

"Exposing the True Costs of War"

The War Crimes Times

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VETS AT WHITE HOUSE DEMAND: 'STOP THESE WARS!'

WikiLeaks exposes U.S. government's duplicity and obstruction of justice—and that's good!

Obama and GOPers Worked Together to Kill Bush Torture Probe

A WikiLeaks cable shows that when Spain considered a criminal case against ex-Bush officials, the Obama White House and Republicans got really bipartisan.

by David Corn

In its first months in office, the Obama administration sought to protect Bush administration officials facing criminal investigation overseas for their involvement in establishing policies that governed interrogations of detained terrorist suspects. A "confidential" April 17, 2009, cable sent from the U.S. embassy in Madrid to the State Department—one of the 251,287 cables obtained by WikiLeaks—details how the Obama administration, working with Republicans, leaned on Spain to derail this potential prosecution.

The previous month, a Spanish human rights group called the Association for the Dignity of Spanish Prisoners had requested that Spain's National

(See TORTURE PROBE on page 6)

WikiLeaks and the End of U.S. 'Diplomacy'

by Amy Goodman

DEMOCRACY NOW!
11/30/2010—WikiLeaks is again publishing a trove of documents, in this case classified U.S. State Department diplomatic cables. The whistleblower website will gradually be releasing more than 250,000 of these documents in the coming months so that they can be analyzed and gain the attention they deserve. The cables are internal, written communications among U.S. embassies around the world and also to the U.S. State Department. WikiLeaks described the leak as "the largest set of confidential documents ever to be released into the public domain [giving] an unprecedented insight into U.S. government foreign activities."

Critics argue, as they did with earlier leaks of secret documents regarding Iraq and Afghanistan, that lives will be lost as a result. Rather, lives might actually be saved, since the way that the U.S. conducts diplomacy is now getting more exposure than ever—as is the apparent ease with which the U.S. government lives up (or

(See DIPLOMACY on page 7)

Why WikiLeaks is Good for Democracy

by Bill Quigley

Information is the currency of democracy.

—Thomas Jefferson

Since 9-11, the U.S. government, through Presidents Bush and Obama, has increasingly told the U.S. public that "state secrets" will not be shared with citizens. Candidate Obama pledged to reduce the use of state secrets, but President Obama continued the Bush tradition. The Courts and Congress and international allies have gone meekly along with the escalating secrecy demands of the U.S. Executive.

By labeling tens of millions of documents secret, the U.S. government has created a huge vacuum of information.

But information is the lifeblood of democracy. Information about government contributes to a healthy democracy. Transparency and accountability are essential elements of good government. Likewise, "a lack of government transparency and accountability undermines democracy and gives rise to cynicism and mistrust," according to a 2008

(See DEMOCRACY on page 7)



Demonstration led by Veterans For Peace at White House on December 16 rekindled the flame of the peace movement on a wintry day. Among the 131 arrested were Daniel Ellsberg, Chris Hedges, Coleen Rowley, members of March Forward!, Iraq Veterans Against the War, and the national board of VFP. Coverage starts on page 12. Photo by Jeanette McDermott.

Bush At Large

by Ralph Nader

George W. Bush is on a roll—a money roll with a \$7 million advance for his book, *Decision Points*, and a rehabilitation roll to paint his war crimes as justifiable mass-slaughter and torture.

His carefully chosen interviewees—NBC's Matt Lauer and Oprah Winfrey—agreed to a safe pre-taping to avoid demonstrations and tough questions. Requests for him to speak are pouring in from business conventions and other rich assemblages willing to pay \$200,000 for "the Decider's" banalities. This is "Shrub's" month in the sun.

In his first week of book promotion, he was asked about anything he would have done had

he known then what he knew now—especially regarding Iraq and its encircled dictator. Well, he deplored receiving "false intelligence" about Saddam Hussein having weapons of mass destruction which was one of several false claims he fed the American people before invading Iraq in 2003. But he has no regrets, saying that "the world was undoubtedly safer with Saddam gone."

But was it safer for over a million Iraqis who lost their lives due to the invasion, over 4 million refugees, 4500 American soldiers lost, 1100 amputees, tens of thousands injured, sick and tens of thousands more GIs coming back with trauma to lost jobs, broken families and permanent damage to their health?

(See BUSH AT LARGE on page 3)

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Abolishing the War System: The Big Picture

The patina of glory that surrounds war is wearing off. Is this the beginning of the end of the war mindset?



by Michael N. Nagler

About the murderous rampage of U.S. soldiers from the 5th Stryker Combat Brigade, who killed and dis-

membered Afghani civilians evidently "for sport," the *Santa Rosa Press Democrat* reported on September 20, "Army officials have not disclosed a motive" for the outrage. Let me try.

Violence is puzzling when we can't see the forest for the trees. If we focus on just this event—and it's certainly a shocker—we may not realize that it's part of a much larger pattern. We must take a step back—in fact, two steps—and take in the whole picture.

What these men did is only one of many signs of breakdown in both of our long, drawn-out wars in the Middle East. In Iraq, for example, from a report filed by McClatchy's Washington Bureau on September 17:

* Drug and alcohol abuse in the ranks, and the associated misdemeanor offenses, have risen alarmingly in the nine-year course of the war. "Drug and alcohol abuse is [now] a significant health problem in the Army," stated a

350-page report the Army released in July.

* Sexual assault tripled in the period 2001-2009; and most telling:

* So did suicide. There were 148 Army suicides in the first six months of this year and the toll is expected to surpass last year's grim total of 160.

Moreover, record numbers of veterans from both wars are unable to work, maintain relationships, or stay out of jail.

People are becoming more aware that we cannot solve problems by waging war on them.

At least now the Army is starting to lend some humane attention to these men and women, after a decade of denial and neglect. Said Gen. Peter W. Chiarelli, the vice chief of staff of the Army:

We can't use these people up, have them develop a problem and then throw them away and not take care of them. There is no way. I can't be part of an organization like that. Part of the reason they're having the problem is the situation we put them into.

And what is that situation? These soldiers lose it because they were put into a war that should never have been fought.

There were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq—and our leaders knew it. Similarly, it was not necessary to destroy the entire Taliban movement—assuming that military force could accomplish such a thing—to capture Osama bin Laden (which, of course, has not happened anyway).

But to get the final answer, we have to step back yet again. We have to recognize that there is such a thing as moral progress. Slavery was considered normal from the earliest records of history down to the 19th century of our era, when a small band of Quakers in London started a movement that broke the spell and suddenly brought to light the horror of enslaving another human being. Slavery still happens, but that's because of other factors; it was formally

abolished in the 19th century because the time was right for people to wake up and stop looking on a whole race of human beings as objects, as possessions.

Today, we are reaching a similar crisis with the institution of war. Despite appearances, people are becoming more aware that we cannot solve problems by waging war on them. If you are not aware that this is happening, you are not alone; watch any news or "entertainment" program and you'll see that competition, violence and war are still considered "normal." It's rare to spot nonviolent, alternative methods, since they are so rarely featured in mainstream media.

It is significant that a good number of the troubled veterans we just mentioned are not suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), exactly, but a variant recently uncovered by psychologist Rachel McNair that she calls PITS: perpetration induced traumatic stress. Simply put, when we do violence against others, we are in some psychological way hurting ourselves—and that pain is becoming more evident as the patina of glory surrounding war wears off. One brigade commander correctly pointed out that the drug problem is "just a symptom of the disease." But the name of the disease is not dysfunctional leaders or lax discipline or a particular conflict that should not have been fought; it's war.

Back when he was campaigning, soon-to-be President Obama said that we must "not only end war [in Iraq] but end the mindset that leads to war." Of course, he did nothing of the kind. And, so, it's up to us.

I encourage anyone who hasn't already done so to familiarize him- or herself with the alternatives to war that fall into three broad categories:

1. living more lightly on the earth, since most wars today are fought over its diminishing resources;
2. diplomacy, mediation, and international institutions that can keep disputes from turning into wars; and

3. nonviolent mechanisms to deal with the wars that nonetheless break out, like the unarmed interventions just mentioned that are helping to reduce violence in trouble spots all over the world now.

I recommend that we all learn about these things and talk about them with family, friends, and our congressmen or women. You may not get anything but raised eyebrows at first, but remember what Gandhi said about a real innovation: "First they ignore you; then they laugh at you; then they fight you—and then you win."

The War Crimes Times
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(www.VeteransForPeace.org)

a nonprofit, national organization of veterans working together for peace and justice through nonviolence.

War Crimes Times provides information on war crimes and war criminals, the need to hold war criminals accountable, the many costs of war, and the effects of our war culture on our national character. Our contributors include journalists, legal experts, poets, artists, and veterans speaking from experience. While their views may not always be entirely consistent with the mission of Veterans For Peace, their topics address the concerns of *War Crimes Times*.

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We welcome submissions of original articles, poetry, cartoons, news items, and letters to the editor. Please submit by the 10th of the month that the issue is printed: March, June, September, December.

Contact: editor@WarCrimesTimes.org

WCT Volunteer staff: Kim Carlyle, Susan Carlyle, Mike Ferner, Clare Hanrahan, Tarak Kauff, Lyle Petersen, Mark Runge, and Nadya Williams

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Bush At Large

(Continued from page 1)

Was it worth a trillion dollars to blow apart the country of Iraq and incur many more enemies? Was it worth starting a war paid for by a massive debt handed to our children so that George W. and Dick Cheney could give themselves and their rich buddies a massive tax cut? Ex-presidents possess self-excusing delusions, but this is non compos mentis run amuck.

Then there is his escape from legal sanctions because the law enforcers in the Justice Department act as if Bush and Dick Cheney are above the law. “What is Attorney General Holder waiting for?” declared conservative/libertarian former Judge Andrew Napolitano, the legal analyst for Fox News, adding that Holder should criminally prosecute both Bush and Cheney for their many crimes. Just as a Justice Department task force was about to do to Richard Nixon after he resigned his office in 1974, for far lesser crimes, when President Ford pardoned him.

I asked Bruce Fein, an associate deputy attorney general under Ronald Reagan, constitutional rights litigator, author of books and articles and many Congressional testimonies on the imperial presidency, and its unlawful penchant for Empire, for his reaction. Here is his response:

“Former President Bush’s selective memoir is a little like Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark. With the exception of authorizing waterboarding, a form of torture, Bush neglects his serial vandalizing of the Constitution and the federal criminal code: five years of illegal surveillances of Americans on American soil; a war against Iraq without proper authorization by Congress; illegal detentions of enemy combatants without accusation or trials; hundred of unconstitutional signing statements professing an intent to refuse to faithfully execute the

laws; unconstitutional defiance of congressional subpoenas; and, employing unilateral executive agreements to circumvent the treaty authority of the Senate over military commitments.

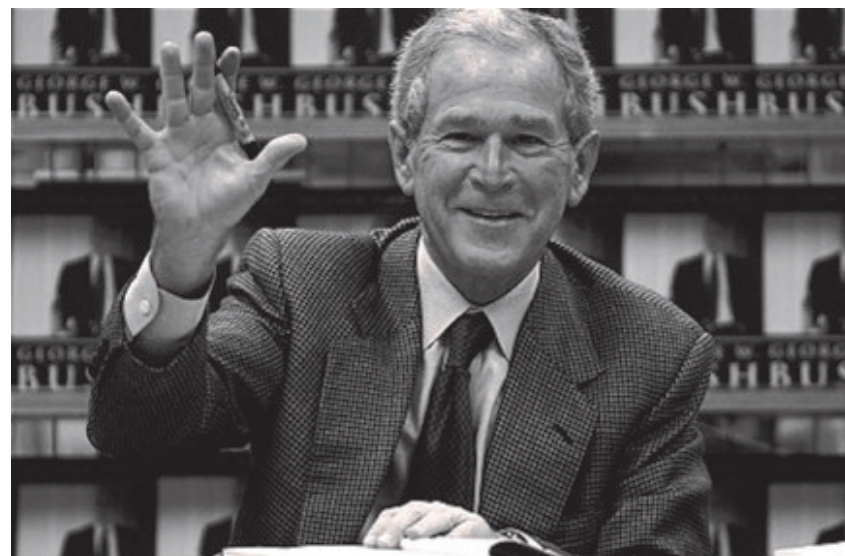
“Despite his constitutional literacy, President Obama has balked at faithful execution of the laws against torture, warrantless spying on Americans, or obstruction of justice perpetrated by Bush and his servile minions. On that score, Obama resembles President Nixon, who was impeached by the House Judiciary Committee and forced to resign for sneering at his constitutional obligation to enforce, not ignore the laws.

“If Obama believes exculpatory circumstances justify non-prosecution of Bush-Cheney,” Fein continued, “then he should pardon them as authorized by the Constitution. A pardon must be accepted by the recipient to be effective, and acknowledges guilt and the inviolability of the rule of law. Ignoring lawlessness at the highest levels like Obama wounds the rule of law, and creates a precedent

The Justice Department acts as if Bush and Dick Cheney are above the law.

that lies around like a loaded weapon ready to destroy the Constitution. Obama himself is thus violating his oath of office by nonfeasance.”

Lawyer Fein is not referring to a one-time episode like Watergate but a recurrent pattern of massive outlawry here and abroad stretching for years. In 2005-2006, the large and very conservative American Bar Association, led by its then president, corporate attorney, Michael Greco, convened three task forces that produced white papers documenting three patterns of Bush’s unconstitutional behavior. Mr. Fein served on the panel that condemned the outpourings of Presidential signing statements. Although addressed and sent to President Bush, the ABA received no response to these unprecedented condemnations.



Our legal system and Constitution touted as the greatest in the world, decay when we allow epidemics of grave violations by the President and other White House violators to be rewarded for their unconstitutionalism and criminality.

On Armistice Day, November 11, 2010, the *Washington Post* put on page one the excruciating, but brave struggle

more of them need to exert real patriotism and speak out against the militant White House draft-dodgers and their neo-con advisors who drove them and our country into these boomeranging, destructive wars.

The *Post* completed this grim trilogy with a full page color ad by the profitable munitions manufacturer, Lockheed Martin, which taxpayers paid for, thanking the “commitment” and “sacrifice” of those who are serving today in America’s military forces.

For the political cowards and their corporate profiteers, wars do not demand their sacrifice, they only invite their manipulative flattery. Same old racket, recalling double Congressional Medal of Honor winner, Marine General Smedley Butler whose book *War Is A Racket* said it all decades ago.

Of course more members of another profession should declare themselves for prosecution—the one million-strong licensed attorneys sworn to uphold the law as “officers of the court”!

Ralph Nader is a consumer advocate, lawyer, author, and has been named by Time Magazine as one of the 100 Most Influential Americans in the Twentieth Century.

Abused Detainee’s Plea for Peace Ignored

by Kim Carlyle

The scene and the story are familiar: a Middle Eastern country occupied by the strongest military force in the world; a middle-of-the-night arrest of a young man by soldiers unfamiliar with his culture, language, and religion. Very quickly the young man is transported to prison where the guards ridicule him, strip him naked, and torture him. Then they kill him.

The bearded young man in his thirties had been targeted by the sect of his religious tradition that had aligned with the occupying forces. His actions, his speeches, and the crowds that followed him appeared to threaten the old order. Officials of the occupying force acted preemptively to maintain stability and to avert any possible insurrection.

This young man had been regarded as an agitator, perhaps an insurgent. Some might even had called him

a terrorist had the term been in vogue twenty centuries ago. His followers called him “rabbi.” His message was radical; it was about peace. This young pacifist called for compassion, for forgiveness, for loving one’s enemies. He had high regard for the poor, the merciful, the gentle, and the peacemakers.

But his message did not die with him. For almost three hundred years, his followers, although severely persecuted, remained true to his teachings. They were pacifists who preached empathic love, cared for the less fortunate, and were brutally sacrificed for sport. Then, in an amazing turn of events, a leader of warriors, for political reasons, took their banner into battle and then promoted their doctrine. As religion, state, and military quickly became intermingled, the spiritual ideals were compromised and became subservient to the political power structure. While the dissident’s followers went from being outcasts to being the establishment, their

values largely died.

The teachings were corrupted. Without a clear distinction between church and state, religious scholars

would rationalize the use of violence and justify war for political ends. Today, warfare has spun out of control. It’s become an integral part of our violent culture. It’s our primary instrument of foreign policy. We glorify



(See *DETAINEE* on page 21)

March Forward! (MarchForward.org)—veterans and service members standing up against war and racism—debunks:

Afghanistan war myths

The Pentagon brass has promoted myths to convince us that we are fighting in Afghanistan for freedom and to protect the United States. Nothing could be further from the truth. We have a right to know the facts that the generals and politicians have been desperately trying to hide. This is not our war!

Myth 1: We are fighting to defeat the Taliban

The U.S. government has a long-standing friendship with the Taliban that soured relatively recently. The Taliban was founded in the early 1990s by members of extreme right-wing religious groups that had been funded and trained by the CIA to overthrow the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, which was established after a popular, progressive revolution in 1978. Even after they became the Taliban and violently seized power in Afghanistan, these groups received funding from the United States up until the Sept. 11 attacks.



U.S. envoy Charlie Wilson meets with future Taliban leaders on behalf of the CIA, while providing them extensive funding and training.

During the Taliban's rule in Afghanistan, the United States tried desperately to form friendly business relations with their government, sending government representatives and CEOs to negotiate oil pipelines with Taliban leaders. But the Taliban government was resistant to allowing U.S. business to do as they pleased—so the United States took advantage of the 9/11 attacks to launch a full-scale invasion in a country they had long tried to dominate.

Now, after nine years of pointless bloodshed, the Pentagon and the puppet Karzai regime are trying to negotiate a truce with the Taliban. A so-called High Council for Peace was recently set up to carry out these talks, which are actively supported by the military brass.

General Petraeus told a think-tank in mid-October, "We do facilitate that [talks with the Taliban]... it would not be the easiest of tasks for a senior Taliban commander to enter Afghanistan and make his way to Kabul if ISAF [International Security Assistance Force] were not willing and aware of it and therefore allows it to take place."

The Pentagon's entire strategy is aimed not at defeating the Taliban, but at cutting a deal with some of its leaders to maintain the illusion of U.S. invincibility. So when they tell us we have to fight to defeat the Taliban, and drive them from any chance of political power, they're lying—they are making us fight so the United States can gain the upper-hand at the bargaining table, so the Taliban will accept a power-sharing deal with the Karzai government, complete with holding top government positions. The U.S. is begging for a truce and our bodies are the bargaining chips.

Myth 2: We are fighting to defeat al-Qaeda

Al-Qaeda has almost no presence in Afghanistan. When asked in June about the number of members the

group has throughout the country, CIA Director Leon Panetta casually remarked, "At most, we're looking at 50 to 100, maybe less." How could the United States possibly be waging a war with nearly 100,000 troops and tens of thousands of mercenaries to defeat an organization the size of a football team?



Countries where al-Qaeda has a base of operations

Like the Taliban, many members of Al-Qaeda, including Osama Bin Laden, received U.S. support during the war against the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan in the 1980s. Robin Cook, who was the British government's foreign secretary from 1997 to 2001, wrote that "[t]hroughout the 80s he [Bin Laden] was armed by the CIA and funded by the Saudis to wage jihad."

However, Al-Qaeda and the Taliban are completely separate organizations. Al-Qaeda had no role in the pre-invasion Afghan government. Not only did the Taliban play no role in the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, they actually offered to extradite Osama Bin Laden.

The generals, politicians, and corporate media have attempted to give the people of the United States, and especially service members, the impression that the Afghan government was "harboring" members of Al-Qaeda. However, Al-Qaeda is an international network with no formal ties to any state. Al-Qaeda has commanders and operatives in over 40 different countries; to say that the battleground is in Afghanistan is laughable. On Sept. 11, it had a presence in many countries throughout Africa and the Middle East; 15 of the 19 hijackers involved in the attacks were from Saudi Arabia. To equate Al-Qaeda with Afghanistan is a gross oversimplification that serves the interests of the war profiteers and warmongering politicians.

Myth 3: We're in Afghanistan to defend women's rights and human rights.

In March of last year, two men delivered bread to Khamisa Mohammed Sawadi, a 75-year-old woman. Sawadi was arrested shortly thereafter because the men were not related to her, and being alone with them violated religious law. She was sentenced to 40 lashes and four months' imprisonment. This horrible violation of human rights was not carried out by the Taliban or any other group in Afghanistan, but by the government of Saudi Arabia, which has been promised up to \$60 billion of military aid from the U.S. government. How can the generals and politicians tell us that we are fighting for women's rights and human rights when they prop up a regime as brutal as the Saudi monarchy?

The U.S. government has never waged a war for altruistic reasons; every decision it makes is calculated



Afghan women protest the Karzai government and the U.S. occupation.

with the interests of the rich and powerful in mind. The enemies of Washington and Wall Street are selectively criticized for human rights violations, but client regimes like Saudi Arabia are given a free pass to be as oppressive as its rulers see fit. The U.S. government itself has committed horrible atrocities in Guantanamo Bay, Abu Ghraib, and Bagram Air Base.

In Afghanistan, the situation for women has not improved. Since the occupation, there has been a 50 percent increase in suicide attempts among Afghan women and girls. Life under U.S. occupation has drastically diminished the living conditions for women in Afghanistan. Last year, the U.S.-puppet regime led by Hamid Karzai approved a law that requires women to get their husband's permission to work or even leave the house and permits marital rape.

It is important to remember that there was a time in Afghanistan's history when women's rights and human rights were established and promoted. This was during the period when Afghanistan was led by a progressive, socialist [Najibullah] government. Hundreds of women's schools opened all over the country, massive literacy programs were created, women won rights they had never before enjoyed and campaigns against sexism were established. During this time of progress in Afghanistan, the CIA spent billions of dollars to overthrow the government, sponsoring death squads (the future Taliban) to attack women's schools and slaughter hundreds of teachers.

The only rights the Pentagon is interested in protecting are the rights of corporations that reap massive profits while GIs and Afghans suffer and die.

Myth 4: We are fighting in self-defense

Afghanistan is more than 7,000 miles from the United States. As a result of centuries of colonial domination, over 70 percent of its population cannot read or write and millions live in poverty. The country's Human Development Index, which is calculated by the United Nations to evaluate a country's level of economic and social development, is 0.352, the second worst in the world. Afghanistan is an impoverished nation that is the victim of imperialism, not a threat that the United States needs to defend itself against.

The war in Afghanistan is a war of aggression just like the Iraq war. The Pentagon and State Department viewed an obedient Iraq as a critical component of a "new Middle East." Likewise, Afghanistan was targeted partially for geostrategic reasons. Afghanistan is located at the crossroads of China, Russia, and India, three rising economic powers that could potentially threaten U.S. global dominance. Having a proxy in such an important location would be of great value to Washington and Wall Street.

It is undeniable now that a major U.S. goal of the Iraq war is to control the country's massive oil reserves.

Likewise the occupation of Afghanistan also serves an economic purpose. Afghanistan is located in an extremely resource-rich region that was once out of reach to U.S. business, in particular the natural-gas-rich former Soviet republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Each of these countries has a wealth of natural resources to be plundered by U.S. capital.



Like in Iraq, U.S. forces are protecting the construction of pipelines and refineries throughout the resource-rich region.

The U.S. government has spent over \$360 billion on the war, which is also a major justification for the \$700 billion Pentagon budget. This money is funneled into massive corporations, military contractors, and other war profiteers. Western corporations are salivating at the trillions of dollars of valuable mineral resources, especially lithium, that were recently discovered in Afghanistan.

A war of self-defense does not last nine-plus years. An unjust war aimed at imposing a subservient, corrupt regime on the Afghan people only increases international resentment towards the United States. If the U.S. government were really concerned with preventing terrorist attacks, it would not be bombing, invading, occupying, and brutalizing poor countries that have done nothing to us.

The United States has over 700 military bases in over 100 countries. Before 9/11, the last attack on U.S. soil was in the war of 1812. The reality is that U.S. military might is not about defending us from imminent threats, but securing a global network of economic and geostrategic domination through force and intimidation. Resistance to the U.S. military is a result of this imperialist foreign policy.

Myth 5: We are going to leave Afghanistan

The United States is preparing for a permanent occupation of Afghanistan. Although withdrawals have been promised starting next summer, “based on conditions on the ground,” it is clear that the Pentagon intends to leave thousands of troops to indefinitely continue the occupation.

To get an idea of what the military brass has planned for Afghanistan, we can look at what is happening in Iraq.



Revealing plans for massive, permanent U.S. compounds in Afghanistan.

Last August the war was officially declared over. However, 50,000 service members and thousands of mercenaries are still occupying the country. We have been told that combat operations have ceased, but GIs continue to die. Even military spokesperson Major General Stephen Lanza admits, “Every soldier is a combat soldier.”

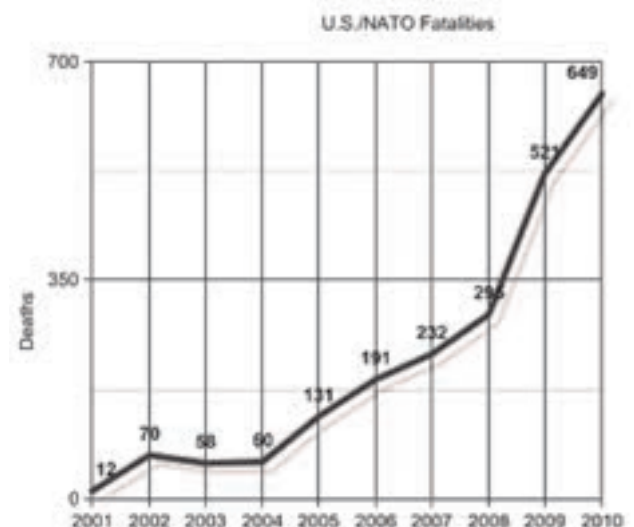
U.S. ambassador to Iraq Ryan Crocker said in an interview earlier this year that the United States military was “going to have to be there, strongly engaged, for a long time to come.” Flush with natural resources and strategically located, Iraq would be a force that could potentially challenge U.S. hegemony in the region if it realizes full independence, and the Pentagon is determined to make sure this never happens.

The same model is being applied in Afghanistan. The administration has given vague and far-off dates for withdrawal to appease the public, but the top brass is setting up a permanent presence. General David Petraeus has said “This is the kind of fight we’re in for the rest of our lives and probably our kids’ lives.” Last May, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates admitted, “We’re not leaving Afghanistan prematurely, in fact, we’re not ever leaving at all.”

Over the past few weeks, the Obama administration has officially pushed its much-touted “transition deadline” of 2011 to 2014, and revealed that massive numbers of U.S. troops will remain in Afghanistan through that period. The top civilian NATO representative in Afghanistan said the heavy involvement of U.S./NATO troops will last “to 2015 and beyond.”

Myth 6: The war in Afghanistan can be won.

Not only is the war in Afghanistan unjust, it is unwinnable. After nine years of bloodshed that brought the U.S. government no closer to its goal of dominating the country, the Pentagon is now focusing on avoiding the appearance of defeat. Thousands of GIs and innocent Afghans will die to maintain the false image of U.S. invincibility.



U.S./NATO fatalities in Afghanistan reveal mounting success for the resistance.

Even the military brass admits that the war cannot be won. General Petraeus said about Afghanistan, “You have to recognize that I don’t think you win this war.” Mark Carleton-Smith, former commander of British troops in Afghanistan, called the war “neither feasible nor supportable,” and said that “[t]he American strategy is doomed to fail.” No amount of military muscle can force the Afghan people to accept foreign domination. The continuation of the occupation only deepens their will to resist.

Up to 75 percent of Afghanistan is controlled by the resistance. Every time an area is captured by the United States, resistance fighters quickly move back in. For example, the offensive in Marjah last February was hailed as a turning point in the war. The plan was that occupation forces and Afghan collaborators would secure the area militarily and then massive amounts of aid would guarantee political loyalty.

However, the people refused to be bought. Captain Chuck Anklam, who leads a marine company in Marjah, told a reporter Oct. 7, months after the “success” of the operation, “We’re in firefights all over, every day,” and “There’s no area that’s void of enemy.” General McChrystal, before he was fired, called Marjah a “bleeding ulcer.” The futility of this war is painfully obvious, but this doesn’t stop the top brass from sacrificing us for the shattered prestige of their empire.

Myth 7: The Taliban equals the resistance to the U.S. occupation.

The Taliban only composes a fraction of the resistance to the occupation. U.S. Army General Ben Hodges admitted that only “a fifth [of fighters] or less are probably full-fledged, ideologically-motivated Taliban insurgents.” After the 2001 invasion, an enormous number of armed groups were formed by ordinary Afghans. According to official military estimates, there are 1,800 different resistance organizations fighting the occupation. This proves that the resistance is a widespread, popular rebellion against what the vast majority of Afghan people rightfully see as a brutal occupation by a foreign invader bent on dominating their land.



Resistance to the U.S./NATO occupation is supported by the vast majority of Afghans, from all walks of life.

They are not motivated by loyalty to the Taliban but a desire to defend the independence of Afghanistan. Every nation has the right to self-determination. Imagine the kind of massive opposition that would be provoked if the United States were under occupation.

The resistance has no intention of attacking the people of the United States, only defending their country against the aggression of the U.S. military. There are tens of thousands of Afghans involved in armed groups. While they oppose imperialism, they do not have any kind of ideological hatred for the people of the United States. They simply want to live their life in peace, free from foreign domination.

The members of resistance organizations are generally poor and working people, who have to struggle every day to survive. They are exploited and impoverished and few have access to decent health care or education. GIs have more in common with the resistance fighters than the privileged military brass that sends us to kill and die in an unjust, imperialist war. We have absolutely no reason to fight our brothers and sisters in Afghanistan.

MARCH FORWARD!
 VETERANS AND SERVICE MEMBERS STAND UP AGAINST WAR AND RACISM

Don't shoot messenger for revealing uncomfortable truths

WIKILEAKS deserves protection, not threats and attacks

by Julian Assange

IN 1958 a young Rupert Murdoch, then owner and editor of Adelaide's *The News*, wrote: "In the race between secrecy and truth, it seems inevitable that truth will always win."

His observation perhaps reflected his father Keith Murdoch's expose that Australian troops were being needlessly sacrificed by incompetent British commanders on the shores of Gallipoli. The British tried to shut him up but Keith Murdoch would not be silenced and his efforts led to the termination of the disastrous Gallipoli campaign.

Nearly a century later, WikiLeaks is also fearlessly publishing facts that need to be made public.

I grew up in a Queensland country town where people spoke their minds bluntly. They distrusted big government as something that could be corrupted if not watched carefully. The dark days of corruption in the Queensland government before the Fitzgerald inquiry are testimony to what happens when the politicians gag the media from reporting the truth.

These things have stayed with me. WikiLeaks was created around these core values. The idea, conceived in Australia, was to use internet technologies in new ways to report the truth.

WikiLeaks coined a new type of journalism: scientific journalism. We work with other media outlets to bring people the news, but also to prove it is true. Scientific journalism allows you to read a news story, then to click online to see the original document it is based



on. That way you can judge for yourself: Is the story true? Did the journalist report it accurately?

Democratic societies need a strong media and WikiLeaks is part of that media. The media helps keep government honest. WikiLeaks has revealed some hard truths about the Iraq and Afghan wars, and broken stories about corporate corruption.

People have said I am anti-war: for the record, I am not. Sometimes nations need to go to war, and there are just wars. But there is nothing more wrong than a government lying to its people about those wars, then asking these same citizens to put their lives and their taxes on the line for those lies. If a war is justified, then tell the truth and the people will decide whether to support it.

If you have read any of the Afghan or Iraq war logs, any of the U.S. embassy cables or any of the stories about the things WikiLeaks has reported, consider how important it is for all media to be able to report these things freely.

WikiLeaks is not the only publisher of the U.S. embassy cables. Other media outlets, including Britain's *the Guardian*, the *New York Times*, *El Pais* in Spain and *Der Spiegel* in Germany have published the same redacted cables.

Yet it is WikiLeaks, as the coordinator of these other groups, that has copped the most vicious attacks and accusations from the U.S. government and its acolytes. I have been accused of treason, even though I am an Australian, not a U.S., citizen. There have been dozens of serious calls in the U.S. for me to be "taken out" by U.S. special forces. Sarah Palin says I should be "hunted down like Osama bin Laden," a Republican bill sits before the U.S. Senate seeking to have me declared a "transnational threat" and disposed of accordingly. An adviser

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WikiLeaks: Torture Probe

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Court indict six former Bush officials for, as the cable describes it, "creating a legal framework that allegedly permitted torture." The six were former Attorney General Alberto Gonzales; David Addington, former chief of staff and legal adviser to Vice President Dick Cheney; William Haynes, the Pentagon's former general counsel; Douglas Feith, former undersecretary of defense for policy; Jay Bybee, former head of the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel; and John Yoo, a former official in the Office of Legal Counsel. The human rights group contended that Spain had a duty to open an investigation under the nation's "universal jurisdiction" law, which permits its legal system to prosecute overseas human rights crimes involving Spanish citizens and residents. Five Guantanamo detainees, the group maintained, fit that criteria.

Soon after the request was made, the U.S. embassy in Madrid began tracking the matter. On April 1, embassy officials spoke with chief prosecutor Javier Zaragoza, who indicated that he was not

The Obama administration, working with Republicans, was actively pressuring the Spaniards to drop the investigation.

pleased to have been handed this case, but he believed that the complaint appeared to be well-documented and he'd have to pursue it. Around that time, the acting deputy chief of the U.S. embassy talked to the chief of staff for Spain's foreign minister and a senior official in the Spanish Ministry of Justice to convey, as the cable says, "that this was a very serious matter for the USG." The two Spaniards "expressed their concern at the case but stressed the independence of the Spanish judiciary."

Two weeks later, Sen. Judd Gregg (R-NH) and the embassy's charge d'affaires "raised the issue" with another official at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The next day, Zaragoza informed the U.S. embassy that the complaint might not be legally sound. He noted he would ask Cándido Conde-Pumpido, Spain's attorney general, to review whether Spain had jurisdiction.

On April 15, Sen. Mel Martinez (R-FL), who'd recently been chairman of the Republican Party, and the U.S. embassy's charge d'affaires met with the acting Spanish foreign minister, Angel Lossada. The Americans, according to this cable, "underscored that the prosecutions would not be understood or accepted in the U.S. and would have an enormous impact on the bilateral relationship" between Spain and the United States. Here was a former head of the GOP and a representative of a new Democratic administration (headed by a president who had decried the Bush-Cheney administration's use of torture) jointly applying pressure on Spain to kill the investigation of the former Bush officials. Lossada replied that the independence of the Spanish judiciary had to be respected, but he added that the government would send a message to the attorney general that it did not favor prosecuting this case.

The next day, April 16, 2009, Attorney General Conde-Pumpido publicly declared that he would not support the criminal complaint, calling it "fraudulent" and political. If the Bush officials had acted criminally, he said, then a case should be filed in the United States. On April 17, the prosecutors of the National Court filed a report asking that the complaint be discontinued. In the April 17 cable, the American embassy in Madrid claimed some credit for Conde-Pumpido's opposition, noting that "Conde-Pumpido's public announcement follows outreach to [Government of Spain] officials to raise USG deep concerns on the implications of this case."

Still, this did not end the matter. It would still be up to investigating Judge Baltasar Garzón—a world-renowned jurist who had initiated previous prosecutions of war crimes and had publicly said that former President George W. Bush ought to be tried for war

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WikiLeaks: Diplomacy

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down) to the adage used by pioneering journalist I.F. Stone: “Governments lie.”

Take the case of Khaled El-Masri. El-Masri was snatched in Macedonia as part of the CIA’s secret extraordinary rendition program, in which people are taken by the U.S. government and sent to other countries, where they can be subjected to torture. He was held and tortured in a secret prison in Afghanistan for months before being dropped by the CIA on an isolated road in Albania, even though the CIA had long established that it had grabbed the wrong man. El-Masri, a German citizen, sought justice through German courts, and it looked like 13 CIA agents

The U.S. State Department instructs its staff around the world and at the U.N. to spy on people.

might be charged. Then the U.S. Embassy in Berlin stepped in, threatening, according to one cable, that “issuance of international arrest warrants would have a negative impact on our bilateral relationship.” No charges were ever filed in Germany, suggesting the diplomatic threat worked. The 13 agents are, however, still facing charges in Spain, where prosecutors enjoy some freedom from political pressures.

Or so we thought. In fact, Spain figures prominently in the leaked documents as well. Among the cables is one from May 14, 2007, authored by Eduardo Aguirre, a conservative Cuban-American banker appointed U.S. ambassador to Spain by George W. Bush. Aguirre wrote: “For our side, it will be important to continue to raise the Couso case, in which three U.S. servicemen face charges related to the 2003 death of Spanish cameraman Jose Couso during the battle for Baghdad.”

Couso was a young cameraman with the Spanish TV network Telecinco. He was filming from the balcony of the Palestine Hotel in Baghdad on April 8, 2003, when a U.S. Army tank fired on the hotel packed with journalists, killing Couso and a Reuters cameraman. Ambassador Aguirre was trying to quash the lawsuit brought by the Couso family in Spain.

The U.S. ambassador was also pressuring the Spanish government to drop a precedent-setting case against former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and other Bush administration officials. In that same memo, Aguirre writes, “The Deputy Justice Minister also said the GOS [government of Spain] strongly opposes a case brought against former Secretary Rumsfeld and will work to get it dismissed. The judge involved in that case has told us he has already started the process of dismissing the case.”

(TORTURE PROBE from page 6)

crimes—to decide whether to pursue the case against the six former Bush officials. That June—coincidentally or not—the Spanish Parliament passed legislation narrowing the use of “universal jurisdiction.” Still, in September 2009, Judge Garzón pushed ahead with the case.

The case eventually came to be overseen by another judge who last spring asked the parties behind the complaint to explain why the investigation should continue. Several human rights groups filed a brief urging this judge to keep the case alive, citing the Obama administration’s failure to prosecute the Bush officials. Since then, there’s been no action. The Obama administration essentially got what it wanted. The case of the Bush Six went away.

Back when it seemed that this case could become a major international issue, during an April 14, 2009, White House briefing, I asked press secretary Robert Gibbs if the Obama administration would cooperate with any request from the Spaniards for information and documents related to the Bush Six. He said, “I don’t want to get involved in hypotheticals.” What he didn’t disclose was that the Obama administration, working with Republicans, was actively pressuring the Spaniards to drop the investigation. Those efforts apparently paid off, and, as this WikiLeaks-released cable shows, Gonzales, Haynes, Feith, Bybee, Addington, and Yoo owed Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton thank-you notes.

David Corn is Mother Jones’ Washington bureau chief. Reprinted with permission.

WikiLeaks: Democracy

(Continued from page 1)

Harris survey commissioned by the Association of Government Accountants.

Into the secrecy vacuum stepped Private Bradley Manning, who, according to the Associated Press, was able to defeat “Pentagon security systems using little more than a Lady Gaga CD and a portable computer memory stick.”

Manning apparently sent the information to

WikiLeaks—a non profit media organization, which specializes in publishing leaked information. WikiLeaks in turn shared the documents with other media around the world including the *New York Times* and published much of it on its website.

Despite criminal investigations by the U.S. and other governments, it is not clear that media organizations like WikiLeaks can be prosecuted in the U.S. in light of First Amendment. Recall that the First Amendment says: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or of the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.”

Outraged politicians are claiming that the release of government information is the criminal equivalent of terrorism and puts innocent people’s lives at

Embarrassment and discomfort are small prices to pay for a healthier democracy.

risk. Many of those same politicians authorized the modern equivalent of carpet bombing of Baghdad and other Iraqi cities, the sacrifice of thousands of lives of soldiers and civilians, and drone assaults on civilian areas in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Yemen. Their anger at a document dump, no matter how extensive, is more than a little suspect.

Everyone, including WikiLeaks and the other media reporting the documents, hopes that no lives will be lost because of this. So far, that appears to be the case as McClatchey Newspapers reported November 28, 2010, that “U.S. officials conceded that they have no evidence to date that the [prior] release of documents led to anyone’s death.”

The U.S. has been going in the wrong direction for years by classifying millions of documents as secrets. WikiLeaks and other media which report these so called secrets will embarrass people—yes. WikiLeaks and other media will make leaders uncomfortable—yes. But embarrassment and discomfort are small prices to pay for a healthier democracy.

WikiLeaks has the potential to make transparency and accountability more robust in the U.S. That is good for democracy.

Bill Quigley is Legal Director at the Center for Constitutional Rights and a law professor at Loyola University New Orleans.

These revelations are rocking the Spanish government, as the cables clearly show U.S. attempts to disrupt the Spanish justice system.

Ambassador Aguirre told Spain’s *El Pais* newspaper several years ago, “I am George Bush’s plumber, I will solve all the problems George gives me.”

In another series of cables, the U.S. State Department instructs its staff around the world and at the U.N. to spy on people, and, remarkably, to collect biometric information on diplomats. The cable reads, “Data should include e-mail addresses, telephone and fax numbers, fingerprints, facial images, DNA, and iris scans.”

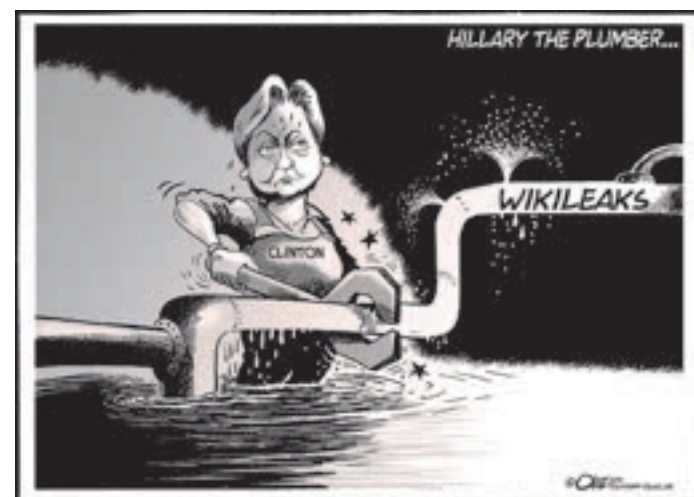
WikiLeaks is continuing its partnership with a global group of media outlets: Britain’s the *Guardian*, *El Pais*, the *New York Times*, German magazine

Der Spiegel and France’s *Le Monde*. David Leigh, investigations editor of the *Guardian*, told me, “We haven’t seen anything yet,” with literally almost a quarter-million cables still not publicly revealed.

A renowned political analyst and linguist, MIT professor Noam Chomsky helped Daniel Ellsberg, America’s premier whistle-blower, release the Pentagon Papers 40 years ago. I asked Chomsky about the latest cables released by WikiLeaks. “What this reveals,” he reflected, “is the profound hatred for democracy on the part of our political leadership.”

Denis Moynihan contributed research to this column.

Amy Goodman is the host of “Democracy Now!” and author of Breaking the Sound Barrier recently released in paperback and now a New York Times best-seller.



The CIA, KKK, & USA

By Sherwood Ross

By assigning covert action roles to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), it is as if the White House and Congress had legitimized the Ku Klux Klan to operate globally. That's because the CIA today resembles nothing so much as the "Invisible Empire" of the KKK that once spread terror across the South and Midwest. Fiery crosses aside, this is what the CIA is doing globally.

The CIA today is committing many of the same sort of gruesome crimes against foreigners that the KKK once inflicted on Americans of color. The principal difference is that the KKK consisted of self-appointed vigilantes who regarded themselves as both outside and above the law when they perpetrated their crimes. By contrast, the CIA acts as the agent of the American government, often at the highest levels, and at times at the direction of the White House.

Its crimes typically are committed in contravention of the highest established international law such as the Charter of the United Nations as well as the U.S. Constitution. What's more, the "Agency," as it is known, derives its funding largely from an imperialist-minded Congress; additionally, it has no qualms about fattening its budget from drug money and other illegal sources. It is a mirror-image of the lawless entity the U.S. has become since achieving superpower status. And it is incredible that the White House grants license to this violent Agency to commit its crimes with no accountability. The Ku Klux Klan was founded shortly after the end of the U.S. Civil War. Klansmen concealed their identities behind flowing white robes and white hoods as they terrorized the newly emancipated blacks to keep them from voting or to drive them from their property.

Allowing it to operate in secret literally gives the CIA the mythical Ring of Gyges. In Plato's Republic, the owner of the ring had the power to become invisible at will. As Wikipedia puts it, Plato "discusses whether a typical person would be moral if he did not have to fear the consequences of his actions." The ancient Greeks made the argument that "No man would keep his hands off what was not his own when he could safely take what he liked out of the market, go into houses and lie with any one at his pleasure, kill or release from prison whom he would, and in all respects be like a god among men." The CIA, like Hitler's Gestapo and Stalin's NKVD before it, has provided modern man the answer to this question. Its actions illuminate why all criminal entities, from rapists and bank robbers to Ponzi scheme swindlers and murderers, cloak themselves in secrecy.

There are innumerable examples of how American presidents have authorized, without public discussion, criminal acts that the preponderant majority of Americans would find reprehensible. For example, President Lyndon Johnson ordered the CIA to meddle in Chile's election to help Eduardo Frei become president. If they had known, U.S. taxpayers might have objected to such a use of their hard-earned money to influence the outcome of another country's elections.

But the public is rarely let in on such illegal foreign policy decisions. Where the KKK after the Civil War terrorized blacks to keep them from voting, the CIA has worked to influence the outcome of elections all over the world through bribery and vote-buying, dirty tricks, and worse. According to investigative reporter William Blum in *Rogue State*, the CIA has perverted elections in Italy, Lebanon, Indonesia, the Philippines, Japan,

Nepal, Laos, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Portugal, Australia, Jamaica, Panama, Nicaragua, and Haiti, among other countries.

If they had known, taxpayers might also object to the CIA's numerous overthrows of foreign governments by force and violence—such as was done in Iran in 1953 by President Eisenhower and Chile in 1973 by President Nixon. Both overthrows precipitated bloodbaths that cost tens of thousands of innocent civilians their lives.

Blum also lists the countries the CIA has attempted to overthrow or has actually overthrown. His list includes Greece, The Philippines, East Germany, Iran, Guatemala, Indonesia, Iraq, Viet Nam, Laos, Ecuador, The Congo, France, Cuba, Ghana, Chile, South Africa, Bolivia, Portugal, and Nicaragua, to cite a few.

As I write, today, October 11th, 2010, Nobel Peace Prize winner Adolfo Perez Esquivel of Argentina called on President Obama to revise U.S. (imperialist) policies toward Latin America. He questioned why the U.S. continues to plant its military bases across the region. That's an excellent question. If the U.S. is a peace-loving nation, why does it need 800 bases the world over in addition to 1,000 on its own soil?

Americans might recoil in disgust if they knew of the CIA's numerous assassinations of the elected officials of other nations. Is it any wonder Americans so often ask the question, "Why do they hate us?" As historian Arnold Toynbee wrote in 1961, "America is today the leader of a world-wide anti-revolutionary movement in the defense of vested interests. She now stands for what Rome stood for. Rome consistently supported the rich against the poor in all foreign communities that fell under her sway; and, since the poor, so far, have always and everywhere been more numerous than the rich, Rome's policy made for inequality, for injustice, and for the least happiness of the greatest number."

The CIA's protective secrecy resembles nothing so much as the KKK, which proudly proclaimed itself "the Invisible Empire" and whose thugs killed citizens having the courage to identify hooded Klansmen to



The Klan set itself up as judge, jury, and executioner—a policy adopted by the CIA today.

law enforcement officials. Today, it is our highest public officials that protect this criminal force, said to number about 25,000 employees. It is actually a federal offense to reveal the identity of a CIA undercover agent—unless, of course, you happen to be I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby, and are employed by Vice President Dick Cheney. (Libby leaked the identity of CIA agent Valerie Plame to punish her husband Joseph Wilson for publishing a report that undercut the White House lie that Saddam Hussein had purchased "yellowcake" [uranium] from Niger to fuel WMD.) Today, high public officials direct the CIA's criminal policies and protect its agents' identities—the better to enable them to commit their crimes.

According to journalist Fred Cook in his book *Ku Klux Klan: America's Recurring Nightmare*, "The Klan was inherently a vigilante organization. It could commit the most atrocious acts under the guise of high principle and perpetrators of those acts would be hidden behind white masks and protected by Klan secrecy... (The Klan) set itself up as judge, jury, and executioner"—a policy adopted by the CIA today.

CIA spies have conducted their criminal operations masquerading as officials of U.S. aid programs, business executives, or journalists. For example, the San Diego-based Copley News Service's staff of foreign correspondents allegedly was created to provide cover to CIA spies, compromising legitimate American journalists trying to do their jobs.

While the murders committed by the KKK likely ran into the many thousands, the CIA has killed on a far grander scale and managed to keep its role largely secret. As Tim Weiner, who covered the CIA for the *New York Times* noted in his book *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA*, "In Guatemala, 200,000 civilians had died during forty years of struggle following the agency's (CIA) 1954 coup against an elected president." Weiner adds, "the CIA's officers in Guatemala still went to great lengths to conceal the nature of their close relations with the military and to suppress reports that Guatemalan officers on its payroll were murderers, torturers, and thieves." When it comes to murder, the CIA makes the KKK look like Boy Scouts.

Like the KKK, CIA terrorists operate above the law. KKK members committed thousands of lynchings yet rarely were its members punished for them. In 2009 at a speech at CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia, President Obama revealed he was not intent on punishing CIA agents for their crimes but would rather "look forward."

[The CIA] casts a lengthy shadow over the White House. [Barack Obama] has vastly expanded the frequency of the CIA's assassinations by drone aircraft in Pakistan and illegally claims the "right" to assassinate any American citizen abroad as well. What's more, from 1989 to 1993 George

(Continued on page 9)



Bush Sr., the CIA's own former Director, sat in the White House. Additionally, from 2001 to 2009, the CIA had that Director's son, George W. Bush, in the Oval Office giving the CIA a blank check after the 9/11 massacre. And in Bill Clinton, who presided from 1993 to 2001, the CIA had a go-along president who satisfied the Agency's bloodlust when he authorized the first illegal "rendition," a euphemism for what KKK thugs once knew as kidnapping and torture.

Is there any question that the Agency has not played an influential, behind-the-scenes or even a direct role in the operations of the U.S. government at its highest level? It may indeed be a stretch to argue that the CIA is running the country but it is no stretch to say that year after year our presidents reflect the criminal philosophy of the Agency.

Other parallels with the KKK are striking. As Richmond Flowers, the Attorney General of Alabama stated in 1966, "I've found the Klan more than just another secret society... It resembles a shadow government, making its own laws, manipulating local politics, burrowing into some of our local law-enforcement agencies...When a pitiable misfit puts on his \$15 sheet, society can no longer ignore him."

Yet the descendants of those misfits have moved up today where they feel comfortable as operatives in the shadow government run by the White House. One of the CIA's illicit duties has been to

serve as a conduit for funneling U.S. taxpayer dollars to corrupt dictators and strongmen bent on suppressing the popular will of their citizenry.

As Noam Chomsky wrote in *Failed States*, in Honduras, "military officers in charge of the battalion (3-16) were on the CIA payroll." This elite unit, he says, "organized and trained by the United States and

Argentine neo-Nazis," was "the most barbaric of the Latin American killers that Washington had been supporting."

Like the KKK, the CIA kidnaps many of its victims with no thought ever of legal procedure. It exhibits utter disdain for the rights of those individuals, the sovereignty of foreign nations, or respect for international law. At least hundreds of foreigners, mostly from the Middle East, have been the victims of "renditions" just as the KKK kidnapped and flogged and lynched blacks, labor leaders, Catholics, Jews, or wayward wives whom it felt to be morally lacking.

In September, 1921, the *New York World* ran a series exposing the KKK. It pointed out that, among other things, the KKK was violating the Bill of Rights wholesale. This included the Fourth amendment against "unreasonable searches and seizures," the Fifth and the Sixth amendments, guaranteeing that no one may be held without a grand jury indictment or punished without a fair trial. And these rights today are similarly trampled by the CIA against American citizens, not just foreigners. Apparently, only foreign courts care to rein in the CIA.

The 23 CIA agents that it took to render one "suspect" in Italy are wanted there by the magistrates. (The spooks, by the way, ran up some fabulous bills in luxury hotels on taxpayers' dollars in that escape.) Former President Jimmy Carter wrote in his book *Our Endangered Values*, the CIA transferred some of

those it kidnapped to countries that included Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Morocco, Jordan, and Uzbekistan where "the techniques of torture are almost indescribably terrible, including, as a U.S. ambassador to one of the recipient countries reported, 'partial boiling of a hand or an arm,' with at least two prisoners boiled to death."

The KKK's methods of punishment were often as ugly: the brutal flogging of blacks in front of vicious crowds, followed by castration and burning their victims alive, and then lynching of the corpses. As for the CIA, "Why?" asks investigative reporter William Blum, "are these men rendered in the first place if not to be tortured? Does the United States not have any speakers in foreign languages to conduct interrogations?"

That the CIA is a terrorist organization was upheld in the famous "CIA On Trial" case in Northampton, Massachusetts, in 1987, when a jury acquitted 14 protestors who tried to stop CIA recruitment on campus, according to Francis Boyle, the University of Illinois international law authority who defended the group. The defense charged the CIA was "an organized criminal conspiracy like the SS and the Gestapo." Boyle said, "You would not let the SS or the Gestapo recruit on campus at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, so you would not permit the CIA to recruit on campus either."

Another shared characteristic of the KKK and CIA is greed, the desire to loot the hard-earned wealth of others. Often, Klansmen terrorized African-Americans who had amassed property to frighten them off their land. Law-abiding black citizens who had pulled themselves up by the proverbial bootstraps were cheated out of their homes and acreage by the night riders.

Similarly, the CIA across Latin America has aligned itself with the well-to-do ruling class at every opportunity. It has cooperated with the elite to punish and murder labor leaders and clergy who espoused economic opportunity for the poor. The notion that allowing the poor to enrich themselves fairly will also create more wealth for an

entire society generally, including the rich, has not permeated CIA thinking.

I emphasize what historian Toynbee noted: "America is today the leader of a worldwide anti-revolutionary movement in the defense of vested interests. She now stands for what Rome stood for."

In sum, by adopting the terrorist philosophy of the KKK and elevating it to the operations of government at the highest level, the imperial Obama administration, like its predecessors, is showing the world the worst possible face of America. Foreigners do not see the goodness inherent in the American people—most of whom only want a good day's pay for a good day's work and to educate their children and live at peace with the world.

Every adult American has a solemn obligation to demand that its government live up to international law, punish the CIA criminals in its midst, and become a respected citizen of the world. This will not come to pass until Congress abolishes the CIA, putting an end to its KKK-style terrorism which threatens Americans as well as humankind everywhere.

Sherwood Ross has worked as a reporter for the Chicago Daily News, a columnist for wire services and as the News Director of a national civil rights organization. He currently operates the Anti-War News Service from Miami, Florida. To contribute to his work or reach him, email sherwoodross10@gmail.com



Image by Mark Runge

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Please consider a generous (or a modest) donation. Thanks,

The *War Crimes Times* Team

The Justification of War:**Medieval Roots and Just War Theory Today**

by Robert Donnellan

Can we, with integrity, make the statement “killing is wrong”? Every known living culture has some proscription against killing, though the form this proscription takes varies greatly. What we do know is that at least since the Neolithic revolution, perhaps as a result of it, groups of people have engaged in warfare over resources and power and have fallen back on moral and logical arguments to circumvent this proscription against killing.

Medieval educator and theologian Thomas Aquinas, drawing on the teachings of Augustine, laid down a framework for making ethical decisions regarding war in his great work *Summa Theologiae*. This framework became the basis for Just War Theory, a theoretical model that is still used today.

Asking and responding to the question “Is it always a sin to wage war?” Aquinas argues that war can be justified as long as certain principles are met:

“The first is the authority of the sovereign on whose command war is waged.”

“Secondly, a just cause is required, namely that those who are attacked are attacked because they deserve it on account of some wrong they have done.”

“Thirdly, the right intention of those waging war is required, that is, they must intend to promote the good and to avoid evil.”

Thomas Aquinas writes from a Christian perspective to a Christian



audience. Modern theorists, in today’s fragmented society, prefer to cover their bases with a more pluralistic approach. However, there are those who still seem reluctant to shed the dogma of their religious traditions. Darrell Cole’s “Thomas Aquinas on Virtuous Warfare” is a painfully ethnocentric and shortsighted justification for Christians to earn God’s favor through

the premise, drawing on the writings of Thomas Aquinas, Augustine, and Romanus Cessario, among oth-

ers, is that “fighting just wars is an act of charity, worthy of Christian love, that unites the believer to God.” He writes:

The ends of the non-Christian are subsumed by Christian charity and given another impetus and finality altogether. The non-Christian fights for peace and order [following Aquinas’s rules for Just War], and so does the Christian; however, the Christian fights for justice under the aspect of God, which leads the Christian to fight for peace and order [as being] goods for others and not for himself. The Christian, in so doing, performs an act that brings him closer to God...[I]nsofar as fighting in just wars is an act of charity, that act elevates the believer closer to that ultimate friendship with God. In short, God elevates the soldier through his virtuous act.

When Cole writes that the Christian fights for others and not for himself, he implies that the morally inferior non-Christian is fighting for himself and



therefore does not fight out of an act of charity.

And charity, for Cole, “is what enables the will to be rationally directed toward right and just conduct.”

Nicolas Fotion is a contemporary philosopher who proposes his own less dogmatic version of Just War Theory in his book *War and Ethics*. Fotion’s framework for traditional Just War Theory (JWT) deals with pre-war considerations (*jus ad bellum*) and in-war considerations (*jus in bello*). The first

Political violence by nations may sometimes be less justifiable than other acts of violence, including that done by terrorists.

If there are reasons that war can be justified, then on the same grounds some acts of terrorism can be justified as well.

three are nearly identical to the principles set forth by Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century.

The *jus ad bellum* principles include:

- legitimate authority
- just cause
- right intention
- last resort
- proportionality
- likelihood of success

The *jus in bello* principles are:

- proportionality (not to be confused with the *jus ad bellum* proportionality)
- discrimination

One must have legitimate authority in order to initiate war using Just War Theory principles.

War is only just if the person or people who make the decision to go to war are legally designated to do so. This becomes a problem when international groups like the UN are considered, or when one considers non-state, rebel, and terrorist groups. Virginia Held, in her book *How Terrorism is Wrong*, argues that political violence by nations may sometimes be less justifiable than other acts of violence, including that done by terrorists. She argues that if there are reasons that war can be justified, then on the same grounds some acts of terrorism can be justified as well.

Here is an example. Americans are quick to dismiss the fact that the United States was formed through illegal political violence against England. Some believe that political violence is justified in opposition to tyranny, human rights violations, and oppression. In America’s case, it is called the Revolution. If this political violence by a resistance group against a legitimate government is considered justified, then some other acts of political violence (what the American government would label terrorism) must also be considered justified. Non-state groups may be less unjustified in resorting to violence than states because states have more resources and options available to them. This gives states a greater obligation to resist resorting to violence. Statehood is not a legitimate factor in determining whether an act of political violence is justified or not. If a government is morally justified in using war to prevent political and social change (which Held believes is doubtful), then it is reasonable to say that non-governmental groups are justified in using violence to instigate change.

Terrorism is often condemned because of its intention to cause fear and to kill innocent people.

However, governments use fear as a tactic, such as when police fire indiscriminately into a crowd to subdue dissidents. Civilians have also been targeted by governments, like the bombing raids by Allied forces in WWII and the nuclear bombs dropped on Japan. If these are considered morally legitimate acts of war, then non-state groups would also be justified in using them. Held’s argument throws a wrench into the legitimate authority mechanism of Just War Theory.

Just cause for going to war is determined if one’s nation is attacked, is under imminent threat of attack, or has been attacked recently. Just cause is also assumed if one’s allies and other friendly nations are attacked, under imminent threat of attack, or have been attacked recently. Notice that this justifies the use of “preemptive” attacks, but it does not justify “preventive” attacks. There is an important difference between the two.



“Preemptive” attacks are carried out literally when an attack is imminent. If an enemy is flying bombers toward your country you might be justified in preemptively shooting down those planes with ground-to-air missiles. This is the absolute last chance to avoid being struck by an enemy attack. What George W. Bush called a preemptive attack against Iraq was actually a “preventive” attack. Whether or not Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction (which, apparently, it did not) there was no evidence that Iraq was preparing an attack against the United States or any of our allies.

The final allowance for just cause is in the case of humanitarian catastrophes. Ideology, religious beliefs, and self-interest can never be just causes for war under Fotion’s JWT, though he casually invokes religious imagery by using terms such as angels, heaven, and blessed.

Right intention means to look at what the nation is trying to accomplish. This is easily confused with just cause. This principle is not about the motivations for going to war, however. A nation would have the right intention if they sought to repel a foreign invader, but not if they overran the aggressor nation, enslaved its people, annihilated its infrastructure, and took over their resources. The problem is that every leader claims right intention—both sides, every time.

The last resort principle encourages negotiations and diplomacy, and serves as an obstacle to going to war. Fotion does not believe the last resort principle should be taken literally, but amends it to mean last reasonable resort. As he interprets it: “...the principle urges those who contemplate going to war to take a series of steps...before taking the plunge.”

Fotion seems to reason that this “plunge” into war is in many cases inevitable. The problem is that, short of being attacked by one’s opponent, there is always room for another shot at diplomacy. Taken literally, the last resort

principle would postpone resorting to war indefinitely.

The proportionality principle, in the *ad bellum* pre-war sense, is making a cost vs. benefit analysis to see if the price of going to war will be worth the rewards. Fotion does not provide a system to judge the value of things such as human life or freedom from

oppression, so it would be very easy to manipulate this principle to suit the desires of the person or people making the decision to go to war.

War should not be undertaken if there is little or no chance of winning,

A nation would have the right intention if they sought to repel a foreign invader, but not if they overran the aggressor nation, enslaved its people, annihilated its infrastructure, and took over their resources. The problem is that every leader claims right intention—both sides, every time.

according to the likelihood of success principle. It would be unjust to send a nation’s troops to their death knowing there is no reasonable chance of success.

Proportionality during a war (*jus in bello*), according to Fotion, “distinguishes between applying excessive and overwhelming force.” It is necessary to use overwhelming force to overcome an enemy, but it is not permissible to use excessive force and utterly destroy them. Think about WWII, and the dropping of nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Excessive?

The second *jus in bello* principle, discrimination, deals with determining who is a legitimate target and who is not. It is not justifiable to kill indiscriminately. A nation must attempt to kill only those who are deemed appropriate military targets or those who directly support them. In today’s warfare, with the sheer destructiveness of modern weapons, following this principle is nearly impossible. Most Just War theorists argue that it is good enough to try to discriminate between civilian and soldier, but that “collateral damage” must be accepted as a part of war.

These principles are made under a few basic assumptions. The very foundation on which a theory allowing war is based must assume an exception to

the universal principle that “killing is wrong.”

Such a theory must assume that war can be justified. Just War Theory further assumes that the parties involved in war are legitimately recognized nations. Fotion believes that with the changing nature of war, at least one of the parties is frequently a non-nation or rebel group. Though he doesn’t state it explicitly, he seems to assume that non-nation groups are morally deficient when compared to nations. There has been a great shift in recent decades from wars between nations to struggles between a nation and rebels or non-nation groups. Fotion thinks that Just War Theory should be split into two theories for this reason. Just War Theory should be kept for dealing with traditional warfare. This he refers to as regular Just War Theory, or JWT-R. He suggests an alternative, JWT-I (-I meaning irregular), for dealing with struggles between nations and non-nation groups.

only concern is the pragmatic welfare of the nation. As long as war benefits “our” national interest there is no need to argue for its justness.

The other two positions, Pacifism and Just War Theory, are idealist positions. Pacifism holds that killing is always wrong, and therefore, war is always impermissible. Just War Theory, as explained above, contains a paradox: JWT assumes an absolute (some acts, such as genocide, are absolutely wrong), but implies relativity (killing may, in some cases, be justified). Even though killing is wrong, war is sometimes permissible.

I do not support Just War Theory. But there is a problem: although I like to think of myself as a Pacifist, I have been trained to think from the anthropological perspective of relativism; and the Pacifist position is one of absolutes, holding that killing and war are absolutely wrong. Calhoun writes: “If absolutism is true, then the dictates of morality apply to all people everywhere and are not merely a matter of societal convention. If, in contrast, moral relativity is true, then moral principles are cultural artifacts having no absolute or objective validity.”

So, I ask myself, “Am I a relativist?” I must answer, “Yes.” “Is killing always wrong?” “Absolutely.” What a mess! But I must concede that there may be cases where not going to war is the immoral choice. Think WWII, or genocide in Rwanda, Darfur, and elsewhere. In cases of genocide it may be that waging war is the only morally just option. Pacifism certainly attempts to impose a simple decision on complex situations. But sometimes simplification is a dangerous choice. Often it is better to recognize the situation’s full complexity in order to make more nuanced and appropriate decisions.

Robert Donnellan served in the Army (1998 to 2001) and in the Michigan National Guard (2002-2004), spending six months deployed to Egypt with the Multinational Force and Observers. He is a member of VFP Chapter 099 and just received a BA in Sociology/Anthropology from UNC Asheville.



December 3, 2010

Dear President Obama,

A week ago, I wrote you on this same subject but since I've not yet received a reply either personal or automated, I felt I should try again.

As president of Veterans For Peace (VFP), a national organization of military veterans, I want to convey to you our serious opposition to your administration's policy of ongoing wars, proxy wars, occupations and drone strikes in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Palestine and Yemen.

Your policies are taking innocent lives, causing untold, lifelong suffering, rapidly destroying our economy, our environment and ultimately making all of us considerably less safe.

Since there are no logical reasons rooted in human or planetary betterment for these policies, we are left to conclude what is logical and obvious: that their purpose is to maintain and advance what has sadly become the global U.S. Empire.

VFP has voiced our opposition to these wars at every national demonstration and with countless local actions, letters, faxes, emails, and phone calls.

We requested a meeting with you shortly after your inauguration, to no avail. We are now requesting another meeting. And since we have tried all the above many times over, this is what we now propose.

If, within 10 days from now, we do not hear a positive response to our request for a meeting, we are prepared to bring a large delegation of our members to Washington before the end of this month. We will come in person to the White House to meet with you or until we are dragged away in full view of our nation and the world—military veterans, carrying their nation's flag, seeking a meeting with their president in the season of Peace.

Like the bonus marchers of the 1930's, we demand our bonus be paid. The bonus for our service and the many sacrifices of our comrades is peace.

In this season of Peace I remain,
Most sincerely yours,

Mike Ferner,
National President,

White House — December 16, 2010



Photos on pages 12-17 by Ellen Davidson unless otherwise indicated



When a government is unjust and no longer serves the people it governs, it is the duty of the governed to resist the entrenched powers and change the course of the society. I can not stand by idly while my government, in my name, continues killing innocents abroad who have done no harm to us. When my government spends unlimited amounts of treasure on our war-making machine and the supporting industries but neglects the needs of the governed, it is imperative that the people give voice to their concerns and try by all non-violent means possible to change the course of their government. This is why I will be in front of the White House December 16th demanding an end to the wars in the Middle East and the looting of our economy by the rich and powerful.

—Ken Ashe, VFP Chapter 099

(Bill Perry photo)

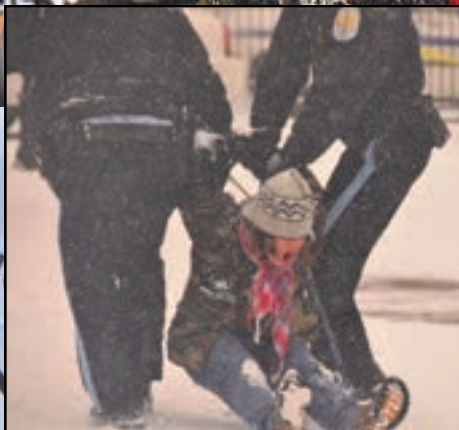




War for empire, endless and cruel war, resulting in untold suffering, destruction and death for millions, a war economy here at home that steals from ordinary citizens and makes the few enormously wealthy, these are powerful reasons for us to put our bodies on the wheels, the levers, the apparatus of this vile war-

making machine and demand that it stop. Enough is enough. There is no glory, no heroism, no good wars, no justification whatsoever, it is all, all of it, based on lies. I'll be in Washington on December 16 with other veterans, resisting this war mentality, demanding its end.

—Tarak Kauff,
December 16 action organizer



They're not going to end the wars. And they're not going to do it, because it's not our government. It's their government. It's the government of the rich. It's the government of Wall Street, of the oil giants, of the defense contractors. It's their government. And the only language that they understand is shutting down business as usual. And that's what we're doing here today, and we're going to continue to do until these wars are over. We're going to fight until there's not one more bomb dropped, not one more bullet fired, not one more soldier coming home in a wheelchair, not one more family slaughtered, not one more day of U.S. imperialism.

—Mike Prysner,
March Forward!



Bitter Memories of War on the Way to Jail

By Chris Hedges

The speeches were over. There was a mournful harmonica rendition of taps. The 500 protesters in Lafayette Park in front of the White House fell silent. One hundred and thirty-one men and women, many of them military veterans wearing old fatigues, formed a single, silent line. Under a heavy snowfall and to the slow beat of a drum, they walked to the White House fence. They stood there until they were arrested.

The solemnity of that funerary march, the hush, was the hardest and most moving part of Thursday's protest against the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. It unwound the bitter memories and images of war I keep wrapped in the thick cotton wool of forgetfulness. I was transported in that short walk to places I do not like to go. Strange and vivid flashes swept over me—the young soldier in El Salvador who had been shot through the back of the head and was, as I crouched next to him, slowly curling up in a fetal position to die; the mutilated corpses of Kosovar Albanians in the back of a flatbed truck; the screams of a woman, her entrails spilling out of her gaping wounds, on the cobblestones of a Sarajevo street. My experience was not unique. Veterans around me were back in the rice paddies and lush undergrowth of Vietnam, the dusty roads of southern Iraq or the mountain passes of Afghanistan. Their tears showed that. There was no need to talk. We spoke the same wordless language. The butchery of war defies, for those who know it, articulation.

What can I tell you about war?

War perverts and destroys you. It pushes you closer and closer to your own annihilation—spiritual, emotional and, finally, physical. It destroys the continuity of life, tearing apart all systems—economic, social, environmental and political—that sustain us as human beings. War is necrophilia. The essence



of war is death. War is a state of almost pure sin with its goals of hatred and destruction. It is organized sadism. War fosters alienation and leads inevitably to nihilism. It is a turning away from the sanctity of life.

And yet the mythic narratives about war perpetuate the allure of power and violence. They perpetuate the seductiveness of the godlike force that comes with the license to kill with impunity. All images and narratives about war disseminated by the state, the press, religious institutions, schools, and the entertainment industry are gross and distorted lies. The clash between the fabricated myth about war and the truth about war leaves those of us who return from war alienated, angry, and often unable to communicate. We can't find the words to describe war's reality. It is as if the wider culture sucked the words out from us and left us to sputter incoherencies. How can you speak meaningfully about organized murder? Anything you say is gibberish.

The sophisticated forms of industrial killing, coupled with the amoral decisions of politicians and military leaders who direct and fund war, hide war's reality from public view. But those who have been in combat see death up close. Only their story tells the moral truth about war. The power of the Washington march was that we all knew this story. We had no need to use stale and hackneyed clichés about war. We grieved together.

War, once it begins, fuels new and bizarre perversities, innovative forms of death to ward off the boredom of routine death. This is why we would drive into towns in Bosnia and find bodies crucified on the sides of barns or decapitated, burned, and mutilated. That is why those slain in combat are treated as trophies by their killers, turned into grotesque pieces of performance art. I met soldiers who carried in their wallets the identity cards of men they killed. They showed them to me with the imploring look of a lost child.



We swiftly deform ourselves, our essence, in war. We give up individual conscience—maybe even consciousness—for the contagion of the crowd and the intoxication of violence. You survive war because you repress emotions. You do what you have to do. And this means killing. To make a moral choice, to defy war's enticement, is often self-destructive. But once the survivors return home, once the danger, adrenaline highs and the pressure of the crowd are removed, the repressed emotions surface with a vengeance. Fear, rage, grief, and guilt leap up like snake heads to consume lives and turn nights into long, sleepless bouts with terror. You drink to forget.

We reached the fence. The real prisoners, the ones who blindly serve systems of power and force, are the mandarins inside the White House, the Congress, and the Pentagon. The masters of war are slaves to the idols of empire, power, and greed; to the idols of careers; to the dead language of interests, national security, politics, and propaganda. They kill and do not know what killing is. In the rise to power, they became smaller. Power consumes them. Once power is obtained they become its pawn. Like Shakespeare's Richard III, politicians such as Barack Obama fall prey to the forces they thought they had harnessed. The capacity to love, to cherish and protect life, may not always triumph, but it saves us. It keeps us human. It offers the only chance to escape from the contagion of war. Perhaps it is the only antidote. There are times when remaining human is the only victory possible.

The necrophilia of war is hidden under platitudes about honor, duty or comradeship. It waits especially in moments when we seem to have little to live for and no hope, or in moments when the intoxication of war is at its pitch to be unleashed. When we spend long enough in war, it comes to us as a kind of release, a fatal and seductive embrace that can consummate the long flirtation with our own destruction. In the Arab-Israeli 1973 war, almost a third of all Israeli casualties were due to psychiatric causes—and the war lasted only a few days. A World War II study determined that, after 60 days of continuous combat, 98 percent of all surviving soldiers will have become psychiatric casualties. A common trait among the 2 percent who were able to endure sustained combat was a predisposition toward "aggressive psychopathic personalities." In short, if you spend enough time in combat you go insane or you were insane to begin with. War starts out as the annihilation of the other. War ends, if we do not free ourselves from its grasp, in self-annihilation.

Those around me at the protest, at once haunted and maimed by war, had freed themselves of war's contagion. They bore its scars. They were plagued by its demons. These crippling forces will always haunt them. But they had returned home. They had returned to life. They had asked for atonement. In Lafayette Park they found grace. They had recovered within themselves the capacity for reverence. They no longer sought to become gods, to wield the power of the divine, the power to take life. And it is out of this new acknowledgement of weakness, remorse for their complicity in evil and an acceptance of human imperfection that they had found wisdom. Listen to them, if you can hear them. They are our prophets.

The tears and grief, the halting asides, the catch in the throat, the sudden breaking off of a sentence, is the only language that describes war. This faltering language of pain and atonement, even shame, was carried like great, heavy boulders by these veterans as they tromped slowly through the snow from Lafayette Park to the White



House fence. It was carried by them as they were handcuffed, dragged through the snow, photographed for arrest, and frog-marched into police vans. It was carried into the frigid holding cells of a Washington jail. If it was understood by the masters of war who build the big guns, who build the death planes, who build all the bombs, and who hide behind walls and desks, this language would expose their masks and chasten their hollow, empty souls. This language, bereft of words, places its faith in physical acts of nonviolent resistance, in powerlessness and compassion, in truth. It believes that one day it will bring down the house of war.

As Tennyson wrote in "In Memoriam":

*Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.*

*So runs my dream: but what am I?
An infant crying in the night:
An infant crying for the light:
And with no language but a cry.*

Witness at the White House Fence

By Ray McGovern

“Show me your company, and I’ll tell you who you are,” my grandmother would often say with a light Irish lilt but unmistakable seriousness, an admonition about taking care in choosing what company you keep.

On Thursday, I could sense her smiling down through the snow as I stood pinned to the White House fence with Daniel Ellsberg, Chris Hedges, Margaret Flowers, Medea Benjamin, Coleen Rowley, Mike Ferner, Jodie Evans, and over 125 others risking arrest in an attempt to highlight the horrors of war.

The witness was sponsored by Veterans for Peace, a group comprised of many former soldiers who have “been there, done that” regarding war, distinguishing them from President Barack Obama who, like his predecessor, hasn’t a clue what war is really about. (Sorry, Mr. President, donning a bomber jacket and making empty promises to the troops

in the middle of an Afghan night does not qualify.)

The simple but significant gift of presence was being offered outside the White House. As I hung on the fence, I recalled what I knew of the results of war.

Into view came some of my closest childhood friends—like Bob, whose father was killed in WWII when Bob was in kindergarten. My uncle Larry, an Army chaplain, killed in a plane crash.

Other friends like Mike and Dan, whose big brothers were killed in Korea. So many of my classmates from Infantry Officers Orientation at Ft. Benning killed in the Big Muddy called Vietnam.

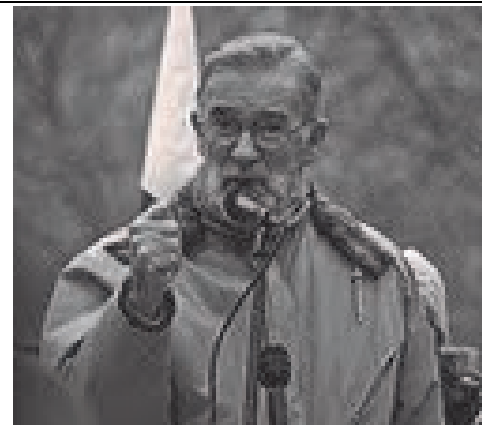
My college classmate with whom I studied Russian, Ed Krukowski, 1Lt, USAF, one of the very first casualties of Vietnam, killed, leaving behind a

wife and three small children. Other friends, too numerous to mention, killed in that misbegotten war.

More recently, Casey Sheehan and 4,429 other U.S. soldiers killed in Iraq, and the 491 U.S. troops killed so far this year in Afghanistan (bringing that total to 1,438). And their mothers. And the mothers of all those others who have died in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan. Mothers don’t get to decide; only to mourn.

A pure snow showered down as if to say, “Blessed are the peacemakers.” Tears kept my eyes hydrated against the cold.

The hat my youngest daughter knit for me three years ago when I had no



hair gave me an additional sense of being showered with love and affirmation. There was a palpable sense of rightness in our witness to the witless ways of the White House behind the fence.

I thought to myself, this White House is

a far cry from the “Camelot” administration of John F. Kennedy, who brought me, and so many others to Washington almost a half-century ago. And yet, I could not resist borrowing a song from the play, *Camelot*: “I wonder what the king is doing tonight. What merriment is the king pursuing tonight...”

Perhaps strutting before a mirror in his leather bomber jacket, practicing rhetorical flourishes for the troops, like, “You are making our country safer.” The

(See WITNESS on page 16)

Upholding the Oath: One Vet’s Impressions

by Paul Appell

In 1932, WWI veterans in front of the White House on Pennsylvania Avenue protested that their promised bonus for serving in WWI had not been paid. President Hoover ordered General MacArthur to clear the street. The vets were pushed across the Potomac to their encampment in Anacostia. Ignoring Hoover’s messages to stop, MacArthur along with Major Eisenhower and Major Patton attacked the encampment.



Photo by Andrew Courtney

Four of the vets and their family members were killed. Medal of Honor recipient Smedley Butler supported and encouraged the vet protesters.

In 2010, on December 16, 131 protesters, the majority of whom were war veterans and members of Veterans For Peace, were physically removed from the fence in front of the White House on Pennsylvania Avenue, handcuffed, and transported to Anacostia Station jail. I had an Agent Orange ribbon pinned to my field jacket to protest the government’s failure to fully live up to their promise to care for my Agent-Orange-injured fellow Viet Nam vets. We protesting vets were

supported by Medal of Honor recipient Charlie Litkey, who participated in a solidarity civil resistance in San Francisco the same day.

This historical connection did not go unnoticed as we stood in our jail cell in Anacostia. Award winning blues artist and Viet Nam vet Watermelon Slim was one of my cellmates. Unfortunately, we had to surrender all of our personal items before being placed in jail, so Slim did not have his harmonica.

As I told Congressman Schock who was sitting directly in front of me on the flight from DC to Chicago Friday night, we were treated with upmost professionalism by the police. One of my favorite photos of the resistance is a photo of Iraq vet Zach Choate, who opted to go in his dress greens with a chest full of medals from his deployments to Iraq, hugging officer Cosmo. Officer Cosmo is the bomb-sniffing Golden Retriever who was brought in to make sure we had not hidden any bombs in our signs and stage.

My wife, Jill, and I had received the official White House Christmas card a few days before I went to DC. It is a snow-covered view of the White House signed by all the first family—including Bo’s paw print. For the two hours I was leaning against the White House fence, every so often I would turn around and stare at the White House. The lawn, the trees, and the White House were covered in snow as shown in the Christmas card. The White House I saw while standing in the snow was a little different. There were snipers on the roof with rifles pointed in our direction. On the lawn were armed, black-outfitted individuals with such high-tech weapons, that even the young Iraq vets could not identify them. Veterans For Peace’s Christmas message to the White House was spelled out in large letters on the banner that I held with one of my fellow members. It said, “Peace on earth? Mr. Obama: End these wars. Not tomorrow. Not next year. Now!”



The civil resistance gave me a chance to spend time (jail time) with my friend and former *New York Times* war correspondent Chris Hedges. Chris wore the same heavy jacket that he wore while covering the Bosnia War, minus the \$5000 worth of body armor he wore there. Though Chris had been captured by the Iraqi Republican Guard near Basra during the Gulf War and held captive, this was his first time to be arrested by U.S. police, as it was for me. Joining us at Anacostia station were many of my favorite outspoken war veterans. These included Ray McGovern (who, as an intelligence official, gave the daily intelligence briefings to Presidents in the White House) and Dan Ellsberg (who had released the Pentagon papers about forty years ago).

It is important to note that we were committing what University of Illinois law professor Francis Boyle calls civil resistance, as opposed to civil disobedience. Civil resistance is the breaking of a lower law to uphold a higher one. I personally was upholding the oath that I took forty-one years ago at Fort Benning to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic. If that means jail time, so be it.



Witness

(Continued from page 15)

opposite, of course, is true, and if President Obama does not know that, he is not as smart as people think he is.

More accurately, the troops are making Obama's political position safer, protecting him from accusations of "softness" on Afghanistan, just as a surge of troops into Iraq postponed the inevitable, sparing George W. Bush from the personal ignominy of presiding over a more obvious American defeat in Iraq.

Both presidents were willing to sacrifice those troops on the altar of political expediency, knowing full well that it is not American freedom that "the insurgents" hate, but rather U.S. government policies, which leave so many oppressed, or dead.

Despite our (Veterans for Peace) repeated requests over many months, Obama has refused to meet with us. On Wednesday, though, he carved out five hours to sit down with many of the fat cat executives who are profiteering from war.

It seems the President was worried that he had hurt the fat cats' feelings—and opened himself to criticism as being "anti-business"—with some earlier remarks about their obscenely inflated pay.

Before our witness on Thursday, we read in the *Washington Post* that Obama told the 20 chief executives, "I want to dispel any notion we want to inhibit your success," and solicited ideas from them "on a host of issues." By way of contrast, the President has shown zero interest in soliciting ideas from the likes of us.

'The Big Fool Said to Push On'

In another serendipitous coincidence, as we were witnessing against the March of Folly in Afghanistan, the President was completing his "review" of the war and sealing the doom of countless more soldiers and civilians (and, in my view, his own political doom) by re-enacting the Shakespearean tragedy of Lyndon the First.

Afraid to get crossways with the military brass, who have made it embarrassingly clear that they see no backbone under that bomber jacket, Obama has just sped past another exit ramp out of Afghanistan by letting the policy review

promised for this month become a charade.

Hewing to the script of Lyndon the First, Barack Obama has chosen to shun the considered views of U.S. intelligence agencies, which, to their credit, show in no uncertain terms the stupidity of keeping U.S. troops neck-deep in this latest Big Muddy in Afghanistan—to borrow from Pete Seeger's song from the Vietnam era.

There is one reality upon which there is virtually complete consensus as highlighted by the U.S. intelligence agencies: The U.S. and NATO will not be able to "prevail" in Afghanistan if Pakistan does not stop supporting the Taliban. Are we clear on that? That's what the recent National Intelligence Estimate on Afghanistan says.

A companion NIE on Pakistan says there is not a snowball's chance in hell that the Pakistani Army and security services will somehow "change their strategic vision" regarding keeping the Taliban in play for the time when the United States and its NATO allies finally leave Afghanistan and when Pakistan will want to reassert its influence there.

If the making of peace today means prison, that's where we need to be.

Should it be too hard to put the two NIEs together and reach the appropriate conclusions for policy?

It is difficult to believe that—after going from knee-deep to waist-deep in the Big Muddy by his early 2009 decision to insert 21,000 troops into Afghanistan, and then from waist-deep to neck-deep by deciding a year ago to send in 30,000 more—Obama would say to "push on."

The answer lies in the kind of "foolish consistency" Emerson termed the "hobgoblin of little minds." Out of crass political considerations, Obama continues to evidence a spineless persistence behind this fool's errand. He seems driven by fear of offending other important Washington constituencies, such as the neoconservative opinion-makers, and having to face the wrath of the be-medaled and be-ribboned Gen. David Petraeus. This is pitiable enough—but a lot of people are getting killed or maimed for life.

'When will we ever learn?'

To answer this other Vietnam-era song, well, we have learned—many of us the hard way. We need to tell the big fool not to be so afraid of neocon columnists and the festooned left breast of the sainted Petraeus—you know, the ten rows of medals and merit badges that made him so lopsided he crashed down on the witness table and was given a time-

out by the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Outside the White House on Thursday, we found ourselves singing "We Shall Overcome" with confidence. And what we learned later of other witnessing conducted that same day provided still more affirmation, grit, and determination.

For example, 75 witnesses braved freezing temperatures at the Times Square recruiting station in New York to express solidarity with our demonstration in Washington.

There in Times Square stood not only veterans, but also grandmothers from the Granny Peace Brigade, the Raging Grannies, and Grandmothers Against the War.

Two of the grandmothers were in their 90s, but stood for more than an hour in the cold. The Catholic Worker, War Resisters League, and other anti-war groups were also represented.

What? You didn't hear about any of this, including the arrest of 135 veterans and other anti-war activists in front of the White House? Need I remind you of the Fawning Corporate Media and how its practitioners have always downplayed or ignored protests, large or small, against the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan? Dave Lindorff summed the situation up (see "News Blackout" on next page).

A Rich Tradition

"Civil Disobedience" was Henry David Thoreau's response to his 1846 imprisonment for refusing to pay a poll tax that violated his conscience. Thoreau was protesting an earlier war of aggression, the U.S. attack on Mexico.

In "Civil Disobedience," Thoreau asked:

Must the citizen ever for a moment, or in the least degree, resign his conscience to the legislator? Why has every man a conscience then? I think that we should be men first, and subjects afterward.

It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right. The only obligation which I have a right to assume is to do at any time what I think right.

Imprisonment was Thoreau's first direct experience with state power and, in typical fashion, he analyzed it:

The State never intentionally confronts a man's sense, intellectual or moral, but only his



body, his senses. It is not armed with superior wit or honesty, but with superior physical strength. I was not born to be forced. I will breathe after my own fashion. Let us see who is the strongest.

Prior to his arrest, Thoreau had lived a quiet, solitary life at Walden, an isolated pond in the woods about a mile and a half from Concord. He returned to Walden to mull over two questions: (1) Why do some men obey laws without asking if the laws are just or unjust; and, (2) why do others obey laws they think are wrong?

More recent American prophets have thrown their own light on the crises of our time while confronting the questions posed by Thoreau.

Amid the carnage of Vietnam, Fr. Daniel Berrigan, SJ, posed a challenge to those who hoped for peace without sacrifice, those who would say, "Let us have peace but let us lose nothing. Let our lives stand intact; let us know neither prison nor ill repute nor disruption of ties."

Berrigan saw no such easy option. "There is no peace," he said, "because the making of peace is at least as costly as the making of war—at least as liable to bring disgrace and prison."

So, if the making of peace today means prison, that's where we need to be. It is time to accept our responsibility to do ALL we can to stop the violence of wars waged in our name. Now it's our turn to ponder those questions.

Ray McGovern is a former CIA analyst. This article first appeared at Consortiumnews.com.



News Black-Out in DC: Pay No Attention to Those Veterans Chained to the White House

By Dave Lindorff

There was a black-out and a white-out Thursday and Friday as over a hundred U.S. veterans opposed to U.S. wars in Afghanistan and elsewhere around the world, and their civilian supporters, chained and tied themselves to the White House fence during an early snowstorm to say enough is enough.

Washington Police arrested 135 of the protesters, in what is being called the largest mass detention in recent years. Among those arrested were Ray McGovern, a former CIA analyst who used to provide the president's daily briefings; Daniel Ellsberg, who released the government's Pentagon Papers during the Nixon administration; and Chris Hedges, former war correspondent for the *New York Times*.

No major U.S. news media reported on the demonstration or the arrests. It was blacked out of the *New York Times*, blacked out of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, blacked out in the *Los Angeles Times*, blacked out of the *Wall Street Journal*, and even blacked out of the capital's local daily, the *Washington Post*, which apparently didn't even think it was a local story worth publishing an article about (they simply ran a photo of Ellsberg with a short caption).

Making the media cover-up of the protest all the more outrageous was the fact that most news media did report on Friday, the day after the protest, the results of the latest poll of American attitudes towards the Afghanistan War, an ABC/*Washington Post* Poll which found that 60% of Americans now feel that war has "not been worth it." That's a big increase from the 53% who said they opposed the war in July.

Clearly, any honest and professional journalist and editor would see a news link between such a poll result and an anti-war protest at the White House led, for the first time in recent memory, by a veterans organization—the group Veterans for Peace—in which veterans of the nation's wars actually put themselves on the line to be arrested to protest a current war.

Friday was also the day that most news organizations were reporting on the much-touted, but also much over-rated Pentagon report on the "progress" of the American war in Afghanistan—a report prepared for the White House that claimed there was progress, but which was immediately contradicted by a CIA report that said the opposite. Again, any honest and professional journalist and editor would immediately see the publication of such a report

as an appropriate occasion to mention the unusual opposition to the war by a group of veterans right outside the president's office.

And yet, the protest event was completely blacked out by the corporate news media. (Maybe the servile and over-paid White House press corps, ensconced in the press room inside the White House, didn't want to go out and brave the elements to cover the protest.)

If you wanted to know about this protest, you had to go to the internet and read ThisCantBeHappening.net or the Huffington Post or the Socialist Worker or OpEd News or else to Democracy Now! on the alternative airways.

My old employer, the *Sydney Morning Herald* in Australia, showed how it's supposed to be done. In an article published Friday about the latest ABC/*Washington Post* Poll, reporter Simon Mann, after explaining that opposition to the war in the U.S. was rising, then wrote:

The publication of the review coincided with anti-war protests held across the U.S., including one in Washington in which people chained themselves to the White House fence, leading to about 100 arrests.

That's the way journalism is supposed to be done. Relevant information that puts the day's news in some kind of useful context is supposed to be provided to readers, not hidden from them.

Clearly, in the U.S. the corporate media perform a different function. It's called propaganda. And the handling of this dramatic protest by American veterans against the nation's current war provides a dramatic illustration of how far the news industry and the journalism profession has converted itself from a Fourth Estate to a handmaiden to power.

Award-winning investigative reporter Dave Lindorff has been raking the journalistic muck now for 38 years. He founded www.thiscantbehappening.net where this article first appeared.

For the *Washington Post*, 'several' means 130

On Friday, December 17, in its Metro section (not in its 36-page front section) on page B3, the *Washington Post* printed a photo of Daniel Ellsberg with no article. The caption said, "he and several others were arrested."

Well-Connected in Washington



Veterans For Peace past president, Elliott Adams secured himself to the White House fence with a bicycle lock during the demonstration on December 16.

Obama lauds vets as they are carried away

The White House issued a press release on December 16 concerning expanded veterans benefits. It said in part, "The President strongly believes that our nation has a sacred trust with our veterans..." Meanwhile at the White House fence, police were dragging veterans away and off to jail.

The strength of the war perpetrators comes not from their numbers, but from their pocketbooks. Our strength, the currency we must spend in order to drown them out and end their tyranny, is ourselves. We must work to end these wars with our bodies as well as our words.

—Linda Wiener, Co-founder,
Surge Protection Brigade,
aka The Seriously Pissed-Off Grannies

San Francisco Solidarity Action: 26 Arrested

Nearly two hundred Veterans For Peace and other peace activists held a rally Thursday, Dec. 16 in front of the new Federal Building in San Francisco in solidarity with the VFP Action in Washington, DC—with the message "End these Wars NOW."



A "die-in" blocked all three entrances to the Federal Building; the participants, representing the one million war dead, pledged "No Business as Usual" as long as the United States continues the wars and occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. Twenty-six veterans and their supporters were arrested.

"We were really arrested for 'Disturbing the Wars,'" said David Hartsough, of PEACEWORKERS. "We hope these actions will help awaken the consciences of the American people to act to help stop these tragic, immoral, and illegal wars which are crimes against humanity. Hopefully these actions and others which also took place across the country December 16 are only the beginning of ongoing actions by the American people to 'Stop These Wars!'"

Submitted by David Hartsough and Nadya Williams.



Photos by Bill Hackwell

Why the U.S. doesn't talk to Iran

By Ismael Hossein-zadeh and Karla Hansen

The unrelenting diplomatic and geopolitical standoff between Iran and the United States is often blamed on the Iranian government for its “confrontational” foreign policies, or its “unwillingness” to enter into dialogue with the United States. Little known, however, is that during the past decade or so, Iran has offered a number of times to negotiate with the U.S. without ever getting a positive response.

special interests—interests that seem to prefer war and militarism to peace and international understanding. These are the nefarious interests that are vested in military industries and related “security” businesses, notoriously known as the military-industrial complex. These beneficiaries of war dividends would not be able to justify their lion's share of our tax dollars without “external enemies” or “threats to our national interests.”

Taking a large share of the national

enemies to justify their unfair share of national treasury, why Iran? Why of all places is Iran targeted as such an enemy? Isn't there something wrong with the Iranian government and/or Ahmadinejad's policies in challenging the world's superpower knowing that this would be a case of David challenging Goliath, that it would cause diplomatic pressure, military threats and economic sanctions on Iran?

These are the kind of questions that the Iranian opposition Green Movement and other critics of Ahmadinejad's government ask: rhetorical questions that tend to blame Iran for the economic sanctions and military threats against that country—in effect, blaming the victim for the crimes of the perpetrator. Labeling Ahmadinejad's policies as “rash,” “adventurous,” and “confrontational,” Mir Hossein Mousavi and other leaders of the “Greens” frequently blame those policies for external military and economic pressures on Iran.

Accordingly, they seek “understanding” and “accommodation” with the U.S. and its allies, presumably including Israel, to achieve political and economic stability. While, *prima facie*, this sounds like a reasonable argument, it suffers from a number of shortcomings.

To begin with, it is a disingenuous and obfuscationist argument. Military threats and economic sanctions against Iran did not start with Ahmadinejad's presidency; they have been imposed on



The former U.S. embassy, Tehran, Iran, as it appeared in 2004. Photo by Bertil Videt.

give in to the imperialistic dictates of the U.S. and its allies.

Second, it is naive to think that U.S. imperialism would be swayed by gentle or polite language to lift economic sanctions or remove military threats against Iran. During his two terms in office (eight years), former president Mohammad Khatami frequently spoke of a “dialogue of civilizations,” counterposing it to the U.S. neo-conservatives’ “clash of civilizations.” This was effectively begging the United States for dialogue and diplomatic rapprochement, but the pleas fell on deaf ears. Why?

Because U.S. policy toward Iran (or any other country, for that matter) is based on an imperialistic agenda that consists of a series of demands or expectations, not on diplomatic decorum, or the type of language its leaders use. These include Iran's giving up its lawful and legitimate right to civilian nuclear technology, opening up its public domain and/or state-owned industries to debt-leveraging and privatization schemes of the predatory finance capital of the West, as well as its compliance with US-Israeli geopolitical designs in the Middle East.

It is not unreasonable to argue that once Iran allowed U.S. input, or meddling, into such issues of national sovereignty, it would find itself on a slippery slope, the bottom of which would be giving up its independence. The U.S. would not be satisfied until Iran became another “ally” in the Middle East, more or less like Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the like.

It is ironic that Green leaders such as Mousavi, former president Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and Khatami blame Ahmadinejad for the hostile imperialist policies toward Iran. For, as mentioned above, U.S. imperialism showed its most venomous hostility toward Iran during the presidency of Khatami while he was vigorously pursuing a path of friendship with the U.S.

While Khatami was promoting his “dialogue of civilizations” and taking conciliatory steps to befriend the U.S.,



Iran talks to Russia: Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Dmitry Medvedev
(source: www.kremlin.ru)

The best-known effort at dialogue, which came to be known as Iran's “grand bargain” proposal, was made in May 2003. The two-page proposal for a broad Iran-U.S. understanding, covering all issues of mutual concern, was transmitted to the U.S. State Department through the Swiss ambassador in Tehran. Not only did the State Department not respond to Iran's negotiating offer, but, as reporter Gareth Porter pointed out, it “rebuked the Swiss ambassador for having passed on the offer.”

Since then, Iran has made a number of other efforts at negotiation, the latest of which was made by President Mahmud Ahmadinejad ahead of September's trip to the United States to attend the annual meeting of the United Nations General Assembly. Regrettably, once again the U.S. ignored Ahmadinejad's overture of meeting with President Barack Obama during his UN visit.

The question is why? Why have successive U.S. administrations been reluctant to enter into a conflict-resolution dialogue with Iran, which could clearly be in the national interests of the United States?

The answer, in a nutshell, is that U.S. foreign policy, especially in the Middle East, is driven not so much by broad national interests as they are by narrow but powerful

treasury was not a difficult act to perform during the Cold War era because the pretext for continued increases in military spending—the “communist threat”—seemed to lie conveniently at hand. Justification of increased military spending in the post-Cold War period, however, has prompted the military-security interests to be more creative in inventing (or manufacturing, if necessary) “new sources of danger to U.S. interests.”

When the collapse of the Soviet system and the subsequent discussions of “peace dividends” in the United States threatened the interests of the military-industrial conglomerates, their representatives invented “new threats to U.S. interests” and successfully substituted them for the “threat of communism” of the Cold War. These “new, post-Cold War sources of threat” are said to stem from the so-called “rogue states,” “global terrorism,” and “Islamic fundamentalism.” Demonization of Iran and/or Ahmadinejad can be better understood in this context.

Now, it may be argued that if beneficiaries of war-dividends need external

When the collapse of the Soviet system and the subsequent discussions of “peace dividends” in the United States threatened the interests of the military-industrial conglomerates, their representatives invented “new threats to U.S. interests”—demonization of Iran can be better understood in this context.

Iran for more than 30 years, essentially as punishment for its 1979 revolution that overthrew the Shah and ended the imperial U.S. influence over its economic, political, and military affairs. It is true that the sanctions have been steadily escalated, significantly intensified in recent months. But that is not because Ahmadinejad occasionally lashes out at imperialist/Zionist policies in the region; it is rather because Iran has refused to

including cooperation in the overthrow of the Taliban regime in neighboring Afghanistan, the U.S. labeled Iran as a member of the “axis of evil,” along with Iraq and North Korea. This demonization was then used as a propaganda tool to intensify economic sanctions and justify calls for “regime change” in Iran.

In the face of Khatami's conciliatory

More than anything else, the alliance is based on a convergence of interests on militarism and war in the Middle East,

The U.S. is afraid of talking to Iran because the long-standing accusations against that country would be automatically exposed.

gestures toward the U.S., many Iranians were so outraged by its unfair and provocative attitude toward Iran that they began to question the wisdom of Khatami's policy of trying to appease the U.S. It is now widely believed that the frustration of many Iranians with Khatami's (one-sided) policy of dialogue with the U.S. played a major role in the defeat of his reformist allies in both the 2003 parliamentary elections and the 2005 presidential election.

By the same token, it also played a major role in the rise of Ahmadinejad to Iran's presidency, as he forcefully criticized the reformists' attitude toward U.S. imperialism as naïve, arguing that negotiation with the U.S. must be based on mutual respect, not at the expense of Iran's sovereignty.

In its drive to provoke, destabilize and (ultimately) change the Iranian government to its liking, the U.S. finds a steadfast ally in Israel. There is an unspoken, de facto alliance between the U.S. military-industrial complex and militant Zionist forces—an alliance that might be called the military-industrial-security-Zionist alliance.

especially against Iran; as Iran is the only country in the region that systematically and unflinchingly exposes both the imperialist schemes of Western powers and expansionist designs of radical Zionism.

Just as the powerful beneficiaries of war dividends view international peace and stability as inimical to their business interests, so too the hardline Zionist proponents of “greater Israel” perceive peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors as perilous to their goal of gaining control over the “Promised Land.”

The reason for this fear of peace is that, according to a number of United Nations resolutions, peace would mean Israel's return to its pre-1967 borders, that is, withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip. But because proponents of “greater Israel” are unwilling to withdraw from these territories, they are



fearful of peace and genuine dialogue with their Arab neighbors—hence, their continued disregard for UN resolutions and their systematic efforts at sabotaging peace negotiations.

So, the answer to the question, “Why is Iran targeted?” boils down to this: because Iran has broken the mold, so to speak, of a pattern of imperialist domination in the Middle East (and beyond). Iran's only “sin” (from the viewpoint of imperialist powers) is that it tries to be an independent, sovereign nation. All other alleged “offenses,” such as pursuit of nuclear weapons or support for terrorism, have proven by now to be hare-brained excuses that are designed to punish Iran for trying to exercise its national rights as a sovereign country.

Under the influence of hawkish neo-conservative pressure groups (representing the interests of the military-industrial-Zionist forces) the U.S. has cornered itself into a position in which it is afraid of talking to Iran because if it does, all of its long-standing accusations against that country would be automatically exposed.

It is worth noting that while the powerful special interests that are vested in the military-security capital benefit from (and therefore tend to advocate) war and military adventures in the Middle East, the broader, but less-cohesive, interests that are vested in civilian, or non-military, capital tend to incur losses in global markets as a result of such military adventures.

Militaristic American foreign policy is viewed by international consumers as a significant negative. Representatives of the broad-based civilian industries are aware of the negative economic consequences of the militarization of U.S. foreign policy. And that's why leading non-military business/trade associations such as The National Foreign Trade Council and USA*Engage (a coalition of nearly 800 small and large businesses, agricul-

ture groups and trade associations working to seek alternatives to the proliferation

of aggressive U.S. foreign policy actions) have expressed disappointment at the recently expanded U.S. sanctions against Iran on the grounds that such sanctions would significantly undermine U.S. national interests.

Yet U.S. foreign policy decisions, especially in the Middle East, seem to be driven not so much by broad national interests as they are by narrow (but powerful) special interests, not so much by “peace dividends” as they are by “war dividends.” These powerful special interests, represented largely by the military-security and the American Israel Public Affairs Committee forces, tend to perceive international peace and stability, especially in the Middle East, as detrimental to their interests.

Ismael Hossein-zadeh, author of the The Political Economy of U.S. Militarism, teaches economics at Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa.

Karla Hansen, director-producer of Silent Screams, is a social worker and peace activist from Des Moines, Iowa.



There is the squandering of our youth who, unable to afford college or to find a job, are lured by the promises of recruiters and see no other option but to join the military. Imagine if instead of spending one million dollars a year to

send one soldier to Afghanistan we spent the money to provide twenty people with an education or jobs at home. Imagine if that person were employed not to kill but to create, to improve conditions at home.

—Margaret Flowers, M.D.

Congressional Fellow for Physicians for a National Health Program
Arrested at the White House 12/16/2010

THE FORGOTTEN PEOPLE – IRAQI CASUALTIES & REFUGEES

by Nadya Williams

Salam Talib Hassan, an Iraqi refugee living in California, was included in a Q&A in the Fall 2010 issue of War Crimes Times with Conor Curran and Josh Steiber, two young veteran resisters.

A computer engineer by profession, Salam Talib had moonlighted in Baghdad as a translator and driver for foreign progressive journalists during the early years of the U.S. invasion and occupation. Despite the fact that the journalists he worked for were 'alternative' (i.e. told the truth about the war), Talib earned death threats and attempts on his life by Iraqi insurgents, which eventually forced him to flee to the U.S. in 2005. Afflicted with polio as a child, Talib walks with the aid of crutches, adding a significant challenge to his life and mobility. He now lives as an asylee (a person who has achieved asylum status) as a graduate student in Berkeley, but continues his journalism and anti-war activism. Despite the compelling and overwhelming evidence that he qualified for political asylum, Talib endured a long and arduous road to legal status in this country.

"In 2003 and '04 there was lots of media coverage of the civilian casualties," Talib says. "Now there's a systematic blocking-out, largely due to the danger which drives out foreigners and reporters." He is clearly agonized by the destruction of his country, the nearly eight years of vicious bloodletting and the sorry plight of nearly 5 million displaced people, out of a population of 27 million. Iraqis constitute the world's largest population of refugees. But numbers can never convey the human toll of war, with a low estimate of 150,000 deaths to a staggering high of one million. Before the U.S. invasion Talib's family was persecuted by the Sadaam Hussein regime; however during the recent war his family has seen the disappearance of one son, the assassination of another, and the attempted murder of still another. As usual, civilian non-combatants are the great majority of the victims, first of the attacking U.S. and allied forces, and now increasingly from random violence.

A list of his journalist friends and colleagues reads like a "Who's Who" of progressive media: Dahr Jamail, Naomi Klein, Christian Parenti (of the *Nation*), Aaron Glanz (of Pacifica Radio), Medea Benjamin (of CodePink), and others. Had Talib not had his professional skills, along with legal and financial help from his foreign journalist colleagues, he might have been stranded in a border country like Jordan or Syria. Or in America he might have lived the typical Iraqi refugee experience: crowded into a low-income apartment with four to five others for four months of free rent, \$200 per month in cash, \$200 per month in food stamps, and a bus pass—all with a four-month limit—then, "So long, you're on your own!" Recently, the four months of federal assistance has been extended to a total of eight months.

Seven and a half years of occupation, destabilization, and destruction of all aspects of infrastructure and security, and now deep civil strife, have produced up to 2.7 million internal refugees, as well as more than 2.2 million external exiles, according to the UN. Nearby Syria and Jordan are the only Middle East countries that will accept people with Iraqi passports, and both have taken in the great majority, with about a third of a million registered with the United Nations. However, Iraqis have no legal status in these countries. The typical refugee in Syria and Jordan subsists on \$75 per month from the UN High Commission on Refugees. The Bush regime allowed a paltry 500 Iraqi exiles per year to enter the U.S., raising the quota just before leaving office two years ago.

In fact, of all the Western nations, Sweden has welcomed the largest number of Iraqis fleeing violence and death, receiving more than the United States and Canada combined and giving them full social, educational, and financial support in the semi-Socialist country. Needless to say, the Swedes have wondered out loud why their tax money has had to pay to house, feed, educate, and employ the victims of America's wars (Afghan and Kurdish refugees abound as well). To this end, the mayor of Sodertalje, a large suburb of 85,000 inhabitants outside of Stockholm, travelled in person to Washington, DC, in April 2008, to ask Congress why they are footing the bill for America's aggression.

Costs of U.S. War for Iraq's Civilians

8 years of violence and bloodshed

150,000 to 1 million dead

2.7 million internal refugees

2.2 million external exiles



Salam Talib Hassan commemorates civilian casualties

When Talib was contacted by a group in Olympia, Washington, to create the Iraq Memorial to Life, he became immediately involved. Started in March 2009 on the war's sixth anniversary, the Memorial's coalition grew to include Veterans For Peace, the Olympia Unitarian Universalist Congregation, and the Fellowship of Reconciliation. More than 3,000 laminated white paper sheets—each inscribed with the names of Iraqi civilian casualties—were displayed in rows like a cemetery in the grounds of a local park. The memorial was replicated later that year on the mall in Washington, DC, with 5,000 plaques for Iraqi civilian dead and 4,000 plaques (provided by Arlington Cemetery) for U.S. military deaths. Many other cities have followed suit. "I do not want the effects of war on civilians to be forgotten," he said.

Activist Cindy Sheehan participates as well in the Memorial projects, and it was through a posting by the Memorial's leader in Olympia that Talib ended up meeting and hosting Conor Curran and Josh Steiber in his Berkeley home on their first cross-country speaking and biking tour in November, 2009. Talib also accompanied them on a month-long road trip in the summer of 2010, crisscrossing the U.S. to speak out against the war.

Salam Talib is collaborating with another activist, Hanan Tabbara, to finish a documentary film about Iraqi refugees. They have hours of footage shot during each of the past two summers and are looking for grants to complete the project. In late 2009 they aired a FSRN (Free Speech Radio News) documentary called, "Guests in the Waiting Room: Iraqi refugees in Jordan." He points out that since the violence is primarily in cities, most refugees are urbanites from a (formerly) highly educated and wealthy country. This adds a special layer of difficulty for them to adapt to unstable income and status as they find themselves disbursed in foreign countries.

(See www.iraqmemorialtolife.org, www.hanantabbara.com)

Nadya Williams is a free-lance journalist, a War Crimes Times contributing editor, a member of Veterans for Peace, San Francisco Chapter 69. She is on the national board of the New York-based Vietnam Agent Orange Relief and Responsibility Campaign.



Images from www.iraqmemorialtolife.org

Messenger

(Continued from page 6)

to the Canadian Prime Minister's office has called on national television for me to be assassinated. An American blogger has called for my 20-year-old son, here in Australia, to be kidnapped and harmed for no other reason than to get at me.

And Australians should observe with no pride the disgraceful pandering to these sentiments by Julia Gillard and her government. The powers of the Australian government appear to be fully at the disposal of the U.S. as to whether to cancel my Australian passport, or to spy on or harass WikiLeaks supporters. The Australian Attorney-General is doing everything he can to help a U.S. investigation clearly directed at framing Australian citizens and shipping them to the U.S.

Prime Minister Gillard and U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton have not had a word of criticism for the other media organizations. That is because the *Guardian*, the *New York Times* and *Der Spiegel* are old and large, while WikiLeaks is as yet young and small.

We are the underdogs. The Gillard government is trying to shoot the messenger because it doesn't want the truth revealed, including information about its own diplomatic and political dealings.

Has there been any response from the Australian government to the numerous public threats of violence against me and other WikiLeaks personnel? One might have thought an Australian prime minister would be defending her citizens against such things, but there have only been wholly unsubstantiated claims of illegality. The Prime Minister and especially the Attorney-General are meant to carry out their duties with dignity and above the fray. Rest assured, these two mean to save their own skins. They will not.

Every time WikiLeaks publishes the truth about abuses committed by U.S. agencies, Australian politicians chant a provably false chorus with the State Department: "You'll risk lives! National security! You'll endanger troops!" Then they say there is nothing of importance in what WikiLeaks publishes. It can't be both. Which is it?

It is neither. WikiLeaks has a four-year publishing history. During that

time we have changed whole governments, but not a single person, as far as anyone is aware, has been harmed. But the U.S., with Australian government connivance, has killed thousands in the past few months alone.

U.S. Secretary of Defence Robert Gates admitted in a letter to the U.S. congress that no sensitive intelligence sources or methods had been compromised by the Afghan war logs disclosure. The Pentagon stated there was no evidence the WikiLeaks reports had led to anyone being harmed in Afghanistan. NATO in Kabul told CNN it couldn't find a single person who needed protecting. The Australian Department of Defense said the same. No Australian troops or sources have been hurt by anything we have published.

But our publications have been far from unimportant. The U.S. diplomatic cables reveal some startling facts:

- ▶ The U.S. asked its diplomats to steal personal human material and information from UN officials and human rights groups, including DNA, fingerprints, iris scans, credit card numbers, internet passwords and ID photos, in violation of international treaties. Presumably Australian UN diplomats may be targeted, too.

- ▶ King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia asked the U.S. to attack Iran.

- ▶ Officials in Jordan and Bahrain want Iran's nuclear program stopped by any means available.

- ▶ Britain's Iraq inquiry was fixed to protect "U.S. interests."

- ▶ Sweden is a covert member of NATO and U.S. intelligence sharing is kept from parliament.

- ▶ The U.S. is playing hardball to get other countries to take freed detainees from Guantanamo Bay. Barack Obama agreed to meet the Slovenian President only if Slovenia took a prisoner. Our Pacific neighbour Kiribati was offered millions of dollars to accept detainees.

In its landmark ruling in the Pentagon Papers case, the U.S. Supreme Court said "only a free and unrestrained press can effectively expose deception in government." The swirling storm around WikiLeaks today reinforces the need to defend the right of all media to reveal the truth.

Julian Assange is the editor-in-chief of WikiLeaks.

U.S. Government PayPal

"It is fascinating to see the tentacles of the American elite. In some ways, seeing the reaction is as important as the material we have released."

—Julian Assange
WikiLeaks
December 7, 2010



Photograph by Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic Vietnam
Vietnam Veterans Memorial
Washington, D.C. 1986
58,000 American soldiers
died in Vietnam from the
lies of the American elite.
Two million* Vietnamese people
were removed from the face of
the earth by the USA.

* Other estimates are higher. According to the BBC, the Hanoi government estimated that in 21 years of fighting, four million civilians were killed across North and South Vietnam, and 1.1 million communist fighters died.

For what do I stand? First, I will not stand for: a Democrat, a Republican, a flag, a border, a government, or a war of any kind. I will stand for the People, to protect and defend the Constitution, for peace and justice.

—Will Covert,
Veterans For Peace
Arrested at the White House
12/16/2010

Detainee

(Continued from page 3)

war and warriors; we demean peacemakers and pacifists.

But if our country were guided by this bygone agitator's teaching and example, we'd be a whole lot better off. He healed the sick and did not discriminate between rich and poor sick people; he was an equal opportunity health care provider. Following his lead, our country would have universal medical care.

He advised the rich to discard their possessions, to give them to the poor. Heeding his instruction, America would have no super rich. We wouldn't be considering tax breaks for the wealthy. Instead we'd return to the 90% tax rate that the affluent enjoyed in the 1960s. Through social programs and job creation, we'd distribute the wealth equitably and eliminate poverty. Yes, the dissident was a socialist.

He condemned violence, decried vengeance, and advocated forgiveness even after an attack. Love your enemy; turn the other cheek; forgive your brother seventy times seven times. With such moral principles, the U.S. would not be engaged in trillion dollar wars. We wouldn't have the entire planet divided into military commands. We wouldn't have troops stationed in 156 different countries. And we wouldn't be killing innocent civilians and detaining and torturing young men in their own Middle Eastern countries whose language and culture we don't understand and whose only crime is to challenge the existing order.

We would, however, have much more money and many more resources for constructive projects, job creation, and tending to the well-being of the planet and its people. (Incidentally, how's the war economy working for you?)

We need this bygone radical's preaching to be born again—and this time, we need to make sure it gets practiced. Is there a better time to start than the season of "Peace on Earth"? Think of this dissident's message of peace and compassion when you pass by a homeless person, when your preacher prays for the troops (but ignores the victims of "collateral damage"), and when you are stuck in a traffic jam near the shopping mall.

Yes. It requires a new way of thinking and feeling, and a rejection of things past—a societal "Scrooge moment," if you will. I'd like to hope that humanity is able to, and wants to, evolve morally. John Lennon said, "War is over, if you want it."

But, then, he was killed, too.

Kim Carlyle is inspired by our great teachers of compassion and peace including Buddha, Gandhi, King, the Dalai Lama, and, of course, Jesus.

Now, in many respects, information has never been so free. There are more ways to spread more ideas to more people than at any moment in history. And even in authoritarian countries, information networks are helping people discover new facts and making governments more accountable.

—Hillary Clinton, January 21, 2010

The United States of War Criminals

by Mickey Z.

People from poorer places and poorer countries have to call upon their compassion not to be angry with ordinary people in America.

—Arundhati Roy

More than half (53.3%) of U.S. tax dollars go to a criminal enterprise known as the U.S. Department of Defense (*sic*), a.k.a. the worst polluter on the planet. We hear about tax cuts *this* and budget *that* and all kinds of other bullshit from the U.S. government and the corporations that own it...but the reality remains: *Roughly one million tax dollars per minute are spent to fund the largest military machine (read: global terrorist operation) the world has ever known.*

What do we get for all that money? To follow, is but one tiny example that mostly slipped through the cracks earlier this year.

On July 23, 2010, Tom Eley at Global Research wrote:

“According to the authors of a new study, ‘Cancer, Infant Mortality and Birth Sex-Ratio in Fallujah, Iraq 2005–2009,’ the people of Fallujah are experiencing higher rates of cancer, leukemia, infant mortality, and sexual mutations than those recorded among survivors in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the years after those Japanese cities were incinerated by U.S. atomic bomb strikes in 1945.”

For those unfamiliar with the U.S. attacks on Fallujah, first of all: You should be fuckin’ ashamed of yourselves. Secondly, here’s Patrick Cockburn’s basic description:

“U.S. Marines first besieged and bombarded Fallujah, 30 miles west of Baghdad, in April 2004 after four employees of the American security company Blackwater were killed and their

bodies burned. After an eight-month stand-off, the Marines stormed the city in November using artillery and aerial bombing against rebel positions. U.S. forces later admitted that they had employed white phosphorus as well as other munitions. In the assault, U.S. commanders largely treated Fallujah as a free-fire zone to try to reduce casualties among their own troops. British officers were appalled by the lack of concern for civilian casualties.”

Of crucial importance is this: A high proportion of the weaponry used by the U.S. in the assault contained depleted uranium (DU).

And you and I paid for it all.

The aforementioned study found that the cancer rate “had increased fourfold since before the U.S. attack”

What is *your* threshold? Which taxpayer-funded horror story is the one that will finally make *you* scream “Enough!”?

and that the forms of cancer in Fallujah are “similar to those found among the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bomb survivors, who were exposed to intense fallout radiation.”

Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Yeah, Americans paid for those bombs, too.

In September 2009, Fallujah General Hospital had 170 newborn babies:

- 24 percent were dead within the first seven days
- 75 percent of the dead babies were classified as deformed

Cockburn writes of a “12-fold increase in childhood cancer in under-14s. Infant mortality in the city is more

than four times higher than in neighboring Jordan and eight times higher than in Kuwait.”

Dig this: After 2005, thanks to this “major mutagenic event” (DU), the proportion of girls born in Fallujah has increased sharply likely because “girls have a redundant X-chromosome and can therefore absorb the loss of one chromosome through genetic damage,” explains Eley.

And you and I paid for it all.

“The impact of war on civilians was more severe in Fallujah than anywhere else in Iraq because the city continued to be blockaded and cut off from the rest of the country long after 2004,” adds Cockburn.

While I could go on with the gory details, I’d much rather you ask a few questions:

Now that you know these facts (and they are just the tiniest proverbial tip of a massive proverbial iceberg), how do you feel *and* what are you going to do about it?

- Is it time you stop buying military video games, hanging yellow ribbons, and allowing our hard-earned money to finance mass murder?
- Can enjoy “the holidays” while women in Fallujah are petrified to have children?
- Are you still able to insulate yourself with all those cute puppy videos on YouTube?
- Are you ready to stop believing there’s a difference between the two wings of the same corporate/military party and start accepting that they’re all accessories to heinous crimes?



- Will you still “support” the volunteer mercenaries as “heroes” or will you recognize them as willing—and paid—accomplices to war crimes?
- Are you okay with 85.1% of U.S. wealth being owned by the top 20% while 53.3% of your tax dollars subsidize atrocities, torture, oppression, occupation, and the literal destruction of the planet’s eco-system?
- What is *your* threshold? Which taxpayer-funded horror story is the one that will finally make *you* scream “Enough!”?
- When you’ve screamed “Enough!” what can/will you do and how soon will you start doing it?

You don’t have to tell me your answers. I’m a co-conspirator just like you.

Save your answers for the children of Fallujah. I’m sure they’re wondering why the fuck we all choose to remain silent and inactive.

Until the laws are changed or the power runs out, Mickey Z. can be found on the Web at <http://www.mickeyz.net/>.

International Conference on Cluster Munitions in Laos

by Nadya Williams

We always call it the Vietnam War, but it was really the South East Asia War. This is because most Americans tend to view situations only from their perspective, and with “boots on the ground” of our troops in Viet Nam fighting and dying, we “forget” about the massive air war inflicted on Laos and Cambodia. We “forget” about then-Secretary of State Henry Kissinger’s mass murder of civilians on the Plain of Jars in Laos.

As the most heavily bombed country in the world, Laos recently hosted a November 9th to 12th International Conference on Cluster Munitions. According to an analysis of U.S. bombing data by Handicap International, a staggering total of at least 790,000 Cluster bombs, containing 383 million submunitions (bomblets) were dropped on Laos, Viet Nam, and Cambodia between 1965 and 1975. Laos received more than the other two countries combined. Conference delegates who

recently gathered in Vientiane were reminded of the long-term devastation cluster munitions cause when, during the course of the meeting, a cluster submunition explosion in Laos’ Peoples Democratic Republic (Lao PDR’s) Bolikhamxay Province killed a 10-year-old girl and injured her 15-year-old sister on the second day of the conference, November 10th.

The current Convention on Cluster Munitions (which takes on unexploded ordnance) came about after the ratification of Landmines Treaty—to date, the treaty has 108 signatories and 46 States Parties. A total of 121 governments attended the four-day meeting, including some 34 non-signatories, a very positive sign for future engagement on the current treaty and on the new “Vientiane Action Plan,” which was adopted at the conference.

New York Times columnist Anthony Lewis wrote on July 9, 1973, “the most appalling episode of lawless cruelty in American history (is) the bombing of Laos. The human results of being the most heavily bombed country in the history of the world were expectably pitiful. They are described



without rancor—almost unbearably so—in a small book that will go down as a classic. It is *Voices From the Plain of Jars*, in which the villagers of Laos themselves describe what the bombers did to their civilization. No American should be able to read that book without weeping at his country’s arrogance.” All details about the Action Plan and a new edition of the book can be found at: www.stopclustermunitions.org.

David Swanson's *War Is A Lie*

by Kim Carlyle

The *War Crimes Times* maintains that war in general should be abolished. We've argued that war is not just ineffective, it's counter-productive—the costs grossly outweigh any possible benefits. What's more, war distracts us from dealing with grave planetary and humanitarian crises; it's outmoded, immoral, and illegal. Now, David Swanson has given us another reason: War is a lie!

In his new book, Swanson explains how war is, and always has been, promoted and executed under campaigns of duplicity. In 336 pages (with hundreds of endnotes for further reference), *War Is A Lie* debunks every argument you've heard used to justify, glorify, instigate, promote, prolong, and expand war, as it dispels the myths associated with war. War is neither glorious nor noble; it is never justified, necessary, or inevitable; it does not promote security; and there is no such thing as a "good war"!

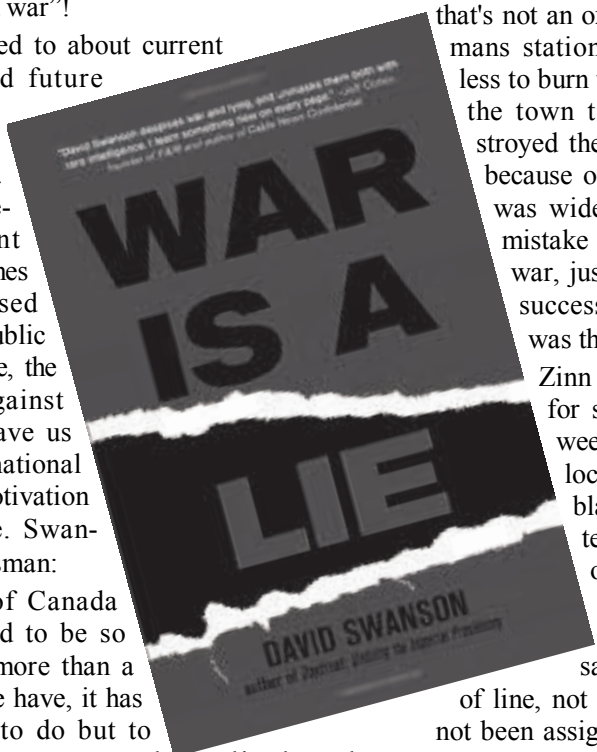
We're not just lied to about current (Iraq's WMDs) and future (Iran's belligerence) wars, we're hoodwinked by historians. Textbooks fail to relate the unpleasant truths about war crimes and the pretenses used in all wars to gain public support. For example, the 1812-14 exercise against the British which gave us our war-glorifying national anthem, had other motivation besides self-defense. Swanson quotes a congressman:

"The conquest of Canada has been represented to be so easy as to be little more than a party of pleasure. We have, it has been said, nothing to do but to march an army into the country and display the standard of the United States, and the Canadians will immediately flock to it and place themselves under our protection. They have been represented as ripe for revolt, panting for emancipation from a tyrannical government, and longing to enjoy the sweets of liberty under the fostering hand of the United States."

Yesterday's "party of pleasure" becomes today's "cakewalk."

But, no good war? Wasn't World War II an unavoidable, humanitarian cause? Not at all. The "surprise" attack on Pearl Harbor was predicted and expected—and provoked by years of American antagonism directed toward Japan. American businessmen not only invested heavily in Hitler's Germany, they shared in the ideology: "Rockefeller gave \$410,000, almost \$4 million in today's money, to German eugenics 'researchers.'" Further, the Allies thwarted efforts of German Jews to flee their oppressors.

To get the book out quickly, with the latest information (some events described and sources cited are from just weeks ago), Swanson chose to self-publish. This provides another advantage: without a need for a publisher's profit, he will send copies to activists "really cheap." Learn about the good deals at www.WarIsALie.com website.



Howard Zinn's *The Bomb*

by David Swanson

The late Howard Zinn's new book *The Bomb* is a brilliant little dissection of some of the central myths of our militarized society. Those who've read *A Terrible Mistake: The Murder of Frank Olson and the CIA's Secret Cold War Experiments* by H.P. Albarelli Jr. know that this is a year for publishing the stories of horrible things that the United States has done to French towns. In that case, Albarelli, describes the CIA administering LSD to an entire town, with deadly results. In *The Bomb*, Zinn describes the U.S. military making its first use of napalm by dropping it all over another French town, burning anyone and anything it touched. Zinn was in one of the planes, taking part in this horrendous crime.

In mid-April 1945, the war in Europe was essentially over. Everyone knew it was ending. There was no military reason (if that's not an oxymoron) to attack the Germans stationed near Royan, France, much less to burn the French men, women, and children in the town to death. The British had already destroyed the town in January, similarly bombing it because of its vicinity to German troops, in what was widely called a tragic mistake. This tragic mistake was rationalized as an inevitable part of war, just as were the horrific firebombings that successfully reached German targets, just as was the later bombing of Royan with napalm.

Zinn blames the Supreme Allied Command for seeking to add a "victory" in the final weeks of a war already won. He blames the local military commanders' ambitions. He blames the American Air Force's desire to test a new weapon. And he blames everyone involved—which must include himself—for "the most powerful motive of all: the habit of obedience, the universal teaching of all cultures, not to get out of line, not even to think about that which one has not been assigned to think about, the negative motive of not having either a reason or a will to intercede."

When Zinn returned from the war in Europe, he expected to be sent to the war in the Pacific, until he saw and rejoiced at seeing the news of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, 65 years ago this August. Only years later did Zinn come to understand the inexcusable crime of the greatest proportions that was the dropping of nuclear bombs in Japan, actions similar in some ways to the final bombing of Royan. The war with Japan was already over, the Japanese seeking peace and willing to surrender. Japan asked only that it be permitted to keep its emperor, a request that was later granted. But, like napalm, the nuclear bombs were weapons that needed testing.

The second bomb, dropped on Nagasaki, was a

different sort of bomb that also needed testing. President Harry Truman wanted to demonstrate nuclear bombs to the world and especially to Russia. And he wanted to end the war with Japan before Russia became part of

it. The horrific form of mass murder he employed was in no way justifiable.

Zinn also goes back to dismantle the mythical reasons the United States was in the war to begin with. The United States, England, and France were imperial powers supporting each other's international aggressions in places like the Philippines. They opposed the Germany and Japan, but not aggression itself. Most of America's tin and rubber came from the Southwest Pacific.

The United States made clear for years its lack of concern for the Jews being attacked in Germany. It also demonstrated its lack of opposition to racism through its treatment of African Americans and Japanese Americans. Franklin D. Roosevelt described fascist bombing campaigns over civilian areas as "inhuman barbarity" but then did the same on a much larger scale to German cities, which was followed up by the destruction on an unprecedented scale of Hiroshima and Nagasaki—actions that came after years of dehumanizing the Japanese. Zinn points out that "*LIFE* magazine showed a picture of a Japanese person burning to death and commented: 'This is the only way.'"

Aware that the war would end without any more bombing, and aware that U.S. prisoners of war would be killed by the bomb dropped on Nagasaki, the U.S. military went ahead and dropped the bombs.

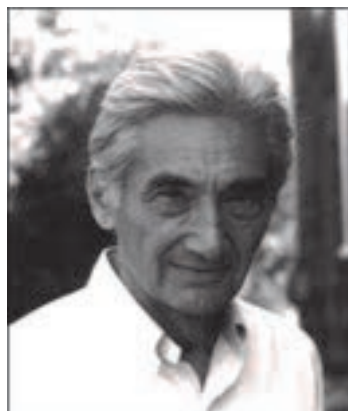
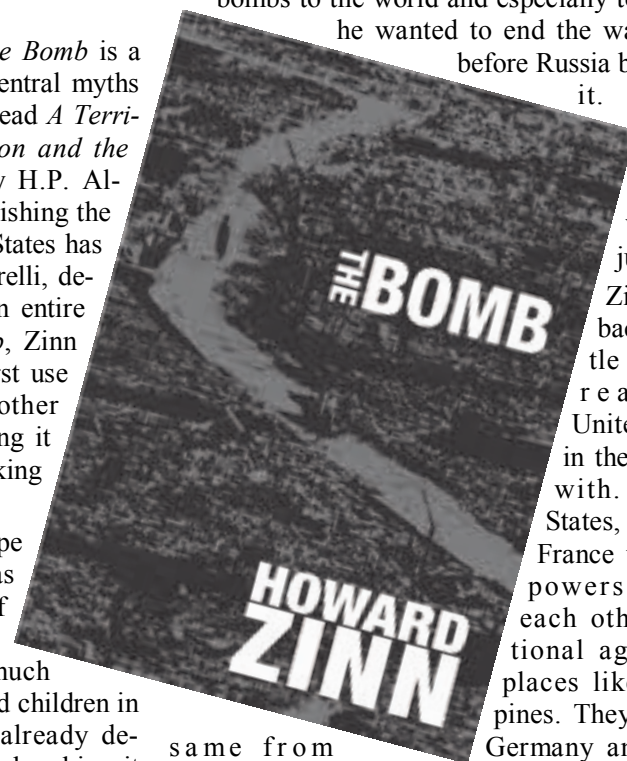
Americans allowed these things to be done in their name, just as the Germans and Japanese allowed horrible crimes to be committed in their names. Zinn points out, with his trademark clarity, how the use of the word "we" blends governments together with peoples and serves to equate our own people with our military, while we demonize the people of other lands because of actions by their governments. *The Bomb* suggest a better way to think about such matters and firmly establishes that

—what the U.S. military is doing now, today, parallels the crimes of the past and shares their dishonorable motivations;

—the bad wars have a lot in common with the so-called "good war," about which there was little if anything good;

—Howard Zinn did far more in his life for peace than for war, and more for peace than just about anybody else, certainly more than several Nobel Peace Prize winners.

David Swanson is the author of War Is A Lie.



Howard Zinn Memorial Fund

Howard Zinn was a devoted member of Veterans For Peace for over twenty-three years. The Howard Zinn Fund for Peace and Justice endowment has been named in his memory to ensure that his legacy will continue through Veterans For Peace projects, services, and outreach.

**Please consider sending a contribution to:
Howard Zinn Memorial Fund c/o Veterans For Peace,
216 South Meramec Ave., St. Louis MO 63105.**



(Photo* by Chris Hondros)

Dear President Obama,

The “war on terror,” which has continued and expanded during your presidency, and your continued support of the Israeli military occupation of Palestine, have wrought untold suffering and misery upon millions of people, as well as putting our hard-earned wealth into the pockets of multinational corporations. You have betrayed the hope that many people—not only here in America, but throughout the world—placed in you. You have continued the Bush policy of war, torture, suspension of habeus corpus, state secrets, and every other evil initiated by the former regime. Instead of the change you promised, you have accelerated our descent into a corporate-controlled militaristic state. These wars of aggression, the continued occupation of Iraq, support of the Israeli military machine, and the bailout of Wall Street have done nothing to make the United States safer, prosperous, or whole. They have done everything to make ordinary people poorer and to further line the golden pockets of rich and powerful corporate bosses. We, the people, want these wars, militarism, and killing stopped. We do not want a country that is the largest exporter of weaponry in the world. We do not want a war economy. We want universal healthcare, good education for our children, jobs, and a U.S. policy of peaceful co-existence with the rest of the world. President Obama, you talk a good game. Now we, the people, demand you walk the walk. End these wars!

In solidarity, Veterans For Peace

* Chis Hondros’ photo (above): Samar Hassan, 5, screams after her parents were killed by U.S. Soldiers with the 25th Infantry Division in a shooting January 18, 2005 in Tal Afar, Iraq. The troops fired on the Hassan family car when it unwittingly approached them during a dusk patrol in the tense northern Iraqi town. Parents Hussein and Camila Hassan were killed instantly, and a son Racan, 11, was seriously wounded in the abdomen. Racan, paralyzed from the waist down, was treated later in the U.S.

The facts of life are that a child who has seen war cannot be compared with a child who doesn't know what war is except from television.

—Sophia Loren

We need to decide that we will not go to war, whatever reason is conjured up by the politicians or the media, because war in our time is always indiscriminate, a war against innocents, a war against children.

—Howard Zinn

WikiLeaks

Around the world, everyone is fed up with America's rampage of censorship. Rage against the U.S. War Machine is building by the day.

The American government is being exposed for its worldwide rape.

The American Dream is a cover-up for world dominance.

The truth is stark naked.

The American Empire indeed has no clothes.

The U.S. brand of democracy is freezing. It's time.

That children are dying from American weapons

is running out of censorship.

That is why WikiLeaks was born, so children could finally thrive.

—Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
December 8, 2010

When the truth is replaced by silence, the silence is a lie.

—Yevgeny Yevtushenko
Soviet dissident



Photograph by Mike Hastie
Medevac helicopter in my military unit in An Khe, Vietnam 1970. I did not serve in Vietnam for the cause of freedom, I served Big Business in America for the cause of profit.

War may sometimes be a necessary evil. But no matter how necessary, it is always an evil, never a good. We will not learn how to live together in peace by killing each other's children.

—Jimmy Carter

Stop thinking this is all there is. Realize that for every ongoing war and religious outrage and environmental devastation and bogus Iraqi attack plan, there are a thousand counterbalancing acts of staggering generosity and humanity and art and beauty happening all over the world, right now, on a breathtaking scale, from flower box to cathedral. Resist the temptation to drown in fatalism, to shake your head and sigh and just throw in the karmic towel. Realize that this is the perfect moment to change the energy of the world, to step right up and crank your personal volume; right when it all seems dark and bitter and offensive and acrimonious and conflicted and bilious ... there's your opening.

Remember magic! And, finally, believe you are part of a groundswell, a resistance, a seemingly small but actually very, very large impending karmic overhaul, a great shift, the beginning of something important and potent and unstoppable.

—Mark Morford



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