civilians....National Security Adviser Susan Rice said the United States will not apologize to Afghanistan.

Susan Rice: “No such letter has been drafted or delivered. There is not a need for the United States to apologize to Afghanistan. Quite the contrary, we have sacrificed and supported them in their democratic progress and in tackling the insurgency and al-Qaeda. So, that is not on the table.”

—Democracy Now!  
November 20, 2013,  
[www.democracynow.org](http://www.democracynow.org)



Susan Rice, U.S. Ambassador to the UN. (U.S. State Department photo.)

draft [which states “The Parties acknowledge that continued U.S. military operations to defeat al-Qaeda and its affiliates may be appropriate and agree to continue their close cooperation and coordination toward that end”]. An update has been circulating in the Pentagon and the U.S. Congress. The Pentagon, via Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Martin Dempsey, justifies the whole thing by the proverbial need to “maintain Afghanistan’s security”

Translation: a future festival of raids by Special Forces, and a counter-terror free-for-all.

The draft text only mentions, vaguely, “full respect for Afghan sovereignty and full regard for the safety and security of the Afghan people, including in their homes,” as Obama also mentioned in his letter to Karzai.

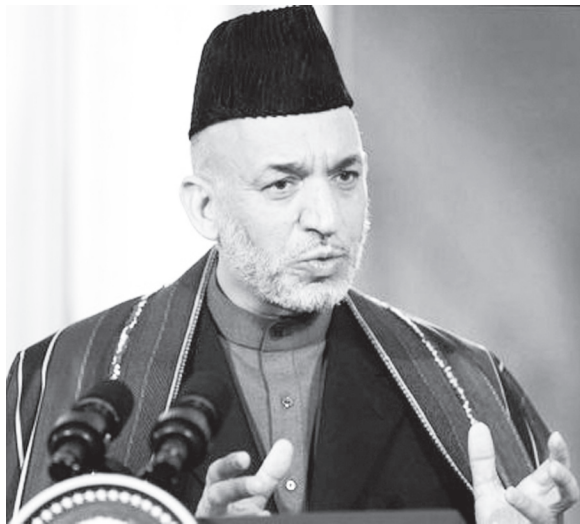
And there’s absolutely nothing on the critical issue of drones based

to say this opens a new Pandora’s box is an understatement. [As the WCT went to press, the Loya Jirga had approved the BSA but Karzai was still refusing to sign it.]

The occupation, for all practical purposes, will continue. This has nothing to do with fighting the War on Terror or jihad. There’s no Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. The few remnants are in Waziristan, in Pakistani territory.

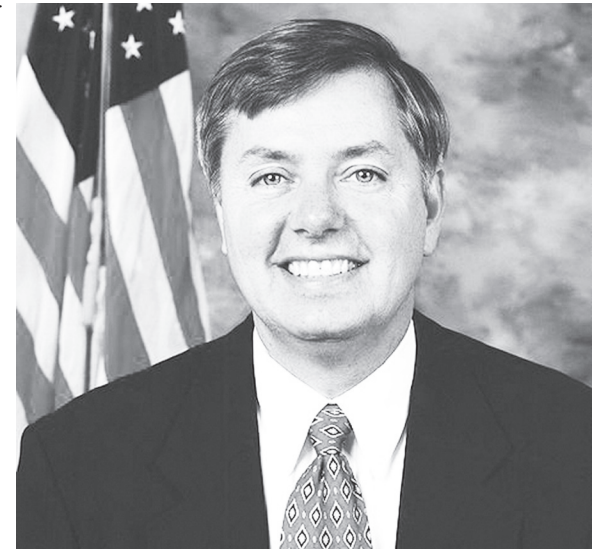
bases in Afghanistan—but also Iran and India, SCO observers and two countries that can sway Afghanistan away from the Taliban in a non-military way.

We just need to picture, for instance, a practically inevitable future development; Washington deciding to deploy the U.S. missile defense system in Afghanistan (it already happened in Turkey). Russia and China already see that the U.S. may have



President of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai (White House photo by Paul Morse.)

***In response to Hamid Karzai’s demand that President Obama issue a letter of contrition for harm caused to Afghan civilians by the U.S. military, Lindsey Graham said, “I’m stunned. Apologize for what? Maybe we should get the Afghan president to apologize to the American soldiers for all the hardship he’s created for them.”***



Lindsey Graham, U.S. Senator from South Carolina (U.S. Congress photo.)

and make sure foreign aid is not being squandered (as it has always been).

There will be plenty of U.S. military outposts and bases; Afghan bases and other bases of which the U.S. has “exclusive use.” Bagram, Kandahar, Jalalabad, and Mazar-e-Sharif are inevitably on the list. Once again, this is the U.S. Empire of Bases—so well characterized by the late Chalmers Johnson—in pristine form.

Marine General Joseph Dunford, the current U.S./NATO military commander in Afghanistan, wants up to 13,000 troops to stay, not including security guards and the cream of the crop, the counterterrorism gang. In theory, these forces won’t engage in combat “unless otherwise mutually agreed.” The draft text emphasizes, “U.S. military operations to defeat Al-Qaeda and its affiliates may be appropriate in the common fight against terrorism.”

in Afghan bases that have been used for incinerating the odd commander but also scores of innocent civilians in the Pakistani tribal areas.

#### All about pivoting to Asia

The Maliki government in Baghdad had the balls to confront the Pentagon and veto the immunity for U.S. forces—effectively kicking out the occupying force in Iraq. Hamid Karzai, for his part, caved in on virtually every U.S. demand. The key question in the next few months is for what; Mob-style protection if he stays in Afghanistan, or the equivalent of the FBI’s witness protection program if he moves to the U.S.?

Even assuming the Loya Jirga endorses the BSA (not yet a done deal) and Karzai’s successor signs it (with Karzai removing himself from the tight spot),

The U.S. is—and will remain—essentially at war with Afghan Pashtuns who are members of the Taliban. And the Taliban will keep staging their spring and summer offensives as long as there are any foreign occupiers on Afghan soil.

The drone war will continue, with the Pentagon and the CIA using these Afghan bases to attack Pashtuns in Pakistan’s tribal areas. Not to mention that these U.S. bases, to be fully operational, need unrestricted access to the Pakistani transit routes from the Khyber Pass and the Quetta-to-Kandahar corridor. This means Islamabad keeps profiting from the scam by collecting hefty fees in U.S. dollars.

No one knows yet how the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) will respond to this. Not only Russia and China—who are adamantly opposed to U.S.

lost the economic race for Central Asia—as China clinches deal after deal in the context of expanding its New Silk Road(s) grand strategy. What’s left for Washington is—guess what—bits and pieces of the same old Pentagon Full Spectrum Dominance doctrine, as in military bases to “monitor” both China and Russia very close to their borders.

What’s certain is that both Russia and China—not to mention Iran—all see this Operation Occupy Afghanistan Forever for what it is; yet another (military) chapter of the American “pivoting to Asia.”

*Pepe Escobar is the roving correspondent for Asia Times/Hong Kong and a frequent contributor to websites and radio shows ranging from the U.S. to East Asia.*

## U.S. Commander Apologizes for Killing Afghan Child in Drone Strike: NATO Promises Investigation Into Attack

by Jason Ditz, November 29, 2013

U.S. Commander Gen. Joe Dunford has offered a statement of apology today after a U.S. drone strike in southern Afghanistan destroyed a civilian home, killing a two-year-old child and two women.

Dunford reportedly called Afghan President Hamid Karzai to express “deep regrets” for the killings. Karzai has demanded an end to all drone strikes in the country, saying he would never sign a deal to keep U.S. troops there unless such killings end.

NATO also issued a statement on the matter, confirming the attack but insisting only the two-year-old was actually a civilian, and claiming the two women were only “wounded” in the strike.

NATO promised an investigation into the matter, saying they “regret” any civilian deaths but insisting that the attack hit its intended target, an “insurgent” on a motorcycle. There was no report of such a person being killed in yesterday’s reports on the matter.

“We are extremely saddened by the tragic loss of innocent lives.”

—General Stanley McChrystal on February 22, 2010, expressing regret to Hamid Karzai after more than two dozen civilians, including women and children, were killed in a NATO airstrike.

“We are deeply sorry for this tragedy and apologize to the members of the Afghan government, the people of Afghanistan, and, most importantly, the surviving family members of those killed by our actions.”

—General David Petraeus on March 2, 2011, after two attack helicopters mistakenly killed nine boys cutting wood.

Victims and former military members speak

# Voices from the Drone Summit

by Marjorie Cohn

In November, I participated in a panel on the illegality of drones and targeted killing off the battlefield at the conference, “Drones Around the Globe: Proliferation and Resistance,” in Washington, D.C. Nearly 400 people from many countries came together to gather information, protest, and develop strategies to end targeted killing by combat drones. I found the most compelling presentations to be first-hand accounts by those victimized by U.S. drone attacks, and a former military

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***Baraa Shaiban described the death of a mother and daughter from a drone strike. “The daughter was holding the mother so tight, they could not be separated. They had to be buried together.”***

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Baraa Shaiban, a human rights activist who works with REPRIEVE, revealed that 2012 was a year that saw “drones like never before” in Yemen. He described the death of a mother and daughter from a drone strike. “The daughter was holding the mother so tight, they could not be separated. They had to be buried together.”

Two members of Al Qaeda were in Entesar al Qadhi’s village, one of the most oil-rich areas of Yemen. Villagers were negotiating with the two men. A drone killed the chief negotiator, scuttling the negotiations and leaving the village vul-

nerable to Al Qaeda. “The drones are for Al Qaeda, not against Al Qaeda,” al Qadhi said.

Air Force Col. Morris Davis (ret.) is a professor at Howard

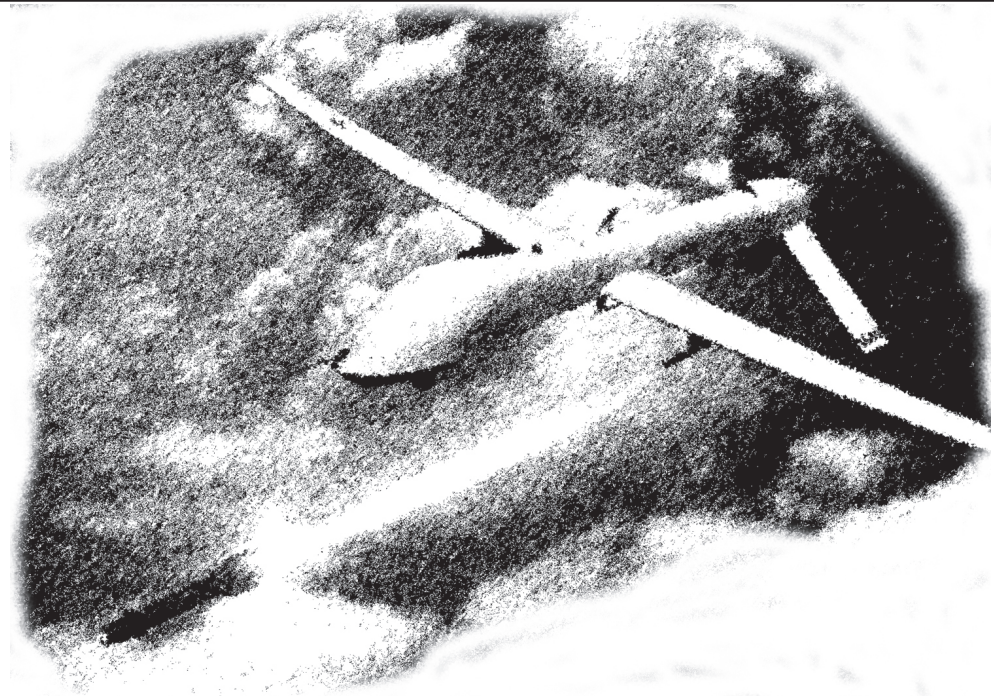
University Law School. He was chief prosecutor at the Guantanamo military commissions until he was reassigned

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***Daniel Hale, who selected targets, realized he “was no longer part of something moral or sane or rational.”***

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due to his disagreement with the government’s policies. Davis had been assigned to a chain of command below Defense Department General Counsel William



Haynes, who favored the use of evidence gained through waterboarding. “The guy who said waterboarding is A-okay I was not going to take orders from. I quit,” Davis said at the time. At the Drone Summit, Davis related the case of Nek Muhammad, who, Davis noted, “was not a threat to us. He was killed as a favor to the Pakistani government so they would look the other way when we wanted to kill our targets.”

Daniel Hale helped choose targets for drone attacks. The former intelligence analyst with the Joint Special Operations Command in Afghanistan delivered a riveting talk. Hale utilized surveillance data for drone attacks. He would tell the sensor

other people around a campfire drinking tea. Hale relayed the information that led to a drone strike, which killed all five men. Hale had no idea whether the other four men had done anything. Hale had thought he was part of an operation protecting Afghanistan. But when the other four men died—a result of “guilt by association”—Hale realized he “was no longer part of something moral or sane or rational.” He had heard someone say that “terrorists are cowards” because they used IEDs. “What was different,” Hale asked, “between that and the little red joy stick that pushes a button thousands of miles away”?

The Drone Summit was sponsored by CODEPINK, *The Nation* magazine, Institute for Policy Studies, Center for Constitutional Rights, and National Lawyers Guild—Georgetown Chapter.

*Marjorie Cohn is a former president of the National Lawyers Guild and a professor at Thomas Jefferson School of Law. Her next book, Drones and Targeted Killing: Legal, Moral, and Geopolitical Issues, will be published next year. This article is reprinted with her permission.*

## Death by Drone

### Pakistan 2004–2013

Total strikes: 379

Total killed: 2,534-3,657

Civilians killed: 416-948

Children killed: 168-200

### Yemen 2002-2013

Confirmed drone strikes: 55-65

Total killed: 269-389

Civilians killed: 21-56

Children killed: 5

(Source: *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism*, <http://www.thebureauinvestigates.com>)

### Follow the money

## Droning for Dollars

“The reality behind the proliferation of drones and their use, first overseas and later on the domestic front, is not so much a government-driven effort as it is a corporate one. U.S. companies have also leaned heavily on specific congressmen and senators for the adoption of drones by promising thousands of jobs in their respective states. Through their access to the Pentagon via Capitol Hill, military contractor giants like Northrop Grumman, Lockheed Martin, Boeing, and General Atomics have lobbied hard for their new products to be adopted as a central part of the U.S. military industrial complex, and have seen their sales jump to over \$5 billion in only a few years since modern prototypes have been launched. U.S. manufacturers have a global market share of around 70 percent of the UAV [unmanned aerial vehicle] market, and their flagship products – the Global Hawk, Reaper, and Predator/Mariner models – dominate U.S. drone fleets across all branches of the military.”

—Patrick Henningsen (2013, November 2). *Killing Children: America’s Undeclared Drone War on the People of Pakistan*. Global Research. Retrieved from <http://www.globalresearch.ca>.

operator—who sits next to the “pilot” of the unmanned drone thousands of miles from the target—where to point the camera. This information would guide the “pilot” in dropping the bomb.

Every day, a slideshow of the most dramatic images from 9/11 and George W. Bush “looking somber” would be projected in the room in which Hale worked. On the wall in the main facility, there were television screens, each showing “a different bird [drone] in a different part of the country.” Every branch of the U.S. military and foreign militaries monitored “all of Afghanistan.” Hale would be assigned a mission “to go after a specific individual for nefarious activities.” He fed his intelligence to a sensor operator “so they would know where to look before a kinetic strike or detention” of an individual.

On one occasion, Hale located an individual who had been involved with Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). The man was riding a motorcycle in the mountains early in the morning. He met up with four

## Drone Dispatches

*The U.S. military launched 506 strikes from unmanned aircraft in Afghanistan last year, according to Pentagon data, a 72% increase from 2011 and a sign that American commanders may begin to rely more heavily on remote-controlled air power to kill Taliban insurgents as they reduce the number of troops on the ground.... The strategy isn't without risk: Drone strikes can kill civilians.... The U.S. military has acknowledged multiple times that it has accidentally killed civilians in drone strikes, including in 2010 when 24 Afghans were killed in Oruzgan province after being mistaken for insurgents, based on drone camera images. They were later determined to be noncombatants.*

—Shashank Bengali and David S. Cloud (2013, February 21). U.S. drone strikes up sharply in Afghanistan. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from <http://articles.latimes.com>.

*With debate intensifying in the United States over the use of drone aircraft, the U.S. military said on Sunday that it had removed data about air strikes carried out by unmanned planes in Afghanistan from its monthly air power summaries.... Civilian casualties from drone strikes have raised ethical concerns and angered local populations, creating tension between the United States and Pakistan and Afghanistan. Some U.S. lawmakers have also questioned the legality of targeted killings and whether drones would allow the killing of American citizens inside the United States.*

—David Alexander (2013, March 10). U.S. Air Force stops reporting data on Afghan drone strikes. Reuters. Retrieved from <http://www.reuters.com>.

*According to NGO and Pakistan government sources the USA has launched some 330 to 374 drone strikes in Pakistan between 2004 and September 2013. Amnesty International is not in a position to endorse these figures, but according to these sources, between 400 and 900 civilians have been killed in these attacks and at least 600 people seriously injured.*

—Amnesty International (2013, October 22). “Will I be Next?” US Drone Strikes in Pakistan. Retrieved from [www.amnestyusa.org](http://www.amnestyusa.org).

*...we take extraordinary care to make sure that our counterterrorism actions are in accordance with all applicable domestic and international law, and that they are consistent with U.S. values and policy. To the extent that these reports claim that the U.S. has acted contrary to international law, we would strongly disagree. We remain—we have repeatedly emphasized the extraordinary care we take to make sure counterterrorism actions are in accordance with all applicable law. And when there are indications that civilian deaths may have occurred, intelligence analysts draw on a large body of information, including human intelligence, signals intelligence, media reports, and surveillance footage to help us make informed determinations about whether civilians were, in fact, killed or injured. Substantial information concerning U.S. counterterrorism strikes is collected, obviously, through a variety of methods, as I just mentioned.*

—U.S. State Department spokesperson Jen Psaki at daily press briefing on November 14, 2013 responding to a question about the Amnesty International report.

*The U.S. House of Representatives intelligence committee rejected a proposal on Thursday that would have required U.S. spy agencies to make an annual public accounting of the number of casualties caused by U.S. drone attacks on militants overseas.... Administration officials also have maintained privately that the number of non-combatant civilians killed or injured in U.S. drone strikes against militants has been relatively minimal—in the low dozens. Respected human rights groups have reported much larger totals.*

—Mark Hosenball (2013, November 21). House committee rejects provision requiring account of drone casualties. Reuters. Retrieved from <http://www.reuters.com>.

## Zero: The Case for Nuclear Weapons Abolition

by David Krieger

reviewed by Barry Ladendorf

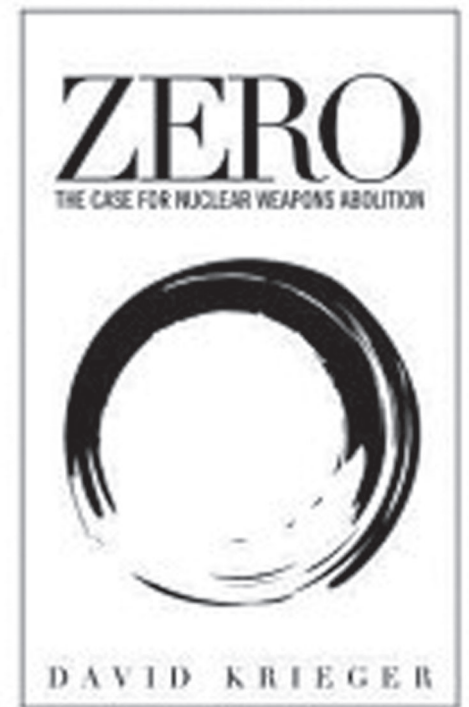
In his remarkably readable and informative book on why abolishing nuclear weapons is an imperative for a safe and secure world, David Krieger points out there is a growing consensus among the peoples of the world that zero nuclear weapons is the only option. Krieger, a founder of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation in Santa Barbara, California, and President of the Foundation since 1982, has devoted his life to educating, inspiring, and urging world leaders and ordinary citizens to act with a sense of urgency in a quest to abolish nuclear weapons.

The United States' nuclear strategy was built on the notion of mutually assured destruction: if any nation attacked the United States, we would respond with total and complete destruction of the attacking nation. To pursue such a strategy, the United States built an enormous nuclear arsenal with various response capabilities. To be able to withstand a first strike and retaliate, the U.S. plan was to deploy our nuclear arsenal in the air, at sea, and from land-based missiles scattered across the country.

With such an overwhelming ability to destroy any adversary, we were coaxed into believing no one would dare attack us. Such a false sense of security left other nations deciding they too must arm themselves with nuclear weapons, thus further perpetuating the false notion of security. In spite of the fact that the U.S. and Russia have actually reduced their nuclear weapons inventories, other nations continue to seek, or are believed to be seeking, a nuclear capability.

In his book *Zero: The Case for Nuclear Weapons Abolition*, David Krieger's piece by piece analysis of the arguments in support of our continued reliance on nuclear deterrence convincingly demonstrates that it is a doomed and failed long-range strategy for world peace and security. He grapples with such questions as: Do we really want to have the fate of the world and future generations entrusted to an ever-changing cadre of world leaders who often govern under intense pressure (politically and emotionally) and stress? Under such circumstances can these leaders be trusted to act prudently for the well-being of all humankind? If nuclear deterrence is so effective, why has the United States spent billions of dollars on missile defense systems? Have those systems and the nuclear arsenal stopped the attacks of 9/11? On the USS *Cole*? On our embassies in Africa and elsewhere?

With the fall of the Soviet Union, perhaps we have become complacent about the danger posed by nuclear weapons. *Zero* awakens us to the dangers, costs, and absurdity of our reliance on these weapons for our security—because in reality with them, we are less secure. Krieger astutely observes that as long as the nine nations of the world's



“nuclear club” rely on the false notion of nuclear deterrence, we can expect nuclear war to loom over the future of the world.

Remembering the *Hibakusha* (the name given a person who survived the atomic bombs dropped on Japan), *Zero* draws on the all too real, personal, and intimate horrors that nuclear war inflicts on all, individually and collectively, by relating the story of Miyoko Matsubara, a Hibakusha. Miyoko, 13 years old when the U.S. dropped its atomic bombs on her country, describes how after the explosions her friend, Takiko, “simply disappeared from my sight.” Miyoko learned English so she could tell her story not to heap on us a sense of guilt and shame, but to give us, simply and quietly, a deeper understanding of the impact of weapons of mass destruction. She challenges us to become more aware of the world and a future we must avoid. Krieger's book accepts that challenge by attempting to raise our consciousness and calling us to act in reducing nuclear weapons so there will not be a future of Hibakusha and others simply disappearing from our sight.

In the words of Archbishop Desmond Tutu:

This book makes a clear and persuasive case for why we must move urgently and globally to zero nuclear weapons. It should be required reading for all citizens of Earth.

No matter your level of understanding on this all-important issue, *Zero* is a concise and thoughtful book which will better your understanding of the development, history, and proliferation of nuclear weapons and why nuclear disarmament is necessary for a secure world. It is an essential addition to your list of must-reads.

*Barry Ladendorf is a member of Veterans For Peace Hugh Thompson Chapter 091 in San Diego and a member of the VFP national board of directors.*

***It is the earnest hope of our people that the world may see the day when all nuclear weapons are abolished.***

—Eisaku Satō, Prime Minister of Japan (1964-72)

# The American Exceptionalism Sweepstakes

*Bragging Rights: Eight Exceptional(ly Dumb) American Achievements of the Twenty-First Century*

by Tom Engelhardt

*“But when, with modest effort and risk, we can stop children from being gassed to death, and thereby make our own children safer over the long run, I believe we should act. That’s what makes America different. That’s what makes us exceptional. With humility, but with resolve, let us never lose sight of that essential truth.”*

—Barack Obama,  
address to the nation on Syria,  
September 10, 2013

Let’s be Americans, which means being exceptional, which also means being honest in ways inconceivable to the rest of humanity. So here’s the truth of it: the American Exceptionalism sweepstakes really do matter. Here. A lot.

Barack Obama is only the latest in a jostling crowd of presidential candidates, presidential wannabes, major politicians, and minor figures of every sort—not to speak of a raging horde of neocons and pundits galore—who have felt compelled in recent years to tell us and the world just how exceptional the last superpower really is. They tend to emphasize our ability to use this country’s overwhelming power, especially the military variety, for the global good—to save children and other deserving innocents. This particularly American aptitude for doing good forcibly, by killing others, is considered an incontestable fact of earthly life needing no proof. It is well known, especially among our leading politicians, that Washington has the ability to wield its military strength in ways that are unimaginably superior to any other power on the planet.

The well-deserved bragging rights to

***Since, in the last decade-plus, power and military power have come to be essentially synonymous in Washington, the pure goodness of firing missiles or dropping bombs has been deified. On that basis, it’s indisputable that the bragging rights to American Exceptionalism are Washington’s.***

American Exceptionalism are no small matter in this country. It should hardly be surprising, then, how visceral is the distaste when any foreigner—say, Russian President Vladimir Putin—decides to appropriate the term and use it to criticize us. How visceral? Well, the sort of visceral that, as Democratic Senator Bob Menendez put it recently, leaves us barely repressing the urge to “vomit.”

Now, it’s not that we can’t take a little self-criticism. If you imagine an over-muscled, over-armed guy walking into a room and promptly telling you and anyone else in earshot how exceptionally good he is when it comes to targeting his weapons, and you notice a certain threatening quality about him, and maybe a hectoring, lecturing tone in his voice, it’s just possible that you might be intimidated or irritated by him. You might think: narcissist, braggart, or blowhard. If you were the president of Russia, you might say, “It is extremely dangerous to encourage people to see themselves as exceptional, whatever the motivation.”

Yes, if you’re a foreigner, this country is easy enough to misunderstand, make fun of, or belittle. Still, that didn’t stop the president from proudly bringing up our exceptionalism in his September 10 address on the Syrian crisis. In that speech, he plugged the need for a U.S. military response to the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian military. He recommended launching a “limited strike,” assumedly Tomahawk missiles heading Damascus-wards, to save Syria’s children, and he made sure the world knew that such an attack would be no passing thing. (“Let me make something clear: the United States military doesn’t do pinpricks.”)

Then, in mid-speech, in a fashion that was nothing short of exceptional (if you were considering the internal logic of the address), he suddenly cast that option aside for another approach entirely. But just because of that, don’t let first impressions or foreign criticism blind you to the power of the president’s imagery. In this century, as he suggested then and in an address to the U.N. two weeks later, Ameri-

can Exceptionalism has always had to do with Washington’s ability to use its power for the greater planetary good. Since, in the last decade-plus, power and military power have come to be essentially synonymous in Washington, the pure goodness of firing missiles or dropping bombs has been deified.

On that basis, it’s indisputable that the bragging rights to American Exceptionalism are Washington’s. For those who



Military vehicles and accessory equipment fill a retrograde yard at Camp Warrior, Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, Oct. 2, 2013, before being shipped from the base to the U.S. The airfield served as a major hub for retrograde operations out of Afghanistan. U.S. Airmen with the 455th Expeditionary Aerial Port Squadron special handling section processed 4.2 million pounds of retrograde equipment during September 2013. (U.S. Air Force photo.)

need proof, what follows are just eight ways (among so many more) that you can proudly make the case for our exceptional status, should you happen to stumble

**2.** What other country could magnanimously spend \$4-6 trillion on two “good wars” in Afghanistan and Iraq against lightly armed, mi-

## ***Afghanistan— “the largest retrograde mission in history.”***

across, say, President Putin, still blathering on about how unexceptional we are.

**1.** What other country could have invaded Iraq, hardly knowing the difference between a Sunni and a Shiite, and still managed to successfully set off a brutal sectarian civil war and ethnic cleansing campaigns between the two sects that would subsequently go regional, whose casualty counts have tipped into the hundreds of thousands, and which is now bouncing back on Iraq? What other great power would have launched its invasion with plans to garrison that country for decades and with the larger goal of subduing neighboring Iran (“Everyone wants to go to Baghdad; real men want to go to Tehran”), only to slink away eight years later leaving

behind a Shiite government in Baghdad that was a firm ally of Iran? And in what other country, could leaders, viewing these events, and knowing our part in them, have been so imbued with goodness as to draw further “red lines” and contemplate sending in the missiles and bombers again, this time on Syria and possibly Iran? Who in the world would dare claim that this isn’t an unmatched record?

nority insurgencies without winning or accomplishing a thing? And that’s not even counting the funds sunk into the Global War on Terror and sideshows in places like Pakistan, Somalia, and Yemen, or the staggering sums that, since 9/11, have been poured directly into the national security state. How many countries, possessing “the finest fighting force in the history of the world,” could have engaged in endless armed conflicts and interventions from the 1960s on and, except in unresisting Panama and tiny Grenada, never managed to definitively win anything?

**3.** And talking about exceptional records, what other military could have brought an estimated 3.1 million pieces of equipment—ranging from tanks and Humvees to porta-potties, coffee makers, and computers—with it into Iraq, and then transported most of them out again (while destroying the rest or turning them over to the Iraqis)? Similarly, in an Afghanistan where the U.S. military is now drawing down its forces and has already destroyed “more than 170 million pounds worth of vehicles and other military equipment,” what other force would have decided ahead of time to shred, dismantle, or simply discard \$7 billion worth of equipment (about 20% of what it had brought into the country)? The general in charge proudly calls this “the larg-



est retrograde mission in history.” To put that in context: What other military would be capable of carrying a total consumer society right down to PXs, massage parlors, boardwalks, Internet cafes, and food courts to war? Let’s give credit where it’s due: we’re not just talking retrograde here, we’re talking exceptionally retrograde!

**4** • What other military could, in a bare few years in Iraq, have built a staggering 505 bases, ranging from combat outposts to ones the size of small American towns with their own electricity generators, water purifiers, fire departments, fast-food restaurants, and even miniature golf courses at a cost of unknown billions of dollars and then, only a few years later, abandoned all of them, dismantling some, turning others over to the Iraqi military or into ghost towns, and leaving yet others to be looted and stripped? And what other military, in the same time period thousands of miles away in Afghanistan, could have built more than 450 bases, sometimes even hauling in the building materials, and now be dismantling them in the same fashion? If those aren’t exceptional feats, what are?

**5** • In a world where it’s hard to get anyone to agree on anything, the covert campaign of drone strikes that George W. Bush launched and Barack Obama escalated in Pakistan’s tribal areas stands out. Those hundreds of strikes not only caused significant numbers of civilian casualties (including children), while helping to destabilize a sometime ally, but almost miraculously created public opinion unanimity. Opinion polls there indicate that a Ripley’s-Believe-It-or-Not-style 97% of Pakistanis consider such strikes “a bad thing.” Is there another country on the planet capable of mobilizing such loathing? Stand proud, America!

**6** • And what other power could have secretly and illegally kidnapped at least 136 suspected terrorists—some, in fact, innocent of any such acts or associations—off the streets of global cities as well as from the backlands of the planet? What other nation could have mustered a “Coalition-of-the-Willing” of 54 countries to lend a hand in its “rendition” operations? We’re talking about more than a quarter of the nations on Planet Earth! And that isn’t all. Oh, no,

that isn’t all. Can you imagine another country capable of setting up a genuinely global network of “black sites” and borrowed prisons (with local torturers on hand), places to stash and abuse those kidnappees (and other prisoners) in locations ranging from Poland to Thailand, Romania to Afghanistan, Egypt and Uzbekistan to U.S. Navy ships on the high seas, not to speak of that jewel in the crown of offshore prisons, Guantanamo? Such illegality on such a global scale simply can’t be matched! And don’t even get me started on torture. (It’s fine for us to take pride in our exceptionalist tradition, but you don’t want to pour it on, do you?)

**7** • Or how about the way the State Department, to the tune of \$750 million, constructed in Baghdad the largest, most expensive embassy compound on the planet—a 104-acre, Vatican-sized citadel with 27 blast-resistant buildings, an indoor pool, basketball courts, and a fire station, which was to operate as a command-and-control center for our ongoing garrisoning of the country and the region? Now, the garrisons are gone, and the embassy, its staff cut, is a global white elephant. But what an exceptional elephant! Think of it as a modern American pyramid, a tomb in which lie buried the dreams of establishing a Pax Americana in the Greater Middle East. Honestly, what other country could hope to match that sort of memorial thousands of miles from home?

**8** • Or what about this? Between 2002 and 2011, the U.S. poured at least \$51 billion into building up a vast Afghan military. Another \$11 billion was dedicated to the task in 2012, with almost \$6 billion more planned for 2013. Washington has also sent in a legion of trainers tasked with turning that force into an American-style fighting outfit. At the time Washington began building it up, the Afghan army was reportedly a heavily illiterate, drug-taking, corrupt, and ineffective force that lost one-third to one-half of its personnel to casualties, non-reenlistment, and desertion in any year. In 2012, the latest date for which we have figures, the Afghan security forces were still a heavily illiterate, drug-taking, corrupt, and inefficient outfit that was losing about one-third of its personnel an-

nually (a figure that may even be on the rise). The U.S. and its NATO allies are committed to spending \$4.1 billion annually on the same project after the withdrawal of their combat forces in 2014. Tell me that isn’t exceptional!

No one, of course, loves a braggart; so, easy as it might be to multiply these eight examples by others, the winner of the American Exceptionalism sweepstakes is already obvious. In other words, this is a moment for exceptional modesty, which means that only one caveat needs to be added to the above record.

I’m talking about actual property rights to “American Exceptionalism.” It’s a phrase often credited to a friendly nineteenth-century foreigner, the French traveler Alexis de Tocqueville. As it happens, however, the man who seems to have first used the full phrase was Russian dictator Joseph Stalin. In 1929, when the U.S. was showing few signs of a proletarian uprising or fulfilling Karl Marx’s predictions, and American Communists were claiming that the country had unique characteristics that left it unready for revolution, Stalin began denouncing “the heresy of American Exceptionalism.” Outside the U.S. Communist Party, the phrase only gained popular traction here in the Reagan years. Now, it has become as American as sea-salt potato chips. If, for instance, the phrase had never before been used in a presidential debate, in 2012 the candidates couldn’t stop wielding it.

Still, history does give Vladimir Putin a claim to use of the phrase, however stomach-turning that may be for various members of Congress. But maybe, in its own way, its origins only attest to... well, American Exceptionalism. Somehow,



Joseph Stalin c. 1936. In 1929, he coined the term American Exceptionalism to ridicule the U.S. for its abnormalities.

through pureness of motive and the shining radiance of the way we exercise power, Washington’s politicians have taken words wielded negatively by one of the great monsters of history and made them the signature phrase of American greatness. How exceptional!

*Tom Engelhardt, co-founder of the American Empire Project and author of The United States of Fear as well as a history of the Cold War, The End of Victory Culture (recently published in a Kindle edition), runs the Nation Institute’s TomDispatch.com. His latest book, co-authored with Nick Turse, is Terminator Planet: The First History of Drone Warfare, 2001-2050.*

*Follow TomDispatch on Twitter and join us on Facebook or Tumblr. Check out the newest Dispatch book, Nick Turse’s The Changing Face of Empire: Special Ops, Drones, Proxy Fighters, Secret Bases, and Cyberwarfare.*

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## Fear Not the Path of Truth

a veteran’s journey after Fallujah  
a film by Ross Caputi

## Fear Not the Path of Truth

Fallujah marine veteran Ross Caputi has made this film available at <https://vimeo.com/80051615> for viewing and for anyone who wants to organize a public screening. With the film now completed, he’s interested in getting it entered into film festivals.

Want to learn more about Fallujah? Click on the Primer at <http://thefallujahproject.org>

# American Exceptionalism Is Killing Us!

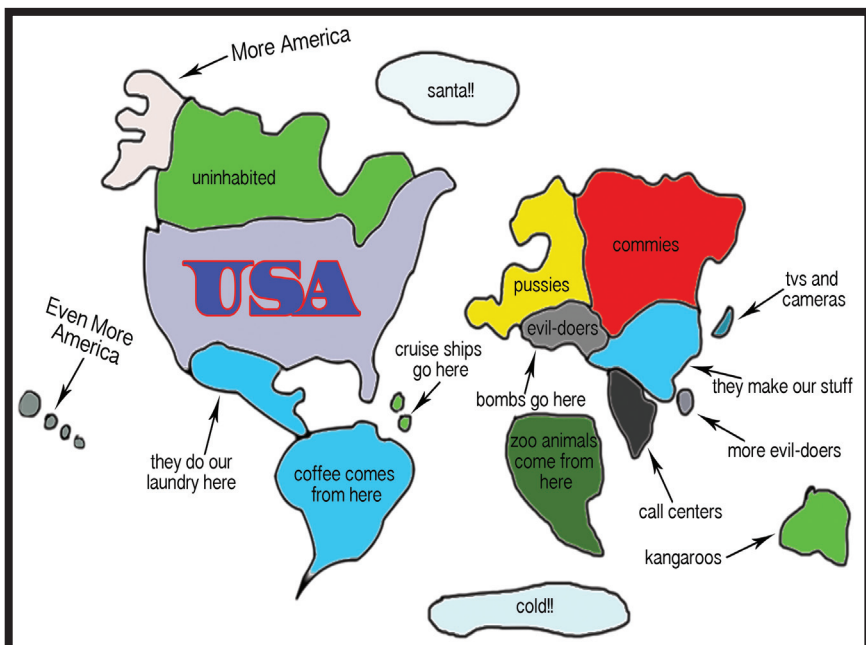
by Mike Ferner

Readers of the *War Crimes Times* no doubt already appreciate how our government's deadly international swagger has made the U.S., as Dr. Martin Luther King put it, "The greatest purveyor of violence in the world." America's supposed exceptional nature permits our government to invade and lay waste to nation after nation within the myth that what we do is, by definition, for their own good. One might almost conclude that America's purpose in the world is to export the surplus of democracy and freedom the gods have given us.

This American Exceptionalism takes a heavy toll on the targets of our foreign policy, but what about the Empire's citizens, right here at home—in addition to the fact that we're spending our way to ruin and fueling the flames of a very violent culture—how else does belief in this exceptional America come back to bite us?

Here's a good example.

Among the endless sound bites and barks emanating from the Affordable Care Act implementation, you may have heard the same comment from a member of the U.S. Senate that floored me: "Obamacare could well destroy the greatest health care system in the world!"



No doubt the Senator meant our very own system here in the U.S.—the one that's "not broken, it's fixed;" the one that abandons tens of millions of people to no health insurance whatsoever; the system that pays corporate executives obscene amounts of money to deny care to as many of the insured as possible; the system that consumes a greater share of the economy than any other industrialized nation's; the system that makes the ER an important source of primary care; the system that causes people in other countries to shake their heads and wonder what exactly is wrong with those crazy Americans?

Even if the Senator from the State of Delusion doesn't really believe we've got the best health care system in the world, pretending to revere it is a good way to keep H.L. Mencken's "boobeisie" in line, by creating the fear we may replace something precious with a frightening, unknown form of socialism.

The sad thing is, such misplaced civic pride in our exceptionalism can be very convincing. How many times have you been in a political discussion with someone who thought they were being diplomatic by concluding their opinions with the worn out chestnut that, "...sure, America's (pick one) health care system/form of government/foreign policy has problems but it's the best there is in the world?"

The sadder thing is, that particular boob is not alone.

In a Gallup poll from late 2010, 73% of those polled believed that U.S. history and our Constitution make us "the greatest country in the world."

A Pew Research Center poll from 2011 found that 91% of respondents believed the U.S. stands above all other countries, or is one of the greatest along with some others. Fully two-thirds of the self-identified "staunch conservatives" believed the U.S. stands above all other countries.

Seventy-seven percent of those responding to a Gallup poll published in January of this year, said individual freedoms in the U.S. were the best in the world or above average and 65% said the same was true for our quality of life.

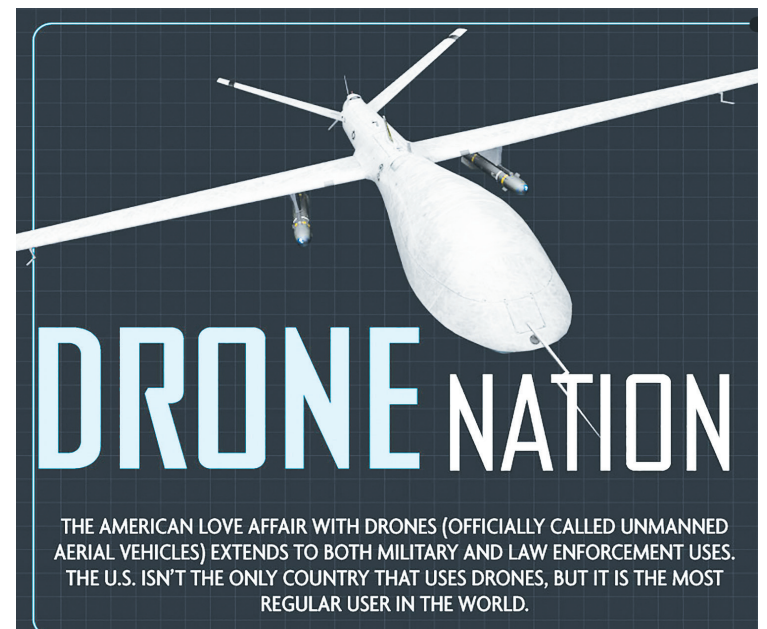
To them I can only recommend this riff from the great comic mind of Louis Black: "What really gets me is when people say this is the greatest country in the world when they've never been anywhere else. If you've never been anywhere else, how do you know this is the best country? For all you know, there could be countries giving shit away every day! Canada is one of those countries. You know what Canada's giving away? HEALTH INSURANCE!!!"

When it comes to foreign policy, the "We're Number One!" syndrome makes it easy for Americans to turn a blind eye to the atrocities our government commits, allowing them to continue unabated, primarily against the populations of small, poor countries.

It's not putting too fine a point on it to say that Americans' understanding of their own country is as infantile as a small child who sees himself at the center of the universe. Such delusions not only mean murder and misery to people living in developing lands, but they are killing us right here at home, too.

The venom of American Exceptionalism needs to be kept out of the reach of children and plainly marked with the skull-and-crossbones "POISON" warning.

*Mike Ferner, an Ohio writer and the former president of Veterans for Peace, served as a Navy corpsman during the Vietnam War. He lives in Toledo, Ohio.*



## WHICH COUNTRIES HAVE DRONES?

THE BIGGEST OWNERS OF MILITARY DRONES IN THE WORLD:

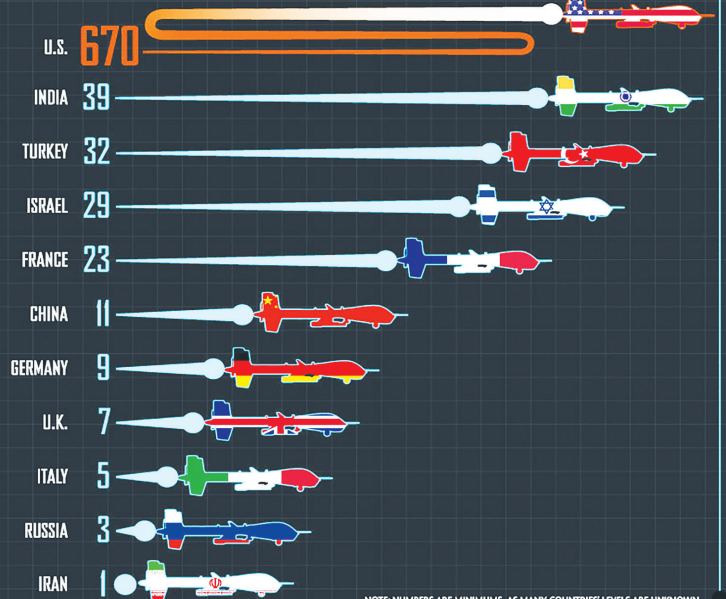


Image by Justin Wong

# Imagine If We Were Number One

by Laura Finley

No, not number one in military spending (which we are). Not number one in incarceration rates (which we are as well). What if, instead of these things, the U.S. became hyper-focused on becoming the most peaceful nation on earth?

The recently released 2013 Global Peace Index (GPI) placed the U.S. 100th out of 162 countries. That's not so spectacular. The GPI, which is endorsed by a number of Nobel Peace laureates, eminent individuals, and renowned academics, considers factors related to both negative peace, that is, the absence of violent conflict, and positive peace, or characteristics of just and humane societies, like ample housing, access to education, lack of poverty, healthcare, and gender equality. The GPI's Posi-

gender equality, education, and infant mortality.

This failure to commit to peace is a global catastrophe, and a costly one at that. The GPI report, available at [www.visionofhumanity.org](http://www.visionofhumanity.org), calculates the total economic

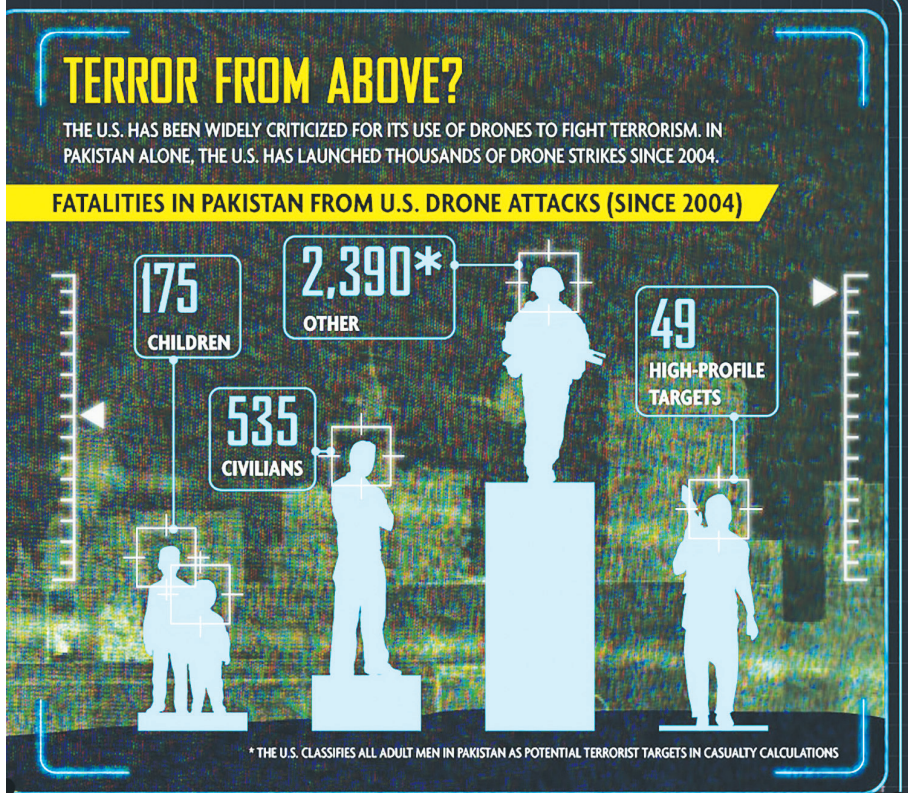
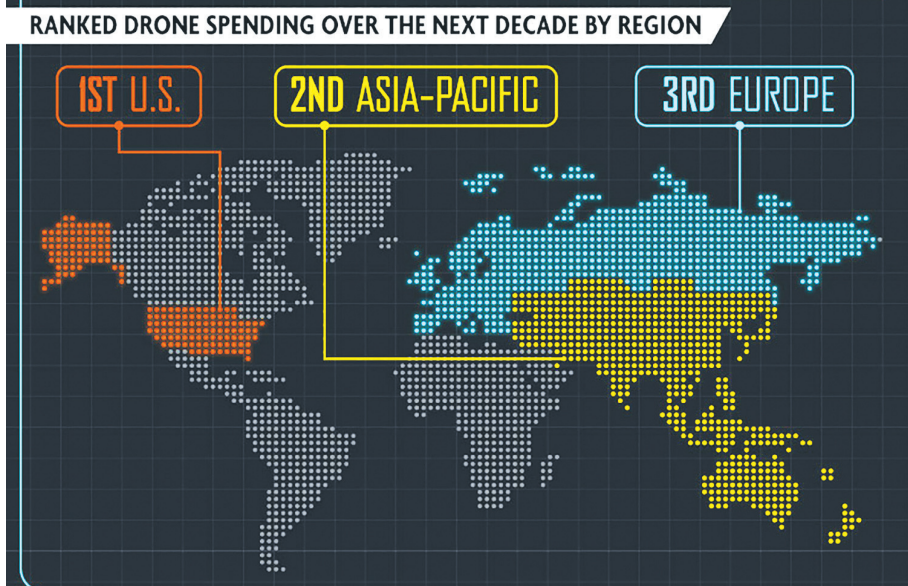
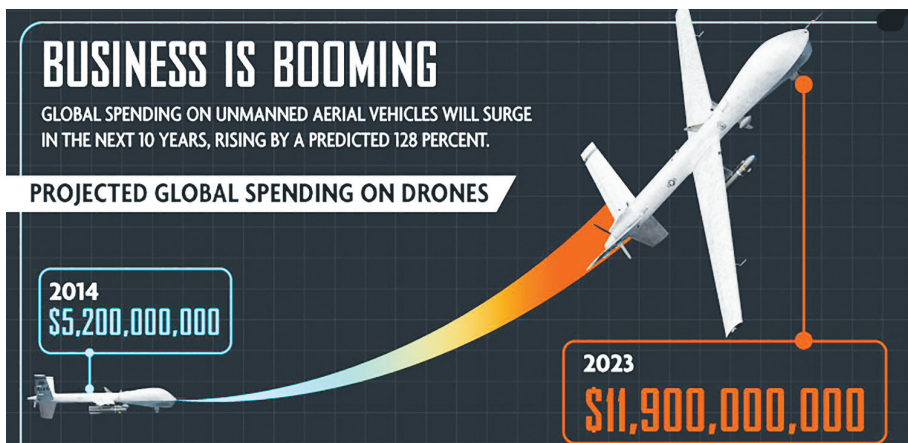
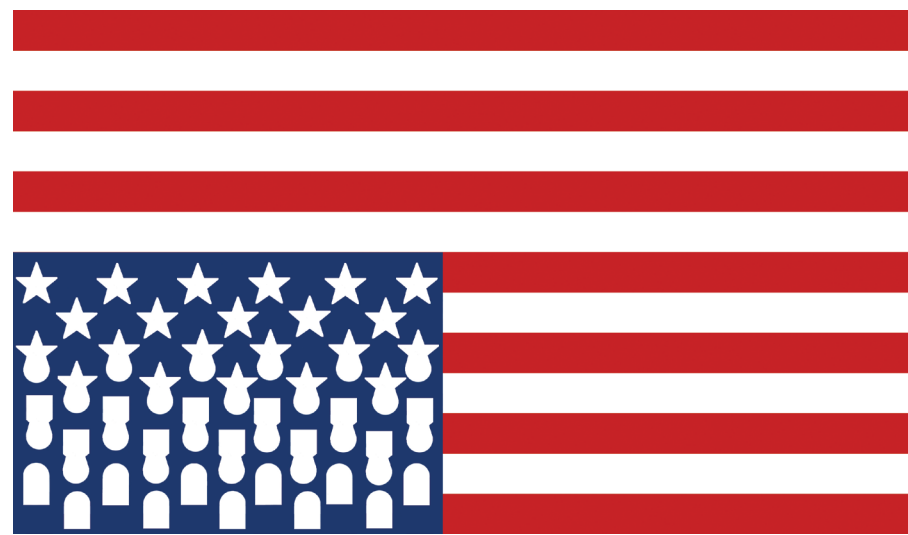
have, among other qualities, more equitable distribution of resources, greater trust between citizens, and more social cohesion. They invest in health and education and seek alternatives to retributive justice. In essence,

*The U.S. scores particularly poorly in regard to...its large and active military, the number of conflicts it is engaged in overseas and the number of combat deaths, its heavy weapons capacity and ease of access to small arms.*

impact of containing violence to have been \$9.46 trillion in 2012. According to the report, cutting the cost of violence in half would be enough to repay all the debts of the developing world, provide for European financial stability, and fully fund the Millennium Development Goals.

nations that score high on positive peace tend also to be high on the overall GPI.

Perhaps the most important goal for the U.S. is to reduce the size, expenditure, and use of its military. It is this militarism that is the underlying cause of the country's poor ranking. Yet



**AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM**

- GREATEST INCOME INEQUALITY
- HIGHEST HEALTHCARE COSTS
- WORST CHILD WELLBEING
- MOST PEOPLE WITH NO HEALTHCARE
- HIGHEST POVERTY RATE
- HIGHEST INFANT MORTALITY RATE
- LOWEST SOCIAL MOBILITY
- HIGHEST OBESITY RATE
- MOST PEOPLE WITHOUT HEALTHCARE
- GREATEST NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN POVERTY
- HIGHEST ANTI-DEPRESSANT USE
- WORST MURDER RATE
- SHORTEST LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH
- HIGHEST INCARCERATION RATE
- HIGHEST CARBON EMISSIONS
- MOST ARMS SALES
- WORST MURDER RATE

SOURCE: Speth, James Gustave, "America: The Best Country in the World at Being Last-How Can We Change That?" AlterNet, 1 March 2012, [http://www.alternet.org/story/154367/america%3A\\_the\\_best\\_country\\_in\\_the\\_world\\_at\\_being\\_last\\_-\\_how\\_can\\_we\\_change\\_that](http://www.alternet.org/story/154367/america%3A_the_best_country_in_the_world_at_being_last_-_how_can_we_change_that)

itive Peace Index measures attitudes, institutions and structures that either promote or prohibit a peaceful environment.

The 2013 GPI noted that, since 2008, 110 countries have become less peaceful. The U.S. is one of these. The U.S. scores particularly poorly in regard to its high prison and jail population, its large and active military, the number of conflicts it is engaged in overseas and the number of combat deaths, its heavy weapons capacity and ease of access to small arms. The U.S. rates moderately on measures related to

So, what does it take to get to the top, to be a "peace" country? The top ten of the GPI is dominated by small Nordic countries, although New Zealand, Canada, and Japan are included as well. Despite being far different geographically and in its population, the U.S. can perhaps draw a thing or two from these countries. Difficult economic times notwithstanding, Iceland is number one for its low crime rates, its minimal military, and its resistance to getting involved in global violent conflict. In general, the high peace countries tend to

57% of President Obama's proposed 2014 budget is devoted to military. Not a step in the right direction. All the more reason, however, for anyone who wants peace to remain vocal and vigilant. How about if we try to be number one at something else for a change?

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# Quaker House—an Overview of a Mission of Peace

by Lynn and Steve Newsom, Directors

*Quaker House is a manifestation of the Friends' Peace Testimony. Based in Fayetteville, NC, home of Ft. Bragg, Quaker House provides counseling and support to service members who are questioning their role in the military; educates them, their families, and the public about military issues; and advocates for a more peaceful world.*

From this mission statement have grown many types of services that we continue to offer and expand upon.

One of our most important missions, the GI Rights Hotline, was developed during the Vietnam War to help service members apply for Conscientious Objector status. It has since grown to include helping AWOL soldiers return to the service and receive just treatment, assisting soldiers who have medical and psychological wounds and need benefits or correct discharges, providing assistance to soldiers who are suffering from sexual harassment or abuse, and giving guidance to parents who want to help their son or daughter.

***One of our most important missions, the GI Rights Hotline, was developed during the Vietnam War. Every call or email we receive could be a potential suicide; we know that the person may be desperate for help.***

Every call or email we receive could be a potential suicide; we know that the person may be desperate for help. Steve Woolford and Lenore Yarger provide a large share of the Hotline counseling. In 2011, the entire network handled approximately 13,000 calls from over 6,000 callers, logging over 42,000 minutes of help. Steve and Lenore handled about 30% of those cases.

We work to be witnesses for peace in all that we do. We have organized many peace rallies and vigils over the years, but now our witness is even more visible through our public education activities and social media.

Supporting conscience is another of our efforts. Ricky Clousing was an army interrogator in Iraq when he became a born-again Christian and tried to convince Army intelligence that “enhanced interrogation” techniques were self-defeating. When he could no longer continue using these techniques, he went AWOL. Quaker House

supported him throughout his trial by getting media attention, exposing the interrogation techniques, and providing him with visitation and letters of support while he served his sentence.

Stephanie Atkinson believed that the Desert Storm Gulf War was not a just war and she refused active duty. After being discharged, she became a Director of Quaker House. While she was here, Heidi Balla asked for help. Heidi was being so severely sexually harassed by men on her work ship that she went AWOL in desperation. Stephanie was able to gain national attention for the problem of

sexual harassment in the military, and Balla was given a general discharge under honorable conditions.

Quaker House has also developed materials on “Truth in Recruiting.” Potential enlistees are often misled about military life and the ramifications of enlisting. Our materials are used nationwide to help young people make more fully informed decisions.

Today’s U.S. armed forces are dealing with record-breaking suicides, family abuse, sexual assaults, and murder. Quaker House has helped bring this violence to the attention of the public. The military is now working actively to alleviate these issues, but it is overwhelmed. The number of domestic violence cases has increased substantially, due in part to the long and frequent deployments of family members, the difficulties faced in reintegration, and the difficulty soldiers have getting diagnosed and treated for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury. Thanks to a generous donor, we have been able to hire a therapist who is now providing free, private therapy to domestic violence victims. These victims do not want to go to the military for help because their abusive spouses could lose their positions and benefits. Some of the victims have divorced their abusive spouses and no longer have any benefits. The free therapy we provide is unique in Fayetteville and badly needed.

We also work with North Carolina Stop Torture Now and Quaker Initiative to End Torture (QUIT) to bring attention to our country’s use of torture. We continue to ask President Obama, Senator Burr, and Senator Feinstein to release the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence 6,000-page report which details our nation’s role in torture renditions. We ask for accountability for the use of torture so that it isn’t used again. Twenty-eight retired admirals and generals have also publicly called for accountability and the release of the report.



Steve and Lynn Newsom, directors of Fayetteville's Quaker House.

We educate about militarized drones and we protest against their use. We believe that the use of drones in countries that we are not at war with is illegal, that using drones to kill without chance of surrender or capture is immoral, and that we are creating hostility in the Mid-East that could lead to a growth in terrorism. Gerald Ford got us out of the assassination business. Drones put us back in that business. We no longer use drones only against high-ranking leadership, we now target the “sergeants and corporals.”



Medea Benjamin speaking at Quaker House.

Quaker House has gained a position of respect in the military and civilian communities. It has become clear to the public, thanks to excellent media coverage of our work, that we provide much-needed help to service members who are stressed, wounded, and damaged after twelve years of war. This position of respect enables us to work more effectively to accomplish our mission.

*Steve and Lynn Newsom felt a strong calling to become the new directors of Quaker House when previous director Chuck Fager retired. Steve, a Vietnam-era Navy veteran, had experience working with soldiers to get their discharges upgraded. Lynn, a retired art teacher, had been involved in the beginnings of Quaker House in 1969 and felt that the mission was very important. Both Lynn and Steve have been active in peace and social justice work throughout their lives.*



Free private informational counseling on discharge-related issues to military service members, their families, and others considering joining the military.

Free confidential support to domestic violence victims in the military.

Domestic Violence Hotline number: 904-274-3571

Free Mindfulness classes and conflict resolution training

Lynn and Steve Newsom, Directors

223 Hillside Avenue, Fayetteville, NC 28226

910-323-3912

GI Rights Hotline: 877-447-4487

Quakerhouse.org

Facebook: Quaker House of Fayetteville

## The God Willing Will To Resist

This is a picture of a Palestinian man launching a rock with his slingshot at Israeli soldiers who were launching countless canisters of tear gas at a protest in Bil'in in November 2013.

It is a weekly event every Friday to protest the long and winding wall that has become the symbol of the brutal occupation and racism against the Palestinian people.

Most people call it apartheid.

I don't think apartheid is a strong enough word.

Ethnic cleansing has a much deeper feeling.

When I was in Hebron, I was told that the IDF (Israeli Defense Force) liked the term, "Sterilization."

This protest over this area of Palestinian land has been going on for the past nine years.

Many Palestinians have been killed or wounded over the course of this time.

From this area you can see the Israeli settlements high on a hill over looking the streams of tear gas.

This is what has been ongoing since 1948, since the Zionist God told the Palestinians that they absolutely had to leave Israeli land.

It is exactly what the U.S. Government told

Native Americans to do 500 years ago.

Because, the Father God in the White House said so.

So, this is what has been happening since 1948, when the British and the U.S. Government threw the switch on the Palestinian people.

Maybe it was a make-up call for not letting Jewish refugees immigrate to the West before Hitler transported them to death camps.

Then, you wonder why the British and the Americans didn't bomb the German rail system leading to those extermination camps.

It was called racism--the belief in inferiority.

The justification for looking the other way without guilt.

Countries all over the world co-signed this belief.

Now, the same racism is being carried out by those who you thought would never do it.

The Occupying Israeli Army simply blows up Palestinian villages, bulldozes houses into neat piles, and has the evidence trucked away or burned.

The Palestinians do get to keep the keys to their houses for keepsakes, per Zionist condolence.

It is all legal, because possession is nine-tenths of the law, per cowboy claim jumping rules of the American West.

After awhile, no one knew they were ever there.

Especially good Christian men who never told their wives.

You erase the villages and the street signs from the map, and the new neighbors move in.

And, of course, you invent a war, and a boogeyman, to justify the moral reasons for doing so.

America and Israel share a common lie.

Neat.

Now, let's pretend that the Palestinian man in this picture with the slingshot is a Native American with a bow and arrow. So, the indigenous person who was born on this land, along with countless generations before him, is launching an arrow at the U.S. Cavalry and white settlers who are stealing his ancestral land, and his way of life.

To speed up the process of convincing the Indians that they need to move off of the land, and into reservation refugee camps, the buffalo are massacred, they are tortured, and herded into crowded conditions like cattle.

Gaza is the largest open air prison in the world.

1,400 Palestinians were killed in 2009, and several thousand wounded.

Well... Israel has the right to defend itself, just like the U.S. Cavalry did at Wounded Knee in 1890.

Frozen in time...

Let's compare some of the participants in these historical events.

The Israeli Military and the U.S. Cavalry of the day.

The Israeli Settlers and the U.S. Settlers of the day.

The Palestinians and the Native Americans of the day.

The prevailing thought of each era, was that the U.S. Government,

and the Israeli Government were the good guys.

And everyone else were the bad guys.

After all, Thomas Jefferson referred to the Indians as savages in the

Declaration of Independence.

And, Benny Morris, one of Israel's most prominent historians,

had this to say about the Palestinians in 2004:

"There are circumstances in history that justify ethnic cleansing.

A Jewish state would not have come into being without uprooting 700,000 Palestinians.

There was no choice but to expel that population."

Or, there was former U.S. President Bill Clinton's statement in a speech given in June 2013:

"No matter how many settlers you put out there in the West Bank,

the Palestinians are having more babies than the Israelis...

You've got an existential question to answer."

Neat.



There have been a thousand books written on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Thousands of intellectuals and academics have given lectures and speeches

all over the world on this subject.

And the solution, or the "Peace Process," is a magnificent delay until the casket closes.

Why?

Because, as far as Israel is concerned, there are only so many chairs around a dinner table.

And, none of those chairs are for Palestinians.

Anymore than they were for the American Indians.

Until the world stage comes to the realization that what is happening with Palestinians,

is exactly what happened in South Africa, there is little hope for change.

Nelson Mandela is gone.

Hundreds of world leaders will come to his funeral.

There will be great speeches made about this famous man.

And, after it is all over, they will all return to their respective countries.

And, Israel will continue to strangle the Palestinian people, until the next brutal uprising.

So, my most important experience and realization on my trip to the West Bank,

was the absolute visceral awareness and truth,

that when I saw that Palestinian man launch his rock with his slingshot, I stepped into a time machine

and saw a Native American with a bow and arrow.

Will Israel eventually destroy the Palestinians and their culture?

That depends on the world leaders who attend Nelson Mandela's funeral.

—Mike Hastie  
Army Medic Vietnam  
December 8, 2013

Photograph by Mike Hastie

***"The UN took a strong stand against apartheid; and over the years, an international consensus was built, which helped to bring an end to this iniquitous system. But we know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians."***

**—Nelson Mandela**

# American Exceptionalism – The Rhetoric and the Reality

by S. Brian Willson

**“Our business is killing, and business is good.”**

– Slogan painted on a U.S. 9th Infantry Division helicopter in Vietnam’s Mekong Delta, 1969

## The Conditioning

Virtually all of us born and raised in U.S. America have been, or were, inculcated in the myth that the United States is the greatest country in the history of the world, endowed by our creator to bring prosperity to the impoverished and Christianity to the heathen. Indeed, we are exceptional—unusual, extraordinary—but not in the ways we were led to believe.

## Cognitive Dissonance

In 1969 Vietnam, dramatic, seemingly incomprehensible differences between what I had been taught and firmly believed about the nobility of “America,” and the unspeakable transgressions I experienced with my own senses, required me to either ignore these troubling differences as invalid, thereby preserving my beliefs, or recognize that what I had been taught was extremely flawed. With my comfortable paradigm seriously challenged, I was set on a path of scary truth-seeking.

## The Wool IS our Eyes (Not pulled over them)

What are the origins of a cultural ethos that manifests in such unconscionable behavior? My war experiences led me to re-examine U.S. and world history, cultural clichés, and unquestioned assumptions. Reading my grandfather’s 1906 U.S. history book, *The History of the United States* by James W. Garner and Henry Cabot Lodge, made me realize that our white cultural sense of superiority was explicitly taught to generations of U.S.

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***Our original English Puritan settlers established the tone of sacred superiority. “We shall find that the God of Israel is among us.... For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us.”***

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Americans. For example, the first chapter proudly explained that the “destruction” of the American Indians was due to the fact “that inferior people must yield to a superior civilization in one way or another. They must take on civilization or pass out.” Some would claim the wool has been pulled *over* our eyes. However, a careful reading of history reveals that the wool has been *in* our eyes from our origins.

It’s no accident that the U.S. American culture has become an extraordinarily dangerous imperial threat in the world. And our behavior is consistently and exceptionally brutal and pathologically violent at home as well as abroad, since our oligarchic ruling structure is exceptionally fearful of genuine people power wherever it manifests.

Eurocentric values of systematic violence and arrogance were introduced into the New World in 1492 when Italian Cristoforo Columbo, sailing under the Spanish flag, invaded the West Indies. Columbus’ log stated,

“with fifty men we could subjugate them and make them do whatever we want.” Eyewitness Bartolome de las Casas described unspeakable behavior that “no age can parallel....cruelty never before seen, nor heard of, nor read of.” The Indigenous possessed no vocabulary to describe the bestiality inflicted upon them. The Arawak Indians were virtually wiped out in 40 years.

Our original English Puritan settlers established the tone of sacred superiority. “We shall find that the God of Israel is among us....For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us.” Since the early 1600s, prior to creation in 1789 of the formal U.S. government, groups of armed adventurers and frontiersmen (operating as paramilitary death squads) alongside various European militaries, engaged in almost constant bloodshed with the “bestly” Indians, carrying out one of the greatest genocides in human history.

## The Colonies Began as Private Commercial Enterprises

The corporate control of our government that we decry today has been with us, more or less, since our nation’s founding. The early “settlers” did not come seeking business or trade with “savages,” but were, in effect, employees or indentured servants of private commercial, corporate enterprises of stock-holding, investor-based, London companies who magically received grants from the Crown to develop lands inhabited by Indigenous in what are today Virginia and Massachusetts. The settlers were charged with the grunt work of planting and harvesting crops which were then sent to England to satisfy investor needs for quick profits in the New World. Many of the men we call our “Founding Fathers”—George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Robert Morris, Patrick Henry, and Benjamin Franklin—were early speculators who claimed hundreds of thousands of acres of Indian land. The Founding Fathers vision was an “empire of liberty” (Jefferson), “imperial republicanism” (Madison), and a mercantile, imperially expansive nation—a new “American system.” Theirs was not a vision of democracy. In George Washington’s second term as President he declared that emergence of “democratic societies” threatened the new republic.

## New World Holocaust

It is estimated as many as 18,000,000 Indigenous north of the Rio Grande inhabited more than 600 autonomous societies in 1492, speaking an estimated 500-plus languages. Remarkably free of serious diseases before the Europeans and African slaves arrived, terrible



This 1872 painting, “Spirit of the Frontier” by John Gast, which shows “Manifest Destiny” (the religious belief that the United States should expand from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean in the name of God), captured the view of Americans at the time. The scene portrays settlers moving west, guided and protected by a goddess-like figure of Columbia and aided by technology (railways, telegraphs), driving Native Americans and bison into obscurity. The angel is bringing the “light” as witnessed on the eastern side of the painting as she travels towards the “darkened” west.

epidemics introduced by the newcomers killed hundreds of thousands. Many Indians were forced into starvation and thousands of others were systematically murdered and massacred as settlers moved westward from the Atlantic coast colonies. Over the next four centuries, a massive die-off reduced the original native population by more than 95 percent. Speaking with forked tongue, the U.S. government broke all of its 600-plus treaties and agreements with various Indigenous nations. This holocaust of immense proportion has yet to be sufficiently recognized for its significance today. This forceful dispossession of other peoples is our original cultural sin and the wool in our eyes keeps us from seeing it.

## U.S. Military Precedents

Our exceptional U.S. military precedents were established in 1779 during the Revolutionary War, when Continental Army Supreme General George Washington ordered General Sullivan to completely eliminate the Iroquois who were mostly siding with the British against the settlers invading their lands:

The immediate objects are the total destruction and devastation of their settlements... It will be essential to ruin their crops now in the ground and prevent their planting more.... to lay waste all the settlements around...that the country may not be merely overrun, but destroyed. [Y]ou will not by any means listen to any overture of peace before the total ruinment of their settlements... Our future security will be in their inability to injure us and in the terror with which the severity of the chastisement they receive will inspire them.

This order, explicitly or implicitly, established imperial U.S. military principles operating to this day: (1) Total war/genocide targeting all inhabitants for elimination; (2) preventing peace; (3) pre-emptive war; (4) terror; (5) crime of self-defense; (6) revenge. Learning that our nation’s “Founding Fathers” resorted to both terror and pre-emptive war was jolting.

General Sullivan’s dutiful execution in 1779 of Washington’s orders has been graphically described by

historians as “the most ruthless application of a scorched-earth policy” in U.S. American history, comparable to Sherman’s Civil War march to the sea, General LeMay’s incendiary wasteland bombings of North Korea in 1950-53, and search-and-destroy missions carried out by U.S. soldiers in Vietnam. Despite the Iroquois being considered one of the most advanced Indigenous federations in the New World, all their settlements were wasted.

### Manifest Destiny – Continental Expansion

Early “Manifest Destiny” behavior was psychically facilitated by a combination of *ethnocentrism* (ethnic superiority) and a deep *racism*—fear manifested as hatred directed toward people of “color,” or those who otherwise looked “different” from white Europeans. Policies were aimed to eliminate certain human beings so they would have an “inability to injure us.” Today’s War of Terror continues this pattern.

Thomas Jefferson’s interest in an empire of liberty was summarized in his 1809 letter to James Madison: “I am persuaded no Constitution was ever before so well calculated as ours for extensive empire and self-government.” Beginning with the Louisiana Purchase, exercised by President Jefferson in 1803 without any constitutional authority whatsoever, the new republic began grandiose expansion with nine territorial additions to the original states, along with fifteen islands and the Panama Canal Zone.

Continental and hemispheric manifest destiny was completed by 1890 with the U.S. Army massacre of Sioux Indians at Wounded Knee. Earlier subsidies of economic development—slave labor of Black Africans and wage slavery of poor Asian and European immigrants—also enabled the expansion.

Early Congressional militants, such as Henry Clay and others interested in promoting the “American System,” urged expansion into Canada and Cuba, claiming that the “virtuous and patriotic” framers possessed “too much wisdom to restrict Congress to *defensive* war (emphasis added).”

U.S. hegemony in the Western Hemisphere was “authorized” by the 1823 Monroe Doctrine that declared the American continents “are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers” and that “any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere” would be considered “dangerous to our peace and safety.” Early westward expansion was first justified under the slogan “Manifest Destiny” in 1845 when *The United States Magazine and Democratic Review* declared that it was “Our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the development of our yearly multiplying millions.” John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts described the U.S. as a “nation, coextensive with the North American Continent, destined by God and nature to be the most populous and powerful people ever combined under one social compact.”

Examining the historical records of the Continental army, and the formal army of the Republic, reveals that army units were involved between 1775 and 1902 in more than 9,000 distinct skirmishes, of which nearly 3,200 involved serious casualties. More than 1,200 of these were battles against Indian nations. In the same period of time, U.S. naval units, which by 1900 had surpassed the strength of the British Navy, had been militarily engaged on more than 1,500 occasions while capturing some 4,000 merchant vessels in foreign seas.

Additionally, the U.S. Navy made thousands of military port calls in Latin America, Asia, Russia, and Africa. Few found fault with this imperial behavior. With God on our side, then as now, we could do no wrong.

### Manifest Destiny Goes Global

In addition to the *thousands* of paramilitary and military operations waged against Indigenous from the 1600s up to 1900, U.S. presidents, from 1798 to the present, have ordered at least 560 overt military interventions—funded by Congress and the people and



President Bush rides in a HUMVEE with General H. Norman Schwarzkopf during his visit with troops in Saudi Arabia on Thanksgiving Day, 1990. (National Archives photo)

## ***President George H.W. Bush at the 1992 Earth Summit resisted pleas of 152 leaders of other countries to make lasting changes that could ensure protection of the world on which all nations depend, boldly proclaiming “The American way of life is not negotiable.”***

justified to protect “American interests”—into more than 100 countries. In addition, thousands of covert operations—all illegal—have been conducted since the CIA’s creation in 1947. Today, U.S. “Full Spectrum Dominance” is assured with over 1,000 military installations around the world, Special Forces death squads operating in 150 countries, military ships sailing in every seaspace, military planes flying in every airspace, and satellites and weapons launched in outerspace. On the home front, an exceptional spying apparatus tracks our every move while insidious, myopic propaganda daily bombards our brains, all justified under the paternalistic “we know best” tone of superiority and exceptionalism in which information is presented.

“American interests” (free marketeers) have long ruled our policies. In 1859, U.S. Senator Thomas Hart Benton (D-MO) urged trade and lucrative commerce with Asia to “realize the grand idea of Columbus carrying wealth and dominion with it.” In 1904, President Theodore Roosevelt bragged that he had forcefully taken Panama from Colombia due to the latter’s incapacity “of keeping order on the Isthmus” claiming that in “flagrant cases of wrongdoing” by Latin American republics, the U.S. had the right to exercise a “Big Stick police power” justifying increased intervention in the internal affairs of Latin America—the Roosevelt Corollary.

In 1907, while lecturing at Columbia University, future president Woodrow Wilson described the theme of the new American century:

Since trade ignores national boundaries and the manufacturer insists on having the world as a market, the flag of his nation must follow him, and the doors of the nations which are closed must be battered down....Colonies must be obtained or planted, in order that no useful corner of the world may be overlooked or left unused.

The U.S. gained more prominence as an aggressive, imperial, world power after arrogantly and criminally dropping atomic bombs on Japan. Since WWII, it has increasingly ruled by terror, ordering over 390 military interventions in more than 100 countries, while bombing 28 of them, and threatening nuclear bombs on 20 different occasions.

Today’s “globalization,” enforced by terror and war, is the product of the continuous theme of Eurocentric exploitation first established some 500 years ago. In a short historical time period, original inhabitants of North America were forced to accept a Eurocentric standard of intolerant religion (Christianity), a politics of arrogance and doublespeak (gruesome exploitation described as “democratizing”), and an economics of private greed (capitalism), while being permanently dispossessed of their rich cultures and land. How do we explain this genocide? I argue that this cultural ethos remains etched into our souls, residing as repressed memory and hidden feelings of terrifying shame. But we can’t see it because of the wool in our eyes.

### Historical Precedents of Imperial Behavior

This kind of diabolical imperial pattern is not unique in world history. Intentional inducement of fear (terror) has always been and continues to be a significant policy for control of one nation, or one group, by another. It is not restricted in its application to the United States civilization. It has been used since the advent of “civilization” some 5,000 to 6,000 years ago.

In seeking a peoples-oriented history, new facts and circumstances often contradict the prevailing and “sacrosanct” story. Unfortunately, many of the attitudes uttered by white Puritanical Pilgrims, founding fathers, and greedy civilian and military “leaders” remain insidiously and structurally operative. Overtly expressed as well as suppressed sentiments of racism and classism continue to dominate much of our personal and political lives. A question I often ask is, how can one nation of human beings so callously and thoughtlessly drop bombs on another nation of human beings, knowing that thousands will be murdered? Exceptional pathology, indeed! I believe such barbarism can only be explained by a deep, cruel racism and/or ugly ethnocentrism operating as defense mechanisms that distract us from long-festered insecurities.

### The American Way Of Life Is Not Negotiable

Behavior continually couched in terms of divinely blessed American Exceptionalism is above reproach. When President George H.W. Bush attended the June 1992 Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (UN Conference on Sustainable Development), he resisted pleas of 152 leaders of other countries to make lasting changes that could ensure protection of the world on which all nations depend, boldly proclaiming “The American way of life is not negotiable.”

*(continued on page 16)*

(continued from page 15)

George Kennan, then director of U.S. State Department's Policy Planning Staff, published a top-secret document in 1948 in which he shared an honest prescription for successful U.S. imperial policy:

...we have about 50 percent of the world's wealth, but only 6.3 percent of its population... Our real task...is to devise a pattern of relationships which will permit us to maintain this position of disparity .... We should cease to talk about ... unreal objectives such as human rights, the raising of the living standards, and democratization... [W]e are going to have to deal in straight power concepts.

Post-World War II U.S. plans for global dominance (as opposed to what we were taught was a Soviet plan) are spelled out in National Security Council Report #68 (NSC-68), April 14, 1950, *United States Objectives for National Security*. An ultimate declaration of U.S. global "Manifest Destiny," NSC-68 formulated a worldview where leaders of the United States asserted their unique right and responsibility to impose their chosen "order among nations" so that "our free society can flourish," and that U.S. policy must "foster a fundamental change in the nature of the Soviet system." A global imperial policy was indispensable to "protect our belief in ourselves and our way of life." NSC-68 "imposes on us, in our own interests, the responsibility of world leadership" such that we must seek to "foster a world environment in which the American system can survive and flourish."

Following World War II, the U.S. considered *all* political and economic sectors or regions of influence that it did not control as being a threat to its global objectives of an integrated political-economic capitalism—i.e., promotion and global spread of a grotesquely consumptive, American Way Of Life (AWOL).

### U.S. Civilization Built Upon Three Exceptionally Diabolical Holocausts

Conveniently left out of the discussion is the fact that our civilization is founded on three holocausts (subsides): (1) stealing land at gunpoint while murdering millions of Indigenous with impunity; (2) stealing "free" labor at gunpoint while murdering millions of Africans with impunity; and (3) during the "The American Century" (20th), stealing global raw materials at gunpoint while murdering millions of people around the world with impunity. Our systematic theft of land, labor, and resources with no accountability has terribly spoiled us.

### Exceptionally Unjust, Repressive, and Narcissistic

We are exceptional—exceptionally violent, narcissistic, and pathological. We are exceptionally consumptive (and therefore exceptionally polluting); exceptionally deceitful and exceptionally imperial in order to preserve our sense of superiority at any cost.

The U.S. is an exceptionally class-based society ruled by the 1 percent; it ranks as the 42nd most unequal country in the world, per the CIA. Astonishingly, one-tenth of 1% (or just 310,000 persons) have more combined pre-tax *income* than the poorest 120 million people combined. Social epidemiologists tell us that social health directly relates to scale of income inequality—how large the gap is between rich and poor. Inequitable societies, such as the U.S., tend to have exceptionally high rates of violent crime and homicide, as residents experience increased hostility and are less likely to trust one another in community.

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## ***We are exceptional—exceptionally violent, narcissistic, and pathological.***

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Consequently, the U.S. possesses an exceptional dependence upon incarceration, especially of its poor and ethnic minorities, such that more than 2.5 million citizens are imprisoned in more than 9,000 jails and prisons. The U.S. holds 25 percent of the world's prisoners—boasting the world's highest per capita detention rate with 800 prisoners for every 100,000 people. Torture has also long been U.S. policy. A 1931 government report concluded that use of torture was "widespread" throughout the *entire* U.S. criminal justice system and it remains an unspoken policy to this day.

Within our own borders, U.S. military units (despite laws prohibiting their use), augmented by private vigilante groups, have violently intervened on behalf of corporations over 160 times, putting down workers' demands for fair labor policies. Historians conclude the U.S. has the "bloodiest and most violent labor history of any industrial nation in the world," with over 700 deaths and thousands of injuries before the 1930s.

Whites' fear of losing their indispensable subsidy provided by slavery and low-wage servitude, led to exceptionally grotesque violence against African Americans, with thousands of lynchings, mutilations, and official executions in the 1800s and 1900s. Virtually every Black person living during that period experienced *terror* on a regular basis, and these scars remain searing to this day.

### We Are the Savages – RX: Cleanse the Wool From Our Eyes

Thomas Jefferson's words in our Declaration of Independence—that [King George III] "has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an indistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions," describe precisely our behavior in Vietnam, and in virtually all of our historical imperial crimes. Who are the real merciless savages? I submit that Jefferson had it backward, an example of psychologist Carl Jung's shadow concept—a kind of dishonest *jujitsu* projecting shameful inner demons onto others (demonizing) in efforts to avoid the pain of emotional honesty and personal intellectual accountability. In Vietnam I discovered that I was one of the merciless savages.

Our exceptionally insatiable, addictive consumption is the domestic political energy driving our exceptionally imperial foreign policy, the latter being necessary to preserve our exceptional orgy of materialism. Our insistence on being "Number One" hides our exceptional national shame and fear of facing our genocidal origins, thus making us an exceptionally dangerous threat to the Planet. Our business remains killing, and business remains lucrative.

We can choose to become a humble and empathic society. Indeed, our survival as a world requires becoming exceptionally noble in caring and sharing. Or, we can stubbornly cling to our delusions of grandeur using dangerous defense

mechanisms necessary to sustain them. My prescription for earnest truth seekers is to live more simply, apprenticing in the art of becoming a revolutionary, while pursuing passionate justice and practicing brutal honesty. Such a path would cleanse the wool from our eyes, enabling a painful but refreshing recovery of our humanity.

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*S. Brian Willson is the author of Blood on the Tracks—The Life and Times of S. Brian Willson (PM Press, 2011). Willson is a Vietnam veteran whose wartime experiences transformed him into a revolutionary nonviolent pacifist. He gained renown as a participant in a prominent 1986 veterans fast on the steps of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. One year later, on September 1, 1987, he was again thrust into the public eye when he was run over and nearly killed by a U.S. Navy munitions train while engaging in a nonviolent blockade in protest of weapons shipments to El Salvador. Since the 1980s, he has continued efforts to educate the public about the diabolical nature of U.S. imperialism while striving to "walk his talk" (on two prosthetic legs and a three-wheeled handcycle) and live a simpler life.*

---



***We are not worth more,  
they are not worth less.***

—S. Brian Willson

***"If there is a country that has committed unspeakable atrocities in the world,  
it is the United States of America. They don't care for human beings."***

**—Nelson Mandela**



*All young boys dream of growing up to be heroes. Parades that honor military veterans as heroes provide role models for the impressionable youth, thus helping to perpetuate the culture of war. Reclaiming November 11th as it was originally intended by Congress in 1926—"the recurring anniversary of this date should be commemorated with thanksgiving and prayer and exercises designed to perpetuate peace through good will and mutual understanding between nations."—as the veterans on these pages are doing, is an important step toward creating a culture of peace.*

## Armistice Day Has Morphed Into Veterans Day\* – "Thank You For Your Service!"

by S. Brian Willson, November 11, 2013

"Thank you for your service." For more than the three decades that I have publicly acknowledged being a veteran, I continue to hear over and over this professed appreciation. Recently I was admitted to the Portland, Oregon, VA hospital and, once completing her medical intake interview, the attending physician made sure she thanked me for my service. I cringed. My service? She had left my room before I could compose an honest response. Nothing I did while in my 3 years, 11 months, and 17 days of military functioning could be even closely defined as service—not to the U.S. people, not to the people of the world, and certainly not to myself. And the implicit, if not explicit, message is a thank-you to veterans for preserving "our freedom."

In 2012, the Pentagon (Department of War) launched a thirteen-year (until 2025) national Vietnam War Commemoration public relations project explicitly designed to justify, glorify, and honor the Vietnam War, including its soldiers. In fact, it is a poorly masked effort to obliterate from our memory the egregiously criminal U.S. war, and the popular GI and citizen opposition to it. This effort has likely made such thank-yous a more pronounced and ubiquitous policy. Eradicating memory is a long historical pattern of imperial powers.

It is a shame that the public seems unwilling to grasp that virtually all our military adventures are



An American sailor, an American Red Cross Nurse and two British soldiers celebrating the signing of the Armistice in Paris on November 11, 1918. (Photo from the Imperial War Museum collection.)

lawless, imperial barbarisms which violently rob others of their freedom and autonomy while enabling the U.S. people to continue living in fantastic opulence justified by a sense of exceptionalism while we callously outsource the consequential pain and suffering inflicted on innocent others and the sacred earth. Our veteran "service" does not protect our "freedoms"—though it does preserve freedom to rob, pillage, and rape, while it destroys and represses others devoid of genuine diplomacy or "democracy."

Since World War II alone, the U.S. military has intervened at the direction of our President, with funding by Congress and the U.S. American people, at least 390 times against dozens of sovereign countries, bombing 28 of them, and launching thousands of covert interventions to boot. All have been criminal—in violation of both domestic and international laws—but were conducted with virtually total impunity. Millions were murdered and impoverished—a diabolical history beyond comprehension.

My role during the Vietnam War consisted first, of designing security procedures for new weapons systems while sitting in an air-conditioned Air Force headquarters office. Then later I functioned as a night security commander of a U.S. Air Force base in Vietnam's hot and humid Mekong Delta. In this role, I was protecting invasive death machines from indigenous attacks, thus enabling infliction of their violent power to destroy inhabited, undefended, fishing villages, murdering and maiming thousands of innocents.

In effect, I was a complicit cog in a vast murdering, money-making machine organizing genocide against people I knew virtually nothing about—people simply seeking preservation of their own self-determination from outside imperial, lawless forces. That I was brainwashed and duped is an understatement, but I quickly realized the absurdity and criminality of my participation. Thus, it is painful to hear the persistent "thank-yous" which, in fact, serve only to justify an unthinking continued support of U.S. wars, ad nauseum. This absurd habit of thanking veterans for our service performs a terrible disservice to a genuine search for a truthful national history.

Read more of Brian Willson's essays at <http://www.brianwillson.com/>



Boy Scout stands at attention during the Veterans Day ceremony at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany, Nov. 8, 2012. The Veterans Day Parade and ceremony are annual events that are held to honor all those who have served in the United States military. (U.S. Army photo)

1916

16 years old when I went to the war,  
To fight for a land fit for heroes,  
God on my side, and a gun in my hand,  
Chasing my days down to zero,  
And I marched and I fought and I bled and I died,  
And I never did get any older,  
But I knew at the time that a year in the line,  
Is a long enough life for a soldier,  
  
We all volunteered, and we wrote down our names,  
And we added two years to our ages,  
Eager for life and ahead of the game,  
Ready for history's pages,  
And we brawled and we fought and we whored 'til  
we stood,  
Ten thousand shoulder to shoulder,  
A thirst for the Hun, we were food for the gun,  
And that's what you are when you're soldiers,  
  
I heard my friend cry, and he sank to his knees,  
Coughing blood as he screamed for his mother,  
And I fell by his side, and that's how we died,  
Clinging like kids to each other,  
And I lay in the mud and the guts and the blood,  
And I wept as his body grew colder,  
And I called for my mother and she never came,  
Though it wasn't my fault and I wasn't to blame,  
The day not half over and ten thousand slain,  
And now there's nobody remembers our names,  
And that's how it is for a soldier.

—Lemmy Kilmister, 1990

\* Known as "The Great War," World War I ceased with an armistice effective on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month. November 11, 1918, is generally regarded as the end of "the war to end all wars." In 1926, Congress passed resolution with the words: "the 11th of November 1918 marked the cessation of the most destructive, sanguinary, and far reaching war in human annals ... and it is fitting that ... this date should be commemorated with thanksgiving ... designed to perpetuate peace ..." A 1938 law made every November 11th a legal holiday to be ... celebrated as "Armistice Day." But sixteen years later, in 1954, following the Korean War, veterans service organizations pressured Congress to strike out the word "Armistice" and insert in its place the word "Veterans."

# Veterans Day *For Peace*

by Kristi Nebel

Steve took twenty minutes to get dressed for the Auburn Veterans Day Parade. The green jungle fatigues were all buttons, he said, no zippers. Then there were the high-top, black boots, plus matching black beret, gloves, scarf, and sunglasses. In his so-called color guard uniform he looked like a Veteran For Peace ready to do a low crawl in sniper-infested jungles near Da Nang.

The “color guard” marched together in formation holding giant American flags, with a peace symbol where the stars should be. Our Veterans For Peace presence at the parade is an anomaly, to say the least. We were forbidden last year by the city of Auburn from marching until the ACLU went to bat for us in court and won the case allowing us entry. Those five color guardsmen are a formidable bunch. Apparently they scared the city fathers with their peace symbols. Steve thinks they’re nothing but nationalistic sarcasm, but I beg to differ.

the former sergeant now officiating from the Seattle VFP chapter, tries to organize us. She barks orders to my partner and me to maintain a uniform distance from the big banner in front of us. We carry a small banner with the Veterans For Peace logo of a dove on a military helmet and our Tacoma chapter number identification. She explains to the other members from chapters in Seattle, Tacoma, Olympia, Chehalis, and Port Townsend how to hold their banners upright in a respectful manner, and to keep even distances from one another.

This year she is intent on maintaining a neat appearance for our group. My partner, with his long athletic legs, ignores her and bounds ahead too close to the banner



Members of Veterans For Peace participating in 48th Annual Veterans Day Parade & Observance on November 9 in Auburn, Washington. (Photo by Kristi Nebel.)

But we look pretty good anyway. Those color guardsmen are truly awesome in the realest sense of the word. Something about them takes my breath away. I know Steve looks downright sexy to me, I’m

embarrassed to say. Generally speaking, uniforms don’t turn me on but that gargantuan flag is a heart-stopper.

I’ve marched in this huge parade five times now. The first time was six years ago when I decided to join VFP because I felt strongly they needed support in their very brave initial move to march in it. I didn’t know if Steve would be interested as he has extreme feelings of animosity toward the nationalistic jingoism and symbolism that is ubiquitous on this occasion.

The Auburn event is the biggest Veterans Day Parade west of the Mississippi, drawing participation from far and wide. The restaurants have a heyday with long lines waiting for lunch afterwards. The event jams up the town with buses full of marching bands from schools all over the state. Obscenely, tiny little boys come dressed in military uniforms and march gaily alongside older generations. Recruiters now say, “This isn’t your father’s Army.” I ask, “Does every generation have to have a war?”

But Steve did get on board that first year and has every year since. So anxious was he to get there in time that he snarled at me for setting the GPS wrong. He feels it’s the most important thing Veterans For Peace does all year.

Indeed, as I march I know it has the same transformative effect on me each time as if never before. My eyes lock with those of other women and I imagine we’re a fraternity of wives of combat soldiers

when I see countless tears well up. We know in a sense our own scars as veterans of marriages that managed to last when others failed in the aftermath of wars that shredded their husbands’ characters.

But probably the finest and most pivotal moments for me are those split seconds when I imagine the observers are being hit by the first impression of the “color guard.” I think of it as a strong smack to the solar plexus, causing a 180-degree, barely-conscious spin.

These women and men have been watching cherubic Cub Scouts perched on tanks and armored vehicles, and gangly, pimple-faced boys in ROTC uniforms, facing futures in wars much more wild and horrific than the computer war games they play. They’ve been waving and cheering them on—until we assault their senses with these towering, patriotic peace flags held by combat soldiers.

One old man looked up, snatched off his cap, held it to his chest and wept. Another man gushed, “Welcome back! Welcome back! Welcome back!” I imagine he knew full well that these veterans had been back for decades, but never will be completely back to the young men they were when they first enlisted in the military. As easily as the next breath of life can come the hope for peace from one who has experienced war.

The hands come together in applause for us throughout the route and I thank as many as I can. Again and again I meet the eyes of women and my head slowly turns as I watch them watching me in our silent understanding. And once again I can’t help it. My eyes tear up, too, as I walk past them.

*Kristi Nebel is one of the founding members, an associate, of VFP Chapter 134. She is a 17-year resident of Tacoma and makes her living as a musician.*

***Obscenely, tiny little boys come dressed in military uniforms and march gaily alongside older generations. Recruiters now say, “This isn’t your father’s Army.” I ask, “Does every generation have to have a war?”***

Twenty-eight of us gathered for the march. This year four came from the Spokane Veterans For Peace chapter in solidarity after we won last year’s court fight. As we wait in line on a side street for our turn to enter the parade, Michelle,

in front of us, rebelling against my pleas to obey. It appears to me that these guys are pretty squirrely for former military. My friend Dave explained to me later that I’m right. They were all fairly unsuccessful, he thinks, in military conformity, gravitating more towards independent thought.



The Eisenhower chapter of Veterans For Peace participating in the Raleigh (above) and Roxboro (below), NC, Veterans Day parades. (Photos by Ahmed Selim [www.filmsforworldpeace.com](http://www.filmsforworldpeace.com).)





VFP Chapter 134 members with banner. Left to right Marilyn Kimmerling, Steve Nebel, and Dave Zink. (photo by Kristi Nebel)



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Remembrance Sunday 2013 — “War is Organised Murder.”

## Veterans For Peace UK at the Cenotaph\*

by Ben Griffin

As a child, I was mesmerized by the somber parades of Remembrance Sunday. The soldiers in their great coats, the veterans wearing their medals, and *The Last Post*\*\* all played a part in recruiting me into the army.

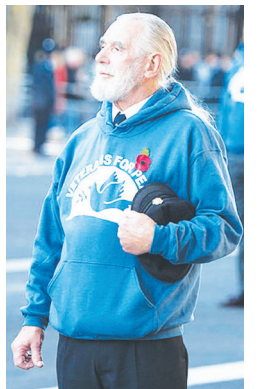
Since leaving the army, the weeks leading up to Remembrance Sunday have become hard to endure. The public relations campaign waged each year by the Royal British Legion hides the brutality and stupidity of warfare. Diamante poppies, girl bands, and children dressed in “Future Soldier” t-shirts are all deployed to attract the unthinking into participating in a glorification of war and the military. There is a distinct lack of remembrance and I am not alone amongst veterans in thinking this.

Veterans For Peace UK was formed in mid-2011. We have attracted veterans of all three services, ranging in experience from D-Day to Helmand Province. Our aim is to advance the cause of world peace through nonviolent action. We speak in schools to counter the propaganda of military recruiters, stand in solidarity with military resisters like Michael Lyons and Bradley Manning, fast in solidarity with the men held in Guantanamo Bay, hold public events to expose the true nature of warfare by telling our own stories, and protest in the street.

This year on Remembrance Sunday, we walked (no marching) to the Cenotaph under the banner “Never Again.” We decided not to wear our medals or berets. Amongst the 18 veterans who attended were men who had served in World War II, Southeast Asia, Northern Ireland, DhoFar, Macedonia, Afghanistan, and Iraq. The message on the back of our tops read “War is Organised Murder”—a quote from Harry Patch, who was the last survivor of the Western Front when he died in 2009. We were followed by around 80 supporters.

The response from bystanders was initially confused, and then, as the penny dropped, mostly positive. As we neared the Cenotaph we were stopped by the police. A negotiation between the police and myself ended with an agreement to allow the veterans and our bugler to approach the monument. The tension built as we waited for the Salvation Army to finish their ceremony.

As we stood facing the Cenotaph, D-Day veteran Jim Radford sang the song *1916* by Lemmy Kilmister [see page 17]. Afghanistan veteran John Boulton then read the poem *Suicide in the Trenches* by Siegfried Sassoon. A wreath of mostly white poppies was then laid by Northern Ireland veteran John Bourton. *The Last Post* was played, after



which there was a minute of silence during which we tried to remember all victims of war.

It was a somber and moving event which took courage to participate in. Next year we hope to have many more veterans committed to peace walking with us to the Cenotaph. We extend our invitation to former enemies who are currently excluded from the “official” state parade.

Ben Griffin is a coordinator with Veterans For Peace UK. He served in the Parachute Regiment and the SAS in Northern Ireland, Macedonia, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

### Suicide in the Trenches

I knew a simple soldier boy  
Who grinned at life in empty joy,  
Slept soundly through the lonesome dark,  
And whistled early with the lark.  
In winter trenches, cowed and glum,  
With crumps and lice and lack of rum,  
He put a bullet through his brain.  
No one spoke of him again.  
You smug-faced crowds with kindling eye  
Who cheer when soldier lads march by,  
Sneak home and pray you'll never know  
The hell where youth and laughter go.

—Siegfried Sassoon, 1918



Veterans For Peace Chapter 111 participates in 2009 Auburn parade (Photo credit: © Cliff Wells 2009 All Rights Reserved.)



Veterans For Peace UK walk (not march) and assemble at Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday. The backs of their blue hoodies read “War is Organised Murder.” (Photos © Guy Smallman)



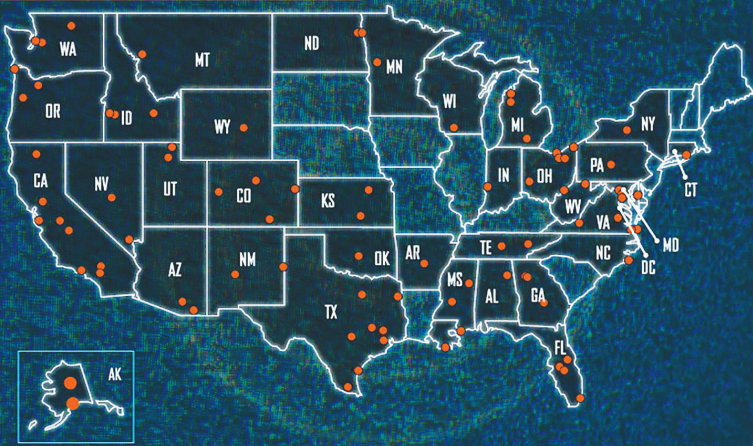
\* a monument (literally “empty tomb”) in London—the United Kingdom’s primary national war memorial.

\*\* the British bugle call from which the American Taps is derived.

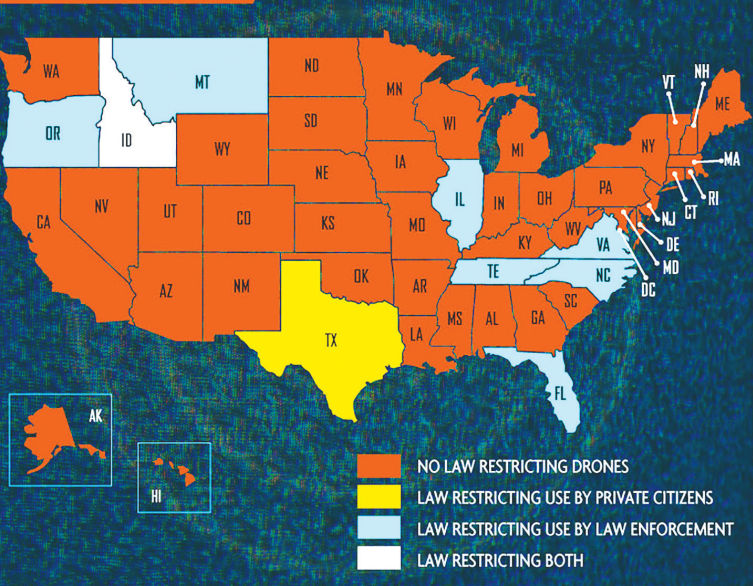
## TARGETING AMERICANS?

MANY AMERICANS ASSUME THESE DEVICES ARE USED ONLY TO LAUNCH OFFENSIVES IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES. THAT'S A FALSE ASSUMPTION. OVER THE YEARS, DOZENS OF AGENCIES ACROSS THE U.S. HAVE USED DRONES FOR A VARIETY OF PURPOSES, MANY OF THEM CLASSIFIED.

### DRONE AUTHORIZATIONS IN THE U.S.



### LAWS ACROSS THE STATES



SOURCES  
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## HOMELAND-SECURITY-DEGREE.ORG

Drone graphics above and on pages 10 and 11 from homeland-security-degree.org.

## Young Afghan farmer boy murdered by U.S. soldiers

The photo shows Gulmuddin, son of an Afghan farmer from Kandahar Province in southern Afghanistan, who was shot and killed on 15 January 2010 by a small group of corrupt U.S. Army soldiers called the Kill Team.



## Double Standards for U.S. War Crimes by John LaForge

In response to regular reports of atrocities by U.S. soldiers, drone controllers, pilots, and interrogators, the White House routinely tries to help. Every president promises to honor U.S. armed forces and says they are the finest military of all, etc.

At Veterans Day ceremonies, president fill-in-the-blank boasts, "America is and always will be the greatest nation on Earth." This past November 11, President Barack Obama said that since 9/11 the U.S. is "defining one of the greatest generations of military service this country has ever produced," and, of course, "[W]e have the best-led, best-trained, best-equipped military in the world."

Really? On Veterans Day 2011, one headline blared: "American Soldier is Convicted of Killing Afghan Civilians for Sport." U.S. aggression, occupation, torture of prisoners, massacres, drone attacks, offshore penal colonies, and sexual assaults against our own service members take the luster from the official self-image of "exceptionality."

In a bold invitation, Human Rights Watch has called on 154 parties to the UN Convention on Torture to bring charges against U.S. officials under explicit language in the treaty which was ratified by the U.S. in 1994.

The treaty requires such action when reputable allegations are not prosecuted by the accused governments, and we don't need any more evidence; just refer to these mainstream U.S. media stories:

- "US Practiced Torture after 9/11, Nonpartisan Review Concludes" (Apr. 16, 2013)
- "Afghans Say an American Tortured Civilians" (May 13, 2013)
- "CIA Drones Kill Civilians in Pakistan" (Mar. 18, 2011)
- "GI Kills 16 Afghans, Including 9 Children, in Attacks on Homes" (Mar. 12, 2012)
- "Libya Effort is Called Violation of War Act" (May 26, 2011)
- "NATO and Afghan forces killed 310 civilians over the same period, mostly from airstrikes, the UN reports" (Aug. 3, 2009)
- "100,000 Iraqis killed since U.S. invasion analysis says" (Oct. 29, 2004)
- "U.N. Chief Ignites Firestorm by Calling Iraq War 'Illegal'" (Sep. 17, 2004)
- "Iraq Says Blast in Baghdad Kills Dozens of Civilians: U.S. Blamed" (Mar. 29, 2003)
- "U.S. Presses for Total Exemption from War Crimes Court" (Oct. 9, 2002)
- "Pentagon Says U.S. Airstrike Killed Women and Children" (Mar. 13, 2002)
- "Bombing Necessary Despite Toll on Civilians, U.S. Envoy Says" (Jan. 9, 2002)
- "U.S. helicopters fire on women, children in Somalia" (Sep. 10, 1993)
- "US forces buried enemy forces alive" (Sep. 13, 1991)
- "200,000 died in Gulf War, and counting" (May 30, 1991)

John LaForge, a co-director of Nukewatch (a nuclear watchdog and environmental justice group in Wisconsin), edits its quarterly newsletter and writes for PeaceVoice.

**"If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner." —Nelson Mandela**

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