

"Exposing
the true costs
of war"

The War Crimes Times

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In this issue

Religion, Militarism, Morality, Justice



"Bearing the sins of imperialism" – image by Mark Runge

If an "Islamist" is one whose corrupt interpretation of the Islamic religion informs his extreme, militant political agenda, then how would a "Christianist" act?

In this issue, we explore how elements of fundamental evangelical Christianity have been a major force in promoting an American culture of war. Not only have they abandoned the Prince of Peace for a god of war, replaced compassion with vengeance, and swapped brotherhood for xenophobia, they have proselytized their distorted message within the military establishment itself.

Chuck Fager, in his review of *Christianity and War*, and **Marc Mullinax**, in his short essay, provide strong arguments that these "fundamentalist" views are an affront to their faith, contrary to Scripture, and far from the true fundamentals of Christianity. Within the military culture, **Ross Caputi** writes about the anti-Muslim attitudes and **Willard Hunter** (in his review of *No Snowflake in an Avalanche*) describes the persecution of those who are not the "right kind of Christians." **John Scales Avery** urges us to consider the wisdom of Tolstoy, Gandhi, and King who understood the true Christian message and **Mark Twain** leads us in prayer.

Despite tremendous societal pressure, throughout history individuals have summoned the strength and courage to resist the cultural programming of militaristic states. **Mike Wong** refused his orders for Viet Nam and **Joe Glenton** refused a second tour to Afghanistan. As more of these stories are told, more soldiers and potential recruits will realize their innate sense of morality and refuse to go to war.

Akin to morality is justice, and while morality can be an individual decision, justice often requires the action of a legal system. But **Margaret Kimberley** reports that the International Criminal Court, actually "advances the cause of criminality" by not prosecuting the likes of George W. Bush. A significant step, however, has been taken by a war crimes tribunal in Malaysia as recounted by **Eunice Au** of the *New Straits Times*. Meanwhile, **Robert Yoder** urges us to indict the incumbent.

Also: young author **Adam Berner** differentiates "crazy" from "insane" as he reacts to a classic war film; **Evan Knappenberger** on alternatives to military service; **Terry J. Allen**, **Dave McCoy**, and **Willard Hunter** on military environmental toxins; **Kevin Baker** on "Green on Blue" killings; **Bill Quigley** on drone assassinations; and more.

One of the functions of good literature is to help us to put our-

Thou Shalt Not Kill by John Scales Avery

selves imaginatively into the skin of another person. Good literature (and for that matter, good cinema, and television) ought to broaden the range of human sympathy, allowing us to share the feelings of other people who are very different from ourselves.

It is an interesting fact that Leo Tolstoy, who is generally considered to have been one of the greatest novelists of all time, was deeply aware of ethical problems, especially as an old man. "...The sharpest of all contradictions," Tolstoy wrote, "can be seen between the government's professed faith in the Christian law of

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Protests at Chicago Summit

Veterans Call for End of NATO

Veterans for Peace works for the abolition of war, and while that process will take many steps, one that should be taken immediately is the dissolution of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

NATO has always been a war-making institution lacking in accountability to the peoples of the nations it claims to represent. But NATO at least once claimed a defensive purpose that it neither claims nor represents any longer.

NATO has militarized the nations of Europe against the will of their people, now maintains hundreds of nuclear weapons in non-nuclear European nations in blatant violation of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, and is threatening Russia with missile base construction on its borders.

United Nations or NATO. While no written law supports that claim, it is a claim that has served its intended purpose. NATO also serves as a false legal shield, protecting the U.S. military from Congressional oversight.

The U.S.-dominated NATO holds up the past year's war on Libya as a model for the future, with an eye on various potential victims, including Syria and Iran. In so doing, NATO serves as the armed enforcer of the exploitative agenda of the G-8.

NATO's interests are neither democratically determined nor humanitarian in purpose. NATO does not bomb all nations guilty of humanitarian abuses. Nor does NATO's bombing alleviate human suffering; it adds to it. Saudi Arabia is not a target. Bahrain is not a target. Ben Ali and Mubarak were not



Veterans For Peace brings banner to NATO summit meeting at McCormick Place in Chicago on May 20. (photo by Ellen Davidson). More at WarCrimesTimes.org.

Having fought aggressive wars in Yugoslavia, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya, NATO remains in Afghanistan, illegally, immorally, and to no coherent purpose. The people of the United States, other NATO nations, and Afghanistan itself, overwhelmingly favor an end to NATO's presence, while Presidents Obama and Karzai, against the will of their people, work to commit U.S. forces to at least twelve and a half more years in Afghanistan.

NATO provides the United States with a pretense of global coalition and legality. Approximately half of the world's military spending is by the U.S.—adding the other NATO nations brings the total to three-quarters. The head of the Pentagon, Leon Panetta, recently testified in Congress that a war could be made legal by working through either the

targets. An analysis of NATO's real motivations reveals a desire to control the global flow of oil; to support dictators who have supported U.S./NATO wars, prisons and torture operations; to back Israel's expansionist agenda; and to surround and threaten the nation of Iran.

The killing and destruction engaged in by NATO in Libya was illegal, immoral, and counter-productive as is its aggression in Afghanistan. NATO's wars have not brought democracy, peace, or human rights anywhere.

Libya is not a model for future NATO action. There is no model for future NATO action. NATO has lost its reason to exist if it ever had one. Veterans For Peace joins with our brothers and sisters in Europe, who are also rallying nonviolently against NATO, in calling for its elimination.

Why Every Community Needs Military Alternatives Programs

by Evan Knappenberger

Here in Central Virginia, people take great pride in our local heritage. Virginia was home to ten presidents, most notably Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe. But it also has a history of militarization. The late historian and Veteran for Peace Dr. Howard Zinn says in his *People's History of the United States* that the "Old Dominion" has at times been the most highly-militarized place in the world. The small town where I live, home to Thomas Jefferson and the University of Virginia, is a key part of the military-industrial complex, and many of my neighbors are military intelligence professionals. Whenever I see off-duty military personnel walking the streets of my community, I wonder to myself, "What would the Founding Fathers say if they were around to witness the modern, militarized world that they helped to create?"

Without a doubt, they would be appalled by the size and scope of the American military empire. Jefferson was staunchly against the idea of a standing army. While he believed in the universal responsibility of community service, he also believed that militarism was detrimental to the health of democracy. Jefferson was against the



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TO HAVE
OTHER OPTIONS**

We must challenge the dominant assumption that war and standing armies are necessary.

principles of state violence being foisted on peaceable citizenry. He wrote to John Jay in 1788, "The breaking of men to military discipline is the breaking of their spirits to principles of passive obedience."

I can speak directly to this issue as someone who joined the army at 17 out of high school. During my enlistment, not only did I hurt innocent people and accomplish nothing in the defense of democracy, but I watched as corrosive military discipline destroyed the souls of my comrades. Not surprisingly, the Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that half of all veterans returning from war will be homeless for two years or more; only one in five uses the Montgomery GI Bill college money; only one in twenty veterans actually finishes college. Of the veterans that spend four years in college, the American Psychological Association estimates that half have been suicidal, and 20% attempt suicide. The VA estimates that 18 veterans kill themselves every day. The military lost more soldiers to suicide in 2011 than it did to combat.

It's also not surprising, since the military likes to recruit 16- and 17-year-old minors, that the U.S. refuses to sign the United Nations Protocol on Child-Soldiers. I was just 16 when I started the process, 17 when I signed, and 18 when I shipped out. By age 20, I was interrogating Iraqi civilians and making life-or-death decisions. There is no excuse for a country which lets minors kill and torture, but won't allow them to smoke pot or drink alcohol. Our kids don't stand a chance against this overwhelming violence.

It follows that one of the best ways to improve our communities is to have an active and effective peace movement. But more than a political movement, what we need is an educational component to inoculate our youth against the soul-crushing violence that is inscribed on young men and women who "signed the dotted line" for one reason or another.

In many cities the peace movement hosts "Alternatives to Military Service" (AMS) programs. In Bellingham, Washington, the Whatcom Peace & Justice Center hosts such a program. Peace advocates, mostly Veterans for Peace members, set up tables in school cafeterias and distribute information which gives a different perspective to students interested in the military. In most places, they have secured agreements with school officials that ensure "limited and equal access"; limited in respect to amount of contact they have with students, and equal in regard to the access that the military has to those students. The success of this agreement lies in limiting the military's reach into the lives of our children.

Military recruiters are notoriously ruthless. Thousands of congressional complaints are lodged each year about recruiter misconduct, and U.S. army recruiting command has a well-documented problem with suicide. In recent years, Marine Corps recruiters in Orange County, California, were caught using teenage prostitutes as an enlistment incentive. Another scandal saw recruiters scavenging group homes for mentally-ill recruits. Despite these well-documented problems with recruiters, they are still given almost total access to high-school students and student information.

If every city and county had an AMS program like Bellingham's, it would ensure ethical adherence by the military regarding our most precious resource, our children. It would plant the seeds of understanding in those children who do enlist so they are better able to cope with the complex moral situations they might encounter. Implementation of AMS programs would indeed be a first step in addressing the problems Jefferson foresaw with the maintenance of a standing military force, namely the moral, intellectual, and emotional problems. On a global level, our nation could become known for producing peacemaker-leaders, rather than for flying drones and shooting missiles at third-world villagers. At the very least, some of this heavy militarism needs balancing out.

To overcome the problems that the world faces in the twenty-first century, it is essential that we engage young people in better ways of moral thinking; we must challenge the dominant assumption that war and standing armies are necessary. To set things right in the world, we must teach our youth to see beyond salaries and careers, and to inspire in them a desire for Peace and a yearning for moral rectitude. Alternatives to Military Service programs are just one way that we can begin to build peace on Earth.

Evan Knappenberger, evan.m.knappenberger@gmail.com, is an Iraq War veteran member of VFP Chapter 962, Charlottesville, VA. See www.EvanKnappenberger.net.

Letters

WCT is Great

I picked up a copy of the *War Crimes Times* by Veterans for Peace and got a chance to read through some of it this afternoon. It is great! Just the kind of anti-war, national publication that is needed. So this is a fan mail.

No, I didn't agree with everything that I read. (For instance, the lead article ["U.S. Withdrawal and Defeat in Iraq," *WCT* Vol. IV No.1] makes the argument that "The withdrawal marks the culmination of the U.S. defeat in Iraq, one comparable to the U.S. defeat in Vietnam." If the U.S. did not still retain over 16,000 personnel in Iraq and if the socialist bloc was still standing, I would agree with Wallerstein. But in both instances, the world situation today is quite different today from back then.)

But the point is not whether I agree with every word, but whether the publication is consistently anti-imperialist and, I would emphasize, holds the perpetrators accountable. And on this count, the *War Crimes Times* is exemplary.

Roger D. Harris
Corte Madera, CA
(via Gene Ruyle)

WCT is not so Great

First, let me say you've got it all wrong.

War is OUR fault, not the fault of crooks in government, military, and banking. If a 9-year-old kid is fat, it is not the kid's fault. It is the fault of the parents who bought the food. The kid just eats what he/she gets.

Similarly, we don't have wars because greedy politicians, bankers, and war corporations want the war. Of course they want war, naturally. We don't get mad at a tiger for being a tiger when it rips off someone's arm. That's what tigers do, naturally.

We only have wars, illegal or not, because stupid Americans pay the illegal taxes to make that possible. The proof of your stupidity, including that of most Americans, is found in the U.S. tax code, under

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The War Crimes Times is produced and distributed by volunteer members of Veterans For Peace chapters 69 in San Francisco, CA; 099 in Western North Carolina; and 119 in St. Petersburg, FL.

The War Crimes Times provides information on war and the war crimes that invariably accompany war, the need to hold war criminals accountable, the many costs of war, and the effects of our war culture on our national character and international reputation. Additionally and importantly, we also report on the efforts of the many people who sacrifice their time, money, and comfort to work for peace.

Our contributors include journalists, legal experts, poets, artists, and veterans speaking from experience. While their views may not always be entirely consistent with ours, their topics address the concerns of the *War Crimes Times*.

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We welcome submissions of original articles, poetry, artwork, cartoons, news items, and letters to the editor. Please submit by the 1st of the month that the issue is printed: March, June, September, December. Contact: editor@WarCrimesTimes.org

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The ICC is Criminal

by Margaret Kimberley

The New World Order under U.S. dominion turns international law on its head and puts criminal-bought flunkies on the judicial bench. America, which is not even a signatory to the treaty that created the International Criminal Court, calls all the shots like a Mafia don. Africans and a few Serbs are the only ones that get arrested, while great crimes against peace masquerade as humanitarian intervention.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) is, despite its name, a court that advances the cause of criminality. It acts in concert with the most powerful nations on Earth,

Only the powerless are ever punished and the aggressors use the court to behave as if they were the injured parties....The hypocrisy is blatant, and proves that the United States and its allies present the greatest threats to peace in the world.

and allows them to engage in crimes of aggression against millions of people all over the world. Only the powerless are ever punished and the aggressors use the court to behave as if they were the injured parties.

The world sees this institution in a benevolent light, assuming that it is a means of protecting humanity from the whims of evildoers in high places. Yet after nine years of existence, the ICC has managed to prosecute mostly little known African dictators and a few Serbians thrown in for good measure.

Ironically, after having opposed the establishment of the ICC and after failing to ratify the treaty that brought it into existence, the United States is now its biggest cheerleader. The Bush administration was terrified that Americans, including Bush, Cheney, and the rest of their henchmen and women, might be punished for their transgressions around the world.

It is strange that after instigating the killings of thousands of people in Iraq, that neither George W. Bush nor Tony Blair have any reason to fear being brought to justice. They travel around the world, unafraid of punishment, giving speeches, writing books, making money, and having no worries whatever about getting their just deserts.

They had even less reason to worry after Barack Obama succeeded them. As the more effective evil, Obama knew that he needed to eschew Bush regime ham-handedness in international relations. While simultaneously refraining from rat-

ifying the treaty which brought the ICC into existence, Obama and company constantly offer up others to put in the dock in The Hague.

Last year Barack Obama, David Cameron, and Nicholas Sarkozy decided to carve up Libya, using NATO to do their dirty work and killing an untold number of civilians in the process—and they too have no fear of prosecution. Lead ICC prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo said as much while the crime was being committed, openly taking the side of the West. Moreno-Ocampo lied to the world, claiming that the Libyan government distributed Viagra to soldiers in order to use rape as a “weapon of war.”

The charge was a lie, made up out of whole cloth. If there was any pretense of ICC impartiality, Moreno-Ocampo himself

dispelled any such notion. The anything-but-disinterested prosecutor is now featured in the latest Kony 2012 video, ending any debate about whether or not the phony, web-driven, ginned up outrage has any standing in reality or truthfulness.

While Obama and Clinton try to scuttle Kofi Annan’s Syrian peace plan and hint at President Assad’s prosecution before the ICC, the ICC shows its true colors. When Palestinians petitioned the ICC to investigate war crimes committed by Israel in Gaza, they were turned away. Moreno-Ocampo determined that because Palestine has not been recognized by U.N. General Assembly, it has no standing to seek justice for the 2,000 people massacred by Israel in 2008 and 2009. The hypocrisy is blatant, and proves that the United States and its allies present the greatest threats to peace in the world.

At the United National Antiwar Coalition conference last month, I asked professor and author Vijay Prashad why the ICC prosecutes Africans and token Serbs, but never threatens anyone in Washington, London, Paris, or Jerusalem. His answer was simple. “It is just international racism. I think there is no (other) way to explain it.”

George Orwell said, “Political language is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable.” Those words are still true; humanitarian missions and “responsibility to protect” are in fact euphemisms meant to promote good old-fashioned imperialism.

The fact is that the United States, Israel, and their European allies never protect anybody. They continue doing what they have done for decades: deciding who is inconvenient and therefore disposal. The human toll is “collateral damage” and quickly forgotten.



Whatever the wishes of the maker of this bumper sticker, great powers – and the countries they protect – are in effect not subject to international law. (Image from www.futureatlas.com/blog)

There are of course people and nations who cause other human beings great suffering in the world. They should be stopped, but they should all be stopped. Joseph Kony has actually killed fewer people than the president of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, but Museveni is a friend of the United States, so no social media campaign to will be directed at getting him before the ICC.

Until there is greater justice in the world, that is to say when the rich capitalist

nations have rivals for power, perhaps a court dedicated to punishing human rights violations would be a viable option. Right now it is fairly useless, because it was not created by people with honest intent.

Perhaps a simple name change is in

order. Is Court for International Criminals a better name? How about Criminal Court International? For once, political language would be honest and George Orwell would be proven wrong.

Margaret Kimberley is an editor and senior columnist for the Black Agenda Report. She also blogs at freedomrider.blogspot.com and can be reached at Margaret.Kimberley (at) BlackAgendaReport.com. This article was reprinted with her permission.

Unanimous Verdict: Bush is Guilty

by Eunice Au

KUALA LUMPUR: Former United States president George W. Bush and his associates were found guilty of crimes of torture by the Kuala Lumpur War Crimes Tribunal on May 11. The tribunal unanimously ruled that the prosecution had proved its case beyond reasonable doubt.

It said all eight accused had engaged in a web of instructions, memos, directives, legal advice, and actions which led to the establishment of a common plan and purpose, joint enterprise and conspiracy to commit crimes of torture and war crimes, in relation to the “War on Terror.”

The “War on Terror” was launched by the U.S. and others in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The eight accused are Bush; former U.S. vice-president Richard Cheney; former U.S. defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld; former counsel to Bush, Alberto Gonzales; former general counsel to the vice-president, David Addington; former general counsel to the defense secretary, William Haynes II; former assistant attorney-general Jay Bybee; and former deputy assistant attorney-general John Yoo.

Tribunal president judge Tan Sri Lamin Mohd Yunus said the eight accused were also individually and jointly liable for crimes of torture in accordance with Article 6 of the Nuremberg Charter. “The U.S. is subject to customary international law and to the principles of the

Nuremberg Charter and exceptional circumstances such as war, instability, and public emergency cannot excuse torture.”



George W. Bush painting in Clinton Library, Little Rock, AR (Preston Kemp photo)

The tribunal agreed that Bush, Cheney, and Rumsfeld knew the U.S. was violating the 1984 Torture Convention and the Geneva Conventions but failed to intervene to prevent the violations. “Evidence clearly shows the legal opinions and advice given by the lawyers Gonzales, Addington, Haynes, Bybee, and Yoo to Bush, Cheney, and Rumsfeld were legally flawed and the lawyers knew full well their advice was sought to be acted upon and thus are also liable.”

The legal opinions, contained in memorandums, were that the Geneva Conventions did not apply (to suspected al-Qaeda and Taliban detainees); there was no torture occurring within the meaning of the Torture Convention; and that enhanced

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Christianity and War, and Other Essays Against the Warfare State.

Laurence M. Vance. Vance Publications, Pensacola, Florida. 418 pages.

Reviewed by Chuck Fager

In the spring of 2011, a young soldier came to see me at the Quaker peace project where I work. He wanted to talk about filing a Conscientious Objector (CO) claim.

Once a very enthusiastic recruit, he had been in the elite Special Forces training program. But the realities of military life had quickly disillusioned him. Raised a conservative Baptist in Texas, he said his worldview had changed so radically that – here he paused to take a deep breath: “I’m not even a Republican anymore.”

Not that he was now a Democrat. Instead, when I explained that he would have to describe his current views in his CO claim letter, and show how he had arrived at them, he handed me a book he’d brought with him.

The book was *Christianity and War*, by Laurence Vance.

I don’t know how the GI’s CO claim turned out; like many who call or visit, he hasn’t followed up. But for me, *Christianity and War* was a godsend, and a revelation.

Why? For several years I’ve been increasingly convinced that something which can be called “American War Christianity” (or AWC) is a key pillar of U.S. militarism. A crusading variety of fundamentalism has

“American War Christianity” is a key pillar of U.S. militarism. A crusading variety of fundamentalism has become pervasive in the armed forces, including the top levels, and its impact is frightening, its potential even more so.

become pervasive in the armed forces, including the top levels, and its impact is frightening, its potential even more so.

There are books and articles that document this phenomenon: one, *With God On Our Side*, by Michael L. “Mikey” Weinstein, was a trailblazer when it appeared in 2006. Another is a paper by Air Force Col. William Millonig, “the Impact of Religious and Political Affiliation on Strategic Military Decisions and Policy Recommendations,” which despite the lengthy title is concise and straightforward. These and others have been valuable to me.

But ever since I came to an awareness of AWC, I figured that besides journalistic or sociological reports, there must also surely be some theological challengers to it. I began looking for them, to guide me in raising a specifically religious challenge to this dangerous phenomenon. Any day I expected to encounter a cadre of liberal religious thinkers who were all over it.

Not so. Yes, I have run across a number of theologians who are writing from an “anti-imperial” perspective, but the empire in question usually turns out to be the Roman (or Babylonian, if they’re Old Testament types). When it comes to our current plight, their writing typically recycles clichés from such sources as National Public Radio.

Interesting, but hardly adequate. Besides which, much such “postcolonial” writing is encased in such impenetrable academic jargon that even the Air Force’s bunker-busters couldn’t penetrate it.

The closest thing I found to an actual theological challenge to AWC as a force today was *Wayward Christian Soldiers*, by Charles Marsh. But while Marsh effectively called out the war-mongering rhetoric of a handful of evangelical leaders on the eve of the Iraq invasion in 2003, he denied being a liberal, instead swearing fealty to Karl Barth’s “neo-orthodoxy.” Besides, his small book didn’t go beyond the handful of targeted statements to examine the broader theological phenomenon involved.

Marsh was a bright brief candle on a dark horizon. Elsewhere among evangelicals, the voices were either uneasily equivocal, or more often entirely on board with the AWC outlook.

So when the young soldier handed me Vance’s book last spring, I was still in search of an informed, vocal liberal theological opponent of AWC.

I’m still searching – for a liberal or conventionally evangelical challenger to AWC, that is. But not for an effective one; not anymore. *Christianity and War* wields a theological bat like Babe Ruth on a tear, knocking pro-war piety right out of the park. A representative affirmation:

“The love affair that many conservative, evangelical and fundamentalist Christians have with the military is an illicit affair. It is contrary to the tenor of the New Testament. It is an affront to the Savior. It is a cancer on Christianity.”(254)

And again, in 2006: “it is a blight on Christianity that many of those who

continue to support [former President George W.] Bush and his [Iraq] war are evangelical Christians who will support Bush until the bitter end – no matter how many more U.S. soldiers are killed, no matter how long the war continues, no matter how many more billions of dollars are wasted, and no matter what outrages the president commits against the Constitution, the rule of law, and Christianity itself.” (327)

But the author, Laurence Vance, is no liberal. As he modestly puts it, “I am willing to match my Christian, Protestant, conservative, evangelical, fundamentalist, Baptist credentials up against anyone.” The difference is that Vance is all these things, and a staunch Libertarian. A Ron Paul supporter (tho the book doesn’t deal with presidential politics), he names names, calls a spade a spade, and cites scripture, the Church Fathers, the Founding Fathers, Erasmus, Charles Spurgeon, and even the occasional Quaker to back up his strongly held views.

Vance cites other theologians and preachers from many centuries, and not a liberal in the lot. He’s been making his fundamentalist antiwar case across the internet for several years, based at LewRockwell.com, a major libertarian website. Indeed, *Christianity and War* is less a treatise than a compilation of blog posts. If that fact makes its text often repetitive, it doesn’t diminish the force of Vance’s arguments, or the pungency with which he makes them.

His fiery sermonettes will likely offend the large mass of church folks of various denominations who value



Forward with God! (1915)

by Boardman Robinson. Cartoon depicting the aftermath of the German shelling of Reims Cathedral. A red cross hangs by the entrance, a crucifix lies on the ground, a nun attends to a dead man, and a knight rides by on horseback with his sword and eyes raised skyward.

politeness over any point of doctrine or ethics, especially when it concerns those in their own circles. But Vance doesn’t care about that. He cares about truth and the Gospel. His model is the Gallilean who ignored all advice to go easy on calling his Pharasaic opponents “hypocrites,” amid much more incendiary terms. No, his vehemence will not commend this book to such “nice” folks; but Vance says he has heard from many disenchanted soldiers, who once accepted the USA=God’s-licensed-killers, but have been cast into a wilderness of confusion by the lies and hypocrisies of imperial war. And it was one of them, a soldier rather than a genteel seminary professor, who brought his book to me.

Why I hadn’t heard about Vance before mid-2011 probably bespeaks my provincialism; but none of my liberal friends had heard of him either. Too bad for us.

But that doesn’t mean Vance hasn’t been heard. Oh, indeed, he has. And he has answered: Three times he repeats a list of epithets flung at him: “Yes, I know, I am a liberal, a communist, a Quaker, a pacifist, a peacenik, a traitor, a coward, an appeaser, an America-hater, and an anti-war weenie.” (p. 189; also 102, & 122)

Well, I’m here to say that Vance is NOT a Quaker; not that there’s anything wrong with that. He is no pacifist either. He makes plain that he would fully support a defensive war, if the U.S. were ever invaded. Just sayin’.

Further, his book is not just a compendium of invective. Vance’s biography states that he holds degrees in history and theology, as well as economics and accounting. Besides knowing the literature of orthodox and evangelical writers against war and militarism, he is also steeped in Biblical languages. (Among his other books is

one about Greek verbs in the New Testament; another deals with its prepositions. One wonders if they are as controversial in their more esoteric fields.)

It turns out, as he shows in detail, that there is actually a sizeable body of anti-military work by very orthodox, even fundamentalist authors, most of it unmentioned by the tradition's modern spokesmen, and ignored by liberals too, for other reasons. But Vance has reprinted many of these volumes, including one, *The Morality of War*, published in 1829 by a Quaker, Jonathan Dymond, which was widely circulated in its day.

Christianity and War also includes a detailed linguistic-theological analysis of the sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," from Exodus 20:13 (pp. 84ff). Many recent Bible translations have rendered the text as "Thou shalt not commit murder," on the basis that some kinds of killing were not only sanctioned in the Bible but commanded by various texts.

Vance is not having it. He points out that the Hebrew term translated "kill," in the commandment is not used in the Old Testament to refer to killing in battles.(86) And he goes on to say,

Exodus 20:13: "Thou shalt not kill." God only knows how many people around the world have been killed as a direct result of U.S. foreign policy. No, I am not equating the United States with Nazi Germany, Soviet Russia, or Red China. . . . [But] From the beginning of the Iraq War, I have maintained that participants in this evil war violate the express teaching of the biblical commandment against killing. Christian apologists for war say that either the commandments don't apply to the state,

and therefore killing done in service for the state is permissible, or else that the sixth commandment is limited to murder, and therefore killing done in wartime is permissible. Therefore, just as Calvary covers it all, my past with its sin and shame, so the wearing of a uniform covers it all, my military service with its death and destruction. Thus, killing someone you don't know, and have never seen, in his own territory, who was no threat to anyone until the United States invaded his country, is not murder if the U.S. government says that he should be killed. No soldier is responsible for the death and destruction he inflicts in a foreign country as long as it is state-sanctioned death and destruction. I reject this ghastly statolatry.(106f)

He also takes on those "Bible believers" who defend American wars because the Bible says,

"the Lord is a man of war" (Exodus 15:3): That this is a true statement there is no question, but how this phrase justifies the United States becoming a country of war shows how warped the Christianity of some people is. (261f)

Further, Vance acknowledges that indeed, "God commanded the nation of Israel in the Old Testament to fight against heathen nations (Judges 6:16). . ."

Then he goes right for the jugular:

but George Bush is not God, and America is not the nation of Israel . . . God sponsored these wars, and used his chosen nation (Deuteronomy 7:11-12) to conduct them,[but] it does not follow that God sponsors American wars, or that America is God's

chosen nation. It does not follow unless, of course, one is a Christian apologist for the U.S. government and its wars."(p. 126, 129)

But that is precisely what American War Christianity comes down to: the shockingly idolatrous identification of U.S. interests as being dictated by God, and treating its leaders (especially conservative presidents), as the equivalent of God. (And no, Vance does not regard Romans 13 as a "get-out-of-hell-free" card.)

Such nationalist idolatry is hardly new, nor is it an American invention. But in U.S. history its tracks go back more than two centuries, and its advocates have included many religious leaders considered "progressive" in their day. But in our time this sanctified militarism has become an evangelical-fundamentalist phenomenon, and the paper by Air Force Colonel Millonig shows how groups associated with it have intentionally and diligently colonized much of the armed forces since the Vietnam War:

The rise of evangelicalism in today's Armed Forces can trace its roots to the Viet Nam War. Public support for the war declined steadily as the years wore on, but evangelical Christians remained generally supportive of the war throughout. Over the course of the war, they found themselves progressively more aligned with the military – a military which increasingly found itself isolated from the general population. . . .

By the early 1970s, prayer groups, breakfasts, and luncheons became commonplace in the Pentagon. Some activities were sponsored by International

(Continued on page 6)

People of Faith Do Not Go to or Support War

by Marc Mullinax

You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

– Jesus

Can a person of faith be a person who bears arms against a nation's enemies? This essay, **which could be wrong**, will argue that people of faith have no business in the business of killing.

"Religions," because they are so culturally dependent, are some of the most violent reactive agents on the planet. As often unreflective reflectors of the mainstream, religions by definition rarely hear or honor disturbing information. Indeed, they often squelch dissonant data.

The religions of Christianity primarily, and of Islam secondarily, have premeditatedly planned the deaths of the other religion's membership. By their easy alliance with violence, they are basically idol-worshippers. Their gods are cultural wish-fulfillments – superstitions, really – that these alleged divinities enjoy the same rages and hatreds – and passports – as they do.

"Faith," on the other hand, is rare, for it is very difficult. I know far fewer people of faith, as I struggle to be one. A person of faith usually does not define their sense of the divine, because a relationship defines their view of God. One cannot really sustain a relationship with a demonic force that calls for the death of anyone. Thus, I reason, a person of good faith cannot kill or condone it.

Well, I hear you argue back with me, "Didn't God order people to kill Israel's enemies in the Old Testament?" and "The Old Testament God is different from the New Testament God." These are bogus certainties.

First, God did not order people to kill others in the Old Testament. I believe and urge you to consider that people

misheard their God because their prior unexamined "religious" prejudices – their inner filters – prevented their hearing in "faith" the first word of God's fierce love (not fierce vengeance) towards all creation. And they wrote what they misheard.

Second, Jesus' "Bible" was the Old Testament, in which he read of the radical love and loving kindness of God.

What we see is what we want to see. Most of what we see is already behind the eyes. This is probably a choice.

Back to war. Only an idol will request bloodshed and violence. Only an idol-worshiper will be ready to kill. (Yes, I am going out on a limb, to provoke. Will you cut me down?)

I raise a controversial point here, for the purpose of conversation: A real person of faith will never, ever go into the military, U.S. or otherwise. The person that does is willing to be brainwashed because they don't have a faith- or God-driven sense that they are a loved person, and the enemy is also in God's plan. The goal of military training is to take a person and wipe their brain of any mercy towards the enemy. Then, instead of mercy, a new God is inserted: the country above all else.

It's called brainwashing.

Here is an impasse. A military person may say they are religious, follow some God, and may even wear religious symbols. But they have dedicated their lives to the exact opposite values of those symbols. Religious, yes, but faithful?

Thus, let me start a conversation. Can one be a person of faith and a trained killer for one's nation? It is, I know, a conversation that we can have only because we live in the legacy of freedom secured by soldiers. But did they die and fight so I could have faith in God, or in the nation? Can one serve both gods?

No one had to fight and die so I could hold this position. And I could be wrong. So the question remains. What do you think?

The Rev. Dr. Marc Mullinax is a Professor of Religion and Philosophy at a college in North Carolina. In this essay, he has employed his own examined opinions, which (sadly) do not reflect the positions of his employer, nation, and culture. In fact, he was censured and lost a department chair position in response to the first publication of this article in the Asheville Daily Planet.



THIS man subjected himself to imprisonment and probably to being shot or hanged

THE prisoner used language tending to discourage men from enlisting in the United States Army

IT is proven and indeed admitted that among his incendiary statements were--

THOU shalt not kill and BLESSED are the peacemakers

Christianity and War

(Continued from page 5)

Christian Leadership and others by the Christian Men of the Pentagon. An informal outreach group called Teams of Two began to increase its evangelical efforts. . . . Many General Officers actively supported the groups and even held leadership positions as these conservative Christian groups continued to grow in size. By the 1980s, nearly 20 evangelical groups held regular meetings.

Under this supportive leadership umbrella, participation in conservative Christian groups also increased at the service academies. . . . Throughout the 1990s, a conservative Protestant shift in the chaplain corps mirrored the regular force. Since 1994, the number of Roman Catholic priests in the Air Force alone has dropped 44 percent and similar decreases exist in mainstream Protestant chaplains as well. (Millonig, 4f)

Millonig's critique of this colonization is carefully nuanced, and secular: his point is that, especially at the top, when an organization's leadership all (or mostly) share the same worldview, the resulting groupthink atmosphere leads to bad decisions. For instance, Millonig says,

When the [G.W. Bush] Administration issued its policy of pre-emptive war in the National Security Strategy, many "mainstream" religions and nearly all Democrats rejected it, insisting pre-emptive war rejects the United Nations charter of war as a last resort and takes a unilateral, militant approach to national security.

Many conservative Christians however, applauded the declaration. In a letter to President Bush, several prominent conservatives strongly endorsed the policy of pre-emptive war against Iraq as "prudent and fall(s) well within the time honored criteria of just war theory."

By now, spring of 2012, we've seen where that kind of foolishness led us; and it was from this pre-emptive cheerleaders' sector that the religious influence on military leadership has come for nearly forty years. I've called this outlook "American War Christianity"; and though I've seldom been accused of speaking too cautiously, Vance makes this phrase look mild. These people and their followers, he insists, make up the "Christian Axis of Evil" (99), adding:

In the Church's conservative, evangelical, and fundamentalist circles—and I identify loosely with all three—much of what is being said is not just wrong, it is evil, immoral, hypocritical, shameful, and more importantly, unscriptural. But the Church

is also not saying enough. It is not saying enough about the defective Christianity of the president. It is not saying enough about the evils of war. It is not saying enough about our overgrown military establishment. It is not saying enough about our interventionist foreign policy. It is not saying enough about the warfare state.

President Bush has mastered the art of using religious rhetoric to capture the support of gullible Christians for his aggressive, militaristic, interventionist foreign policy he terms "this great mission." (98)



He pounds this theme repeatedly. One of his most striking posts is called, "Are You A Christian Warmonger?" (27-27). It presents the reader a quiz, or "self-assessment tool": a list of twenty pro-war clichés, (29) For those who agreed with many of these statements, Vance's "eldering" is sternly forthright.

"Whatever Jesus Christ did or will do has absolutely no relevance to what the U. S. military does in Iraq or anywhere else, except, of course, in the depraved mind of a Christian warmonger."

Vance takes on just about all the biblical rationalizations one could imagine for endorsing wars and their killing, as long as they're being fought by the U.S. We already heard his take on the assertion that "Thou shalt not kill" does not apply; but what about Jesus being a bloodthirsty warrior, especially during his Second Coming battle with the Anti-Christ (Revelation 19). Vance's reply (he says he does believe in the Second Coming, but):

The problem here is a simple one: American military officers are not surrogates for Jesus Christ. Whatever Jesus Christ did or will do has absolutely no relevance to what the U. S. military does in Iraq or anywhere else, except, of course, in the depraved mind of a Christian warmonger. The Bible says that "in righteousness" Jesus Christ "doth judge and make war." There is nothing righteous about the actions of U.S. battlefield commanders. (132)

What? The U.S. military is not a surrogate for Jesus? Iraq isn't Armageddon? Why didn't I think of that?

"Pray for our troops," says a militant petition he saw. Vance replies to it this way:

Yes, we should pray for the troops. We should pray that the troops come home. We should pray that the blood of not one more American soldier is shed on foreign soil. We should pray for the healing of the thousands of U.S. soldiers who have been injured in the senseless Iraq war. We should pray for an

with the impact of this phenomenon, his work stands alone.

While he's not at all a pacifist, Vance draws on Quaker sources perhaps more than he realizes. He quotes Friend Jonathan Dymond as "one young in years but old in wisdom," who was exposing the pernicious work of war propaganda in 1827:

Another cause of our complacency with war, and therefore another cause of war itself, consists in that callousness to human misery which the custom induces. They who are shocked at a single murder on the highway, hear with indifference of the slaughter of a thousand on the field. . . . The inconsistency and disproportionateness which has been occasioned in our sentiments of benevolence, offers a curious moral phenomenon. . . .

But perhaps the most operative cause of the popularity of war, and of the facility with which we engage in it, consists in this; that an idea of glory is attached to military exploits, and of honor to the military profession. The glories of battle, and of those who perish in it, or who return in triumph to their country, are favorite topics of declamation with the historian, the biographers, and the poet. They have told us a thousand times of *dying heroes*, who "resign their lives amidst the joys of conquest, and, filled with their country's glory, smile in death"; and thus every excitement that eloquence and genius can command, is employed to arouse that ambition of fame which can be gratified only at the expense of blood. (166f)

Vance also applauds "Thomas Jefferson's 'Quaker' foreign policy"; as the third president put it:

Peace has been our principle, peace is our interest, and peace has saved to the world this only plant of free and rational government now existing in it. However, therefore, we may have been reproached for pursuing our Quaker system, time will affix the stamp of wisdom on it, and the happiness and prosperity of our citizens will attest its merit. And this, I believe, is the only legitimate object of government, and the first duty of governors, and not the slaughter of men and devastation of the countries placed under their care, in pursuit of a fantastic honor, unallied to virtue or happiness. . . . (192f)

And Vance makes much of the late-life witness of Marine General (and two-time Medal of Honor winner) Smedley D. Butler. Butler, who attended a Quaker school before enlisting in the Marines and was the product of several Quaker families with deep Pennsylvania roots, became a militant isolationist and anti-militarist

(Continued on page 8)

end to this unconstitutional, immoral, and unjust war. We should pray that Congress ends funding for this war. We should pray that Bush leaves office a disgraced commander in chief. We should pray that young, impressionable students are not ensnared by military recruit-

ers. We should pray that pastors stop recommending military service to their young men (and women). We should pray that families stop supplying cannon fodder to the military. We should pray that the troops actually start defending this country instead of every other country. We should pray for a change in U.S. foreign policy that can make this all possible.

Not only that: ". . . This ideological desire to legitimize killing in war is an unholy one, and every Christian who attempts to do so should be ashamed of himself and repent 'in sackcloth and ashes' (Matthew 11:21)." (86)

The upshot is that *Christianity and War* offers the most trenchant and articulate critique of American War Christianity I have seen. In ten-plus years of struggling

No Snowflake in an Avalanche

by Mikey Weinstein and Davin Seay

Reviewed by Willard Hunter

“America has built the most lethal fighting machine in human history. Control of that machine is the ultimate goal of this fundamentalist Christian cabal...”



Air Force chaplains

In 2008, Air Force chaplains performed more than 147,000 counselings, provided more than 50,000 worship observances and conducted more than 28,000 religious rites and observances for Airmen and their families. (USAF photo)

While the badly bloated U.S. national security and defense budgets are currently under heavy scrutiny, a less obvious challenge faces the all-volunteer military. Its people and institutions are under attack by Christian fundamentalists.

Mikey Weinstein's and David Seay's new book, *No Snowflake in an Avalanche*, documents the Christian fundamentalists' assault on the U.S. military and Weinstein's counter-attack using the Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF).

Mikey Weinstein, a 1977 Air Force Academy (USAFA) graduate, comes from a family of military academy graduates. His two sons and a daughter-in-law are also USAFA graduates. He earned a law degree in the Air Force, served several years in the AF Judge Advocate General Corps, and worked in the Reagan White House helping manage the Iran-Contra investigation. He laughs, “I had an up close and personal education in stonewalling, plausible deniability, and slow rolling.” (33) After serving in the White House, he worked for a number of public and private companies and eventually joined H. Ross Perot as general counsel in Perot Systems Corporation and in other capacities.

Weinstein's comfortable life in Albuquerque, NM, ended in July 2004, when Curtis, his freshman son at the USAFA, told him, “I'm going to beat the shit out of the next guy who calls me a ‘fucking Jew’ ... I'm going to beat the shit out of the next guy who accuses me, or our people, of killing Jesus Christ.” (39) Those words eight years ago changed Mikey's life. They brought back memories of the anti-Semitic harassment, including two beatings, he experienced at the Academy in the early 1970s. He took direct action then—the

Academy covered up his hitting a superior officer investigating his accusations. And beginning in 2004, he again chose to protect his family and others at the USAFA.

He bluntly states:

The purpose of this book is not ... just to protect the lives and safety of those who have directly experienced the horrors perpetrated by these enemies of civilization. It's to protect the lives of all of us who are imperiled by those who work day and night to gain control of the most powerful military and deadliest arsenal in existence. America has built the most lethal fighting machine in human history. Control of that machine is the ultimate goal of this fundamentalist Christian cabal.... (15-16)

He continues:

It's treason, pure and simple. This is an ongoing attempt at a de facto

The Military Religious Freedom Foundation works with atheists who are pressured to participate in prayers and services. Jews face mandatory military activities during their religious observance periods, and Muslims are constantly exposed to vitriolic comments and worse.

coup by radical fundamentalist Christians to seize the levers of military power and enforce their maniacal doctrines on the country and, eventually, the world. Their egregious, ongoing violation of strict prohibitions against proselytizing... is only the tiniest tip of an enormous submerged iceberg. They see the ‘War on Terror’ as a historic opportunity to advance their agenda of eradicating, either through coercive conversion, brute force, or even death, any religion that competes with their deliberately misconstrued Biblical claims of divine right. (16)

Weinstein's strategy is to seek as much publicity as possible to spotlight fundamentalist Christian efforts to dominate the U.S. military. He gives frequent press conferences and interviews to support on-going Foundation activities. Because of his activity and visibility, he and his

family have received numerous threats and now have security at public events.

Mikey and Bonnie, his wife, founded the MRFF in 2005. It is the principal vehicle used to bring lawsuits against the military, individuals, and fundamentalist organizations on behalf of members of the military and their families who face formal and informal discrimination. Today, the foundation has a high profile board of advisors, legal and security supporters, a small paid staff, and a lot of volunteers.

No Snowflake in an Avalanche details a number of MRFF successes. For example, Weinstein and the Foundation exposed USAF materials used for ethics training for nuclear missile launch officers. He says the combination of fundamentalist Christian propaganda and the pronouncements of a Nazi scientist (Werner von Braun) used to explain to nuclear missile launch officers why launching nuclear weapons is an inherently



Chaplain (Capt.) David Haltom of the 732nd Air Expeditionary Group provides spiritual guidance to an Airman in a combat zone Feb. 23 in Southwest Asia. (USAF photo)

“(1) Its well known existence enrages our Islamic allies both abroad and domestically; (2) it incalculably emboldens our Islamic enemies both abroad and domestically; and (3) it absolutely demoralizes our own troops...” (121)

But being Christian isn't enough for the fundamentalists. Weinstein and Seay emphasize that 95% of the MRFF clients are Christians and about 25% are Roman Catholics. These Christians just aren't the “right kind of Christians.” The Foundation also works with atheists who are pressured to participate in prayers and services. Jews face mandatory military activities during their religious observance periods, and Muslims are constantly exposed to vitriolic comments and worse.

Weinstein and the MRFF are hated by many people. The book ends with a selection of three types of emails they received: hate-filled emails, thank-filled emails from people whom the Foundation has helped, and emails from civilian and religious leaders who support its work. The hate emails are scary and frequently include imprecatory prayers (see Psalms 119) that wish evil on Mikey, his family, and the Military Religious Freedom Foundation.

I recommend this book to people who wish to get a glimpse into the on-going fight for the soul of the U.S. military.

Weinstein does include a few specific stories of named Foundation clients. Dustin Chalker, for example, is a highly decorated Army medic, and an atheist. He was blackballed for not attending mandatory Christian services. (89-94) A small percentage of MRFF clients are Muslims; they have needed serious assistance. Weinstein provided written testimony before a senate subcommittee hearing on March 28, 2011, describing the bad treatment of Muslims in the U.S. military.

He believes the anti-Muslim spirit presents a clear threat to our national security:

Willard Hunter is a member of Veterans For Peace in Albuquerque, NM. He has read MRFF emails for several years and has met the Weinsteins on two occasions. He received an MA in Political Science in 2011, with interests in national security and U.S. drug policy.

War and Christianity

(Continued from page 6)

activist in the 1930s. He proposed a constitutional “Amendment for Peace,” which would have prohibited the American military from fighting or being based beyond a defensive zone around our coasts.

Butler believed that his amendment “would be [an] absolute guarantee to the women of America that their loved ones never would be sent overseas to be needlessly shot down in European or Asiatic or African wars that are no concern of our people.”

He also reasoned that because of “our geographical position, it is all but impossible for any foreign power to muster, transport, and land sufficient troops on our shores for a successful invasion.” In this Butler was echoing Jefferson, who recognized that geography was one of the great advantages of the United States . . . (404)

So like it or not, Quaker peace witness has left its fingerprints on Laurence Vance’s perspective. But most important is his fundamentalist Christian libertarian outlook. While he repeatedly blasts George W. Bush in these pages, he is no more fond of the many ways Barack Obama has continued most of his predecessor’s pro-imperial policies. Though *Christianity and War* was published in 2005 (updated in 2008), before Obama’s elevation to the White House; his recent blog posts do not give Bush’s successor a pass.

Yet overall Vance minimizes talk of politics outside the recent wars. A look at his extensive blog posts makes clear, however, that he’s a passionate partisan of the longtime libertarian standard-bearer, Rep. Ron Paul. Vance is also a southerner, and has affinities with the neo-Confederates who despise Abe Lincoln; prefer to call the Civil War by other, rebel-friendly names; and wish the Confederate states had been allowed to secede—and then abolish slavery in their own good time.

These views, and many others of the libertarian platform, are deeply problematic to me, and doubtless to many others, who may be drawn to its anti-imperial and anti-militarist features. Nevertheless, Vance prudently keeps these other matters out of his 400-plus pages in *Christianity and War*, and except for taking note of them here, I’ll stick to the book’s themes. Those are arguments for another day, and another book.

Laurence Vance’s assault on the theological and sectarian underpinnings of American War Christianity is an achievement that is serious and credible on many fronts, and deserves wide attention as such. It is intellectually, historically, theologically and biblically informed, and as a polemicist, his aim is true.



Left: Image by Brian Sawyer, Westford, MA

Right: Camp Taqaddum, Iraq (Nov. 10, 2007) U.S. Navy Cmdr. Patrick J. McLaughlin, a chaplain with 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward), offers an invocation prayer during a celebration of the 232nd Birthday of the U.S. Marine Corps. USMC photo by Cpl. Michael J. O'Brien.

The book (and the blog) takes on the “Christian warmongers” on their own turf, naming names, citing sources, and demolishing every major pillar of their defense of war. After a decade of seeing this war machine close up, I remain convinced that such a deconstruction is one of the most important tasks of peace work.

Yet I know of no liberal Christian writer who has come anywhere close to a similar effort

Shame on them; shame on us. A bow to Laurence Vance, and *Christianity and War*, for going where we have feared to tread.

Chuck Fager, raised in a Catholic, military family on Air Force bases, became a conscientious objector in 1965. Arrested three times during his work with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, he once spent a night in a cell with Dr. King. Chuck, who became a Quaker in 1966, is the author of numerous books, essays, and pamphlets. For the last decade, he has been director of Quaker House in Fayetteville, North Carolina, close to Fort Bragg, one of the largest military bases in the U.S. This article was adapted for the WCT with the author’s permission.

Further Reading

“The Impact of Religious and Political Affiliation on Strategic Military Decisions and Policy Recommendations,” by Col. William Millonig: www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA449308

Essays on the principles of morality: and on the private and political rights and obligations of mankind by Jonathon Dymond: http://books.google.com/books/about/Essays_on_the_principles_of_morality.html?id=vAUvAAAAYAAJ

“War is a Racket” by Major General Smedley Butler: www.archive.org/details/WarIsARacket



The War Prayer

...Then came the “long” prayer. None could remember the like of it for passionate pleading and moving and beautiful language. The burden of its supplication was, that an ever-merciful and benignant Father of us all would watch over our noble young soldiers, and aid, comfort, and encourage them in their patriotic work; bless them, shield them in the day of battle and the hour of peril, bear them in His mighty hand, make them strong and confident, invincible in the bloody onset; help them to crush the foe, grant to them and to their flag and country imperishable honor and glory—

An aged stranger entered and moved with slow and noiseless step up the main aisle, his eyes fixed upon the minister, his long body clothed in a robe that reached to his feet, his head bare, his white hair descending in a frothy cataract to his shoulders, his seamy face unnaturally pale, pale even to ghastliness. With all eyes following him and wondering, he made his silent way; without pausing, he ascended to the preacher’s side and stood there waiting. With shut lids the preacher, unconscious of his presence, continued with his moving prayer, and at last finished it with the words, uttered in fervent appeal, “Bless our arms, grant us the victory, O Lord our God, Father and Protector of our land and flag!”

The stranger touched his arm, motioned him to step aside—which the startled minister did—and took his place. During some moments he surveyed the spellbound audience with solemn eyes, in which burned an uncanny light; then in a deep voice he said:

“I come from the Throne—bearing a message from Almighty God!” The words smote the house with a shock; if the stranger perceived it he gave no attention. “He has heard the prayer of His servant your shepherd, and will grant it if such shall be your desire after I, His messenger, shall have explained to you its import—that is to say, its full import. For it is like unto many of the prayers of men, in that it asks for more than he who utters it is aware of—except he pause and think.

“God’s servant and yours has prayed his prayer. Has he paused and taken thought? Is it one prayer? No, it is two—one uttered, the other not. Both have reached the ear of Him Who heareth all supplications, the spoken and the unspoken. Ponder this—keep it in mind. If you would beseech a blessing upon yourself, beware! lest without intent you invoke a curse upon a neighbor at the same time. If you pray for the blessing of rain upon your crop which needs it, by that act you are possibly praying for a curse upon some neighbor’s crop which may not need rain and can be injured by it.

“You have heard your servant’s prayer—the uttered part of it. I am commissioned of God to put into words the other part of it—that part which the pastor—and also you in your hearts—fervently prayed silently. And ignorantly and unthinkingly? God grant that it was so! You heard these words: ‘Grant us the victory, O Lord our God!’ That is sufficient. the whole of the uttered prayer is compact into those pregnant words. Elaborations were not necessary. When you have prayed for victory you have prayed for many unmentioned results which follow victory—must follow it, cannot help but follow it. Upon the listening spirit of God fell also the unspoken part of the prayer. He commandeth me to put it into words. Listen!

O Lord our Father, our young patriots, idols of our hearts, go forth to battle—be Thou near them! With them—in spirit—we also go forth from the sweet peace of our beloved firesides to smite the foe. O Lord our God, help us to tear their soldiers to bloody shreds with our shells; help us to cover their smiling fields with the pale forms of their patriot dead; help us to drown the thunder of the guns with the shrieks of their wounded, writhing in pain; help us to lay waste their humble homes with a hurricane of fire; help us to wring the hearts of their unoffending widows with unavailing grief; help us to turn them out roofless with little children to wander unfriended the wastes of their desolated land in rags and hunger and thirst, sports of the sun flames of summer and the icy winds of winter, broken in spirit, worn with travail, imploring Thee for the refuge of the grave and denied it—for our sakes who adore Thee, Lord, blast their hopes, blight their lives, protract their bitter pilgrimage, make heavy their steps, water their way with their tears, stain the white snow with the blood of their wounded feet! We ask it, in the spirit of love, of Him Who is the Source of Love, and Who is the ever-faithful refuge and friend of all that are sore beset and seek His aid with humble and contrite hearts. Amen.

(After a pause.) “Ye have prayed it, if ye still desire it, speak! The messenger of the Most High waits!”

It was believed afterward that the man was a lunatic, because there was no sense in what he said.

Written by Mark Twain in 1905, rejected by his publisher, and published posthumously in 1916—during the War to End All Wars.

Thou Shalt Not Kill

(Continued from page 1)

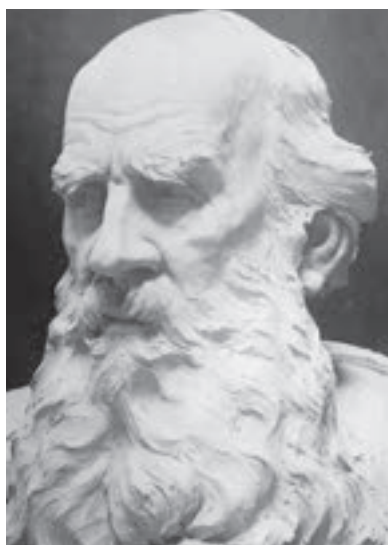
the brotherhood of all humankind, and the military laws of the state, which force each young man to prepare himself for enmity and murder..."

In 1894, the young Indian lawyer, Mohandas K. Gandhi, (who was then working for the civil rights of Indians in South Africa), read Tolstoy's books on Christianity and was greatly influenced by them. Gandhi wrote a review of Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, and in 1909 he sent Tolstoy an account of the activities of the civil rights movement in South Africa.

He received a reply in which Tolstoy said:

...The longer I live, and especially now, when I vividly feel the nearness of death, the more I want to tell others what I feel so particularly clearly and what to my mind is of great importance—namely that which is called passive resistance, but which is in reality nothing else but the teaching of love, uncorrupted by false interpretations. That love—i.e. the striving for the union of human souls and the activity derived from that striving—is the highest and only law of human life, and in the depth of his soul every human being knows this (as we most clearly see in children); he knows this until he is entangled in the false teachings of the world. This law was proclaimed by all—by the Indian as by the Chinese, Hebrew, Greek, and Roman sages of the world. I think that this law was most clearly expressed by Christ, who plainly said that “in this alone is all the law and the prophets”....

The peoples of the Christian world have solemnly accepted this law, while at the same time they have permitted violence and built their lives on violence; and that is why the whole life of the Christian peoples is a continuous contradiction between what they profess, and the principles on which they order their lives—a contradiction between



...the whole life of the Christian peoples is a continuous contradiction between what they profess, and the principles on which they order their lives.

—Leo Tolstoy

answer, the bishop generally put another question, whether murder was always in all cases forbidden by God's law; and the unhappy young ladies were forced by previous instruction to answer “not always” – that murder was permitted in war and in the execution of criminals. Still, when one of these unfortunate young ladies (what I am telling is not an invention, but a fact told to me by an eye witness) after her first answer, was asked the usual question, if killing was always sinful, she, agitated and blushing, decisively answered, “Always,” and to all the usual sophisms of the bishop, she answered with decided conviction that killing always was forbidden in the Old Testament and forbidden by Christ, not only killing, but every wrong against a brother. Notwithstanding all his grandeur and arts of speech, the bishop became silent and the girl remained victorious.

love accepted as the law of life, and violence which is recognized and praised, acknowledged even, as a necessity in different phases of life, such as the power of rulers, courts, and armies...

This year, in the spring, at a Scripture examination in a girls' high school in Moscow, the teacher and the bishop present asked the girls questions on the Commandments, and especially on the sixth. After a correct



They say, “Means are after all means.” I would say, “Means are after all everything.” As the means, so the end.

—Mohandas K. Gandhi

He felt that opposition to war followed naturally from his advocacy of non-violence. In his book, *Strength to Love*, Dr. King wrote:



We never get rid of an enemy by meeting hate with hate; we get rid of an enemy by getting rid of enmity...

—Martin Luther King

In the hands of Gandhi, non-violent passive resistance became a practical political force, which he and his followers used to free India from colonial domination. To the insidious argument that “the end justifies the means,” Gandhi answered firmly:

They say, “Means are after all means.” I would say, “Means are after all everything.” As the means, so the end. Indeed the Creator has given us control (and that very limited) over means, none over end... The means may be likened to a seed, and the end to a tree; and there is the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree. Means and end are convertible terms in my philosophy of life.

In other words, a dirty method produces a dirty result; killing produces more killing; hate leads to more hate. But there are positive feedback loops as well as negative ones. A kind act produces a kind response; a generous gesture is returned; hospitality results in reflected hospitality. Hindus and Buddhists call this principle “the law of karma.”

The ideas of non-violence were also used in the civil rights movement in America, led by Martin Luther King, Jr. In 1967, a year before his assassination, Dr. King forcefully condemned the Viet Nam war in an address at a massive peace rally in New York City.

Wisdom born of experience should tell us that war is obsolete.... If we assume that life is worth living, and that man has a right to survival, then we must find an alternative to war ... I am convinced that the Church cannot be silent while mankind faces the threat of nuclear annihilation. If the church is true to her mission, she must call for an end to the nuclear arms race.

Concerning the Christian principle of loving one's enemies, Dr. King wrote:

Why should we love our enemies? Returning hate for hate multiplies hate, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate. Only love can do that ... Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend. We never get rid of an enemy by meeting hate with hate; we get rid of an enemy by getting rid of enmity... It is this attitude that made it possible for Lincoln to speak a kind word about the South during the Civil War, when feeling was most bitter. Asked by a shocked bystander how he could do this, Lincoln said, “Madam, do I not destroy my enemies when I make them my friends?” This is the power of redemptive love.

Today, with the world poised on the edge of a disaster that might be produced by escalatory cycles of revenge and counter-revenge, we need to remember wise voices from the past, among them the voices of Tolstoy, Gandhi, and King. They tell us of the immorality, waste, and folly of war. They tell us to recognize the humanity of all other humans. They tell us to show the love and generosity of spirit that can turn enemies into friends.

John Scales Avery is a theoretical chemist noted for his research publications in quantum chemistry, thermodynamics, evolution, and history of science. Since the early 1990s, Avery has been an active World peace activist. During these years, he was part of a group associated with the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs. In 1995, this group received the Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts. Presently, he is an Associate Professor in quantum chemistry at the University of Copenhagen. This article was posted at Countercurrents.org and is reprinted with the author's permission.

“I threw down my arms for it was not seemly that a Christian man, who renders military service to the Lord Christ, should render it by earthly injuries....It is not lawful for a Christian to bear arms for any earthly consideration.”

—Marcellus the Centurion (?-298 A.D.)

'Green on blue' killings reveal the farce of the Afghanistan war

More lies cannot sustain the occupation

On May 7, the Associated Press reported yet another killing of a NATO troop by an Afghan National Army soldier. The previous week, two U.S. soldiers were also killed by their Afghan "partners."

by Kevin Baker

KABUL—Army Command Sgt. Major John Troxell is one of the highest ranking, most experienced U.S. soldiers fighting in Afghanistan this year. His counterpart in the Afghan army has the same prestige.

They trust each other, but whenever they meet one another, each soldier brings a personal security team.

"I always have someone locked and loaded, passively watching," Troxell said.

So begins an article posted by Adam Ashton April 20 on the *News Tribune* online blog. Troxell is also one of the highest ranking senior non-commissioned officers in Afghanistan. This excerpt reveals how he feels about "his Afghan counterparts" and sheds light on the claim that the

If the occupation of Afghanistan is such a success and the end of the war is right around the corner, why does Troxell need a personal security team every time he meets his Afghan counterpart?

United States trusts Afghan soldiers.

The U.S. government has made its case for continuing the wildly unpopular, criminal war in Afghanistan, based on the claim that "progress" is being made and Afghan military forces will take over the job, allowing for a U.S. withdrawal. This is what President Obama recently reiterated during his surprise photo-op to Afghanistan, where he gave the illusion that the war was winding down and could soon be taken over by Afghan forces (he then proceeded to sign a pact that will keep U.S. troops in Afghanistan beyond 2024).

If the occupation of Afghanistan is such a success and the end of the war is right around the corner, why does Troxell need a personal security team every time he meets his Afghan counterpart?

We have all heard the phrase, "If you lie and lie and lie, eventually you will get caught." The U.S. government and its top military leadership have been caught yet again in a lie about their claims of Afghan support for U.S. goals and progress toward being able to turn over Afghanistan to reliably pro-imperialist forces.

Ashton's post comes while what are referred to as "green on blue" killings are at an all-time high. What this means is that U.S.-funded Afghan soldiers are killing U.S. troops; this is becoming one of the biggest threats to the lives of U.S. soldiers.

CSM Troxell continues to spew lies and ignorance in the post, which quotes him as saying that soldiers should be cautious with new Afghan recruits: "Often, the Afghans are young and poorly educated. They have likely heard anti-Western propaganda all their lives."

The post continues: "What we have to do is educate these young men," he said. His safety precautions are being replicated throughout the NATO headquarters where he works and its connected bases around Kabul."

"They have likely heard anti-Western propaganda all their lives"

For the past ten years, the United States has waged a brutal occupation that has resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Afghan people and plunged their country into a chaotic quagmire—a country where nine out of ten young men have never even heard of the 9/11 attacks or the World Trade Center. The war is at an all-time high in unpopularity among both U.S. and Afghan people as well as service members.

The Afghan people do not exactly *hear* anti-Western propaganda. They see it and feel it every day in the form of missiles, Apache strikes, night raids, and the funerals of their family members.

This begs the question: What must these young men be educated in? It does not take a genius to realize that no

one of any nationality wants to have their country occupied for any amount of time.

The "progress" we have been dying for

Last year, an article featured a company commander who absurdly boasted that they can successfully maneuver 100 meters (about the length of a football field) from their combat outpost without being shot at—where before they would be shot at instantly upon leaving their outpost. Nine years to clear 100 meters!—at a cost of hundreds of thousands of lives and trillions of tax dollars. Sounds like real progress.

Those 100 meters have come at a heavy price for people in the U.S. and an even heavier price for the people of Afghanistan.

As we see atrocity after atrocity erupt in Afghanistan—from the video of Marines urinating on the dead, the burning of Qurans, the Afghan kill team, the Staff Sgt. Bales massacre that left over a dozen Afghans dead in the



middle of the night—should it really be any surprise that the people of Afghanistan are rejecting the U.S./NATO occupation of their country? Can anyone really blame them for doing so?

In fact, the reason so many U.S. service members turned against the wars after fighting in Iraq or Afghanistan



Command Sgt. Maj. John W. Troxell thanks Afghan National Police Command Sgt. Maj. Abdul Zafar as Afghan National Army 205th Corps Command Sgt. Maj. Kafayatullah and 205th Corps 2nd Brigade commander Col. Mohammed Wazir Akbari look on during a meeting on Forward Operating Base Eagle in Zabul province.

is because they realized: "If I was in their position, I would be doing the same exact thing."

The "partnership" Washington boasts about

Ashton's post continues to show the "partnership" between Afghan and U.S. Forces:

"[Col. Lapthe] Flora is working with a three-star Afghan general at the Ministry of Defense's ground forces command. Afghans are not allowed to bring weapons in American offices. A U.S. soldier always has a loaded weapon when entering the Afghan side of their complex.

"Likewise, on the Afghan air force wing of the base here, U.S. airmen wear their body armor and carry rifles to their work. Their Afghan counterparts are prohibited from bringing their weapons into joint facilities."

This does not sound like a partnership between U.S. and Afghan forces against the Taliban as Washington and the Pentagon would have us believe, but rather a failing policy that is continuing to cause more suffering, death, and misery. Opposition to the U.S./NATO occupation is so widespread, so popular, that it penetrates the highest levels of the Afghan government, police, and military, in the "safest" of areas.

Of course, as far as CSM Troxell's friends in the White House, Congress, the officer corps, the Pentagon, and the parasitic war profiteers are concerned—they will never be placed in harm's way. They are in no rush to end an occupation that they know is doomed to fail. In fact, this war was lost the day that it began.

The leaders of the military are consciously sending young men and women to their deaths knowing full well that the U.S. strategy is incapable of being successful. They are knowingly lying to our loved ones, friends, family members, and the people of the United States. They are forcing an occupation on a sovereign people—who overwhelmingly want us out—killing thousands.

No victory in sight for the corporate politicians and their financiers

Just recently, an 84-page report was released to the public by Lt. Col. Daniel Davis that destroys the castle of lies built by Washington regarding the "success of the Afghan war" and the promise that it will end.

Davis states that there is absolutely no way this war is winnable or has even affected the Taliban. "Even a cursory observation of key classified reports and metrics," Davis explains, "leads overwhelmingly to the conclusion that over the past two years, despite the surge of 30,000 American soldiers, the insurgent force has gained strength...."

The report continues to state that the Afghan army and police are “a barely functioning organization” and that they often refuse to even leave cover to investigate possible insurgent activity.

President Obama’s promise that the U.S. forces will leave Afghanistan is premised entirely on replacement by Afghan puppet forces (also widely hated among Afghans). But those intended puppets are not dancing as Washington is assuring the public they will.

The reason there is such a lack of desire by the Afghan police and military to engage the Taliban is because many among them overwhelmingly disagree with the U.S. occupation. The United States has failed so miserably in Afghanistan that what should be the



Soldiers from the 4th Brigade Combat Team of the 82nd Airborne Division, the Afghan National Police, and the Afghan National Army’s 203rd Corps assemble for a recognition ceremony for Operation Maiwand.

most pro-occupying force in the country, the Afghan military, has rejected the U.S./NATO-led debacle.

They are able to fill their ranks with the promise of a paycheck (in the second-poorest country on the planet) but actual support for the U.S. occupation is non-existent, not just among the populace, but among those on the U.S. payroll who are supposed to be the most dedicated supporters.

Why are we killing and dying for this?

What does this mean for enlisted service members? It shows that they have no reason to take part in their war and, in fact, have the right to reject participating in Washington’s tragic failure. The war is a massive tragedy for the Afghan

people, who are not our enemies, and a disaster for us and our families.

As soldiers continue to return from the field of slaughter in Afghanistan, as more and more of the undeniable truth is revealed to us, we will continue to build against the officer corps and their lap dogs, the senior non-commissioned officers like CSM Troxell. We will continue to raise the slogan that service members have the absolute right to refuse to take part in this war.

Those who are profiting and expanding their profits from these wars will soon find themselves with no one willing to lose their lives or kill for them. The shameless lies told by the military leadership can no longer cover up the predatory aims of the war. No longer will national chauvinism work to trick service members into dying for the profits of Big Oil and the defense industry. The truth is on full display for the world to see.

The military has run out of places to hide their skeletons.

Kevin Baker is a former U.S. Army infantryman, Iraq war veteran, and a member of March Forward. Learn more at <http://www.answercoalition.org/march-forward/>

Five Reasons Drone Assassinations Are Illegal

by Bill Quigley

U.S. civilian and military employees regularly target and fire lethal unmanned drone guided missiles at people across the world. Thousands of people have been assassinated. Hundreds of those killed were civilians. Some of those killed were rescuers and mourners.

These killings would be criminal acts if they occurred inside the U.S. Does it make legal sense that these killings would be legal outside the U.S.?



Some Facts about Drone Assassinations

The U.S. has used drones to kill thousands of people in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia. But the government routinely refuses to provide any official information on local reports of civilian deaths or the identities of most of those killed.

In Pakistan alone, the New America Foundation reports U.S. forces have launched 297 drone strikes killing at least 1,800 people, three to four hundred of whom were not even combatants. Other investigative journalists report four to eight hundred civilians killed by U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan.

Very few of these drone strikes kill high level leaders of terror groups. A recent article in *Foreign Affairs* estimated “only one out of every seven drone attacks in Pakistan kills a militant leader. The majority of those killed in such strikes are not important insurgent commanders but rather low level fighters, together with a small number of civilians.”

An investigation by the *Wall Street Journal* in November 2011 revealed that most of the time the U.S. did not even know the identities of the people being killed by

drones in Pakistan. The *W S J* reported there are two types of drone strikes: “personality strikes” target known terrorist leaders; “signature strikes” target groups of men believed to be militants but are people whose identities are not known. Most of the drone strikes are signature strikes.

In Yemen, there have been at least 34 drone assassination attacks so far in 2012 alone, according to the London based Bureau of Investigative Journalism. Using drones against people in Yemen, who are thought to be militants but whose names are not even known, was authorized by the Obama administration in April 2012, according to the *Washington Post*. Somalia has been the site of ten drone attacks with a growing number in recent months.

Civilian deaths in drone strikes are regularly reported, but more chilling is the practice of firing a second set of drone strikes at the scene once people have come to find out what happened or to give aid. Glenn Greenwald of Salon.com, a leading critic of the increasing use of drones, recently pointed out that drones routinely kill civilians who are in the vicinity of people thought to be “militants” and are thus “incidental” killings. But the U.S. also frequently fires drones again at people who

show up at the scene of an attack, thus deliberately targeting rescuers and mourners.

Here are five reasons why these drone assassinations are illegal.

One. Assassination by the U.S. government has been illegal since 1976

Drone killings are acts of premeditated murder. Premeditated murder is a crime in all fifty states and under federal criminal law. These murders are also the textbook definition of assassination, which is murder by sudden or secret attack for political reasons.

In 1976, U.S. President Gerald Ford issued Executive Order 11905, Section 5(g), which states “No employee of the United States Government shall engage in, or conspire to engage in, political assassination.” President Reagan followed up to make the ban clearer in Executive Order 12333.

Section 2.11 of that Order states “No person employed by or acting on behalf of the United States Government shall engage in, or conspire to engage in, assassination.” Section 2.12 further says “Indirect participation. No agency of the Intelligence Community shall participate in or request any person to undertake activities forbidden by this Order.” This ban on assassination still stands.

The reason for the ban on assassinations was that the CIA was involved in attempts

to assassinate national leaders opposed by the U.S. Among others, U.S. forces sought to kill Fidel Castro of Cuba, Patrice Lumumba of the Congo, Rafael Trujillo of the Dominican Republic, and Ngo Dinh Diem of South Vietnam.

Two. United Nations report directly questions the legality of U.S. drone killings

The UN directly questioned the legality of U.S. drone killings in a May 2010 report by NYU law professor Philip Alston. Alston, the UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions, said drone killings may be lawful in the context of authorized armed conflict (e.g., Afghanistan, where the U.S. sought and received international approval to invade and wage war on another country). However, the use of drones “far from the battle zone” is highly questionable legally. “Outside the context of armed conflict, the use of drones for targeted killing is almost



An AGM-114 Hellfire missile hung on the rail of an US Air Force MQ-1L Predator Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) is inscribed, “IN MEMORY OF HONORABLE RONALD REAGAN.”

never likely to be legal.” Can drone killings be justified as anticipatory self-defense? “Applying such a scenario to targeted killings threatens to eviscerate the human rights law prohibition against arbitrary deprivation of life.” Likewise, countries which engage in such killings must provide transparency and accountability, which no country has done. “The refusal by States who conduct targeted killings to provide transparency about their policies violates the international law framework that limits the unlawful use of lethal force against individuals.”

(Continued on page 17)

Reflecting on the President's first term

NOBAMA

by Robert Yoder

War Crimes

In 2000, President Clinton signed the Rome Statute which defines war crimes and created the International Criminal Court (ICC). In 2002, however, shortly before it was to go into effect, President Bush “nullified” Clinton’s signature and declared that the U.S. would no longer be a party to, nor accept jurisdiction of, the ICC. It is now clear why: Guantanamo, Abu Ghraib, “enhanced interrogation techniques,” extraordinary rendition to torture, and enforced disappearance in secret prisons. These are all war crimes in spite of the Bush administration’s twisted logic that legalized practices we have condemned since World War II. Bush, Cheney, Tenet, Rumsfeld, all are unindicted war criminals.

The War on Terror under Obama has become a program of extra-judicial assassinations with faceless analysts using secret procedures, secret criteria, and secret data to determine who lives and who dies.

Barack Obama the Candidate pledged to end all this; however, none of his predecessor’s policies have been clearly or effectively reversed, including his quiet refusal to re-sign the Rome Statute or come under the jurisdiction of the ICC. Instead, Obama the President continues to hold prisoners indefinitely without trial in Guantanamo Bay, ignores domestic and international law, and pursues wars of aggression in ever more insidious and immoral ways: through extra-judicial assassinations using unmanned drones, CIA operatives, and small teams of Special Forces in countries with which we are not at war—Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, et. al. Extra-judicial assassinations are a category of willful killing, a war crime. Indefinite detention in Guantanamo Bay without a trial is a war crime. Barack Obama is as guilty of war crimes as Bush, as Cheney, as Rumsfeld, as Tenet.

Drone Wars

Distance is of essential importance. It renders responsibility invisible and retaliation impossible.

—Etel Adnan, *Master of the Eclipse*

Bug Splat: military jargon for someone killed in a drone strike.

For a new generation of young guns, the experience of piloting a drone is not unlike the video games they grew up on. ...drone operators kill at the touch of a button, without ever leaving their base – a remove that only serves to further desensitize the taking of human life.

—Michael Hastings, “The Drone Wars,” *Rolling Stone*, April 26, 2012

President George W. Bush, in his eight years as the self-proclaimed War President, authorized 78 drone strikes. President Obama, on his third day in office, authorized a drone strike that killed 20 people in Pakistan, three of them children. In his first three years as president, there were 253 known covert drone strikes in Pakistan alone, plus an unknown number in Yemen, Somalia, Libya, and, most recently, the Philippines. Drones are Obama’s weapon of choice.



Image credit: warcriminalswatch.org

as war crimes.

The sound of a drone, described as the buzzing of an aerial lawnmower, circling high above a targeted village for hours, strikes fear in the heart of every inhabitant, for they know that, at any time and without warning, they or their loved ones could be incinerated. This is terrorism.

In designated battle zones like Iraq and Afghanistan, U.S. Air Force personnel control drones from bases in Iraq, Afghanistan, Qatar, and the U.S. In Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, Libya, et al., countries with which we are not technically at war, the CIA controls the drones from their headquarters in Langley, Virginia. The Pentagon’s 7,000 drones can take off and land by themselves; track vehicles, individuals, even footprints in the dirt from a mile up; and those which are armed, like the Predator and Reaper drones, can unleash Hellfire missiles with deadly accuracy. The unknown, however, is whether the target is actually a terrorist.

An estimated 3,000 people have been killed in drone strikes and in spite of denials by the Pentagon, the NSC and President Obama, a large number of those killed, perhaps as many as thirty percent, were not terrorists or insurgents or affiliated with al Qaeda or any other terrorist organization; they were innocent civilians including at least 174 children. For Obama to claim that the drone program is highly precise and kept on a tight leash with few civilian casualties makes him either naïve or a liar, neither of which is a good sign.

Undeclared Wars

The President is the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, but under the Constitution he cannot declare war; only Congress can do that—and they have not done so since World War II. In the hysteria following 9/11, the Authorization for the Use of Military Force passed by Congress on September 14, 2001, granted the president the authority to use all “necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001 ... in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States....” This open-ended resolution effectively declared war against anyone deemed a terrorist or terrorist sympathizer regardless of nationality or physical location. President Obama has used this to reshape the War on Terror in ways undreamed of by his predecessor.

While George W. Bush and his neocon administration openly invaded and occupied a country that posed no threat to the United States and had no part in the 9/11 attacks, Barack Obama is far more subtle. Except for Afghanistan, his wars of aggression are not carried out by armies in the field but by remote-controlled drones and teams of assassins working in the dead of night. The War

on Terror under Obama has become a program of extra-judicial assassinations with faceless analysts using secret procedures, secret criteria, and secret data to determine who lives and who dies. The claim of “national security” cloaks everything in an opaque veil that hides abuses, mistakes, and the horrific reality of war. John Rizzo, chief counsel of the CIA for six years during the Bush administration, calls extra-judicial assassinations “militarized murder.”

Under Bush, government lawyers found loopholes and twisted logic in order to legalize what had previously been criminal activity—torture, indefinite detention, secret prisons, illegal wiretaps—but Barack Obama has changed the very nature, scope, and definition of war itself. When Congress demanded justification for ongoing combat in Libya, he contended, contrary to the findings of his own Justice and Defense Department lawyers, that he did not need authorization since the U.S. had handed off active combat operations to NATO forces. Drone strikes, surveillance, and logistical support, he claimed, “do not involve sustained fighting or active exchanges of fire with hostile forces, nor do they involve U.S. ground troops.” That is, war is not war.

Obama has turned the CIA into a paramilitary force that operates outside all law and wages covert wars wherever America’s alleged enemies are. Without congressional discussion, debate or oversight, the War on Terror has become a shape-shifting endless war that disregards domestic and international law, basic human rights, and the Constitution. We have squandered the nation’s blood and treasure, destroyed the illusion of America as a beacon of justice, and become as bankrupt morally as we are financially, a nation of barbarians and terrorists wreaking death and destruction around the globe. Barack Obama should be impeached and tried as a war criminal.

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Robert Yoder is a WCT contributing editor. His current book, 100 Letters to President Obama, is available from Wild Ocean Press.

SONG OF THE DEAD IN VAIN

Sit down and negotiate
whichever way you want, old silver foxes.
We’ll wall you in in a splendid mansion
with food, wine, terrific beds, a great fireplace
provided you deal with and negotiate
the lives of our children and yours.
May all created knowledge
converge to bless your minds
and guide you in the labyrinth.
But we, the army of the dead in vain,
will be waiting for you outside in the cold,
we of Marna and Montecassino,
of Treblinka, Dresden, and Hiroshima:
And the lepers and the trachoma victims
will be with us,
the disappeared of Buenos Aires,
the dead of Cambodia and the doomed of Ethiopia,
those negotiated away in Prague,
the emaciated of Calcutta,
the innocents mangled in Bologna.
Woe to you if you leave dissenting:
You’ll be clenched in our embrace.
We’re invincible because we’re the
vanquished.
Invulnerable because already extinguished:
We laugh at your missiles.
Sit down and negotiate
till your tongue dries up:
If injury and shame continue
we’ll drown you in our putridity.

—Primo Levi

Translated from Italian by Jack Hirschman

The *Golden Rule* Project of Veterans For Peace**Peace Boat to sail again**

by Fredy Champagne

The ketch *Golden Rule*, an historic anti-nuclear peace boat, is scheduled to set sail and resume its peaceful mission in late summer following extensive restoration.

During its first mission in 1958, four activists from the Non-Violent Action Against Nuclear Weapons (which became the Committee for Non-Violent Action before merging into the War Resisters League) attempted to sail

We found this famous vessel in a truly deplorable condition – but there's enough there, and its symbolism so compelling, that we have determined to fully rebuild and restore the Golden Rule to its original condition. It is our intention that it will once again take its place in the forefront of the battle against militarism and needless war.

After two years hard work – new frames, planking, floors, and deck beams; rebuilt transom and stem; hull painted inside and out; the deck and house are being finished as you read this – the little “tall ship” is scheduled for launch, finishing the masts and rigging, and sailing

Because of this boat's famous history, the *Golden Rule* and its crew will gain publicity for the cause of peace wherever they go.

their vessel into the Eniwetok Proving Grounds, the U.S. test site in the Marshall Islands. They were intercepted by the U.S. Coast Guard five nautical miles from Hawaii. Led by former U.S. Naval Commander, Albert S. Bigelow, the *Golden Rule* and its crew made two attempts to sail to the islands. They were arrested and imprisoned for sixty days, and the ketch towed back to Honolulu.

During the crew's trial, a tremendous national anti-nuclear movement grew, with protests staged around the U.S. demanding an end to the testing and the freedom for the *Golden Rule* crew. The trial inspired Dr. Earle Reynolds, his wife, and two children; they slipped out of the harbor and headed for the test zone in their yacht, *Phoenix of Hiroshima*. When Dr. Reynolds announced on the radio that he was in the nuclear testing area, his craft was boarded and the crew arrested by the U.S. Coast Guard. (These actions then inspired Greenpeace to use similar methods in their campaigns to halt nuclear testing.)

Since those historic events, the *Golden Rule* fell into a state of disrepair, but members of Veterans For Peace in Northern California recognized its potential:

trials by September. Then, according to the project mission statement:

Veterans For Peace, together with friends of the Golden Rule, will once again sail this vessel in opposition to militarism and the manufacture, testing, and use of nuclear weapons. Over a period of years, we plan for the Golden Rule to take its message of peace far and wide – on all three coasts, as well as the Great Lakes and inland waterways.

Because of this boat's famous history, much media attention is expected, and the *Golden Rule* and its crew will gain publicity for the cause of peace wherever they go. They intend to begin with a visit to the San Francisco Bay Area during 2013 Americas Cup Yacht Races (an event which will draw worldwide media coverage) and then a ten-year tour of the U.S. Waterways, visiting communities along the coasts, bays, rivers, canals, inter-coastal waterways, and the Great Lakes. A typical visit might include speaking events, press conferences, photo ops, and boat tours for school children and the general public—a grand opportunity to raise public awareness of anti-nuclear and peace movements and to engage like-minded groups.



SAILS AGAINST THE BOMB
— Last voyage of "The Golden Rule"
— June 4, 1958 — Honolulu, San Diego, etc.

You can help

The *Golden Rule* project is seeking regional volunteers to sail and to join the committee as the tour moves from one area to the next, and logistical and publicity assistance from local activists, especially from VFP chapters. Financial assistance is also welcome.

Learn more at www.vfpgoldenruleproject.org.

Fredy Champagne is a member of VFP Chapter 022 in Garberville, CA; He was the founder of the Veterans - Viet Nam Restoration Project and a co-founder of the VFP Iraq Water Project.

(LETTERS continued from page 2)

the well-ignored definition of “Exempt income”. ... READ IT. According the U.S. tax law, nearly every American does NOT owe any income tax. Zero.

So, here's your news tip.

----- NEWS TIP -----

Search tax law for “excluded income”
<http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov> (title 26)

Ignorance of the law is no excuse for stupid beliefs, and then broadcasting that stupidity with your War Crimes newspaper. READ THE LAW, before you tell ignorant people incorrect information. War occurs because they paid for it. Then show the U.S. tax law to your fellow tax slaves, those dumb, war-supporting American citizens.

War is OUR fault. And, not one soldier would be willing to go to war, legally declared or not, to another country, unless they got paid, by our tax money. Remember, Jesus said you can't serve God and money. These clowns, mostly stupid teenagers and twenty-something-year-olds, go to fight only because they want the almighty dollar.

Give your readers the facts, not all of this typical anti-war rhetoric.

War will only end when the cash flow stops. Then the war profiteers will have to go home, along with the dumb-kid soldiers. Not to mention we could close over 160 military bases all over the world, saving trillions.

mrzolt@yahoo.com
via email

Editor responds: If it were only so simple! The WCT attempts to inform readers of all the factors that contribute to our militaristic society. We may be wrong on occasion; but we don't think we “got it all wrong.” Also, we take strong exception to the writer's disrespect of recruits and their motivation.

The WCT is Great

Many thanks indeed for taking the time and trouble to send the copy of the excellent *War Crimes Times* - congratulations, another great issue.

Kindest wishes,

Felicity Arbuthnot
London, UK

Bush is guilty

(Continued from page 3)

interrogation techniques, consisting of cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment, were permissible.

The tribunal ordered that reparations be given to the war crime victims corresponding with the irreparable harm and injury, pain and suffering they had undergone even though the tribunal was merely a tribunal of conscience with no real power of enforcement.

The findings of the tribunal will be submitted to the International Criminal Court, United Nations and the Security Council, and the names of the accused will be entered into the War Crimes Commission's Register of War Criminals.

Former prime minister Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, in an immediate response, said the

verdict and findings would be publicized globally and sent to heads of government of all nations. He also hoped the public would not invite these war criminals to their countries.

“The International Criminal Court seems to be subservient to the big powers and does not seem to have the capacity or the willingness to charge the leaders of big powers who are responsible for torture, invasion of an independent country, destruction in war, and for the killings of so many people,” said Dr. Mahathir, who is the Perdana Leadership Foundation honorary president.

He said one step which could be undertaken, especially in democratic nations, was for people to insist that all election candidates should declare that they would never go to war on others.

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Life After G.I. War Resistance: Military Resisters 30 Years Later

by Michael Wong

Since the start of the Bush era, soldiers and veterans have been a core part of resisting America's wars for empire.

In 2004, Veterans for Peace sponsored Iraq Veterans Against the War, which began with seven members. IVAW now has hundreds of veterans and active duty members, chapters in all 50 states and overseas, and continues gaining members all the time. Iraq and Afghanistan veterans are marching in peace demonstrations, speaking out at public events, giving media interviews, organizing active duty soldiers on military bases, and actively helping GI resisters. Anti-war Iraq veterans were featured in a documentary movie, *The Ground Truth*, and in several other movies about the war. During the Iraq War, over 2,000 active duty troops signed the "Appeal for Redress" calling on Congress to end the war. At the height of the war, the GI Rights Hotline received up to 3,000 calls a month from GIs wanting out of the wars and the military, and an estimated 200 plus soldiers went AWOL in Canada. Courage to Resist helped many service members publicly refuse military orders, including 1st Lt. Ehren Watada, who never served a single day in jail. Now a young PFC, Bradley Manning, stands accused of telling the truth by leaking hundreds of thousands of classified documents. All of this, combined with the civilian peace movement, turned the tide of American public opinion against the Iraq War, and eventually led to bringing at least the regular troops home, although thousands of mercenaries remain.

What will happen to the young GIs who refused orders to war or directly resisted the military in other ways? In particular, what will life be like for them afterward? What will their lives be like long after these wars are over, and the country and the world moves on?

The experience of the Viet Nam-era GI resisters may be very relevant here.

Forty-one years ago, I was a soldier in the U. S. Army. I had received orders to Viet Nam, and, after much agonized soul searching, had decided I wasn't going to go. I went AWOL for two weeks. I then reported to the Presidio stockade with my lawyer, turned myself in, refused orders, and submitted a limited conscientious objector application (objection to a particular war, not to military service in general or to legitimate military defense of the nation). The Army first pressed three charges against me, for a total of 15 years in prison if convicted. I was prepared to plead guilty to those charges. But the Army instead dropped all the charges, released me from the stockade, and ordered me to report to Oakland Army terminal for shipment to Viet Nam. I escaped and deserted to Canada.

In making this decision, I was haunted by deep fear of all the things the Army, the government, and society said would happen to those who dared to openly defy them. They said people like me would be branded cowards, traitors; that we'd be disgraced and spat upon all our lives. They said we'd be losers, never respected, never trusted, never able to hold down a job, hated by everybody, loved by nobody. They said that without the

all-powerful Honorable Discharge, we would be held in contempt by all who laid eyes on us, and we would live out our miserable lives in the gutter, on the margins of society, hiding our terrible secret and unable to face anyone with what we had done.

Do you think this propaganda didn't scare me? Of course it did. But stronger than my fear of disgrace and rejection by society was my refusal to kill and be killed for politician's lies, the profits of the rich, war crimes repeatedly committed against unarmed civilians, and the invasion, conquest, and exploitation of a small foreign country that never threatened or attacked us. Like thousands of my contemporaries and hundreds of the Iraq and Afghanistan generation, I refused orders to war.

After the Viet Nam War ended, I returned to the U.S., turned myself in to the army again, and got an Undesirable Discharge.

Eventually, I was featured in a very small part in a documentary film about the Viet Nam-era GI resistance movement, *Sir! No Sir!* The movie interviewed and told the stories of GIs who had resisted the Viet Nam War in various ways, and told about the role that Jane Fonda played in supporting the GI resistance movement. This led to a personal epiphany about GI resistance.

The premiere of the film took place on June 19, 2005 at the Los Angeles Film Festival. A fairly large group of

Don't believe the nation's leaders; all they tell you are lies. Believe your own eyes and your own heart, and follow where they lead. If you trust anybody, trust your friends and your loved ones.

vets who were in the film flew down to attend the premiere. This is an email I sent at the time:

It was amazing to see just how deep and broad the GI anti-war movement really was. Even having been in the middle of the movement, I hadn't realized just how vast it actually was, I only knew my little corner of it. But contrary to current mainstream propaganda, the GI resistance movement was in fact so widespread that the military was actually close to collapse, according to high ranking military sources of the time. Nixon went to Vietnamization and a U.S. air war because American ground troops had become unreliable. In Chicago during the Democratic convention when Mayor Daley's cops were attacking and beating the demonstrators, Army troops were sent to Chicago but never used—because their commanders weren't sure which side the troops would be on.



Jane Fonda with Viet Nam-era Army resister Mike Wong at *Sir! No Sir!* fundraising benefit on Feb. 22, 2006, Mill Valley, CA.

*You would have to see the movie to fully appreciate the scope of all this. But you can get a sense of it by checking out the *Sir! No Sir!* website.*

The theatre was said to hold about 600 people, and almost every seat was filled. After the movie was shown, the producer David Zeiger took the stage and called on all the people in the movie who were present to join him. There were about sixteen of us, and we all stood up together and started to walk up to the stage. As we did, the audience rose and gave us an enthusiastic standing ovation, including loud applause and cheers. One man shouted, "Heroes!" as the applause accelerated.

We walked to the stage and stood in a line facing the audience. David made some introductory remarks and had us briefly introduce ourselves. There was a question and answer period in which audience members asked about the film and resistance, and different people answered different questions.

After the showing, different people came up to talk to us. Some activists with different projects came up and told us about their projects and exchanged information. One woman urged me and the others to continue speaking out....

A key realization of the night came to me when I was standing on the stage with the other military deserters/resisters. As I looked down the line, the thought that struck me was how well all of us had actually done in life, even in establishment terms. Looking down the line, I realized that all of us were financially secure. Virtually all of us had at least a bachelor's degree, and about a third of us had a master's degree. Virtually all of us had professional jobs. Most had homes, families, a middle class lifestyle. The few who didn't had an alternative lifestyle that they chose, not one that was imposed on them. This from a group of people who had started out in life either as wanted criminals on the run from the FBI, or as convicted felons locked up in prison for years. We had overcome years of formidable personal and institutional hardships to achieve our successes, but there we were, all success stories by anybody's definition.



 **877-447-4487**
From Overseas: 202-483-2220
The GI Rights Hotline
girightshotline.org girights@girightshotline.org

Beyond material success, all of us were still active trying to make a positive difference in society. We were politically active. We were personally continuing to grow and develop every day. We were all still dedicated to the same fundamental values that prompted our rebellion against the Viet Nam war in the first place. We were all still moving forward in our lives.

It struck me how in the '60s, the government, the military, the "mainstream" society, said that people like us were doomed to be failures, that our lives would be lives of disgrace and desperation, that we'd never be able to get a job, that people would look down on us, that we'd be the outcasts of society, that we'd never be able to look at ourselves in the mirror, and that we'd drown in our own shame. Looking down the line of resisters, I realized that just the opposite was true. The average American has no college degree. The average American is not a professional. The average American is not politically active, and not trying to change the world. We were in fact more, not less, accomplished than the norm. I can't tell you how proud, and privileged, I felt to be able to stand with these people.

America today is locked in another quagmire like Viet Nam. Our middle class is being eroded by the Republicans' economic war of the rich against all. Our international prestige is sinking. Our economy and environment are being driven into a tailspin. Yet for us ex-fugitives, our personal lives were going very well. We are actually doing better than the nation!

The next day, I talked about this with a few of the other deserters/resisters, and they all agreed. Our personal lives, despite the many dark times when we didn't know if we were going to live or die, were now going better than the nation. All of us were

The very qualities that led today's GI resisters to resist the wars will also lead them to success in life.

more concerned about the fate of the nation than worried about our personal lives. We succeeded because of the very issues and struggles that we choose to face and deal with, that seemed so large and overwhelming at the time. We succeeded because we had to work hard to survive and follow our mandate to make a positive difference in the world. We succeeded because we had fiercely loyal friends who shared our dreams and ideals and we all stood by each other even in the worst of times.

Moral of the story: Don't believe the nation's leaders; all they tell you are lies. Believe your own eyes and your own heart, and follow where they lead. If you trust anybody, trust your friends and your loved ones.

Did our group represent the experience of all GI resisters? There were over 90,000 military deserters during the Viet Nam War and an estimated 500,000 veterans with bad discharges, an unknown number due to various forms of war resistance.* Our group, of course, can't represent them all. But in my experience in the army

and the deserter community in Canada during the war, the people in our group were a fairly typical cross-section.

Since that time, I have met many Iraq War veterans and numerous GI resisters. We have talked, and sometimes they ask me and others of my generation what it was like for us. I look in their eyes and faces, and see reflections of myself and my generation so many decades ago. These are brave men and women, living with pain, fear, doubts, and wrestling with big questions of war and peace, life and death. When I visited Canada, current day military deserters shared their stories, and I felt so proud of them. They are very young, but they had the courage to do what they felt was right.

Today's GI resisters have a tough road of struggle ahead of them. But if my generation's experience is any example, they will prevail, they will become successful, and they will grow to become leaders in their time. The very qualities that led them to resist the wars will also lead them to success in life. And that is how it should be.

Michael Wong is a member of VFP Chapter 69 in San Francisco. He is one of the veteran-activist writers for *In The Mind Field* (www.inthemindfield.com), where this article first appeared.

Websites:

Sir! No Sir! sirnosir.com

GI Rights Hotline girightshotline.org

Courage to Resist www.couragetoresist.org

Bradley Manning Support Network bradleymanning.org

* *Long Time Passing: Viet Nam and the Haunted Generation*, by Myra MacPherson. Published by Signet, New American Library, New York, NY, 1984. Page 394.

If my soldiers were to begin to think, not one would remain in the ranks.

—Frederick The Great (1712-86)

Why I refused to return to fight in Afghanistan's brutal occupation

by Joe Glenton

Recent attacks in Kabul confirm the occupation is falling to pieces. Claims about "decisive years" and "turned corners" are little more than cant. Instead for all their lack of air power, drones, and high-tech equipment, the Taliban are gaining ascendancy.

The ability to attack up to seven different locations, to hold one for 20 hours, and to attack the fortified compounds of the occupiers and local supporters cannot sensibly be read as a sign that the insurgency is losing ground. Fighting in Afghanistan is seasonal and the Kabul attacks were the season's opening game.

No insurgency can survive without broad support from the local population. The insurgent relies upon the people for intelligence, support, safety, and more. The fact that insurgents now control great swaths of the country virtually unchallenged tells us the people have been lost, partially due to the occupiers' bumbling efforts. The argument that Afghans are rejecting the Taliban falls flat.

Let's not forget there is no mandate in law for aggression nor any mention of – or authority for – brutally occupying Afghanistan in the UN resolutions regarding it



Lance Corporal Joe Glenton
(photo by James Whitaker)

– which is why I refused to serve a second tour in Afghanistan. I was sentenced to five months in military prison for it but other soldiers too have refused and are refusing to serve in Afghanistan – as is their right.

The *Daily Mail* published an excellent article about an anonymous British major's despair at being deployed into what he – and many soldiers

I know – considers a lost cause. They are increasingly unwilling, as the officer said, to die for "a war of choice already lost halfway across the world." For all the clarity of the article, it ends in jingoism: dutifully, he will fight on, the writer asserts.

Yet conscientious objection is a legal and contractual right. In fact, it is more than that – it is a legal and moral obligation. This is why we must not accept that the debate about serving in Afghanistan be narrowed down to an exchange about a soldier's heroism or cowardice. Instead, I would encourage servicemen to explore their right to refuse, be aware of it, and to act upon their conscience. You will find you are not obliged to go; contracts, remember, bind multiple parties, not just one.

Naturally, the military and government will make it hard. Their oft-repeated fear is that if refusing to serve is allowed, "the floodgates will open." They are correct, and that is all the more reason to inform servicemen and servicewomen of their rights.

At the same time as the Taliban attacks there has been a rise in atrocities. We have recently seen British soldiers arrested on suspicion of abusing children, as well as the

stabbing by a squad of a 10-year-old Afghan boy. A multinational operation in all respects, the U.S. has done its share: kill teams, SS flag-waving, photographing bodies, urinating on corpses, and the Panjwai massacre carried out, according to the witnesses, by 15 to 20 U.S. troops. When young men are

I would encourage servicemen to explore their right to refuse, be aware of it, and to act upon their conscience.

shaped for war and sent to fight there are consequences – even in "just" wars. The training involves two-way dehumanization – both of our soldiers and of the enemy – as Giles Fraser highlighted lately. These acts are coming thick and fast at the end of a long, dehumanizing, failed war. Conscientious objection was a hard road for me, but while I was in military prison I received 200 letters a day, which helped. As did the support of my fellow soldiers.

Those sending our young men and women to die or be mutilated for nothing have no authority to say what is honorable, courageous, heroic, or cowardly. You can volunteer, and you can un-volunteer. It's in the contract. Then perhaps our cynical, diamante-poppy-wearing political class will stop using the last dead kid to justify the next dead kid – insisting we must fight on so they have not died in vain. By refusing, I clawed back some honor from an honorless war.

Joe Glenton was the first British soldier to refuse to deploy to Afghanistan. His book, *Soldier Box*, will be printed by the end of this year. Learn more at joeglenton.com.



Apocalypse Now

— now

by Adam Berner

Film as dream, film as music. No art passes our conscience in the way film does, and goes directly to our feelings, deep down into the dark rooms of our souls.

—Ingmar Bergman

The night before I wrote this piece I watched *Apocalypse Now*. The movie had a deep impact on me and remains my favorite film of all time.

I was shocked not by the violence and the scenes of warfare, but by how acclimated the characters had become to war. For example, during one firefight a character talked about surfing. The soldiers quickly adapted to the

Col. Kurtz (played by Marlon Brando): “You have to have men who are moral... and at the same time who are able to utilize their primordial instincts to kill without feeling... without passion... without judgment... without judgment! Because it's judgment that defeats us.”

(Photo by isamizdat)

situation, discussing irrelevant matters right after or even during a battle. I was shocked at the film's surreal depiction of the Viet Nam War, how people are changed in one of two ways.

The more common is “going crazy”— when a person accepts what is happening around him as normal, even moral, so they can still function as a human being and not lose themselves to madness.

The second reaction is “going insane.” Insanity comes to those who cannot make themselves believe the lies and delusions; for them, the harsh stark reality is all they can see. The men who go insane are the ones who have the best quality of mankind, empathy. Their concerns overpower the compulsion to conform to the situation; eventually despair and frustration consume them, leaving them as cold, hollow shells. These men go into battle without compassion, restraint, or remorse. Their will is unbendable and they have no limitations or inhibitions to stop themselves.

What I wrote helped me to not only comprehend the film itself, but to express my view to others. It was a way for me to understand the nature of mankind and how we respond to horror.

I never was... I never was the same after the war. Nobody was. Anybody who told you that they weren't changed is a liar. I remember one day my grandson asked me, “How did you do it? How did you keep yourself from going crazy?”

And I told him. I looked straight into his beautiful big green eyes and I told him, “I did go crazy, we had to. It was the only way to stay sane. Anyone who didn't go crazy went insane.”

“Now, there's a difference between the two. You may not think so, but there is. Crazy, (sigh), crazy is when you laugh, you laugh while bullets fly right over your head and grenades rain down on you. Crazy is when you don't weep when your comrades, your friends, are shot or stabbed and their blood is all over you like droplets from a storm. And you can hear them crying out, for revenge, for help, or just for someone to acknowledge their life. My god, I can still hear them.

“But you keep on running, you keep on fighting, and hope and pray to God that you won't be next. Any man who wasn't crazy would stop, collapse, and weep, but we couldn't, we didn't have that luxury. That's what going crazy meant.

“Insanity though, that was worse. Or maybe it was better. Insanity was when you couldn't take it anymore. When you realized that just pulling a trigger and raining a holocaust down from the sky wasn't enough. You realized that if we wanted to win, hell, just to survive in that jungle, you had to die. You had to kill your own humanity. You had to live and kill without emotion, without love, without pity, without compassion, without mercy, without anger, without hate. You had to kill, just kill and breathe, over and over and over again until you were nothing more than that.

“Those who went insane would destroy whole villages, burn them to the ground, nothing left but ash and bones. They would kill thousands without a single tear or smile or any semblance of anger. They were the best fighters and the worst men. But it only happened to the best of us. It happened to men of love and kindness, they were the ones who went insane. And after a while you could see something in their eyes. Their stone-cold dead dark eyes. They were just begging for death. Begging for it to come and take away the pain and emptiness. And the only thing I could do was go crazy.”

Adam Berner is a junior at the Canterbury School of Florida.

I'm Gonna' Tell You

I'm gonna' tell you
what a rifle bullet
does to your future when
it bursts its way
through your guts
and spinal cord.

I'm gonna' tell you
about a hand grenade
that comes flying your way,
landing between your legs
with its clock ticking
while you're trying to dig
a hole in stony ground
with your helmet.

I'm gonna' tell you
to duck inside a farmhouse
when a Panzer's turret
swings around in your direction
and its crew is loading
high explosive for
special delivery
up your ass.

I'm gonna' tell you
what to do when our P 47
Thunderbolts come calling
with eight .50 caliber machine guns,
and they manage to confuse
your hole in the ground
with Wehrmacht trenches.

I'm gonna' tell you
how to dry off after
marching through a deluge all day
with a condom
over your M1's muzzle,
spending the night
in a not quite frozen
water-filled ditch,
the wet dark illuminated
with the neon of tracers,
rifle blasts, mortars,
and a BAR.

I'm gonna' tell you
to stop worrying after you've
thrown away your gas mask
because you cut sections
out of its breathing tube to
sheath your dog tags so that
they won't jingle at night
while your squad is trying
to move quietly into position
for an attack on
a well-defended bunker.

I'm gonna' tell you
how to avoid
shiny-new
second Lieutenant
widow makers,
wearing pressed OD's
and clean jackets,
when they get out of
muddy jeeps driven by
a corporal needing a shave,
wearing a knit cap,
and chewing tobacco.

I'm gonna' tell you
about the smells.
Burning truck tires,
corpses, vomit, cow shit,
your unwashed body,
freshly spilled intestines
throbbing in the sun,
Konzentrationslagers,
puddles of urine,
rotting fish blown out
of a putrid barnyard pond
covered with decaying creatures
in shades of purple, black, and
green,
fat flies gorging in the
thickened blood of horses
bloomed to the size of
a Macy's Thanksgiving Day
parade balloon, while
gracefully sharing the bounty
with squirming white maggots.
All this,
mingled with
gunpowder, and fear.

I'm gonna' tell you
how lucky you are,
you haven't lived through
these things,
how fucked up you are
to have created
these things.
Yes, you,
waving the flag,
buying war bonds,
singing sentimental war songs,
reading all about
stories from the front
in the pages next to
stock market reports,
praising the troops,
exulting in victory.
And now that war is over.
That's what you think.
That's what you want to think.
Asshole!
You just started the next one.

—Jay Wenk

Jay Wenk is a veteran of WWII and the author of *Study War No More: A Jewish Kid from Brooklyn Fights the Nazis*.

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(Continued from page 11)

Illegal Drones

Three. International law experts condemn U.S. drone killings

Richard Falk, professor emeritus of international affairs and politics at Princeton University thinks the widespread killing of civilians in drone strikes may well constitute war crimes. “There are two fundamental concerns. One is embarking on this sort of automated warfare in ways that further dehumanize the process of armed conflict in ways that I think have disturbing implications for the future,” Falk said. “Related to that are the concerns I’ve had recently with my preoccupation with the occupation of Gaza of a one-sided warfare where the high-tech side decides how to inflict pain and suffering on the other side that is, essentially, helpless.”

Human rights groups in Pakistan challenge the legality of U.S. drone strikes there and assert that Pakistan can prosecute military and civilians involved for murder.

While stopping short of direct condemnation, international law expert Notre Dame Professor Mary Ellen O’Connell seriously questions the legality of drone attacks in Pakistan. In powerful testimony before Congress and in an article in *America* magazine she points out that under the charter of the United Nations, international law authorizes nations to kill people in other countries only in self-defense to an armed attack, if authorized by the UN, or if assisting another country in their lawful use of force. Outside of war, she writes, the full body of human rights applies, including the prohibition on killing without warning. Because the U.S. is not at war with Pakistan, using the justification of war to authorize the killings is “to violate fundamental human rights principles.”

Four. Military law of war does not authorize widespread drone killing of civilians

According to the current *U.S. Military Law of War Deskbook*, the law of war allows killing only when consistent with four key principles: military necessity, distinction, proportionality, and humanity. These principles preclude both direct targeting of civilians and medical personnel but also set out how much “incidental” loss of civilian life is allowed. Some argue precision-guided weapons like drones can be used only when there is no probable cause of civilian deaths. But the U.S. military disputes that burden and instead directs “all practicable precautions” be

taken to weigh the anticipated loss of civilian life against the advantages expected to be gained by the strike.

Even using the more lenient standard, there is little legal justification of deliberately allowing the killing of civilians who

are “incidental” to the killings of people whose identities are unknown.

Five. Retired high-ranking military and CIA veterans challenge the legality and efficacy of drone killings

Retired U.S. Army Colonel Ann Wright squarely denies the legality of drone warfare, telling Democracy Now: “These drones, you might as well just call them assassination machines. That is what these drones are used for: targeted assassination, extrajudicial ultimate death for people who have not been convicted of anything.”

Drone strikes are also counterproductive. Robert Grenier, recently retired Director of the CIA Counter-Terrorism Center, wrote, “One wonders how many Yemenis may be moved in the future to violent extremism in reaction to carelessly targeted missile strikes, and how many Yemeni militants

with strictly local agendas will become dedicated enemies of the West in response to U.S. military actions against them.”

Recent polls of the Pakistan people show high levels of anger in Pakistan at U.S. military attacks there. This anger in turn leads to high support for suicide attacks against U.S. military targets.

U.S. Defense of Drone Assassinations

U.S. officials claim these drone killings are not assassinations because the U.S. has the legal right to kill anyone considered a terrorist, anywhere, if they can argue it is in self-defense. Attorney General Holder and White House counterterrorism advisor John Brennan recently defended the legality of drone strikes and argued they are not assassinations because the killings are in response to the 9/11 attacks and are carried out in self-defense even when not in Afghanistan or Iraq. This argument is based on the highly criticized claim of anticipatory self-defense which justifies killings in a global war on terror when traditional self-defense would clearly not. The government refuses to provide copies of the legal opinions relied upon by the government.

Growing Resistance to Drone Assassinations

In signs of hope, people in the U.S. are resisting the increasing use of drones. CODEPINK, the Center for Constitutional Rights, and the London-based human rights

group Reprieve co-sponsored an International Drone Summit in Washington, DC, to challenge drone assassinations. Investigative journalist Jeremy Scahill noted that Congress only managed to scrape up six votes to oppose the assassination of U.S. citizens abroad. “What is happening to this country? We have become a nation of assassins. We have become a nation that is somehow silent in the face of the idea that assassination should be one of the centerpieces of U.S. policy.”

As National Public Radio and the *New Republic* jointly editorialized, there is good reason to doubt the veracity of U.S. claims that drone killings are even effective. Drone use has escalated and expanded the U.S. global war on terror and thus should be subject to higher levels of scrutiny than it is now. As the use of drones escalates, so too does the risk of killing innocents which produces “legitimate anti-American anger that terrorist recruiters can exploit... Such a steady escalation of the drone war, and the inevitable increase in civilian casualties that will accompany it, could easily tip the delicate balance that assures we kill more terrorists than we produce.”

There is incredible danger in allowing U.S. military and civilians to murder people anywhere in the world with no public or Congressional or judicial oversight. This authorizes the President and the executive branch, according to the ACLU and the Center for Constitutional Rights, to be prosecutor, judge, jury, and executioner.

The use of drones to assassinate people violates U.S. and international law in multiple ways. U.S. military and civilian employees who plan the attacks and target and execute people in Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia are violating the law and, ultimately, risk prosecution. As the technology for drone attacks spreads, protests by the U.S. that drone attacks by others are illegal will sound quite hollow. Continuation of flagrantly illegal drone attacks by the U.S. also risks justifying the exact same actions, taken by others, against us.

Human rights groups in Pakistan challenge the legality of U.S. drone strikes there and assert that Pakistan can prosecute military and civilians involved for murder.

Even using the more lenient standard, there is little legal justification of deliberately allowing the killing of civilians who are “incidental” to the killings of people whose identities are unknown.

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The American Society of International Law issued a report, “Targeting Operations with Drone Technology: Humanitarian Law Implications,” in March 2011. Concerned that drones may be the future of warfare, scholars examined three questions in the U.S. use of drone technology: the scope of armed conflict (what is the battlefield upon which deadly force of drone killing is authorized); who may be targeted; and the legal implications of who conducts the targeting (since it is often not military but clandestine CIA agents who decide who dies). Concluding that the U.S. may soon find itself “on the other end of the drone” as this technology expands, they criticize official U.S. silence on these key legal questions.

Others are taking direct action. Select examples include: fourteen people arrested in April 2009 outside Creech Air Force base in Nevada in connection with a protest against drones by the Nevada Desert Experience; in January 2010 people protested drones outside the CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia; in April 2011, thirty-seven were arrested at Hancock Air Force base in upstate New York as part of a four hundred person protest against the use of drones; in October 2011, as part of the International Week of Protest to Stop the Militarization of Space, there were protests outside of Raytheon Missile Systems plant in Tucson; in April 2012, twenty-eight people were preemptively arrested on their way to protest drones at Hancock Air Force Base.

There is a brilliant new book, *Drone Warfare* authored by global activist Medea Benjamin which documents the nuts and bolts of the drone industry and the money involved



Bill Quigley teaches law at Loyola University New Orleans and is Associate Legal Director of the Center for Constitutional Rights. This article was reprinted with his permission. Contact him at quigley77@gmail.com.

Assassination by the U.S. government has been illegal since 1976.

Viet Nam Redux: Shades of Agent Orange

U.S. Military Toxins – the gift that keeps on killing: A tragic history of pollution continues in Iraq and Afghanistan
by Terry J. Allen

Once again, sick and dying vets are trying to trace their cancers and respiratory problems to the toxins of war.

Hey, Iraq, don't say we never gave you anything. In addition to hundreds of thousands dead and untold injured, the United States is leaving behind enough toxic waste sites to kill your rats.

"Open-air burn pits have operated widely at military sites in Iraq and Afghanistan," the Department of Veterans Affairs notes on its website. On hundreds of camps and bases across the two countries, the U.S. military and its contractors incinerated toxic waste, including unexploded ordnance, plastics and Styrofoam, asbestos, formaldehyde, arsenic, pesticides and neurotoxins, medical waste (even amputated limbs), heavy metals, and what the military refers to as "radioactive commodities." The burns have released mutagens and carcinogens, including uranium and other isotopes, volatile organic compounds, hexachlorobenzene, and, that old favorite, dioxin (aka Agent Orange).

The military pooh-poohs the problem, despite a 2009 Pentagon document noting "an estimated 11 million pounds [5,000 tonnes] of hazardous waste" produced by American troops, the *Times* of London reported. In any case, it says, the waste isn't all that toxic, and there is no hard evidence troops were harmed. Of course,

one reason for that lack of evidence, reports the Institute of Medicine (which found 53 toxins in the air above the Balad air base alone), is that the Pentagon won't or can't document what it burned and buried, or where it did so.

The little media attention that has been paid to this massive pollution has dimly illuminated its potential impact on U.S. troops. Left in mephitic darkness are the contractors, often impoverished South Asians, who did the dirty work at the bases, as well as Iraqi civilians who live and farm nearby. The *Times* of London reported that "open acid canisters sit within easy reach of children, and discarded batteries lie close to irrigated farmland," causing people to sicken and rats to die "next to soiled containers."

The toxic air echoes with the Viet Nam War's Agent Orange fiasco. Victims of that war's dioxin suffered for years before the

The military's history of pollution is long and largely unmitigated by legislation, treaties or lawsuits. It stretches around the world, from bases in the Philippines to Okinawa, Kuwait to Canada, and to numerous U.S. sites as well.

United States took limited responsibility—but only for its troops, and not for the countries it poisoned.

The military's history of pollution is long and largely unmitigated by legislation, treaties, or lawsuits. It stretches around the world, from bases in the Philippines to Okinawa, Kuwait to Canada, and to numerous U.S. sites as well.

teous boom industry—Area 51 was an amusing Mecca for a dedicated band of tinfoil-hat nutters who fantasized about alien anal probes and insisted that the government was hiding space aliens on a secret Air Force Base in the Nevada desert.

But a real and more nefarious plot was the military's exploitation of lax regulation and worker confidentiality agreements to use Area 51 as a secret dumping/burning ground for the toxic waste shipped in from other bases.

As deaths mounted at Area 51, workers—and their widows—sued, producing

evidence that the military had regularly filled football-field-sized trenches with 55-gallon drums of hazardous waste, doused them with jet fuel, and set them ablaze. The lawsuit foundered on the shoals of "national security" secrecy. The military got away with murder.

Fast forward to U.S. military bases around the world that are similarly immune

from effective regulation and reporting. U.S. Government Accountability Office investigators charge that the military in Iraq burned prohibited substances and ignored "guidance" to monitor emissions and to analyze its waste stream.

Again, sick and dying vets, this time from Iraq and Afghanistan, are trying to trace their cancers and respiratory problems to the toxins of war. Again, the military refuses to release complete data, and claims the data show no harmful effects. Again, the assumption of culpability, and the clean-up efforts will come too little, too late.

A July article in the *New England Journal of Medicine* studied 80 soldiers disabled with constrictive bronchiolitis, "a very rare finding" in otherwise healthy, young non-smokers. Almost all the cases were traced to "inhalational exposures during service in Iraq and Afghanistan." The journal lamented: "This group causes particular concern, since their potential toxic exposures are shared by most personnel who were deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan."

And, oh, yes, by those left to endure the predictable consequences of expedient poisoning. You're welcome, Iraq.

Terry J. Allen, a senior editor for In These Times (where this article first appeared), has written the magazine's monthly investigative health and science column since 2006. This article is reprinted with her permission. Contact: tallen@igc.org.



Burn pit in Balad, Iraq.

An underground tsunami of liquid and dissolved jet fuel and aviation gas from Kirtland Air Force Base is flowing off-base into the drinking water supply of Albuquerque, New Mexico. The fuel was leaked from pipelines at a Kirtland's Bulk Fuels Facility. The spill was estimated in 2010 to be some 8,000,000 gallons—an amount considered to be the largest, deepest, and greatest threat to any city's drinking water aquifer in the history of the nation. Recently however, a geologist at the New Mexico Environment Department stated it could be three times larger at 24,000,000 gallons.

The dissolved plume of contamination will inevitably hit municipal wells to the northeast of Kirtland that supply a large portion of Albuquerque's water for homes and businesses. It contains ethylene dibromide which is toxic in miniscule amounts and will require shutdown of the wells or the installation of a water treatment facility. The Air Force has stated it has no plan

Kirtland AFB Toxic Plume Threatens Albuquerque

by Dave McCoy and Willard Hunter

to stop the dissolved plume of contamination.

The liquid plume of light nonaqueous phase liquid (LNAPL), which is floating

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on the aquifer at a depth of 500 feet, contains diesel fuel, benzene, ethylbenzene, toluene, and zylene and is moving more slowly than the dissolved plume. The Air Force has no plan to remove any of the liquid jet fuel from the aquifer despite the New Mexico Environment Department's April 2, 2010 order to provide an interim plan and removal in five years. If the liquid jet fuel plume reaches the city wells, there can be no clean up of the drinking water as

could be done for the dissolved plume.

The liquid plume is already a mile long and a half mile wide and the dissolved plume is more than three times that size.

There is no way to stop the dissolved plume because of the tremendous hydraulic gradient created by the city wells.

The Air Force claims it will begin to remediate the liquid plume. But remediation expert, Dwight Patterson, has stated the Soil Vapor Extraction equipment they intend to use will have no effect on the continuing movement of the jet fuel plume and, if the liquid plume is not halted, it will reach a tipping point where it increasingly

accelerates toward city wells—as has already happened for the much larger dissolved plume.

An environmental organization, Citizen Action, is demanding that Albuquerque's Water Authority gain a financial commitment from the Air Force to begin planning now for construction of a water treatment facility for the coming contamination of the city wells. The Air Force accepts responsibility but has continued to study the problem (stalled) and taken very little action since it became aware of the problem in 1997.

Dave McCoy is executive director and Willard Hunter (of Veterans For Peace in Albuquerque) is president of the board of Citizen Action, a small, pugnacious environmental group fighting to have Sandia National Laboratories and Kirtland AFB clean up their environmental threats to Albuquerque.

"You must be the change you wish to see in the world." — Mahatma Gandhi

On May 10th Wired.com posted on its Danger Room blog a presentation from a course taught at the Joint

Forces Staff College to military officers. The course, *Perspectives on Islam and Islamic Radicalism*, taught that the enemy of the United States was the Islamic faith itself, and that a “total war” against the world’s Muslim population would be necessary to defend the United States from Islamic terrorism. The course went as far as to create a “Counter-Jihad Op Design Model” that suggested that Saudi Arabia should be threatened with starvation, Mecca and Medina may need to be destroyed, and Islam should be reduced to cult status. The presentation argued that the virtue of this model was that it left “open the option once again of taking war to a civilian population wherever necessary (the historical precedents of Dresden, Tokyo, Hiroshima, Nagasaki being applicable to the Mecca and Medina destruction decision point).”

Wired.com received hundreds of documents and course materials that illustrated the hateful and false ideas being taught in this course, and it reported that the course instructor brought in “anti-Muslim demagogues as guest lecturers.” The course was canceled by the Pentagon after Wired.com first reported it, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff have since taken steps to ensure that no more anti-Islamic course material will be taught to anyone in the entire security apparatus of the federal government, military or civilian. However, it may be too late to undo the damage caused by this course. *The Guardian* reported that although Lieutenant Colonel Matthew Dooley, who was responsible for much of the course material, began teaching at Joint Forces Staff College in 2010, the course had existed since 2004 and “was offered five times a year, with about 20 students each time.”

Jihad is considered by many scholars (Western as well as Islamic) to be a religious analogue to Western just war theory, and they see it as falling within the norms of international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions.

It’s quite chilling to learn that Dooley advocated to his students that the U.S. military should use terrorism against the world’s entire Muslim population, and who knows how many officers who have operated in Iraq and Afghanistan have been exposed to these bigoted and sociopathic ideas. But Dooley’s course is just a symptom

Teaching Terrorism in the Name of Freedom

by Ross Caputi

of a much bigger problem. The beliefs expressed in his course are too widespread in the U.S. military for Dooley to be the root of it all, and simply canceling his class will not put an end to this. The ignorance and

hatred that is rife in our military needs to be dealt with on a much larger level.

When I was in Marine Corps boot camp in 2003, I remember how my drill instructors told us that we were fighting terrorists (“terrorist” was nearly synonymous with “Muslim”) because Islam taught them that if they killed an American they would go directly to heaven when they died and receive 72 virgins. For a while I believed it. I believed it all the way to Fallujah, where my command told us that Fallujah had been taken over by terrorists and that we were going to “liberate” the city by killing everyone who picked up arms against us. Evidence of their acts of terrorism was lacking (and the attack by U.S. troops—when we were clearly the aggressors—was not an act of terrorism), but the fact that they believed in jihad and fought back against us was enough to condemn them.

Those attitudes were widespread when I was in Iraq as early as 2004. “Insurgent” and “terrorist” were equated, and it was widely believed that jihad was a call for a holy war against infidels, in which terrorism was the main tactic. Such ideological distortions created an atmosphere in which anyone who picked up a weapon against us

and looked like they might have been a Muslim (meaning they were brown skinned) was immediately condemned as a jihadi terrorist. The simplistic explanation that their religion told them to attack us not only hid the inconvenient truth that we were, in fact, the aggressors, but it discouraged any further investigation into the issue. They

were misguided by false beliefs, we were good—sweet and simple.

The idea that we are in a clash of civilizations with the Islamic world was very much alive in the minds of your average, low-ranking soldier and your military brass while I was in the military, and it still

What is clear is that the removal of anti-Islamic course material from military and FBI schools is not enough to combat the false beliefs about Islam that are prevalent in our security forces.

is today. The differences between the Islamic world and the West are perceived by many to be so different that conflict is believed to be inevitable. Yet the differences are far more superficial than what Dooley taught his students, and what my drill instructor taught me. Dooley’s course taught a “Counter-Jihad Op Design Model,” yet jihad is considered by many scholars (Western as well as Islamic) to be a religious analogue to Western just war theory, and they see it as falling within the norms of international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions.

Jihad literally means “struggle” or “effort,” and it is a duty for all Muslims. Jihad can take on three forms: an internal struggle to refrain from sin and be the best Muslim one can be (which is often referred to as Jihad Al Akbar, the greater jihad); an external struggle for justice and to build a good Islamic society; and a holy war. However, in jihad there are considerations of *jus ad bellum* (just cause for war) and *jus in bello* (just conduct in war), just as in just war theory. Most modern Islamic scholars agree that jihad can only be fought in self-defense. Furthermore, in jihad there is a strict distinction between combatants and noncombatants, private property is protected, certain weapons and tactics are forbidden,

and there are limitations on collateral damage. Clearly, jihad does not condone terrorism, but that has not stopped a few madmen from invoking the term to try to justify their crimes.

A misunderstanding of what jihad is and what it condones is undoubtedly the root of a lot of Islamophobia. Yet all of the above considerations raise the question, “What is so scary about jihad?” It appears to be just the foreignness of the word itself, rather than the concepts it invokes, that scares most Americans. Jihad and just war theory deem many of the

same acts to be moral or immoral. They only differ in how they justify those acts: through the will of Allah or through secular philosophy. However, the widespread misunderstanding of jihad has led many to nearly equate it with terrorism, and the “War on Terror” in reality has been a war on jihad. It is of the most bitter irony that those who have responded to our aggression by shouting “jihad” in the name of self-defense were condemned as our enemies and were met with more aggression. The circularity of our justifications for our aggression and the Islamic justification for self-defense has spun us into a bloodbath that has shown little sign of abating.

Whether or not we will be able to sensibly remove ourselves from the vicious cycle of violence that has been the “War on Terror” remains to be seen. What is clear is that the removal of anti-Islamic course material from military and FBI schools is not enough to combat the false beliefs about Islam that are prevalent in our security forces. Simply not teaching them anymore will not make them go away soon enough to avert more bloodshed. Some sort of critical intervention is needed.

Ross Caputi is a former U.S. marine (2003-06) who took part in the second battle of Fallujah in November 2004. He became openly critical of the military and was discharged from the army in 2006. Ross is currently a student at Boston University and is founding director of the Justice for Fallujah Project. He is working on a book, Both Ends of the Gun, with Feurat Alani.



In April 1917 Cardinal James Gibbons of Baltimore, the de facto head of the U.S. Catholic church, issued a letter that all Catholics were to support World War I, an example of the Just War Theory.



The pursuit of peace and progress cannot end in a few years in either victory or defeat. The pursuit of peace and progress, with its trials and its errors, its successes and its setbacks, can never be relaxed and never abandoned.

—Dag Hammarskjöld

THE DIVINE WIND

Edward Tick

"Kamikaze" in Japanese means Divine Wind. Tanka is a traditional Japanese verse form of 5-7-5-7-7 syllable lines, and was the origin of haiku. This tanka series considers the World War II Kamikaze, or suicide flight, experience through the eyes of both the Japanese Kamikaze pilot and the American sailor under attack..

I. The Pilot Looks Down

Emperor, sun god,
from your eastern pagoda
with its soft blue roof
you breathe droplets of gold
on rice grass and green bamboo.

Ancestor, uncle,
Mount Fuji's snowcap glitters,
chrysanthemums bloom,
the stones of Kyoto warm
as you peek out of the sea.

Not an almond branch,
not a school of swift herring
escapes blossoming.
Nagasaki rejoices
when you rise above the sea.

Daily it was you
who kissed my closed eyelids
to pull me from dreams.
I looked across my harbor home
to see you kiss green waters.

I am a steel bird.
I feel you breathing, breathing.
I spread my long wings.
As a child you cradled me.
Catch me as I fall. I fall.



II. The Gunner Looks Up

Remember Spring, Dad?
Driving far to fresh marshes
hiding in deep grass.
We'd smell the musty quiet.
Water would lap at our ears.

I learned to wait, watch
the ducks returning northward,
their brave brown bodies
flapping in a living V
flecking us with small shadows.

You taught me: don't cry,
don't jump, don't move. You'd point, point.
I'd aim my shotgun
at their long bodies, long wings.
My finger would squeeze. Slow. Slow.

The shotgun's gray blast
flecking a tiny body
with red polka dots.
It fell, wings spread like mad flames.
The others squawked, scattered.

At its peak I squeeze.
I squeeze. It does not scatter.
I squeeze. It falls. Squeeze.
Steel bird screaming down on me.
Daddy, I don't cry. Ducks! Ducks!



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Mark Runge started it as an exercise in drawing. He then adding elements one by one until a story emerged. He read a proposal for a show that was to showcase veterans and their artwork, and the piece grew into an image that reflected his war-time experiences. The piece, Iraqi Knights and Civilian Life, (PTSD), is done in charcoal and colored pencil. The size is approximately 30x22.5".



"Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal."

Martin Luther King, Jr.