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Peace with Iran

صلح با ایران

"No war on Iran" is a requisite condition for peace, but peace is an ongoing process whose own requisites are empathy and understanding. The sages tell us that an enemy is one whose story we haven't heard. Sadly, most Americans choose to ignore *others'* stories, while choosing to hear—and believe—the stories, the tall tales, told by our government leaders and their media.

But the stories of the people of Iran are our stories. They are people like us. Parents in Iran want food, clothing, health care, education, security, and a future for their children; their children want stability and love—and peace.

The cultural story of Iran is ancient. The Persian ancestors of today's Iranians had law and literature for centuries while our Northern European predecessors were hunting and gathering their sustenance and, from time to time, clubbing one another. In recent history, for a couple hundred years anyway, Iran has not fought a war of aggression. They have attacked no one. Meanwhile, Western countries, led by the bellicose U.S., have wantonly and repeatedly attacked other nations at will.

Please take a moment to imagine a role reversal. Suppose we were the country suffering sanctions and praying that the world's military superpower would not attack us. Suppose that superpower had an archipelago of military bases in Canada and in Mexico. Suppose that we were being threatened for violating laws that, in fact, we were complying with. Suppose that we were being told by the world powers wielding the biggest clubs that it was unacceptable for us to even think of acquiring our own club to use as a deterrent to attack.

Once we, as a people, choose empathy and understanding over belligerence and arrogance and once we choose to seek out and listen to others' stories, we will begin to engage in the process of peace with Iran.



"Peace Girl – Tehran, Iran"
Image by Icy & Sot – icyandsot.com

From March Forward!

Veterans & GIs say: 'No War on Iran!'

by Mike Prysner

The millionaire politicians are at it again, prodded by their buddies in Big Oil and the defense industry, beating the war drums against a country that refuses to bow down to Wall Street.

It's the same old story: Republicans and Democrats alike are targeting yet another independent country—not-so-coincidentally sitting atop massive oil reserves—and rambling on about Weapons of Mass Destruction that everybody knows don't exist.

We've just endured 10 years of Washington's wars for "national security," which only seem to benefit those who are making a profit, while on the other hand causing massive bloodshed overseas and severe lack of money for people's needs here at home.

Like with Iraq, the U.S. government's sanctions, assassinations, and threats of war towards Iran have nothing to do with self-defense or human rights, but what is best for big business in one of the most profitable regions in the world.

Regardless of the fact that most people oppose a war with Iran, it is painfully obvious that the U.S. government acts only in the interests of the 1%—unless they are forced to do otherwise.

We cannot sit back while Wall Street drives another charge into war that destroys the lives of millions in the name of profit. March Forward! is mobilizing to take action against war with Iran. We call on all our members and supporters to join us.

From Friends Committee on National Legislation

Quaker Lobby Calls for Bilateral U.S.-Iran Talks

Talking to Iran is the single most effective way to prevent war and prevent a nuclear-armed Iran. It's time for the United States to negotiate a "grand bargain" with Iran, which would include reaching a comprehensive nuclear verification and safeguards agreement to ensure full transparency of Iran's nuclear program.

Hasn't diplomacy with Iran already been tried? Hardly. U.S. and Iranian officials have reportedly spent a grand total of 45 minutes in direct, one-on-one

talks in more than 30 years. That singular reported incident of high-level, U.S. and Iranian bilateral talks took place during a lunch break in Geneva, in October 2009. After those talks collapsed, rather than pursue further talks—which is what sustained diplomacy requires—the Obama administration abandoned its efforts to engage in robust diplomacy with Iran...grievances between both sides cannot begin to be resolved until U.S. policymakers are willing to spend more

than 45 minutes in direct, bilateral talks with Iran.

Don't Israelis support attacking Iran? There is a wide spectrum of the Israeli military and national security establishment, as well as the Israeli public, who are opposed to attacking Iran. In fact, a February 2012 poll revealed that only 19% of Israelis said they would support an Israeli military attack on Iran if it is not approved by the United States. Certainly, there is a broad diversity (See FCNL on page 17)



A few basic facts from March Forward!

Who is the real threat to peace?

Fact: Iran does not possess a nuclear weapon.

Fact: Iran has the right, according to international law, to develop nuclear energy for civilian use.

Fact: Iran's nuclear energy program is regularly monitored by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Fact: Iran has never started a war.*

Fact: The United States possesses 10,600 nuclear warheads in its stockpile, 7,982 of which are deployed and 2,700 of which are in a contingency stockpile. The total number of nuclear warheads that have been built from 1951 to present is 67,500.

Fact: The United States is the only country to have ever used nuclear weapons. It did so when it incinerated hundreds of thousands of Japanese people living in the cities of Nagasaki and Hiroshima. Neither city had any military significance.

Fact: The United States has spent \$7 trillion on nuclear weapons. The U.S. military budget for 2012 alone is about equal to Iran's entire Gross National Product.

* "never" in recent history, anyway. The last time was the 4th Russo-Persian War of 1826 to 1828. (ed.)

unlike Iran, possesses hundreds of nuclear weapons.

Fact: Israel, unlike Iran, refuses to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, or allow the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) into Israel to monitor its nuclear program.

Fact: There is active discussion in the Israeli media about whether Israel will carry out military strikes against Iran's nuclear energy facilities. Israel bombed similar nuclear civilian energy facilities in Iraq in 1981 ("Operation Babylon") and in Syria in 2007 ("Operation Orchard").

Fact: The United States and Britain used severe economic sanctions and CIA covert operatives to overthrow the democratically elected government of Iran led by Dr. Mohammad Mosaddegh in 1953. The Iranian government under Mosaddegh had nationalized the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC), which [later] became known as British Petroleum (BP), in a campaign to use oil profits to eradicate widespread poverty within Iran. The successful CIA and British Intelligence coup d'état put the Shah of Iran (King) back in power. The Shah's dictatorship denationalized Iranian oil and returned it to the ownership of British and U.S. oil

companies. The Shah executed and tortured thousands during his 26-year bloody reign, which ended in the 1979 revolution that created the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Fact: The United States broke diplomatic relations with Iran and has pursued a policy of economic sanctions against the country since the overthrow of the U.S.-backed Shah (King).

Fact: Iran's oil reserves are the fourth largest in the world—it has 12.7 percent of the world's known oil reserves. That makes Iran's oil reserves second only to Saudi Arabia in the Middle East, greater than those of Iraq.

Fact: The new economic sanctions against Iran include a ban on the import, sale and trade of Iranian oil, which constitutes half of Iran's Gross National Product. It forbids any company in the world that does any business with Iran or its Central Bank from having any trade or economic transaction with a U.S. bank or corporation.

Fact: The economic sanctions are an effort to create economic suffering in Iran and to deprive the country of the goods and services to sustain life. According to international law, these economic sanctions constitute a blockade or an act of war against Iran even though Iran poses no threat to the people of the United States or Europe.

Afghan Massacre Demonstrates War has Failed

by Matt Southworth



The continued suffering and violence of the Afghan people can only be lessened by political solutions to the conflict – which can only happen in the absence of foreign troops

As is increasingly evidenced by developments in Afghanistan from gloomy intelligence reports to the Quran burning to the recent massacre of 16 Afghan civilians, including nine children, it is long past time for the U.S. military to leave that country.

After weeks of tumultuous upheaval, the slaying allegedly by a U.S. Army Staff Sergeant is just the most recent incident undermining U.S. objectives to win hearts and minds. Frankly, that mission has long been lost.

We are still learning about the Staff Sergeant, a married father of two. It appears he was deployed to both Iraq and Afghanistan a total of four times. On one of those tours, he suffered a traumatic brain injury (TBI), but was declared "fit for duty" by the U.S. Army. Afghans would certainly beg to differ. This is also more evidence that

the U.S. military cannot be allowed to deploy troops with diagnosed psychological issues—such as Post Traumatic Stress or TBIs, a message pushed by a project called Operation Recovery.

The media has tried hard to paint this incident as an isolated deranged U.S. soldier committing murder—the "bad apple" theory. While the heinousness of the massacre is seemingly rare, the terror and rage it creates among ordinary Afghans is not. After ten years of this war and some 40 years of conflict, Afghans are endlessly affected by the suffering and violence in their country.

Yet this also alludes to something larger than just the "bad apple" theory. If I learned one lesson in Iraq, it was that violence—whether by us or those resisting our presence—only caused more violence. Moreover, the violence was accompanied by something worse: the dehumanization of the "other." That happens on both sides. War doesn't just rob the occupied of their humanity; it robs the occupiers of theirs too. And this is why humankind cannot continue to wage senseless wars that accomplish nothing but death and destruction.

(See *WAR HAS FAILED* on page 18)

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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 War Crimes Times.

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The Jirga Medal of Honor: The Colossal Folly of War in Afghanistan

by Ralph Nader

*They can see us all
the way from
America on screens
sitting in cool rooms
where they can
press buttons and
wipe us out without
our seeing or
hearing anything
coming at us. We
are all so terrified.
Especially the
children.
We wonder why
they are doing this
to us? We never
threatened them.
They threaten
everyone with their
bases, ships,
planes and
missiles.*

The U.S. war in Afghanistan is testing so much futuristic detect and destroy weaponry that it can be called the most advanced all-seeing invasion in military history. From blanket satellite surveillance to soldiers' infra-red vision to the remotely-guided photographing killer drones to the latest fused ground-based imagery and electronic signal intercepts, the age of robotic land, sea, and air weaponry is at hand.

U.S. and NATO soldiers and contractors greatly outnumber the Taliban, whose sandals and weapons are from the past century. Still, with the most sophisticated arsenals ever deployed, why are U.S. generals saying that less than 30,000 Taliban fighters, for almost a decade, have fought the U.S. led forces to a draw?

Perhaps one answer can be drawn from a ceremony that could be happening in various places in that tormented country. That is, a Jirga of elders awarding a young fighter the "Jirga medal of honor" for courage on the battlefield, which often happens to be their village or valley.



Despite their sophisticated weaponry like this Predator drone and Hellfire missile, the U.S.-led forces have fought to a draw with the sandal-clad Taliban.

The chief elder rose to address a wise circle of villagers. "Today we are presenting our beloved Mursi with the revered Jirga medal of honor for courage beyond the call of duty in rescuing seven of his brother defenders from almost certain destruction. The invaders had surrounded our young brothers at night in the great Helmand gully

with their snipers, grenade-launchers, and helicopter gunships.

"It looked like the end--until Mursi started a very smoky fire and diverted the enemy with a firebomb that startled several donkeys into braying loudly. In the few seconds absorbed by diverting the foreigners who directed their firepower in that direction, Mursi led his brothers, two of them wounded, through a large rock crevice and down an incline that was hidden from view and into a cave covered with bush. For some reason, the occupiers' night vision equipment was not working, thanks be to Allah.

"The next morning, the enemy had gone away, provably to start another deadly attack elsewhere on our people. Before the Jirga awards you this ancient symbol of resistance, Mursi, in the form of a sculptured shield made of a rare wood, will you say a few words to your tribe?"

Mursi, a thin-as-a-rail twenty-year-old youth, rose.

I accept this great honor on behalf of my brothers who escaped with their lives that terrible night in Helmand. I was very scared.

The enemy has everything and we have nothing. They have planes, helicopters, artillery, many soldiers with equipment that resists bullets, sees in the dark and provides them with food, water, and medicine. We only have our old rifles, some grenades and explosives. They can see us all the way from America on screens sitting in cool rooms where they can press buttons and wipe us out without our seeing or hearing anything coming at us. We are all so terrified. Especially the children.

We wonder why they are doing this to us? We never threatened them. They threaten everyone with their bases, ships, planes, and missiles. I hear that the foreign soldiers ask themselves why are they here, what are they doing here and for what? But they are paid well to be here, destroying our country year after year, though they boast about



Jirga of elders from the village of Kalagu in the Zormat district of eastern Afghanistan's Paktia province.

Photo: Andrya Hill, U.S. Army

building some bridges and digging some water wells. No thank you.

Go back to your families, you will never win because we are fighting to repel you invaders from our ancient tribal lands, our homes,. Fighting to expel the invaders is stronger and more righteous than your weapons and all your military wealth. Even if many of us lose our lives, we will prevail one day. For we will have heaven and they will have hell.

A long knowing silence followed. A rooster crowed in the distance. The chief elder then slowly handed the medal to their brave hero.

Can the most militarily-powerful country in the world ---many of whose people and soldiers are opposed or have serious doubts about why we are continuing to pursue these senseless undeclared wars of aggression that create more hatred and enemies--look with empathy at what those people, whom we are pummeling, are going through? Will the Pentagon, which doesn't estimate civilian casualties, let its officials speak publicly about the millions of such casualties--deceased, injured and sick--that have afflicted innocent Iraqis, Afghanis and Pakistanis?

Will our current crop of political candidates for Congress and the Presidency ever reflect on the wise words of our past Generals--Dwight Eisenhower, George Marshall and, earlier, Smedley Butler--about the folly and gore, not the glory of war?

The eighteenth century words of the Scottish poet, Robert Burns, rings so true. He wrote:

*"And would some Power the small gift give us.
To see ourselves as others see us!
It would from many a blunder free us..."*

Ralph Nader is a consumer advocate, lawyer, and author. His most recent book--and first novel--is, Only The Super-Rich Can Save Us. His most recent work of non-fiction is The Seventeen Traditions.

*One day while I was in a bunker in Vietnam,
a sniper round went over my head.
The Vietnamese individual who fired that weapon
was not a insurgent, not a radical fundamentalist,
not a rebel, not a terrorist, or a so-called bad guy.
The person who tried to kill me was a regular
everyday citizen of Vietnam,
who did not want me in His country.
This truth escapes millions.*

—Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71

The world war on democracy

by John Pilger

Lisette Talate died the other day. I remember a wiry, fiercely intelligent woman who masked her grief with a determination that was a presence. She was the embodiment of people's resistance to the war on democracy. I first glimpsed her in a 1950s Colonial Office film about the Chagos islanders, a tiny creole nation living midway between Africa and Asia in the Indian Ocean. The camera panned across thriving villages, a church, a school, a hospital, set in a phenomenon of natural beauty and peace. Lisette remembers the producer saying to her and her teenage friends, "Keep smiling girls!"

Sitting in her kitchen in Mauritius many years later, she said, "I didn't have to be told to smile. I was a happy child, because my roots were deep in the islands, my paradise. My great-grandmother was born there; I made six children there. That's why they couldn't legally throw us out of our own homes; they had to terrify us into leaving or force us out. At first, they tried to starve us. The food ships stopped arriving [then] they spread rumors we would be bombed, then they turned on our dogs."



A Diego Garciaian at the time of the U.S. encampment, 1971.

(Source: Geodesy Collection)

In the early 1960s, the Labor government of Harold Wilson secretly agreed to a demand from Washington that the Chagos archipelago, a British colony, be "swept" and "sanitized" of its 2,500 inhabitants so that a military base could be built on the principal island, Diego Garcia. "They knew we were inseparable from our pets," said Lisette, "When the American sol-

diers arrived to build the base, they backed their big trucks against the brick shed where we prepared the coconuts; hundreds of our dogs had been rounded up and imprisoned there. Then they gassed them through tubes from the trucks' exhausts. You could hear them crying."

Lisette and her family and hundreds of islanders were forced on to a rusting steamer bound for Mauritius, a distance of 2,500 miles. They were made to sleep in the hold on a cargo of fertilizer: bird shit. The weather was rough; everyone was ill; two women miscarried. Dumped on the docks at Port Louis, Lisette's youngest children, Jollice and Regis, died within a week of each other. "They died of sadness," she said. "They had heard all the talk and seen the horror of what had happened to the dogs. They knew they were leaving their home forever. The doctor in Mauritius said he could not treat sadness."

This act of mass kidnapping was carried out in high secrecy. In one official file, under the heading, "Maintaining the fiction," the Foreign Office legal adviser exhorts his colleagues to cover their actions by "re-classifying" the population as "floating" and to "make up the rules as we go along." Article 7 of the statute of the International Criminal Court says the "deportation or forcible transfer of population" is a crime against humanity. That Britain

had committed such a crime—in exchange for a \$14 million discount off an American Polaris nuclear submarine—was not on the agenda of a group of British "defense" correspondents flown to the Chagos by the Ministry of Defense when the U.S. base was completed. "There is nothing in our files," said a ministry official, "about inhabitants or an evacuation."

Today, Diego Garcia is crucial to America's and Britain's war on democracy. The heaviest bombing of Iraq and Afghanistan was launched from its vast airstrips, beyond which the islanders' abandoned cemetery and church stand like archaeological ruins. The terraced garden where Lisette laughed for the camera is now a fortress housing the "bunker-busting" bombs carried by bat-shaped B-2 aircraft to targets in two continents; an attack on Iran will start here. As if to complete the emblem of rampant, criminal power, the CIA added a Guantanamo-style prison for its "rendition" victims and called it Camp Justice.

What was done to Lisette's paradise has an urgent and universal meaning, for it represents the violent, ruthless nature of a whole system behind its democratic facade, and the scale of our own indoctrination to its messianic assumptions, described by Harold Pinter as a "brilliant, even witty, highly successful act of hypnosis." Longer and bloodier than any war since 1945, waged with demonic



Location of Diego Garcia.
(source: CIA world factbook)

weapons and a gangsterism dressed as economic policy and sometimes known as globalization, the war on democracy is unmentionable in western elite circles. As Pinter wrote, "it never happened even while it was happening." Last July, American historian William Blum published his "updated summary of the record of U.S. foreign policy." Since the Second World War, the U.S. has:

- Attempted to overthrow more than 50 governments, most of them democratically-elected;
- Attempted to suppress a populist or national movement in 20 countries;
- Grossly interfered in democratic elections in at least 30 countries;
- Dropped bombs on the people of more than 30 countries;
- Attempted to assassinate more than 50 foreign leaders.

In total, the United States has carried out one or more of these actions in 69 countries. In almost all cases, Britain has been a collaborator. The "enemy" changes in name—from Communism to Islamism—but mostly it is the rise of democracy independent of western power or a society occupying strategically useful territory, deemed expendable, like the Chagos Islands.

The sheer scale of suffering, let alone criminality, is little known in the west, despite the presence of the world's most advanced communications, nominally freest journalism and most admired academy. That the most numerous victims of terrorism—western terrorism—are Muslims is unsayable, if it is known. That half a million Iraqi infants



Lisette Talate was "swept" and "sanitized" from her island of natural beauty and peace to make way for a military base – a crime against humanity.

died in the 1990s as a result of the embargo imposed by Britain and America is of no interest. That extreme jihadism, which led to 9/11, was nurtured as a weapon of western policy ("Operation Cyclone") is known to specialists but otherwise suppressed.

While popular culture in Britain and America immerses the Second World War in an ethical bath for the victors, the holocausts arising from Anglo-American dominance of resource-rich regions are consigned to oblivion. Under the Indonesian tyrant Suharto, anointed "Our Man" by Thatcher, more than a million people were slaughtered. Described by the CIA as "the worst mass murder of the second half of the 20th century," the estimate does not include a third of the population of East Timor who were starved or murdered with western connivance, British fighter-bombers, and machine guns.

These true stories are told in declassified files in the Public Record Office, yet represent an entire dimension of politics and the exercise of power excluded from public consideration. This has been achieved by a regime of un-coercive information control, from the evangelical mantra of consumer advertising to sound-bites on BBC news and now the ephemera of social media.

It is as if writers as watchdogs are extinct, or in thrall to a sociopathic zeitgeist, convinced they are too clever to be duped. Witness the stampede of sycophants eager to deify Christopher Hitchens, a war lover who longed to be



A B-1 bomber takes off from Diego Garcia on a strike mission against Afghanistan in 2001 during Operation Enduring Freedom.

(USAF photo)

allowed to justify the crimes of rapacious power. "For almost the first time in two centuries," wrote Terry Eagleton, "there is no eminent British poet, playwright, or novelist prepared to question the foundations of the western way of life." No Orwell warns that we do not need to live in a totalitarian society to be corrupted by totalitarianism. No Shelley speaks for the poor, no Blake proffers a vision, no Wilde reminds us that "disobedience, in the eyes of anyone who has read history, is man's original

virtue.” And grievously, no Pinter rages at the war machine, as in American Football:

Hallelujah.

Praise the Lord for all good things...

We blew their balls into shards of dust,

Into shards of fucking dust...

Into shards of fucking dust go all the lives blown there by Barack Obama, the Hopey Changey of western violence. Whenever one of Obama’s drones wipes out an entire family in a faraway tribal region of Pakistan, or Somalia, or Yemen, the American controllers in front of their computer-game screens type in “Bugsplat.” Obama likes drones and has joked about them with journalists. One of his first actions as president was to order a wave of Predator drone attacks on Pakistan that killed 74 people. He has since killed thousands, mostly civilians; drones fire Hellfire missiles that suck the air out of the lungs of children and leave body parts festooned across scrubland.

Obama said the military would not only be ready to “secure territory and populations” overseas but to fight in the “homeland” and provide “support to the civil authorities.” In other words, U.S. troops will be deployed on the streets of American cities when the inevitable civil unrest takes hold.

Remember the tear-stained headlines when Brand Obama was elected: “momentous, spine-tingling”: the *Guardian*. “The American future,” wrote Simon Schama, “is all vision, numinous, unformed, light-headed ...” The *San Francisco Chronicle*’s columnist saw a spiritual “lightworker [who can] usher in a new way of being on the planet.” Beyond the drivel, as the great whistleblower Daniel Ellsberg had predicted, a military coup was taking place in Washington, and Obama was their man.

Having seduced the anti-war movement into virtual silence, he has given America’s corrupt military officer class unprecedented powers of state and engagement. These include the prospect of wars in Africa and opportunities for provocations against China, America’s largest creditor and new “enemy” in Asia. Under Obama, the old source of official paranoia Russia, has been encircled with ballistic missiles and the Russian opposition infiltrated. Military and CIA assassination teams have been assigned to 120 countries; long planned attacks on Syria and Iran beckon a world war. Israel, the exemplar of U.S. violence and lawlessness by proxy, has just received its annual pocket money of \$3 billion together with Obama’s permission to steal more Palestinian land.

Obama’s most “historic” achievement is to bring the war on democracy home to America. On New Year’s Eve, he signed the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), a law that grants the Pentagon the legal right to kidnap both foreigners and U.S. citizens and indefinitely detain, interrogate and torture, or even kill them. They need only “associate” with those “belligerent” to the United States. There will be no protection of law, no trial, no legal representation. This is the first explicit legislation to abolish habeus corpus (the right to due process of law) and effectively repeal the Bill of Rights of 1789.

On January 5, in an extraordinary speech at the Pentagon, Obama said the military would not only be ready to “secure territory and populations” overseas but to fight in the “homeland” and provide

“support to the civil authorities.” In other words, U.S. troops will be deployed on the streets of American cities when the inevitable civil unrest takes hold.

America is now a land of epidemic poverty and barbaric prisons: the consequence of a “market” extremism which, under Obama, has prompted the transfer of \$14 trillion in public money to criminal enterprises in Wall Street. The victims are mostly young jobless, homeless, incarcerated African-Americans, betrayed by the first black president. The historic corollary of a perpetual war state, this is not fascism, not yet, but neither is it democracy in any recognizable form, regardless of the placebo politics that will consume the news until November. The presidential campaign, says the Washington Post, will “feature a clash of philosophies rooted in distinctly different views of the economy.” This is patently false. The circumscribed task of journalism on both sides of the Atlantic is to create the pretense

of political choice where there is none.

The same shadow is across Britain and much of Europe where social democracy, an article of faith two generations ago, has fallen to the central bank dictators. In David Cameron’s “big society,” the theft of 84 billion pounds in jobs and services even exceeds the amount of tax “legally” avoided by piratical corporations. Blame rests not with the far right, but a cowardly liberal political culture that has allowed this to happen, which, wrote Hywel Williams in the wake of the attacks on 9/11, “can itself be a form of self-righteous fanaticism.” Tony Blair is one such fanatic. In its managerial indifference to the freedoms that it claims to hold dear, bourgeois Blair-ite Britain has created a surveillance state with 3,000 new criminal offenses and laws: more than for the whole of the previous century. The police clearly believe they have an impunity to kill. At the demand of the CIA, cases like that of Binyam Mohamed, an innocent British resident tortured and then held for five years in Guantanamo Bay, will be dealt with in secret courts in Britain “in order to protect the intelligence agencies”—the torturers.

This invisible state allowed the Blair government to fight the Chagos islanders as they rose from their despair in exile and demanded justice in the streets of Port Louis and London. “Only when you take direct action, face to face, even break laws, are you ever noticed,” said Lisette. “And the smaller you are, the greater your example to others.” Such an eloquent answer to those who still ask, “What can I do?”

I last saw Lisette’s tiny figure standing in driving rain alongside her comrades outside the Houses of Parliament. What struck me was the enduring courage of their resistance. It is this refusal to give up that rotten power fears, above all, knowing it is the seed beneath the snow.

John Pilger is a journalist and an award-winning documentary film-maker. His latest film is The War You Don't See. This article was reprinted from www.johnpilger.com with his permission.

The Face of Youth Being Arrested in D.C.



Photograph by Mike Hastie Taken at a demonstration near The White House in D.C. September 2005

**You wonder where it is all leading to.
You wonder how much longer the
Police State is going to get away with everything.**

**The innocence of youth in America is
getting more and more disillusioned
with the future of their lives.**

**Eventually, that innocent face will turn
to hopeless resentments that will no
longer trust any generation that came before them.**

**"The Road," is becoming more traveled.
America has become the thousand-yard stare.
The U.S. Propaganda State has become high on
everything.**

**The most profound realization I had when
I came back from Vietnam, was that I was
the enemy in Vietnam.**

**I was still young then, but that innocent face I took to
Vietnam was battered and beaten by the previous
generation of Americans who said they loved me.**

**That political incest betrayal took me to
a padded cell nine years after I got back
from Vietnam.**

**When I went back to Vietnam in 1994 to
make amends to the Vietnamese people,
I found my soul again.**

**I followed my path, and it led to the truth.
I was born in America, but my heart is
Vietnamese.**

**The youth in America will have to find their
way back home, and that path will force them
to become a citizen of the world.**

**It is the last thing the political elite in America
want them to discover.**

**Betrayal is like having a lifelong mentor turn on you
and become your worst enemy.
That enemy still lives inside of you, and in order to
survive, you have to outgrow the
lies that once defined your life.**

—Mike Hastie, Army Medic Vietnam
February 10, 2012

Obama terror drones: CIA tactics in Pakistan include targeting rescuers and funerals

by Chris Woods and Christina Lamb

The CIA's drone campaign in Pakistan has killed dozens of civilians who had gone to help rescue victims or were attending funerals, an investigation by The Bureau of Investigative Journalism for the *London Sunday Times* has revealed.

The findings were published just days after President Obama claimed that the drone campaign in Pakistan was a "targeted, focused effort" that "has not caused a huge number of civilian casualties."

Speaking publicly for the first time on the controversial CIA drone strikes [during an online town hall discussion in late January], Obama claimed they are used strictly to target terrorists, rejecting what he called "this perception we're just sending in a whole bunch of strikes willy-nilly."

"Drones have not caused a huge number of civilian casualties," he told a questioner at an on-line forum. "This is a targeted, focused effort at people who are on a list of active terrorists trying to go in and harm Americans."

But research by the Bureau has found that since Obama took office in January, 2009, between 282 and 535 civilians have been credibly reported as killed, including more than 60 children. A three month investigation including eye witness reports has found evidence that at least 50 civilians were killed in follow-up strikes when they had gone to help victims. More than 20 civilians have also been attacked in deliberate strikes on funerals and mourners. The tactics have been condemned by leading legal experts.

Although the drone attacks were started

The U.S. claims the drones are a vital tool that has helped them almost wipe out the leadership of al Qaeda in Pakistan. But others point out they have stoked enormous anti-American sentiment in a country with an arsenal of 200 nuclear weapons.

under the Bush administration in 2004, they have been stepped up enormously under Obama.

There have been 260 attacks by unmanned Predators or Reapers in Pakistan by Obama's administration—averaging one every four days. Because the attacks are carried out by the CIA, no information is given on the numbers killed.

Administration officials insist that these covert attacks are legal. John Brennan, the president's top counter-terrorism adviser, argues that the U.S. has the right to unilaterally strike terrorists anywhere in the world, not just what he called "hot battlefields."

"Because we are engaged in an armed conflict with al-Qaeda, the United States takes the legal position that, in accordance with international law, we have the author-



Predator drone (indicated by arrow) keeps watch over Afghanistan

Photo by Todd Huffman

ity to take action against al-Qaeda and its associated forces," he told a conference at Harvard Law School last year. "The United States does not view our authority to use military force against al-Qaeda as being restricted solely to 'hot' battlefields like Afghanistan."

State-sanctioned extra-judicial executions

But some international law specialists fiercely disagree, arguing that the strikes amount to little more than state-sanctioned extra-judicial executions and questioning how the U.S. government would react if

another state such as China or Russia started taking such action against those they declare as enemies.

The first confirmed attack on rescuers took place in North Waziristan on May 16, 2009. According to Mushtaq Yusufzai, a local journalist, Taliban militants had gathered in the village of Khaisor. After praying at the local mosque, they were preparing to cross the nearby border into Afghanistan to launch an attack on U.S. forces. But the U.S. struck first.

A CIA drone fired its missiles into the Taliban group, killing at least a dozen people. Villagers joined surviving Taliban as they tried to retrieve the dead and injured.

But as rescuers clambered through the demolished house the drones struck again. Two missiles slammed into the rubble,

killing many more. At least 29 people died in total.

"We lost very trained and sincere friends," a local Taliban commander told *The News*, a Pakistani newspaper. "Some of them were very senior Taliban commanders and had taken part in successful actions in Afghanistan. Bodies of most of them were beyond recognition."

For the Americans the attack was a success. A surprise tactic had resulted in the deaths of many Taliban. But locals say that six ordinary villagers also died that day, identified by Bureau field researchers as Sabir, Ikram, Mohib, Zahid, Mashal and Syed Noor (most people in the area use only one name).

Yusufzai, who reported on the attack, says those killed in the follow-up strike "were trying to pull out the bodies, to help clear the rubble, and take people to hospital." The impact of drone attacks on rescuers has been to scare people off, he says: "They've learnt that something will happen. No one wants to go close to these damaged buildings anymore."

The legal view

Naz Modirzadeh, Associate Director of the Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research (HPCR) at Harvard University, said killing people at a rescue site may have no legal justification.

"Not to mince words here, if it is not in a situation of armed conflict, unless it falls into the very narrow area of imminent threat then it is an extra-judicial execution," she said. "We don't even need to get to the nuance of who's who, and are people there for rescue or not. Because each death is illegal. Each death is a murder in that case."

The Khaisor incident was not a one-off. Between May 2009 and June 2011, at least fifteen attacks on rescuers were reported by credible news media, including

the *New York Times*, CNN, Associated Press, ABC News and Al Jazeera.

It is notoriously difficult for the media to operate safely in Pakistan's tribal areas. Both militants and the military routinely threaten journalists. Yet for three months a team of local researchers has been seeking independent confirmation of these strikes.

Eyewitness accounts

The researchers have found credible, independently-sourced evidence of civilians killed in ten of the reported attacks on rescuers. In five other reported attacks, the researchers found no evidence of any rescuers—civilians or otherwise—killed.

The researchers were told by villagers that strikes on rescuers began as early as March 2008, although no media carried reports at the time. The Bureau is seeking testimony relating to nine additional incidents.

Often when the U.S. attacks militants in Pakistan, the Taliban seals off the site and retrieves the dead. But an examination of thousands of credible reports relating to CIA drone strikes also shows frequent references to civilian rescuers. Mosques often exhort villagers to come forward and help, for example—particularly following attacks that mistakenly kill civilians.

Other tactics are also raising concerns. On June 23, 2009, the CIA killed Khwaz Wali Mehsud, a mid-ranking Pakistan Taliban commander. They planned to use his body as bait to hook a larger fish—Baitullah Mehsud, then the notorious leader of the Pakistan Taliban.

"A plan was quickly hatched to strike Baitullah Mehsud when he attended the man's funeral," according to Washington Post national security correspondent Joby Warrick, in his recent book *The Triple Agent*. "True, the commander... happened to be very much alive as the plan took shape. But he would not be for long."

The CIA duly killed Khwaz Wali Mehsud in a drone strike that killed at least five others. Speaking with the Bureau, Pulitzer Prize-winner Warrick confirmed what his U.S. intelligence sources had told him: "The initial target was no doubt a target anyway, as it was described to me, as someone that they were interested in. And as they were planning this attack, a possible windfall from that is that it would shake Mehsud himself out of his hiding place."

Up to 5,000 people attended Khwaz Wali Mehsud's funeral that afternoon, including not only Taliban fighters but many civilians. U.S. drones struck again, killing up to 83 people. As many as 45 were civilians, among them reportedly ten children and four tribal leaders. Taliban leader Baitullah Mehsud escaped unharmed, dying six weeks later along with his wife in a fresh CIA attack.



Sailors maneuver drone during training exercise
(US Navy photo)

tribal meeting had been called to resolve the issue.

“We in the Pakistan military knew about the meeting,” he said, “we’d got the request ten days earlier.”

“It was held in broad daylight, people were sitting out in Nomada bus depot when the missile strikes came. Maybe there were one or two Taliban at that Jirga—they

have their people attending—but does that justify a drone strike which kills 42 mostly innocent people?”

“Drones may make tactical gains but I don’t see how there’s any strategic advantage,” he added. “When innocent people

After a remarkable lack of debate, there is starting to be unease in the U.S. at the lack of transparency and accountability in the use of drones particularly as the campaign has expanded to hit targets in Libya, Yemen, and Somalia and until recently to patrol the skies in Iraq.

die, then you’re creating a whole lot more people with an issue.”

Growing tension

Drone attacks have long been a source of tension between the U.S. and Pakistan despite the fact that the Pakistan government gave tacit agreement, even allowing them to fly from Shamsi airbase in the western province of Baluchistan, while publicly denouncing the attacks. In return the U.S. made sure that some of the terrorists killed were those targeting Pakistan.

However the relationship has been stretched to breaking point, first with the raid to kill Osama bin Laden in May and subsequent U.S. accusations of Pakistani complicity, then the NATO bombing of a Pakistani post in November, killing 24 soldiers. In December, Pakistan ordered the CIA to vacate the Shamsi base. For a while drone attacks stopped but they have resumed.

The U.S. claims the drones are a vital tool that has helped them almost wipe out the leadership of al Qaeda in Pakistan. But others point out they have stoked enormous anti-American sentiment in a country with an arsenal of 200 nuclear weapons.

Peter Singer, director of the 21st Century Initiative at the Brookings Institution, points out the operation has never been debated in Congress, which has to approve sending U.S. forces to war.

So dramatic is the switch to unmanned war that he says the U.S. now has 7,000 drones operating and 12,000 more on the ground, while not a single new manned combat aircraft is under research or development at any western aerospace company.

After a remarkable lack of debate, there is starting to be unease in the U.S. at the lack of transparency and accountability in the use of drones particularly as the campaign has expanded to hit targets in Libya, Yemen, and Somalia and until recently to patrol the skies in Iraq.

Three U.S. citizens were killed by missiles fired from drones in Yemen last September. Anwar al Awlaqi, an alleged al Qaeda operative, was deliberately targeted in what some have described as the U.S. government’s first ever execution of one of its own citizens without trial. His colleague and fellow citizen Samir Khan also died in the attack. Two weeks later, Awlaqi’s 16-year-old son Abdulrahman

media inquiries on the subject with no comment and refusal to give names of those killed or who are on the target list.

Until Obama’s comments [in January], the White House would not even confirm the program existed.

“We don’t discuss classified programs or comment on alleged strikes,” said a senior administration official in response to the findings presented by the *Sunday Times*.

Lawsuit

The ACLU filed a lawsuit [on February 1] demanding the Obama administration release legal and intelligence records on the killing of the three U.S. citizens in Yemen.

Privately some senior U.S. military officers say they are extremely uncomfortable at the way the administration is carrying out these operations using the CIA, which is not covered by laws of war or the Geneva Convention.

The use of drones outside a declared war zone is seen by many legal experts as setting a dangerous precedent. Aside from allies such as Israel, Britain, and France, other countries have drone technology including China, Russia, and Pakistan. Iran recently captured a downed U.S. drone.

Heyns, the UN rapporteur, said an international legal framework is urgently needed to govern their use.

“Our concern is how far does it go—will the whole world be a theatre of war?” he asked. “Drones in principle allow collateral damage to be minimized but because they can be used without danger to a country’s own troops they tend to be used more widely. One doesn’t want to use the term ticking bomb but it’s extremely seductive.”

The Bureau of Investigative Journalism (<http://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/>), where this article first appeared, is an independent, not-for-profit organization that carries out research in the public interest.

HECUBA* IN VIET NAM

Hecuba: “Greeks! Your strength is in your spears, not in the mind.”
--Euripides, *The Trojan Women*

All your strength, America, is in your bombs!
What were your eagles are now carriers of death.
Strange loves twitch in your sermons.

What fear turns you to this terror?--
to drive people into trenches and tunnels, to poison their land.
What fear makes you kill the children of Viet Nam so savagely?--
pounding them to bits with your bombs.
What shame! To crush down the weak, to force them under the earth.
(Little Astyanax could at least ascend to the tall walls of Troy
and gaze at his City for a moment, nobly, before the terrible plunge.)

The wail of Hecuba is rising against you, America--
rising from the wounded throats of Viet Nameese mothers...
Let the faces of underground children shine in the sun!

—Thanasis Maskaleris, 1966

"He pretty much said he can kill anyone he wants."

—member of the audience of Northwestern University Law students after Attorney General Eric Holder’s recent speech justifying drone attacks as reported by Joe Scarry.

* Hecuba, queen of Troy, endured the pain of watching her city sacked and her children, including the hero Hector, slaughtered. The victorious Greeks threw Hector’s son, Astyanax, from the top of the city wall to preempt future retribution of his part.

Nukes are a crime against humanity, even in storage

Nuclear Deterrence: Insane, Immoral, and Illegal

by Kim Carlyle

...we can be tranquil and thankful and proud,
For man's been endowed with a mushroom-shaped cloud.
And we know for certain that some lovely day,
Someone will set the spark off—and we will all be blown away.
—“The Merry Minuet,” Sheldon Harnick, 1958

A discussion of nuclear weaponry can quickly become confusing, not because of the complexity of the technology, but because of the absurdity of the strategic justification for stockpiling hoards of atomic bombs. Take “deterrence,” for example. Deterrence embodies the notion that your enemy is so irrational that he would seriously consider launching an attack that would effectively destroy a nation and its people, yet is rational enough to understand that in doing so he submits his own nation to the same fate.

The current posturing and saber-rattling over Iran’s nuclear intentions is absurd as well. Here’s a nation that hasn’t attacked another country in two hundred years being badgered by belligerent nations, led by the U.S. and Israel, that already have vast stores of nukes and routinely make war on other non-nuclear nations. These belligerents demand that Iran not do what they’ve already done. President Obama, in his State of the Union address made it clear: “Let there be no doubt: America is determined to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear

weapon, and I will take no options off the table to achieve that goal.”

With *all* possible options on the table, here’s what I’d like to hear the President say next: “We’ll set the example for a safe, secure, nuclear-weapons-free world by disarming America first!”

While it’s an option not likely to be exercised, it’s the one that has the best chance of stopping the proliferation of nuclear weapons throughout the world. This is, in essence, the conclusion reached by Commander Robert Green in *Security Without Nuclear Deterrence*. The difference is that his more pragmatic approach calls for Great Britain to disarm first. Then, given the anti-nuclear attitude of Europe, France would feel pressure to disarm. Next Russia and the U.S. would stand down their nuclear forces and that would



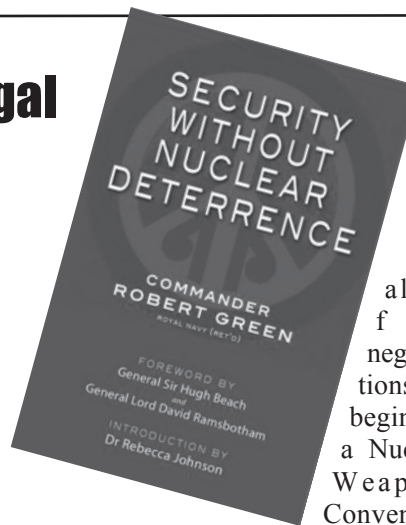
“INDEPENDENCE FROM NUCLEAR TERRORISM”

Above: Judith Hallock (2nd from left) with Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance (OREPA) colleagues holding banner on July 5, 2010 just before being arrested for blocking the entrance to the Y12 Nuclear Weapons Complex in Oak Ridge, TN; Below: With co-defendants and full banner display outside the courthouse in Anderson County, TN following her arrest. (Photos by Ralph Hutchinson)



Presenté

This book review was first assigned to Judith Hallock, who had just joined the *WCT* team and had visions of expanding our distribution. Shortly after she received the book, she was diagnosed with brain cancer and was unable to complete the task. Judith was a co-founder of the Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance (OREPA) in 1988 and for 23 years set an example that led many others to find their way to resist the scourge of nuclear weapons. She established the tradition of civil resistance in Oak Ridge, being among the first people ever arrested in a nonviolent action for peace at the Y12 nuclear weapons plant. Judith died on Friday, January 13, 2012



allow for negotiations to begin on a Nuclear Weapons Convention which would

“provide the comprehensive, enforceable plan for going to zero nuclear weapons.”

Green is no idle dreamer. As a navigator-bombardier in a nuclear strike jet squadron in 1969, his assigned target was a military airfield near St. Petersburg; for three years his task was to be ready to deliver a ten kiloton free fall nuclear bomb to detonate above the target. Later, he was assigned to an aircraft-carrier-based helicopter which was prepared to drop nuclear depth-bombs on Soviet nuclear submarines. Due to the enormity of the blast and the lack of speed of his aircraft, this was a suicide mission. About this time Green “came to realize not only that nuclear weapons were militarily useless, but that the full consequences of their use had not been thought through.”

Promoted to Commander and assigned to a staff position in London, he observed the machinations of the nuclear lobby promoting its agenda to the British government and military. Despite his experience, it was well after he left the military in 1982, and well after he took up the campaign against nuclear energy in 1986, that Green began opposing nuclear weapons. It was the 1990-91 Gulf War that broke him out of the brainwashing that had sustained his belief in nuclear weapons. He realized how close Israel came to retaliating for Iraq’s Scud missile attacks with a nuclear strike against Baghdad—an event which likely would trigger a much broader conflagration, and provide one more example of the failure of the nuclear deterrence rationale. Since then Commander Green has joined the legion of veterans, former military insiders, who are outspoken in their active opposition to destructive foreign policies.

In *Security Without Nuclear Deterrence*, Commander Green describes his personal journey before launching into a detailed history of the progression of proliferation, as one nation after another acquired nuclear destructive capability. This is a story of pathos: an account chronicling the struggles and intrigues that occurred within and among nations, struggles in which the worst qualities of humanity—pride, fear, mistrust, arrogance, and lust for power—ultimately overcame the best.

For example, India, inspired by the nonviolent legacy of Gandhi, repeatedly

called for total elimination of all nuclear weapons. Then, slowly caving to the perceived need to keep up with China, Pakistan, and the other nuclear nations exerting influence in their region, they began “developing nuclear explosive engineering for peaceful purposes.” Meanwhile, archrival Pakistan was being pressured by the U.S. to not develop a nuclear program—until the Soviets invaded Afghanistan and the U.S. needed Pakistan’s cooperation to arm the Mujahedeen. As Pakistan moved forward with nuclear weapons development, India, ever wary of its border adversary, did as well. Before long, both had tested nuclear weapons and joined the unholy club.

But not all nations succumb to the mad machinations of keeping up with the nuclear Joneses. There are glimmers of hope and signs of sanity. Almost the entire southern hemisphere has established nuclear-weapons-free zones in which countries commit themselves not to manufacture, acquire, test, or possess nuclear weapons. What’s more, New Zealand stood bold in 1987 to become the first Western-allied state to reject nuclear deterrence for its security. These are countries that not only recognize the heavy economic burden and the opportunity costs of nuclear programs, they realize that the weapons themselves are inherently immoral and illegal.

Green writes: “Nuclear deterrence entails a fundamental moral deception: using the most immoral means imaginable to achieve what governments of nuclear states claim are the most moral ends. The Cold War mindset required the creation of the morally bogus concept of a ‘just deterrent’ by those who believed they could save themselves by threatening to destroy potentially all civilization and the entire ecosystem of the planet. Such a construct was necessary in order to mask the reality that nuclear weapons are the ultimate negation of the principle of proportionality between means and ends that are used to characterize international politics.”

Proportionality is not just a moral concept; it is also a principle of international humanitarian law closely linked to *distinction* (between combatants and civilians).

International humanitarian law includes the provision that “Parties to a conflict shall at all times distinguish between the civilian population and combatants in order to spare civilian population and property. Neither the civilian population as such nor civilian persons shall be the object of attack. Attacks shall be directed solely against military objectives.”

Principle VI of the Nuremberg Tribunal of 1950 defines crimes against peace as “Planning, preparation, initiation, or waging of a war of aggression or a *war in violation of international treaties, agreements or assurances*” or “Participation in a common plan or conspiracy for the accomplishment of any of the acts mentioned [above].”

(Continued next page)

It follows then, that even the preparation (through manufacture and stockpiling) for the use of nuclear weapons, which by their very nature are indiscriminate in destruction, is illegal since they could only be used in a “war in violation of international treaties, agreements or assurances.”

So, nuclear deterrence is insane, immoral, and illegal. But there is a way out. Despite the naysayers reasoning that we can’t un-acquire “the bomb,” Green sees a precedent with the abolition of slavery. He draws several parallels between the slave trade and nuclear weapons and notes similar justifications by their proponents: “nuclear weapons are ‘a necessary evil,’ ‘cost-effective,’ ‘not against the law,’ and anyway ‘there is no alternative.’ These were the slavers’ arguments condoned by the main churches.”

Nonetheless, slavery was brought to its end by “a small group of committed campaigners” who “focused on the *illegality* of slavery.”

Illegality, therefore, should be the focus of the few, but dedicated, anti-nuke campaigners. To even keep nuclear weapons in storage is already a crime against humanity.

Kim Carlyle is the War Crimes Times editor-in-chief.

From the pages of

Security Without Nuclear Deterrence:

Christchurch, NZ: Astron Media & Disarmament & Security Centre;
2010; 272 pages

“...nuclear weapons are terror devices that combine the poisoning horrors of chemical and biological weapons, plus inter-generational effects unique to radioactivity, with almost unimaginable explosive violence.”

Nuclear deterrence is the ultimate expression of the philosophy of terrorism: holding humanity hostage to the presumed security needs of a few.

—Rajiv Gandhi,
speaking at the UN Special Session
on Disarmament in 1988

Nuclear deterrence is neither “reliable” nor “stable,” as claimed by proponents. It has not prevented non-nuclear states from invading countries allied to nuclear weapons states....Nor have nuclear armed states been constrained from mobilizing for war with each other...

The entire world knows that Israel has a huge warehouse of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons, and that it serves as the cornerstone for the nuclear arms race in the Middle East. In Israel, there is frequent mention of the “Iranian and Iraqi danger,” while ignoring the fact that it was Israel that introduced nuclear weapons to the Middle East in the first place, and created the legitimacy for other states in the region to obtain nuclear weapons.

—Issam Makhoul, Knesset member, 2000

The most formidable obstacle to starting negotiations for a Nuclear Weapons Convention is a deep-rooted U.S. preference for autonomy in international affairs. Historically, U.S. support for multilateral institutions has been directly proportionate to their acquiescence in endorsing U.S. global interests and policies.

As the Doomsday Clock approaches five minutes to midnight, Obama’s rhetoric is beginning to seem rather hollow.

Doomsday Clock: five minutes to midnight

By Felicity Arbuthnot

J. Robert Oppenheimer, Scientific Director of the Manhattan Project, said on the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. “I remembered the line from the Hindu scripture, the *Bhagavad-Gita*, ‘Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.’”

Chilling ironies surely do not come much greater than this. The Nobel Peace Prize winning President of the United States, in an election year, has contributed to global instability and the possibility of nuclear conflict to such an extent that the Doomsday Clock was moved to five minutes to midnight on January 10, 2012.

The forward-creeping hands of the symbolic clock, maintained since 1947 by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists at the University of Chicago, indicate we are closer to global catastrophe than we have been at any time in the last 26 years, with the exception of 2007, when the hands were similarly set under the gung-ho presidency of George W. Bush.

What a world away from Obama’s June 2009 speech at Egypt’s Al Azhar University, where he declared he was in Cairo “to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims round the world (and to) share ... tolerance and dignity.”

Obama asserted: “There must be a sustained effort to listen to each other, to learn from each other, to respect one another and to seek common ground ... the interests we share as human beings are far more powerful than the forces that drive us apart.”

Tell that to the bereaved, maimed, homeless Libyans, Iraqis, Afghans, the U.S.-menaced people of Syria, over one third who are age fourteen or under. Tell it to the annihilation-threatened Iranian population, of whom nearly a quarter are also children. This is the same Iran which, so demonized, generously hosts one of the largest refugee populations in the world (at a cost of ten million dollars a day, according to 1999 UNHCR figures).

Tell it to the droned and blown (away) of Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia.

A “sustained effort to listen” has been largely denied the untried, incarcerated, abused, and tortured in Bagram and Guantanamo’s “gulags of our times,” as much during the Obama presidency as the years before.

The Doomsday Clock is only three minutes behind the two minutes to

midnight in 1953—the most apocalyptic year ever—when both the U.S. and Soviet Union tested thermo-nuclear devices within nine months of each other.

But back to the ticking atomic clock. Alarming, the furthest from “midnight” it has ever been is seventeen minutes, on July 31, 1991, when the U.S., under George H. W. Bush, and then Soviet Union, under Mikhail Gorbachev, signed the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty. This was a heartening seven minute leap from the ten to midnight of 1990, even in spite of the 32-nation war on Iraq after the invasion of Kuwait. The Berlin Wall had, however, fallen and the Cold War seemed to be ending.

In 1963 and 1972, both years of seemingly groundbreaking arms limita-



USS *John C. Stennis*, bristling with nuclear weapons.
(U.S. Navy photo)

tion treaties between the U.S. and Soviet Union, the clock remained at ten minutes to midnight.

Even when India tested a nuclear device, and the U.S. and Soviet Union both modernized their destructive potential in 1974, the clock stood four minutes further away from annihilation than in Obama’s age – at nine minutes to midnight.

19,000 nuclear weapons

As the United States aircraft carriers, *Carl Vinson* and *John C. Stennis*, bristling with nuclear weapons and twitchy testosterone-fuelled troops, steam Iranwards to either bomb nuclear installations – with the danger of a potential nuclear winter – or bomb to keep the Straits of Hormuz open for one-fifth of the world’s oil supplies, the clock is just two minutes back from when the Soviet Union tested its first atomic bomb in

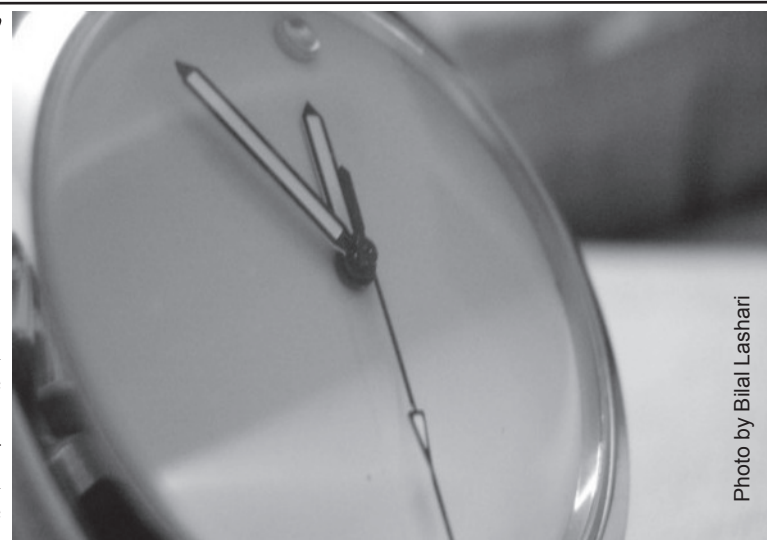


Photo by Bilal Lashari

1947, officially starting the nuclear arms race.

It is only three minutes behind the two minutes to midnight – the most apocalyptic ever – of 1953, when both the U.S. and Soviet Union tested thermonuclear devices within nine months of each other.

There are about 19,000 nuclear weapons in the world, according to the Science and Security Board. “That’s enough to blow up the Earth many times over. We are really in a pickle,” says Kennette Benedict, Executive Director of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, of their latest clock change.

“Recognizing our common humanity is only the beginning of our task,” said President Obama, in Cairo, when some believed his “Yes we can” meant peace and a new dawn for the planet and humanity.

“No system of government can or should be imposed by one nation on any other,” he went on. “It’s easier to start wars than to end them. ... It’s easier to see what is different about someone than to find the things we share. But we should choose the right path, not just the easy path. There’s one rule that lies at the heart of every religion—that we do unto others as we would have them do unto us.

“This truth transcends nations and peoples – a belief that isn’t new, that isn’t black or white or brown, that isn’t Christian or Muslim or Jew. It’s a belief that pulsed in the cradle of civilization, and that still beats in the hearts of billions around the world. It’s a faith in other people, and it’s what brought me here today,” he concluded.

Indeed. Beware of Presidents bearing Nobel Peace Prize tags.

Felicity Arbuthnot is a journalist with special knowledge of Iraq, a country which she has visited thirty times since the 1991 Gulf war. She has been nominated for a number of awards for her coverage of Iraq and was also a moderator at the 2003 World Uranium Weapons Conference. This article first appeared on the New Internationalist website (www.newint.org) and is reprinted with her permission.

WAR CRIMES TIMES GOES TO VIET NAM

by Edward Tick, Ph.D.

"It was a very powerful moment for me at the War Remnants Museum in Saigon," says Vietnam combat veteran Peter Winnen, "when you opened the Winter 2012 *War Crimes Times* to the Vietnamese children's art layout." Peter was one of a dozen veterans, their spouses, war widows and activists on the 11th annual Healing and Reconciliation Journey to Viet Nam led by Ed Tick and Kate Dahlstedt of Soldier's Heart.

The mission of the War Remnants Museum, according to Museum Director Madame Van, is "to spread and teach peace by documenting the terrible truths about war." We stood in the gallery housing a display of Children's

Paintings on War and Peace that has been an important educational project of the museum for a decade. Every year, the War Remnants Museum invites paintings on war and peace by Vietnamese children ages five to fifteen. Tens of thousands of paintings are submitted and the museum displays them on a rotating basis. After the painful exhibition on what the Vietnamese call the American War, this exhibit soothes hearts and provides hope for the future. Many paintings are about Agent Orange disabilities in families and communities. But about 70% of the paintings are about peace. Some show Vietnamese and American soldiers and children dancing together.

Paintings from this exhibit are now on tour in the United States in a project co-sponsored by the War Remnants Museum, Soldier's Heart, and the Wick Poetry Center and Art Department of Kent State University. Some of these were featured on the cover and centerfold of the winter issue of the *War Crimes Times*.

"The bald truth featured in that layout," Peter Winnen continues, "surrounded by dozens and dozens of hand-drawn, children's war-art on the walls behind you, formed a vivid surrounding for bearing witness to the deformed bodies, but unbroken spirits, of the Agent Orange victims' band who performed so beautifully for us. They were my first face-to-face acknowledgement of our obscene atrocity, our war crime, that persists genetically into a fourth generation of Vietnamese and my fellow American veterans and their families."



Peter Winnen in reconciliation with an NVA vet he fought against at Khe Sanh.

Soldier's Heart has been leading healing journeys to Viet Nam since 2000. On these journeys, American veterans and activists meet with their Vietnamese counterparts. We hold veteran reconciliation groups in which former foes meet, forgive and hug. We visit poor communities, orphanages, Agent Orange centers, and other sites of ongoing war wounding and give philanthropic service. We visit old AO victims and do ceremony aimed at healing war wounds for all victims. And we network with Vietnamese organizations for reconciliation and mutual healing of everybody's wounds.

Our last trip occurred during January and February 2012. We went during Tet, the Vietnamese New Year, to share this sacred holiday with the Vietnamese and transform its meaning for American vets who had endured the Tet Offensive.

Soldier's Heart has been networking and conferring with Vietnamese organizations for years. On our journeys we meet with everyone we can who was touched by the war and bring both Vietnamese and American experiences into one. As our friend and Viet Cong veteran Tam Tien, who hosts us in the Mekong Delta, says, "From now on Vietnamese and American veterans must be the lips and tongue of the same mouth telling the world the same story."



This is our group of American, Viet Cong, and ARVN vets in reconciliation after a ceremony in the old AO on the rubber plantation in Tay Ninh.

The *War Crimes Times* helped to tell that story and make it one. We carried a stack of 50 copies and distributed it all over Viet Nam, especially to veterans, scholars,

officials and activists working for peace and reconciliation from the Vietnamese side. In addition to being read by dozens of veterans and influential individuals, the *War Crimes Times* is now in the hands of:

- Dai Nam University
- National Youth Theater
- University of Social Sciences and Humanities
- Vietnam Association for Victims of Agent Orange
- Viet Nam – U.S. Society
- Viet Nam Union of Friendship Organizations
- Veterans Association of Viet Nam
- War Remnants Museum

In every case, Vietnamese from the ordinary to the powerful expressed great interest, respect, and appreciation to Veterans for Peace for publicizing their ongoing plights from war wounds and efforts to heal and reconcile. They proudly held up the display of their children's paintings. They declared their love of peace, solidarity with American veterans and mutual desire for healing for all. And they thanked Veterans for Peace for continuing to advocate for Agent Orange relief for their country and our veterans.



Ed Tick presenting the *War Crimes Times* to Madame Van, director of the War Remnants Museum in Ho Chi Minh City, in the gallery featuring the permanent exhibit of Vietnamese Children's Art on War and Peace. An exhibit of paintings from this collection are traveling through the U.S. and were featured in Winter issue.

Vietnamese and American veterans both found the *War Crimes Times* to be moving and relevant, not only about the Vietnam War, but also about present and ongoing conflicts. Said American veteran Vela Giri: "I was quite impressed by this paper. The radical and true interpretation of the defeat of the U.S.A. in Iraq was a very instructive point of view."

Veteran Peter Winnen provides the most moving testimony regarding this work. After the *War Crimes Times* was presented in the Museum, says Peter, "I went down on my knees in front of the Agent Orange victims band to get closer and hug them for their courageous, hopeful voices. Back at the hotel I wrote, 'I knelt down and kissed the fruit of Agent Orange. And he kissed me back.'"

Edward Tick is co-director of Soldier's Heart (www.soldiersheart.net/) and the author of *War and the Soul*. Contact Ed for more information about trips to Viet Nam. To bring the traveling exhibit of Vietnamese Children's Art to your community, contact Nicole Robinson, Wick Poetry Center Outreach Coordinator at nlrobin1@kent.edu or (330) 672-2101.

"Compassion and tolerance are not a sign of weakness, but a sign of strength." – H. H. Dalai Lama

Why Civilian Control of the US Military Is Deeply Threatened

by Conn Hallinan

A military that conducts stealthy night raids, secret assassinations, and death-dealing drones is more likely to believe it has the right to control America's policy abroad.

For decades the U.S. military has waged clandestine war on virtually every continent on the globe, but, for the first time, high-ranking Special Operations Forces (SOF) officers are moving out of the shadows and into the command mainstream. Their emergence suggests the U.S. is embarking on a military sea change that will replace massive deployments, like Iraq and Afghanistan, with stealthy night raids, secret assassinations, and death-dealing drones. Its implications for civilian control of foreign policy promises to be profound.

SOF forces have almost doubled in the past two decades, from some 37,000 to close to 60,000, and major increases are planned in the future. Their budget has jumped from \$2.3 billion to \$9.8 billion over the last 10 years.

In August, 2011, Vice Adm. Robert Harward—a former commander of the SEALs—the Navy's elite SOF that recently killed al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden—was appointed deputy commander of Central Command, the military region that embraces the Middle East and Central Asia. Another SEAL commander, Vice Adm. Joseph Kernan, took over the number two spot in Southern Command, which covers Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Obama Administration has been particularly enamored of SOFs, and, according to reporters Karen DeYoung and Greg Jaffe of the Washington Post, is in the process of doubling the number of countries where such units are active from 60 to 120. U.S. Special Operations Command spokesman Col. Tim Nye told Nick Turse, research director of the Nation Institute's Tomdispatch.com that SOF forces would soon be deployed in 60 percent of the world's nations: "We do a lot of traveling."

Indeed they do. U.S. Special Operations Command (SOC) admits to having forces in virtually every country in the Middle East, Central Asia, as well as many in Africa, Southeast Asia and Latin America. But true to its penchant for secrecy, SOC is reluctant to disclose every country to which its forces are deployed. "We're obviously going to have some places where it's not advantageous for us to list where we were at," Nye told Turse.

SOF forces have almost doubled in the past two decades, from some 37,000 to close to 60,000, and major increases are planned in

the future. Their budget has jumped from \$2.3 billion to \$9.8 billion over the last 10 years

These Special Forces include the Navy's SEALs, the Marines Special Operations teams, the Army's Delta Force, the Air Force's Blue Light and Air Commandos, plus Rangers and Green Berets. There is also the CIA, which runs the clandestine drone war in Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia.

It is increasingly difficult to distinguish civilian from military operatives. Leon Panetta, former director of the CIA, is now Defense Secretary, while Afghanistan commander Gen. David Petraeus—an expert on counterinsurgency and counter terror operations—is taking over the CIA. Both have worked closely with SOF units, particularly Petraeus, who vastly increased the number of "night raids" in Iraq and Afghanistan. The raids are aimed at decapitating insurgent leadership, but have caused widespread outrage in both countries.

The raids are based on intelligence that many times comes from local warlords trying to eliminate their enemies or competition. And, since the raids are carried out under a cloak of secrecy, it is almost impossible to investigate them when things go wrong.

A recent CIA analysis of civilian casualties from the organization's drone war in Pakistan contends that attacks since May 2010 have killed more than 600 insurgents and not a single civilian. But a report by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism at City University in London found "credible evidence" that at least 45 non-combatants were killed during this period. Pakistani figures are far higher.

Those higher numbers, according to Dennis C. Blair, retired admiral and director of national intelligence from 2009 to 2010, "are widely believed [in Pakistan] and, Blair points out, "our reliance on high-tech strikes that pose no risk to our soldiers is bitterly resented."

Conn Hallinan is a columnist for Foreign Policy In Focus and the Berkeley Daily Planet and a recipient of a Project Censored "Real News Award." This article was reprinted with his permission.



US Army Special Forces Master Sergeant gives instruction to two sniper students in a five-week sniper course.



An MH-6 Little Bird from 160th SOAR carrying Special Forces Soldiers from the 5th SFG(A) prepares to land during a SOF aerial infiltration demonstration Sept. 28 at NASCAR's Kansas Speedway 400.

(Photo by Spc. Tony Hawkins, USASOC PAO).

In an instant Khaled El-Hamedi's family was dead.

Anatomy of a NATO War Crime

by Franklin Lamb

Sorman, Libya

It was a warm early Monday morning along the Libyan coast on June 20, 2011.

At approximately 0200 Greenwich mean time (GMT) the next day in NATO Headquarters in Brussels, and 30 minutes later in its media center in Naples, staffers finished tabulating NATO's 92nd day of aerial attacks on Libya and began to post the data on its website (www.nato.int).

Twenty-four hours earlier an Atlantic Alliance command unit, located approximately 30 miles off the Libyan coast, in a direct line with Malta, and NATO's targeting unit had signed off on 49 bombing missions for June 20, the last day of spring and the last day of NATO's original UN bombing mandate.

The authority for NATO's bombing, which far exceeded earlier estimates, was claimed from the hastily adopted UN Security

It was early Monday morning, June 20, 2011.

Sorman, Libya, is a quiet and peaceful Libyan town located 45 miles west of Tripoli, near the Mediterranean coast, in the Zawiya District of the Tripolitania region in northwestern Libya.

Many of the town's children grew up exploring the 3rd Century magnificent Roman ruins at nearby Zabratha. Some archeologists consider Zabratha, located almost in direct line with Rome across the Mediterranean, and built on a high cliff above the sea, as the most complete extant Roman architecture, with only a small part of this large Roman city having been excavated. I had visited Zabratha a few times since the mid-1980s and each visit elicits more awe. Families from Sorman and nearby villages regularly visit and picnic there.

In the early hours of June 20, 2011 it was dark in Sorman except

At NATO's Control and Command Center, the 49 bombing missions planned for early morning of June 20, included a target at Sorman, which would push the number of NATO reconnaissance sorties over Libya to 11,930. This number would become 26,500 by midnight on October 31, when NATO would end its air campaign. The day's bombing sorties would also bring the tally of rocket and bombing targets to 4,521. This figure would increase to more than 11,781 by late fall, when NATO was instructed to end OUP (Operation Unified Protector).

NATO prepares to bomb Sorman's "command and control center"

Before the bombs were fired at the Khaled K. al-Hamedi compound, NATO staff conducted a six-step process, the first of which was surveillance using the MQ-9 Reaper UAV, which sometimes is



A montage of the Libyan civil war created from images available on the Wikimedia Commons. Clockwise from top-left: The Libyan National Transitional Council flag is flown by anti-Gaddafi fighters in Brega on 10 March 2011; protesters in Bayda; protesters and defectors clash with Libyan soldiers in Bayda on 17 February 2011; a French rescue helicopter lands on USS *Mount Whitney*, at the beginning of the military intervention; remains of two Palmaria heavy howitzers of the Libyan Army, destroyed by French warplanes near Benghazi; USS *Barry* launches one of its Tomahawk missiles during Operation Unified Protector.

“...the scene was one of total devastation. Collapsed and blown apart concrete and tiled homes, small body parts, and bits of family belongings and memorabilia, trees, some blown over, others bending and nearly denuded of their foliage, dead, terrified and dying petting zoo animals...”

ity Council Resolutions 1970 and UNSCR 1973.

UN resolutions 1970 & 1973 gave NATO UN Chapter 7 authority to enforce a no-fly zone over Libyan airspace, initially for 90 days which ironically ended the day before its bombing at Sorman.

The two UN Security Council Resolutions were insisted upon by their main sponsors, France, the UK, Italy, and the U.S. who claimed that “a limited no-fly zone would protect Libya's civilian population from the wrath of the government of Libya's leader, Muammar Gaddafi.” NATO requested and was granted two additional 90-day extensions to continue its Libyan mission which gave its air force until the end of 2011 to continue Operation Unified Protector.

for some muted half-moon light. A few dim street lights and some partially illuminated homes provided some light as residents began to rise and prepare for the *Al Fajr* (“Dawn”) prayers.

At the homestead of Khaled K. El-Hamedi, the thirty-seven-year-old President of the International Organization for Peace, Care & Relief (IOPCR), one of Libya's most active social service organizations, everyone was asleep following a rambunctious birthday party for his three-year-old son, Khweldi. The Hamedi family members also included Khaled's five-year-old daughter Khaleda, his pregnant wife Safa, his aunt Najia, and his six-year-old niece Salam, among others.

also used to fire missiles. Also above Sorman was a Predator drone with full-motion video.

During June 19 and the early hours of June 20, the drones locked on the Hamedi homestead target and relayed updated information to NATO's command center.

The Hamedi home was not what NATO labels a “time-critical target,” so there was plenty of time for its staff to transmit information about the site from unmanned reconnaissance aircraft to intelligence analysts. Almost certainly, according to a source at *Jane's Weekly*, NATO UAV's watched the Hamedi compound over a period of days and presumably observed part of the birthday party the day before the order to bomb was issued.

NATO Rules of Engagement for Operation Unified Protector, constitute a set of classified documents which present specific and detailed instructions about what is a legitimate target and who can approve the target, whether pre-planned or “on the fly”—when a pilot happens upon a target of opportunity. The Sorman attack on the Hamedi home was planned as part of what NATO calls its “Joint Air Tasking Cycle (JATC).

A target development team put the Hamedi home on the June 20 daily list of targets. The team used a report from NATO intelligence analysts who determined that retired officer Khaled al Huweldi, Hamedi, one of the original members of the Gaddafi-led 1969 coup against King Idris in 1969, and a former member of the Al Fatah Revolution's Revolutionary Command Council was living on the property. His assassination had been ordered by NATO because they hoped to weaken the regime in some way even though the senior Hamedi was retired and had no decision making role in Libya.

On June 19, the day before the bombing attack on the Hamedi family at Sorman, NATO was obliged by its own regulations and by the international law of armed conflict to conduct a “potential for

collateral damage review” of this mission. There is no evidence that this was ever done.

A requested U.S. Congressional NATO Liaison Office review of the Sorman bombing, initially requested from Libya on August 2, was completed in early September 2011 and found no documentary evidence or other indication that anyone in NATO's Target Selection Unit, evaluated, discussed, or even considered the subject of potential civilian casualties at the Hamedi home in Sorman.

Following the green light to bomb the Hamedi home, the coordinates were fixed at 32°45'24"N 12°34'18"E. Specific aim points on the Hamedi property were chosen and eight bombs and missiles were readied and attached to the strike aircraft.

At Sorman, NATO used a variety of bombs and missiles including the “bunker busting” BLU-109 (Bomb Live Unit) which is designed to penetrate 18 feet of concrete. NATO also used the American MK series of 500 lb, (MK 81) 1000 lb, (MK-82) and the 2000 lb (MK-84) that Israel used so widely during its 2006 invasion of Lebanon.

Following the inferno at Sorman, NATO denied responsibility, but the next day NATO

admitted carrying out an air strike somewhere in Sorman but denied that there were civilian deaths even as its drones filmed the scene close up. NATO's media office in Naples issued a statement claiming "A precision air strike was launched against a high-level command and control node in the Sorman area without collateral damage." NATO spokespersons also told Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch that "the facility was a legitimate military target and that all necessary precautions were taken before conducting the strike which minimized any potential risk of causing unnecessary casualties."

The official NATO record of its bombing of Libya for June 20, 2011 reads as follows and remains unchanged:

"Allied Joint Force Command NAPLES, SHAPE, NATO HQ.

Over the past 24 hours, NATO has conducted the following activities associated with Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR:

*Air Operations Sorties conducted 20 JUNE: 149
Strike sorties conducted 20 JUNE: 52*

Key Hits 20 JUNE:

In the vicinity of Tripoli: 1 Command & Control Node, 8 Surface-To-Air Missile Launchers, 1 Surface-To-Air Missile Transport Vehicle.

In the vicinity of Misratah: 3 Truck-Mounted Guns, 2 Self-Propelled Anti-Aircraft Guns, 1 Tank.

In the vicinity of Tarhuna: 1 Military Equipment Storage Facility.

In the vicinity of Al-Khums: 1 Military Vehicle Storage Facility. In the vicinity of Zintan: 1 Rocket Launcher."

Oddly, NATO records for June 20 as well as subsequent reports of bombing attacks listed for June 20th and June 21st in its daily logs have never included the bombing attack on Sorman or the attack on the Al-Hamedidi residence which indisputably killed 15 civilians.

Just before the bombs hit, eyewitnesses reported seeing red specks in the sky and then flashes of intense light, immediately followed by thunderous, ear-splitting blasts as eight American

bombs and rockets pulverized their neighbor's homestead.

In an instant Khaled El-Hamedidi's family was dead. The children were crushed, blown apart or shredded into pieces, along with friends and extended family members who had slept overnight.

Khaled was working late, attending meetings with displaced Libyans driven from their homes and urgently in need of IOPCR help. As he returned home, Khaled saw from his car window the sky light up and heard exploding bombs. He was frozen in horror as he entered his property and observed rescue workers frantically digging and futilely trying to move the thick concrete slabs of his home hoping against hope that they would miraculously find survivors.

Libyan government spokesman Mousa Ibrahim announced the death of 15 people, including



Khaled K. El Hamedidi, President of the International Organization for Peace, Care, and Relief, lost his family in a NATO bombing attack.

three children, killed at Sorman. He slammed the NATO bombing as a "cowardly terrorist act which cannot be justified." Investigators, who visited Sabratha hospital 10 kilometers from Sorman, saw nine bodies, including three young children. They also saw body parts including a child's head.

For those who visited the Al-Hamedidi compound following the NATO bombings, as I did less than a week after the crime as part of an international delegation, the scene was one of total devastation: collapsed and blown-apart concrete and tiled homes, small body parts, and bits of family belongings and memorabilia, trees—some blown over, others bending and nearly denuded of their foliage. There were dead, terrified, and dying petting zoo animals, including exotic birds, ostrich, deer, small animals, and

a large moose killed or left near death; most were in a blind stupor staring blankly from what remained of their shelters while dying of wounds and from trauma.

Outside one of the bombed houses I noticed crushed cartons of spaghetti pasta and cans of tomato sauce, stockpiled for distribution to the needy as part of the work of IOPCR during the summer and in preparation for the coming holy month of Ramadan observances, which includes performing charitable works and individual humanitarian acts.

Under growing pressure from the international community including NATO member states, NATO HQ claimed equipment malfunction, missed target, poor intelligence, and pilot errors.

Finally U.S. Defense Secretaries Gates and his replacement, Leon Panetta, admitted that NATO lacked effective intelligence on the ground to identify military targets with certainty. Gates, in criticizing NATO's operation in Libya, implied that NATO used a *bomb-first-ask-questions-later* paradigm in Libya. And this appears to have been the case. These excuses in no way absolve NATO and its 28 NATO member states of responsibility.

Canadian Lieutenant General Charles Bouchard insists to this day that only Libya's military was targeted: "This important strike will greatly degrade Gaddafi regime forces' ability to carry on their barbaric assault against the Libyan people," he told the media from his office in Brussels. The civilian deaths at Sorman came just hours after NATO acknowledged that one of its missiles had gone astray early on Sunday, hitting a residential neighborhood of Tripoli.

At the request of Khaled al-Hamedidi — himself being sought by Libya's new government, and aware that I was going to return to Sorman — I felt honored as I made my way to his loved ones' gravesites on the family homestead where he and I first met, in order to deliver a message from him to his loved ones.

Picking my way through debris in the dark, under the cold and suspicious eyes of a couple of local militiamen, I stood at the same spot, where on June 27 his family's freshly dug graves bore witness to what Khaled was describing to our shocked delegation concerning the details of the horror and hellfire that NATO unleashed upon his family.

Back in June I had moved to the rear of our group as Khaled spoke to us about the loss of his babies, his beauties, and his precious pregnant wife. I was embarrassed because for some reason, uncontrollable tears would not stop streaming down my face and, despite averting my eyes, I saw that Khaled noticed. I was touched when this young man, to whom I was a total stranger, came to me and put his arm around my shoulder in comfort. Clearly, he understood that each of us can feel the pain of others, even of strangers, as well as connect them with our own losses of loved ones in life.

Later, as I learned more about Khaled's family and saw their most expressive and revealing photos, I came to believe that with respect to the wanton criminal aggression that caused thousands of needless deaths of innocents over the period of nearly nine months, that Najia, Safa, Salam, Khaleda, and Khweldi, and the others slaughtered at Sorman, are forever iconic representatives of all the innocent civilians who were slaughtered in Libya since March 2011.



Lt. Gen. Charlie Bouchard claimed that only Libya's military was targeted.

During my recent visit to Sorman, I stood at the same location as last June. I surveyed the area and then approached the graves of Najia, Safa, Salam, Khaleda, and Khweldi. In the cold darkness with the piles of rubble still in place, it was eerie.

I knelt close, felt a strange source of warmth and looked over my shoulder. I whispered in the silent night that I had a message from your loving husband, father, uncle, and nephew that he asked me to deliver to you.

I read to them the message entrusted to me. And I left a copy in Arabic, pinned to a bouquet of flowers. The message read:

Please say a very big hello to them and tell them I am coming. Please tell them, "I won't leave you alone and I miss each of you so very much." And please write them each a note. Najia, Safa, Salam, Khaleda, and Khweldi. Franklin, tell them, "You are my life. You are my love. I miss you very, very much. Life without you is so painful, so hard and completely empty. I won't stay and live away from you. I promise. I'll return and be close to you. Baba will be back. I love you."

As I made my way back to the main road in search of a taxi, a militiaman stopped me and interrogated me about why I was there, confiscated my camera, and ordered me to leave the area at once.

I paused for a moment and looked back toward what had been a loving family home, a petting zoo and bird sanctuary that had delighted the children in this neighborhood.

A little boy and girl, perhaps siblings, maybe six or seven years old, approached me with their Ethiopian nanny and asked: "Wien, (where is) Khaleda? Wien Khweldi? metta yargeoun ila Al Bayt (when will they come home?)"

"When will they come home?"

Unable to speak, I kissed and patted their heads and continued on my way.

Khaled K. Al-Hamedidi is strong, deeply religious, and fatalistic. He has pledged to family and friends around the world that he will continue his work with the International Organization for Peace, Care, and Relief in spite of the life shattering loss of his loved ones. An honorable family, a peaceful and welcoming town, a devastated country, and a shocked and angry international community demand justice from those who sent "Unified Protector" and NATO's no-fly zone to destroy Libya in order to "protect the civilian population."

Dr. Franklin Lamb is Director of the Americans Concerned for Middle East Peace, Beirut-Washington DC; Board Member of The Sabra Shatila Foundation; and a volunteer with the Palestine Civil Rights Campaign, Lebanon. He can be reached at fplamb@gmail.com.

A terrible lesson**Forced Military Testing in America's Schools**

by Pat Elder

The invasion of student privacy associated with military testing in U.S. high schools has been well documented by mainstream media sources, like *USA Today* and National Public Radio. The practice of mandatory testing, however, continues largely unnoticed.

The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) is the military's entrance exam given to fresh recruits to determine their aptitude for various military occupations. The test is also used as a recruiting tool in 12,000 high schools across the country. The three-hour test is used by military recruiting services to gain sensitive, personal information on more than 660,000 high school students across the country every year, the vast majority of whom are under age 18. Students typically are given the test at school without parental knowledge or consent. The school-based ASVAB Career Exploration Program is among the military's most effective recruiting tools.

In roughly 11,000 high schools where the ASVAB is administered, students are strongly encouraged to take the test for its alleged value as a career exploration tool, but in more than 1,000 schools, according to information received from the U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command through a Freedom of Information Act request, tens of thousands of students are required to take it. It is a particularly egregious violation of civil liberties that has been

High school student activists confront military recruiters at the 2008 Taste of Chicago food fair about their deceptive tactics. The students were trained in leadership development through a project funded by the A.J. Muste Memorial Institute's Counter Recruitment Fund.

Photo by AFSC Chicago



going on almost entirely unnoticed since the late 1960s.

Federal laws strictly monitor the release of student information, but the military manages to circumvent these laws with the administration of the ASVAB. In fact, ASVAB test results are the only student information that leaves U.S. schools without the opportunity provided for parental consent.

Aside from managing to evade the constraints of federal law, the military may also be violating many state laws on student privacy when it administers the ASVAB in public high schools. Students taking the ASVAB are required to furnish their social security numbers for the tests to

All Juniors will report to the cafeteria on Monday at 8:10 a.m. to take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery. Whether you're planning on college, a technical school, or you're just not sure yet, the ASVAB Career Exploration Program can provide you with important information about your skills, abilities and interests – and help put you on the right course for a satisfying career!

This announcement, or one very similar to it, greets students in more than a thousand high schools across the country. There's no mention of the military

“The school-based ASVAB is among the military's most effective recruiting tools ... tens of thousands of students are required to take it.”

be processed, even though many state laws specifically forbid such information being released without parental consent. In addition, the ASVAB requires underaged students to sign a privacy release statement, a practice that may also be prohibited by many state laws.

A typical school announcement reads:

or the primary purpose of the test, which is to find leads for recruiters.

Imagine you're Captain Eric W. Johnson, United States Navy, Commander, United States Military Entrance Processing Command and you had the complete cooperation of the Arkansas Department of Education to recruit high school students into the U.S. military. The first step you might take would be to require juniors in public high schools to take the ASVAB. ASVAB test results are good for enlistment purposes for up to two years. The ASVAB offers a treasure trove of information on students and allows the state's top recruiter to pre-screen the entire crop of incoming potential recruits. “Sit down, shut up, and take this test. That's an order!”

One hundred forty-two Arkansas high schools forced 10,000 children to take this military test without parental consent in Arkansas alone last year. “We've always done it that way and no one has ever complained,” explained one school counselor.



System Technician 1st Class Phuong Dao, assigned to the local Naval Recruiting Office, speaks to students from Radford High School in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, during the school's annual Career Fair in 2007.

During the fair, Dao, along with nine other Sailors from various commands in the area, spoke with more than 200 students about various job opportunities and benefits the Navy has to offer.

The Army recruiter's handbook calls for military recruiters to take ownership of schools and this is one way they're doing it. The U.S. Army Recruiting Command ranks each high school

participate in the ASVAB Career Exploration Program. If the school requires all students of a particular group or grade to test, the MEPS will support it.” (USMEPCOM Reg. 601-4)

Is it entirely coincidental that a thousand schools require students to take the test, or does the Department of Defense have regulations in place solely for public consumption that it has no intention of following?

In addition, the Pentagon is grossly under reporting the number of schools with mandatory testing. There are hundreds of schools with required testing that are not reported by the DoD. For instance, the information released by the DoD for the 2009-10 school year shows there is no mandatory testing in Ohio. However, it is possible, using a simple Google search tool, in this case (“k12.oh.us” asvab “all juniors”) to uncover several dozen schools that require students to take the ASVAB that are not reported by the Pentagon.

Why can't we get traction on this issue?

There is great reluctance in American society to stand up to the U.S. military, particularly concerning the way it runs a dozen programs in the nation's schools. Calls for transparency are met with silence and indignation, a terrible lesson for American high school students.

Meanwhile, military recruiting regulations specifically prohibit that the test from being made mandatory.

“Voluntary aspect of the student ASVAB: School and student participation in the Student Testing Program is voluntary. DOD personnel are prohibited from suggesting to school officials or any other influential individual or group that the test be made mandatory. Schools will be encouraged to recommend most students

Pat Elder (pelder@studentprivacy.org) is the Director of the National Coalition to Protect Student Privacy, www.studentprivacy.org and also serves on the Steering Committee of the National Network Opposing the Militarization of Youth, NNOMY, www.nnomy.org.

Hijacking the Arab Spring

by Robert Yoder

It's impossible to know what's really going on in Syria. The Assad government refuses to let outside observers, journalists or even the International Committee of the Red C into the country and both sides are waging a propaganda war. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights is either a legitimate opposition group of more than two dozen dissidents or a two-person mom-and-pop shop run out of a corner store in London and funded by the National Endowment for Democracy, a U.S. NGO. The Syrian National Council [SNC] is either a government in exile capable of taking over after the Assad regime falls or an ineffective bickering bunch of dilettantes who can agree on nothing. The Free Syrian Army [FSA] is either composed of 40,000 defectors from the Syrian Army or less than a thousand men controlled by the CIA and other Western intelligence services.

One thing is clear however, thousands have died since the protests began more than a year ago, crimes against humanity are being committed every day by both sides, and innocent men, women and children, as in every conflict, are the losers.

Here's what else is clear: the U.S. has no Middle East policy other than protecting our national interests, i.e., guaranteeing the

quickly to ensure U.S. hegemony in the region.

Libya was the perfect solution. Qaddafi was almost universally despised. He was unpredictable and corrupt, a brutal dictator in power for more than forty years and now he was crushing a popular uprising with merciless force. Without allies, Qaddafi was a no-risk target and, most important, Libya has huge reserves of sweet crude oil.

Under the guise of a "humanitarian" mission, the U.S. launched more than 100 Cruise missiles and scores of bombing runs to neutralize Libya's military and kill Qaddafi. After several weeks, the U.S. ostensibly turned over military operations to a NATO-led coalition which continued the attacks until opposition militias hunted Qaddafi down and, in the most savage and brutal way, killed him.

To attack a country which has not attacked you is a war crime. To sodomize, beat and shoot a confused, disoriented, defenseless old man is a crime against humanity.

But no matter, the U.S. had found a way to hijack the Arab Spring. Libya became the model to ensure that future uprisings would end the way we wanted them to end

“With Obama’s tools of choice being Special Forces, drones and the CIA, there’s little doubt that he’s lining everything up to guarantee the desired outcome in Syria.”

flow of oil to satisfy our insatiable demand. Oil and business interests, as always, trump freedom, democracy and human rights. For sixty years we have backed despots and dictators who suppressed dissent, trampled human rights and committed crimes against humanity, all in the name of stability and national interest.

The revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt caught the U.S. off guard. Our reliable allies, Zine El Abedine Ben Ali in Tunisia and Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, were toppled before we could react and the Arab Spring was spreading all over the Middle East – Bahrain, Yemen, Algeria, Jordan the U.A.E., Libya. Something had to be done

– with a compliant government who danced to our tune.

We haven't openly interfered in other despotic Middle East nations in revolt. Saudi Arabia, our second largest source of oil, easily suppressed their nascent revolt; Bahrain, home of the U.S. Fifth Fleet, is under control with assistance from the Saudi military; and Yemen and the other lesser nations in turmoil? Well, let them twist in the wind.

And then there's Syria. It took more than five months before Obama froze Syrian assets under U.S. control and declared that Bashar al-Assad must step



aside. That was on August 18, 2011, and since then Syria has been on the margins of discussion—until the recent escalation of violence and a rising chorus of calls for military intervention.

Without oil, we've had little interest in Syria in the past. Why now? One reason is it's one of Iran's closest allies and Iran has been a thorn in the U.S.'s side for more than thirty years, ever since the overthrow of the U.S.-backed Shah. Iran stands in the way of our complete dominance of the Middle East. Moreover, Iran is Israel's current *bête noir* and they are terrified that Iran is on the verge of building a nuclear weapon – in

a few things we do know: on December 2, 2011, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that Burhan Ghalioun, the president of the SNC, said that a Syrian government run by his group would cut Damascus's military relationship to Iran and end arms supplies to militant groups such as Hezbollah and Hamas; during the recent "Friends of Syria" meeting in Tunis, Secretary of State Clinton stated that not only would opposition forces in Syria somehow, someday, find the means to defend themselves and take the offensive, but that the SNC was a credible representative of the Syrian people; on February 17, MSNBC reported that Pentagon officials confirmed that the U.S. was intercepting Syrian government and military communications and had drones monitoring the Syrian military in order to make a case for an international response.

We also know that the FSA's headquarters are in Turkey's Hatay province which borders Syria, that NATO also has a base there and, it is rumored, the CIA is there as well. With Obama's tools of choice being Special Forces, drones and the CIA, there's little doubt that he's lining everything up to guarantee the desired outcome in Syria.

A rising chorus of coordinated voices has been calling for military intervention recently and the national media, as they did in the run up to Iraq, as they did in the run up to Libya, are faithfully parroting the administration's line. Based on past history, look for an armed "humanitarian" mission in the near future.

Robert Yoder is a writer and antiwar peacenik. His current book, 100 Letters to President Obama, is available from Wild Ocean Press, wildoceanpress.com



The Justice for Fallujah Project (<http://thefallujahproject.org>) is a group of veterans, students, and working people dedicated to raising awareness about the suffering of the people of Fallujah, promoting solidarity with the victims of U.S. war crimes, and ultimately ending all U.S. wars and occupations.

The Killing Season

by David Pear

America
Kill in blood lust
Egypt, Libya, Syria, Bahrain
Blood flows like puddles in the rain
Arms and legs in a pile
Stink after awhile
Kill again we must
Kill in blood lust
Amen

America
Join the fight
Women, children and mothers
Delight
Sisters, bothers and others
Tonight

Kill a baby
Terrorist maybe
Bodies riddled
Bloody river
Arms and legs
Blown to bits

Do not fit
Amen

America
Make it right
Use your might
Kill tonight
In Guns we trust
Bloody war lust
Killing
People dying by the million
Amen

America
Bomb for peace
Make the war cease
As before
Iraq and Afghanistan
Korea, Cuba, Lebanon
Bombs of napalm
Sear the flesh
Rare done meat
Bloody mess
Egypt, Libya, Syria
Weapons need the test
Kill all the rest
Bomb Iran
Bahrain
Bloody puddles of rain
In hell we meet
Amen



Photo by Juan-Carlos Delgado

Iraq Veteran Micaiah Dutt of Occupy Portland:

What are we doing?

I see a government that has been at war for every decade since its inception. I see a government that committed a gross genocide against the native populations in order to steal their land. I see a government that has enabled corporations to steal from the public through government contracts and kickbacks.

Furthermore, I see a diseased society in which people value money more than happiness, peace, love, understanding, and compassion. I see the United States as it really is—a selfish, indulgent, hateful, ignorant, and violent nation. I see a nation that has destroyed the concept of community and replaced it with institution. I see a nation that has destroyed critical thinking, and replaced it with repetitious thought. I see a nation that has destroyed art, creativity, and passion and replaced it with rules, regulations, and formalities. I see a nation who uses wars around the world in order to maintain a peace at home. A peace not built on community, equality and love. No, a peace built on material goods, consumerism, and selfish indulgence.

So what am I doing about it?

I'm no longer participating. My life is an act of rebellion. I will not participate in a society that places thieves and murderers in positions of honor while enslaving for profit millions of people through our bullshit judicial system.

I cut out all unnecessary expenses. Instead of going out to eat, I go to massive community potlucks. Instead of going to a bar, I go to a friend's house. Instead of going to a show, we throw concerts in backyards, basements, and living rooms. I attend workshops put on by affinity groups. I learn/teach about oppressions of all types: religion based, gender-based, race-based, sex-based, economic based, etc. I sit in union halls and help workers strike against mega-corporations that want to strip them of their rights. I hang out with

street kids and lawyers. I attend nightly potlucks; I share what I have with those in need.

I protest. I and thousands with me call out those thieves and murderers in public through civil disobedience.

I teach. I give classes on American History using *A Peoples History of the United States*.

I give speeches. I sit on panels at churches, libraries, homes, parks, and anywhere else where I am invited.

I speak to the media. I try in the best way I know how to share a revolutionary message that places community over institution. I share my knowledge of America's vast history of oppression.

I form friendships. I meet people of all types and backgrounds. I encourage them and they encourage me. I help them and they help me. We are dedicated to social change and our friendships are forged through collective struggle.

“We are creating a new world...and we are creating it right now. Our lives are the first casualties in the revolution. We are sacrificing our comfort, privilege, and apathy in order to show people that a new world is possible!”

We are creative. We come up with creative ways to explain and reveal the vast corruption in the American system. We make posters and costumes. I share ideas. We turn those ideas into essays, actions, speeches, posters, pictures and movies.

We are fools. We know that society doesn't want to hear our message. We know that society is more than comfortable with genocide, population manipulation, consumerism, greed, pride, hatred and ignorance. But we refuse to play along.

We are creating a new world...and we are creating it right now. Our lives are the first casualties in the revolution. We are sacrificing our comfort, privilege, and apathy in order to show people that a new world is possible!

LETTERS

We receive many supportive letters from readers. Thanks! Here are two from authors of articles that appeared in the last issue.

—Ed.

.....
What a pleasant surprise to hear from you. I'm glad to know that there is such a publication as yours that highlights war crimes. Will be awaiting the publication excitedly :) Unfortunately Malaysia is not one of the countries that has ratified the Rome Statute so Bush and Blair can enter and exit our country freely.

Eunice Au, *New Straits Times* Malaysia
(author of "Action possible against Bush, Blair")

.....
I would be honored to have the piece published by the *War Crimes Times* as I have the greatest appreciation for and gratitude toward Veterans For Peace for your work over the decades.

Yours for peace and a world without military blocs,

Rick Rozoff, Stop NATO <http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com/>
(author of "Sole Military Super-Bloc: NATO Issues Daily Reprieves To The World")

The War Crimes Times

Wants You!

The *WCT* has opportunities for volunteers to help with the production and distribution of this unique quarterly. The tasks, which only take a few hours each quarter, include editing, layout, proofreading, packaging, hauling, mailing, record-keeping, database management, and cleaning up afterwards. If you can't spare the time, maybe you can spare a dollar or two to help us reach folks who need our message.

Inquire at editor@WarCrimesTimes.org



During WWI, the British government tightly controlled the war news. On hearing a report from the front, Prime Minister David Lloyd George said, "If people really knew, the war would be stopped tomorrow. But of course they don't know, and can't know."

The WAR CRIMES TIMES wants the people to know.

FCNL Calls for Talks, not War, with Iran

(Continued from page 1) of opinion in Israel, but this poll suggests that the Israeli public have a strong understanding of the fact that the cost of a military attack on Iran would be high, while the benefits would be small to non-existent.

What evidence is there that a “grand bargain” with Iran is possible? Iran has actually proposed a “grand bargain” with the United States in the past. In 2003, Iran proposed that in exchange for the U.S. lifting all sanctions against Iran and a new relationship based on “mutual respect,” the Iranians would end their support for Hamas and the Islamic Jihad, and pressure them to cease attacks on Israel. The Iranians offered to allow intrusive international inspections of its nuclear program and commit to signing and adhering to the Additional Protocol to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Iran also offered to accept the Arab League initiative (i.e. Saudi peace plan) to recognize and normalize relations with Israel, in return for an Israeli commitment to withdraw from all occupied territories and accept a fully independent Palestinian state.

The Bush administration rebuffed Iran’s proposal for a “grand bargain” at that time. In fact, U.S. and Iranian history is littered with examples of missed opportunities, when one side was ready for negotiations, while the other wasn’t.

It’s certainly true that Iran has also rejected significant proposals offered by the United States, as well. Most notably, after two rounds of talks in October 2009, Iran refused to accept a U.S. “fuel swap offer,” which would involve swapping its low-enriched uranium in return for fuel for a medical research reactor. However, Iran eventually agreed to another version of the agreement, which was secured by Turkey and Brazil, but later rejected by the United States.

The main point is that all of the outstanding issues between the U.S. and Iran cannot be resolved in a day. The U.S. must pursue sustained, direct, and one-on-one talks with Iran, and Congress must work on opening political space, rather than shutting down political space with more and more provocative sanctions measures.

What if in the end, diplomacy fails? If diplomacy doesn’t work, the U.S. must continue to pursue sustained, direct, one-on-one talks with Iran. The U.S. has tried more than 30 years of increasingly indiscriminate sanctions and aggressive threats against Iran, and that has failed to do anything but increase the resolve of hardliners on all sides. Restoring relations between the United States and Vietnam, China, or any other country that the United States previously had severed relations with takes years, and restoring relations with Iran will be no different.

The U.S. has tried more than 30 years of increasingly indiscriminate sanctions and aggressive threats against Iran, and that has failed to do anything but increase the resolve of hardliners on all sides.

Would a military strike on Iran prevent Iran from being able to obtain a nuclear weapon? No! Even proponents of attacking Iran admit that a military strike on Iran would set back Iran’s nuclear program two years at most.

As former top Middle East intelligence analyst Paul Pillar has pointed out, a military strike could convince hardliners in Iran to pursue a nuclear weapons capability, in order to deter future U.S. and/or Israeli attacks:

“If the saber rattling were ever to lead to the use of military force, among the disastrous consequences for U.S. interests would be to ensure the enmity of future generations of Iranians and to provide the strongest possible incentive for those Iranians to build, or rebuild, a nuclear weapons capability.”

What gives the U.S., which holds much of the world’s nuclear arsenal, the moral authority to demand that Iran—or any other country—should not also pursue a nuclear weapons capability? What about Israel’s nuclear weapons?

FCNL opposes all nuclear weapons, held by any country anywhere. We support a nuclear weapons-free zone in the Middle East, as many security experts have called for. Also, Article 14 of UNSC resolution 687, which was passed following the first U.S. war with Iraq, called for “establishing in the Middle East a zone free from weapons of mass destruction and all missiles for their delivery.”

What has talking to Iran ever achieved? Despite the limited efforts that U.S. and Iranian diplomats have made to comprehensively resolve conflict between the two countries, the accomplishments of diplomacy have been significant—though they have received astoundingly little notice.

After 9/11, the Bush administration initiated talks with Iran about Afghanistan, led by James Dobbins, the president’s special envoy to Afghanistan. As veteran Iran expert Dr. Trita Parsi wrote in his recent book on the Obama administration’s diplomatic efforts with Iran, “Contrary to commonly held perception, the U.S. did not assemble a coalition against the Taliban; Washington joined an existing coalition led by Iran.”

During those meetings in which U.S. and Iranian diplomats took an active role, the Iranians made the following offers to the United States: air bases, cooperation in search-and-rescue missions for downed U.S. pilots, cooperation as a bridge between the Northern Alliance and the U.S. in the campaign against the Taliban, and cooperating with the U.S. to find and kill Al Qaeda members.

Is Iran really a rational actor? Top U.S. and Israeli national security experts, including Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Martin Dempsey and the former head of Israel’s spy agency Meir Dagan, agree that Iran is a “rational actor.”

As Fared Zakaria points out, the term “rational actor” describes a state that “calculates costs and benefits.” As the Director of National Intelligence James Clapper explains in his latest testimony to Congress, the U.S. intelligence community concludes that Iran makes its decisions based on a “cost-benefit approach.”

This article was adapted from “FCNL’s FAQ on Iran” with permission from Friends Committee on National Legislation (www.fcnl.org), a non-partisan Quaker lobby in the public interest.

At this time many Iranians all over the world are watching us and I imagine them to be very happy. They are happy not just because of an important award or a film or a filmmaker, but because at the time when talk of war, intimidation and aggression is exchanged between politicians, the name of their country, Iran, is spoken here through her glorious culture. A rich and ancient culture that has been under heavy dust of politics. I proudly offer this honor to the people of my country, a people who respect all cultures and civilizations and despise hostility and resentment. Thank you very much.

—Asghar Farhadi, the writer and director of *A Separation*, winner of Best Foreign Language Film, 2012 Academy Awards.



Pentagon “Losing the Battle” AGAINST Improvised Explosive Devices In Afghanistan

by Sherwood Ross

Even though it has spent at least \$60 billion to destroy them, the Pentagon is losing the battle to combat the Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), which have accounted for two out of every three U.S. casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan. This won't stop the Pentagon, though, from spending another \$10.1 billion on them next year as it struggles to reduce the human toll the IEDs are taking in its longest-ever war.

While 10 to 15 percent of the IEDs that go off maim or kill U.S. soldiers, “The statistical likelihood of (an enemy) being killed or hurt while planting a bomb was close to zero”, writes Andrew Cockburn in the November 2011 issue of *Harper's Magazine*. Some 70,000 IEDs had been planted in Iraq alone by May, 2007, he reported.

“Assembled from cooking pots, mobile phones, flashlight batteries, farm fertilizer, and other commonplace items, these home-made weapons have altered the course of the Iraqi and Afghan wars,” Cockburn writes. “They are also as far removed from our industrial approach to warfare as it is possible to be.”

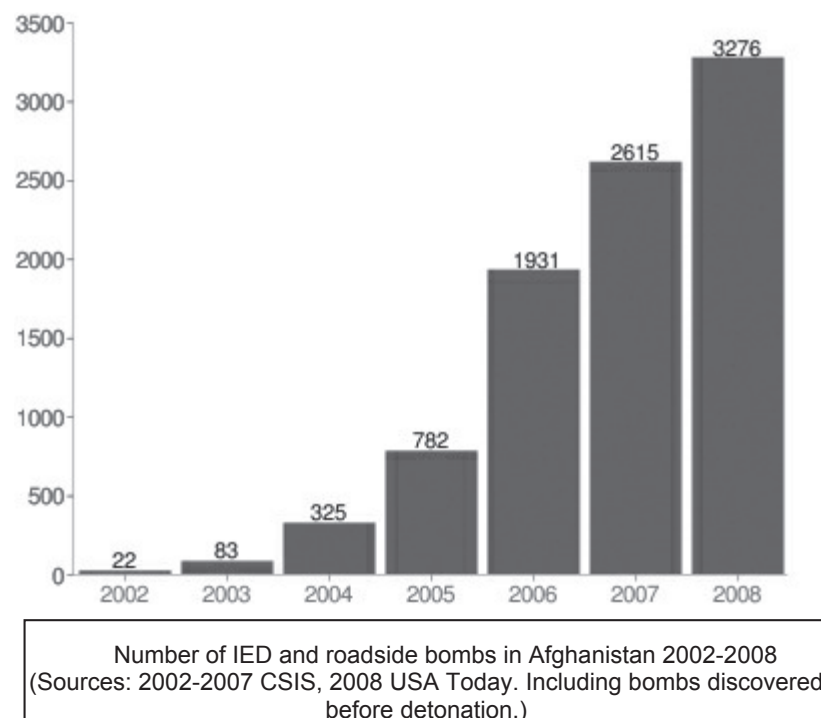
According to the online encyclopedia *Wikipedia*, “In 2009, there were 7,228 IED attacks in Afghanistan, a 120 percent increase over 2008, and a record for the war.

In 2010, “IED attacks in Afghanistan wounded 3,366 U.S. soldiers, which is nearly 60 percent of the total IED-wounded since the start of the war... Insurgents planted 14,661 IEDs in 2010, a 62 percent increase over the previous year,” *Wikipedia* said.

“As a general rule, we find about 50 percent of the IEDs before they go off,” General Michael Oates told Cockburn. The other 50 percent do detonate but of this group one-third do no harm because they were set incorrectly or were not sufficiently lethal or failed to

pierce the protective gear of the troops, Oates continued. But, “Somewhere between 10 and 15 percent kill or harm our soldiers or our equipment, and that number's been very stubborn since about 2004.”

Military analyst Rex Rivolo said the human networks



employed making, planting and triggering the IEDs provide jobs for 15,000 workers so that it “counts as a definite growth sector.” IED-planters earn about \$15 per job. Rivolo said the best way to inhibit their deployment was to operate low-flying light aircraft over areas where IEDs might be planted.

“When Rivolo oversaw a test-exercise in Jordan in 2005 that clearly demonstrated the effectiveness of the light-aircraft approach, all copies of the resulting report were recalled and destroyed,” Cockburn wrote. Rivolo told him, “It was too cheap for their taste.” Rivolo headed research at the Counter-IED Operations Integration Center in Baghdad.

A concurring view comes from Franklin Spinney, a former Pentagon analyst, who said that those who come up with simple responses to nullify the IED impact “are the antithesis of the techno-war that keeps the money flowing. The American military has sold the idea that complex technologies coupled to step-by-step analytical procedures can negate all the uncertainties and surprises of combat to solve any problem in war.”

A big part of the U.S. response has been money plowed into sophisticated surveillance systems. The Air Force and the Army are hard at work building blimps costing \$211 million and \$517 million, respectively, which can hover 20,000 feet or higher for a week at a time and spy over large areas to detect IED planters.

Those who plant IEDs are regarded as High Value Targets, or HVTs, and their eradication is “the ultimate objective of our entire counter-IED strategy,” Cockburn writes. Yet, when HVT bomb-planters are killed, attacks within three miles of their strikes increase by an average of 20 percent, he writes.

According to Rivolo, the reason is “our principal strategy in Iraq is counterproductive and needs to be evaluated.” The slain HVTs were almost always replaced at once, usually within 24 hours and, Rivolo said, “The new guy is going to work harder.”

If the strategy is counter-productive, a cynic may well wonder if the goal in Afghanistan isn't so much to win—as to spend.

Sherwood Ross, who worked formerly as a columnist for major dailies and wire services, writes on current affairs and runs a public relations firm “for good causes.”

War Has Failed

(Continued from page 2)

So it is this simple. War cannot bring peace because war is only violence which exacerbates all the things that undermine peace. That should now be clear as anti-Afghan-war sentiment in the U.S. has reached a tipping point.

Some 60% of those recently polled believe the war is not worth fighting. Congress is listening. Eighty-eight members of the House and 24 senators recently sent letters to president Obama calling for an expedited withdrawal. The White House is also reportedly now debating the pace of the drawdown. We support H.R.780 by Barbara Lee (CA), the “Responsible Withdrawal from Afghanistan Act.”

U.S. troops must withdraw because they are not leverage for peace and

stability, but are exacerbating violence and tensions. The solution—inevitably messy—to the conflict in Afghanistan (different from the U.S. war) will be political. We should not abandon Afghanistan, but U.S. troops have no role in political negotiations. Afghan self determination can only be realized in the absence of foreign troops.

I cannot say it better than Washington Post Columnist Eugene Robinson: “It's their country, not ours. In increasingly clear language, Afghans are telling us to leave. We should listen and oblige.”

Matt Southworth is Legislative Program Associate, Foreign Policy with FCNL. He also serves on the Board of Directors for Veterans for Peace and is an advocacy leader in the pro-peace veteran community. This article, first posted at <http://fcnl.org/blog>, is reprinted with permission.



AYPV peace walk in Kabul 18th March 2011; banner says: “The citizens of Afghanistan say NO to war.” The Afghan Youth Peace Volunteers are a grassroots group of multi-ethnic, ordinary Afghans working towards non-military solutions for Afghanistan, based on non-violence, unity, equality and self-reliance.

Young Vet Injured by Police Catapulted into the World Media Spotlight

War Crimes Times contributing editor Nadya Williams spoke with two members of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) on March 1, 2012: Scott Olsen, 24, an ex-Marine seriously injured during a police sweep of Occupy Oakland, and Navy veteran Josh Shepherd, 26, who was also at the protest. Shepherd became the main media contact for the global news story that followed.



Josh Shepherd

Williams: Scott, in a confrontation with the Oakland, California police at the Occupy encampment on the evening of October 25th, 2011, you were hit on the left side of your head by what has just recently been confirmed was a bean bag – an anti-personnel weapon, intended to be fired directly at people – and not, as previously thought, a metal tear gas canister, which is meant to hit the ground. Your lawyer also contends that the bag, containing hard plastic balls, was fired from a distance of less than 30 feet. Your skull was fractured, and your speech was damaged. How are you doing now?

Olsen: Well, I couldn't speak the whole time I was in the hospital, which was for two-and-a-half weeks. I had a 2 inch diameter skull fracture and cracked

vertebrae in my neck. I've made good progress in the last four months; the neck brace is off, but there's still pain. My speech is okay, but not back to what it was before I was hit. I'm back to working [as a computer systems manager] for 20 hours a week at my old job.

Williams: Josh, you were wearing your full Navy uniform at the confrontation with the police and standing next to Scott. Were the police being provoked?

Shepherd: No, there was no aggression against the police. They were just trying to run us off. Maybe it was because I was wearing my [former] uniform that the police didn't fire at me, I don't know. I didn't see Scott get hit, others carried him away; but because he was in a coma for several days, plus couldn't talk, my contact info was put out to the media.

Williams: So what was that like – dealing with worldwide media? The Nation magazine even gave IVAW a media award for your handling of the barrage of international press, radio, TV, and internet demands.

Shepherd: Dizzying is the only word for it! My cell was overwhelmed – forget about school or work. I'd miss three calls for every one that I could take. I live in San Francisco, but we kind of set up a "media center" at the home of an ex-Army IVAW member, who happens to live across the street from the hospital where Scott was. We had a whole team, including a few people who had professional experience who helped us out tremendously. We spoke to the BBC, CNN, Fox, ABC, MSNBC, Press TV, all local and many international news outlets. I went to New York and was on *Democracy Now!* There were vigils for Scott at Occupy Oakland, and a huge march of thousands on November 2nd. The national offices of Veterans for Peace and IVAW played a big role as well.

Williams: Scott, can you talk about why you joined the Marines, and when you turned against the war?

Olsen: At the time, I just thought it was the patriotic thing to do. I had taken a college computer class my last year at high school, but didn't have money to go to college full-time. I'm from a town in Wisconsin of about 15,000 people, which was hard hit economically by the 1990s. I joined 3 days after I turned 18, in July, 2005.

I was sent to Iraq twice, to Al Qa'im by the Syrian border in the winter of 2006–07; and then again, to two different cities in the summer of 2008. I worked in computer administration, but had to travel a lot in convoys to different infantry bases. I saw vehicles in front of me blown up by IEDs, with people killed. My turning against the war was gradual. By the time I returned back to Camp Pendleton, Calif., in September 2008 I was moved to a non-deployment status. I got out in November, 2009.

Williams: And why did you become involved with Occupy?

Olsen: Because I lived just a few hours' drive from Madison, Wisconsin, I started going to the wonderful people's rallies and occupations that started last February in the state capital over the union busting and cut-backs. There was such a beautiful spirit of community – all kinds of people coming together. I'd already joined IVAW and sometimes wore the shirt, but never spoke at rallies.

When I got a job in California and came to San Francisco last summer, it was just logical for me to participate in the Occupy movement.

Williams: What are your feelings about the police response to people's demands for economic justice, as voiced by Occupy?

Olsen: Obviously they're trying to suppress us, keep us down. By their use of violence, they're keeping out families, older people, and regular folks. It seems they only want the radicals to go out and demonstrate! There might not be encampments, but we're still here, there are still direct actions – at banks and foreclosed homes. We simply must replace the present system.

Williams: Of course the attack on you should never have happened, but it certainly pushed the issues of America's wars and economic collapse on to the world stage.

Olsen: Yes, I understand that IVAW and Veterans for Peace membership went way up, so it's good that there's more involvement, but it's sad that a tragic event seems to be what it takes to wake people up. We vets see that this is not the country we fought for. We don't recognize it any more. But I'm hopeful for the future – we're not going away.



Scott Olsen

(Photos by Nadya Williams)

“The future of the world rests in the hands of America. The future of America rests on the backs of 80,000,000 working men and women and their children. We are facing a grave crisis in our national life. The few who profit from the labor of the masses want to organize the workers into an army which will protect the interests of the capitalists. You are urged to add to the heavy burdens you already bear, the burden of a larger army and many additional warships. It is in your power to refuse to carry the artillery and the dreadnoughts and to shake off some of the burdens, too, such as limousines, steam yachts and country estates.”

—Helen Keller, “Strike Against War” speech at Carnegie Hall, New York City, January 5, 1916

The Radical Mark Twain

Few Americans know that our beloved national icon was so much more than *Huckleberry Finn* and folk humor. Mark Twain was the active vice-president of the Anti-Imperialist League from 1900 until his death in 1910—because of his deep humanity and total horror over America’s first colonial war. The so-called Spanish-American War of 1898 to 1902 took the Spanish colonies of the Philippines, Guam, Puerto Rico, and Cuba for our own possessions—U.S. imperialism against indigenous nationalism. None was more brutal than our invasion and occupation of the Philippines, with massacres and atrocities continuing for many years. In response, in 1901 Twain wrote his own “updated” version of “The Battle Hymn of the Republic.”
 —Nadya Williams

The Battle Hymn of the Republic

Mine eyes have seen the orgy of the launching of the Sword;
 He is searching out the hoardings where the stranger's wealth is stored;
 He hath loosed his fateful lightnings, and with woe and death has scored;
 His lust is marching on.

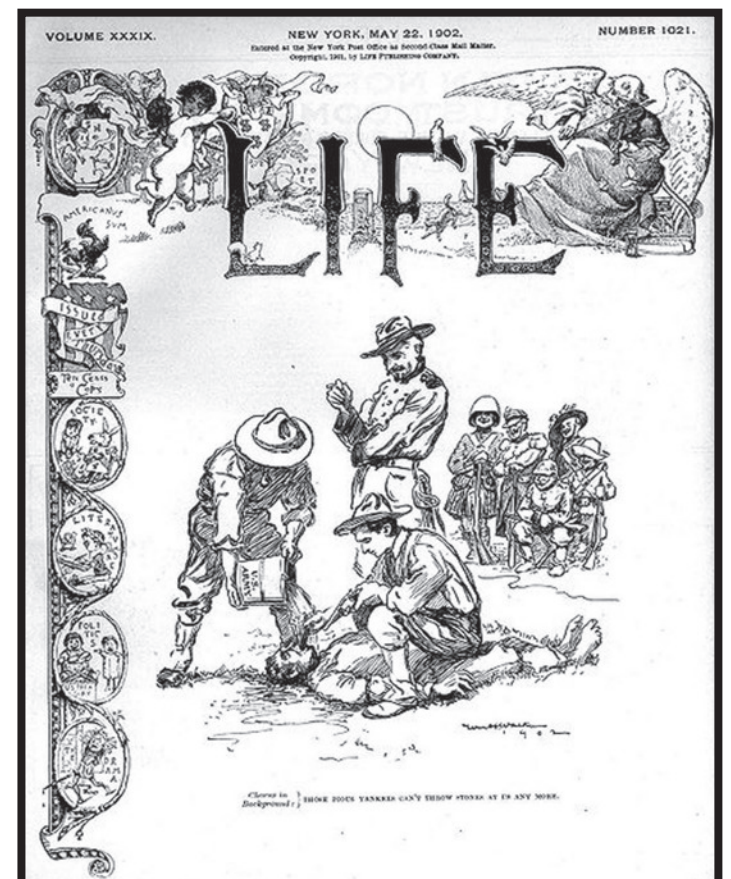
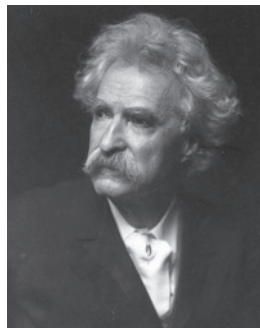
I have seen him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling camps;
 They have builded him an altar in the Eastern dews and damps;
 I have read his doomful mission by the dim and flaring lamps—
 His night is marching on.

I have read his bandit gospel writ in burnished rows of steel:
 “As ye deal with my pretensions, so with you my wrath shall deal;
 Let the faithless son of Freedom crush the patriot with his heel;
 Lo, Greed is marching on!”

We have legalized the strumpet and are guarding her retreat;*
 Greed is seeking out commercial souls before his judgement seat;
 O, be swift, ye clods, to answer him! be jubilant my feet!
 Our god is marching on!

In a sordid slime harmonious Greed was born in yonder ditch,
 With a longing in his bosom—and for others' goods an itch.
 As Christ died to make men holy, let men die to make us rich—
 Our god is marching on.

* NOTE: In Manila the Government has placed a certain industry [prostitution] under the protection of our flag. (M.T.)



The caption reads: "Chorus in background} 'Those pious Yankees can't throw stones at us anymore.'" This cartoon on the May 22, 1902 cover of Life magazine depicts American soldiers waterboarding a Filipino in the Philippine-American War. Lieutenant Grover Flint described one such torture session.

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