

EUROPE TALKS, U.S. BALKS

Brits, Dutch Confront Illegal Iraq War

by Peter Dyer

On March 18, 2003, on the eve of the invasion of Iraq, Elizabeth Wilmshurst resigned as Deputy Legal Adviser to the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), the British equivalent of the U.S. State Department.

“I regarded the invasion of Iraq as illegal, and I therefore did not feel able to continue in my post,” she said later. Ms. Wilmshurst discussed her resignation while appearing before the current British inquiry into the Iraq War — the Chilcot Inquiry.

In an office of 35 or so lawyers, she may have been the only one to resign. However, she testified that her perspective was shared unanimously among all the FCO Legal Advisers, including the head of the office, Sir Michael Wood.

Sir Michael himself told the Chilcot Inquiry: “I considered that the use of force against Iraq in March 2003 was contrary to international law. In my opinion, that use of force had not been authorized by the Security Council, and had no other legal basis in international law.”

In sum: every lawyer

(See BRITS on page 6)

JOHN YOO WALKS THOUSANDS

Justice Department calls war crimes “poor judgment” but British probe continues

In a stunning decision, the U.S. Department of Justice overruled its Office of Professional Responsibility’s recommendation for disciplinary action against lawyers John Yoo and Jay Bybee, instead calling their criminal actions “poor judgment.”

Meanwhile, courts and activists in Europe continue their efforts to bring American and British war crimes to light and the war criminals to justice.

In the Netherlands, an independent inquiry has found that the invasion of Iraq in 2003 was a violation of international law.

In Britain, the Chilcot Inquiry has interrogated former Prime Minister Tony Blair and, apparently intends

(See JUSTICE on page 3)

MARCH

Signs say: *Indict Bush*

Anti-war protest in U.S.

by Narayan Lakshman

Washington, DC, March 20 (*The Hindu*): On the seventh anniversary of the invasion of Iraq, thousands of people from across the United States on Saturday converged on Lafayette Square, opposite the White House in Washington, DC. The rally then marched through downtown DC, halting en route at the premises of military contractor Halliburton, the Mortgage Bankers Association and The *Washington Post* offices.

(See PROTEST on page 3)

Why Do They Hate Us?

by Dr. Bouthaina Shaaban

The report of the UN secretary General, Ban Ki Moon caused a shock to all those concerned about justice and human rights.

In his report to the UN General Assembly of February 5, 2010 on the Israeli war on Gaza, he says: “No determination can be made on the implementation of resolution 64/10 by the parties concerned,” pointing out that he has “called upon all of the parties to carry out credible domestic investigations into the conduct of the Gaza conflict.” The Secretary General does not live on the moon, of course; and, unlike American officials, he visited Gaza and saw for himself the hundreds of homes and schools, some of which are UN schools, shelled by the missiles and phosphoric bombs fired by Israeli warplanes.

TV screens all over the world had shown the dead bodies of children, women and

unarmed civilians killed by Israeli bombs. He saw for himself the smoke of white phosphor in the sky over Gaza. In order to ascertain himself of the credibility of the Palestinian narrative, he only has to look at the disabled people who lost their limbs, eyes and members of their families. Putting the Israelis and the Palestinians in the same category implies a great deal of injustice; and ignoring the tragic conditions imposed on the Palestinians for sixty years as a result of occupation and blockade is an injustice and a shame that will haunt those who committed it and those who condone it.

Although human life is sacred and must not be subject to the litany of figures, it might be useful to remind Western politicians who ask idiotically “Why do they hate us?” that Gaza was destroyed a year ago, not by earthquake as in Haiti, but by a war launched

(See WHY on page 10)



Peace activists in Washington, DC bring messages to Obama (photo by Jacquelyn Martin/AP)

INSIDE: Interview with Kathy Kelly — How to Prosecute a President — DU in Fallujah — NYC IDF Protest — Open letter to Obama — photos, opinions, cartoons, & more...



Mr. President: By Refusing to Look Back, You're Jeopardizing What Lies Before Us

By Eric L. Wattree



I undoubtedly have neither the information nor wisdom to question the vast majority of your presidential decisions. But it takes neither classified information, nor wisdom, to question your decision to "move forward and not look back" regarding the Bush administration's actions leading this nation into the Iraq War, and the alleged war crimes committed thereafter.

During your inauguration you swore that to the best of your ability you would act to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. Yet, your decision to circumvent the rule of law in response to the Bush administration's actions leading up to and during the War in Iraq does everything but that. Your position in this matter is diametrically opposed to one of the fundamental principles of this nation—that no one is above the law.

This is not a partisan issue, Mr. President. The concept of equal rights under the law (which also means equal consequences for violating the law) is both central to the United States Constitution, and a fundamental cornerstone of the American ideal. Without that concept—the concept that no man is above the law—America is no longer America. So by choosing to ignore that ideal, you're not only in violation of your oath of office, but you're striking a much more devastating blow against America than Al Qaeda could ever manage.

And I'm not speculating here. We've already seen the negative consequences of setting such a precedent. Hundreds of thousands of people have died just because we failed to

hold Richard Nixon accountable for Watergate.

Had Richard Nixon been held accountable and sent to jail for Watergate, chances are Ronald Reagan wouldn't have embarked upon Iran-Contra. And if Reagan had been impeached, then imprisoned for his actions during the Iran/Contra episode—including flooding the inner cities of this nation with drugs (an action the Black community is still suffering from)—Bush and his cohorts would have been placed on notice that ANYONE who circumvents the laws of this land will face heavy consequences.

Thus, had Bush and Cheney known that America stood united and unequivocal in that stance, the War in Iraq probably never would have happened, which in turn would have saved the lives of thousands of American troops, and hundreds of thousands of Iraqi citizens.

One would think, Mr. President, that you would be particularly sensitive to the importance of adhering to the rule of law. While I'm in total agreement with your position that you were elected to be the president of ALL the people, there was no way you could avoid bringing the experience of the African American collective into the White House with you. That experience should inform you, in a very personal way, of the negative consequences of ignoring the rule of law.

Let me make it clear that I'm not one who subscribes to the belief that because you're a Black president that you owe Black people any more than you owe any other American. But that doesn't mean that you shouldn't bring the knowledge and wisdom of the Black experience to bear as you carry out your job as chief executive. And part of that experience should be the wisdom to understand that

this nation's failure to strictly adhere to the rule of law led directly to the lynching of Black people and the bombing of Black churches in the South. It also led to Jim Crow, rules that distorted the law of the land and were specifically designed to circumvent the law's intent.

So I sincerely hope that you will consider the historic symbolism of your position in this matter. After all of the hardships that Black people have gone through as a direct result of this nation's penchant to ignore the rule of law "for the better good," regardless of what you accomplish on behalf of this nation as president, future historians will look back upon the first Black President of the United States taking a position to ignore the law and "not look back" on the unjust murder of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi

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people and thousands of American citizens, as grossly unconscionable, and a dark mark upon your presidency.

But even if you can live with that, current events clearly demonstrate that the slippery slope in which the nation has slid over the past thirty years is becoming even more steep as this column is being written.

Who would have thought just a mere thirty years ago that the validity of war crimes, torture, and the blatant invasion of privacy of the American people would even be a subject for debate in this country? And who would have thought that a Vice President of the United States would be under a cloud for revealing the identity of a CIA agent, or that a corporation that he formerly headed would be guilty of providing American troops with contaminated water for profit?



And further, who would have thought a mere thirty years ago that American troops would be sent into an unnecessary war without the equipment necessary to sustain their lives, then when wounded, made to pay for the equipment that had to be cut from their body and left on the field of battle? And who would believe that this nation would then force those brave troops to pay for their own meals while lying in the hospital recuperating

from their wounds in the nation's defense?

Yet, now you say let us "not look back?" Oh no, I don't think so. I don't think that once the

American people come out of the shock of the past ten years they're going to let that fly. They already sense that there's something terribly wrong with our government; they're just currently in shocked disbelief—but they'll be coming out of that shocked disbelief somewhere around the 2012 election.

In my opinion you're one of the best presidents that we've ever had in many ways, but there's only one chink in your armor—you seem to be unwilling to confront the GOP in an aggressive and forthright manner. Ordinarily that might be considered less than important, but in the current political environment it is

just as serious a shortcoming as if you were reluctant to confront Al Qaeda.

The GOP leadership is a much more serious threat to the American way than Al Qaeda can ever be. While Al Qaeda is undoubtedly a physical threat to the American people, the GOP is attacking America's soul. They're attempting to alter what America is as a nation—and your failure to address that issue is so counter-intuitive to your political base, who, after all, voted for change, that many are beginning to wonder if you're not part of the problem.

In short, Mr. President, we don't give a damn about the appearance of bipartisanship. In this case, to be bipartisan means, "Okay, let's comprise and just destroy America a little bit." Your political base—which includes Democrats, Independents, and Republicans—are not interested in that. We're looking to you to defend the American way of life, by any means necessary—period.

Eric L. Wattree is a writer, poet, and musician, born in Los Angeles. He's a columnist for the Los Angeles Sentinel, the Black Star News, staff writer for Veterans Today, and a contributing writer to Your Black World, the Huffington Post, ePluribus Media, and several other online sites and publications. He's also the author of A Message from the Hood.

The War Crimes Times, a project of **Veterans For Peace** (www.VeteransForPeace.org, a nonprofit, national organization of veterans working together for peace and justice through nonviolence), provides information on war crimes, war criminals, and on the necessity and means to prosecute war criminals as part of VFP's efforts to seek justice and accountability. **WCT** is published quarterly by **VFP Chapter 099** (Western North Carolina). Donations help cover printing and postage costs of the many copies given away at public events. Donate at WarCrimesTimes.org or send a check (memo "WCT") to:

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"The ultimate step in avoiding periodic wars, which are inevitable in a system of international lawlessness, is to make statesmen responsible to law."

—Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson
chief American prosecutor at the Nuremberg Tribunals

Protest

(Continued from page 1)

While the protest drew a smaller crowd than the tens of thousands who marched during the final years of the Bush administration, the ANSWER coalition, the main organizer, said momentum was building due to disenchantment with President Obama's troop surge decision for Afghanistan. Other participating groups included Veterans for Peace, Military Families Speak Out and the National Council of Arab Americans and activists such as Ralph Nader and Cindy Sheehan.

In a statement the ANSWER coalition said,

"People from all over the country are organizing to converge on Washington, DC, and on the West Coast to demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. and NATO forces from Afghanistan and Iraq."

"Instead of war, we will demand funds so that every person can have a job, free and universal health care, decent schools, and affordable housing," said the coalition statement.

According to some reports the rally could prove to be significant as it was the "first massive, nationally coordinated effort to challenge U.S. foreign policy since President Obama took office." Though the costs and scope of U.S. military engagements have expanded under Mr. Obama, the anti-war movement has thus far been largely silent since January 2008.

However with Saturday's protest march, the movement signaled that it had revived and was capable of challenging the Obama administration on its foreign policy strategies.

The ANSWER coalition said though "the enthusiasm and desire for change after eight years of the Bush regime was the dominant cause that led to election of a big Democratic Party majority in both Houses of Congress and the election of Barack Obama to the White House... [it was now] obvious to all that waiting for politicians to bring real change... is simply a prescription for passivity by progressives and an invitation to the array of corporate interests from military contractors to the banks, to big oil, to the health insurance giants that dominate the political life of the country."



Photo: Narayan Lakshman

Justice

(Continued from page 1)

to question former president George W. Bush and senior officials of his administration including Dick Cheney, Condoleezza Rice, and Donald Rumsfeld.

Also in Britain, writer and activist George Monbiot has established a fund as an incentive to encourage citizens to arrest Tony Blair for crimes against peace.

In Spain, a far-reaching case against alleged British and American war criminals was closed when the parliament passed pending legislation to curtail the application of universal jurisdiction in their country.



News Bits Droning on Obama—

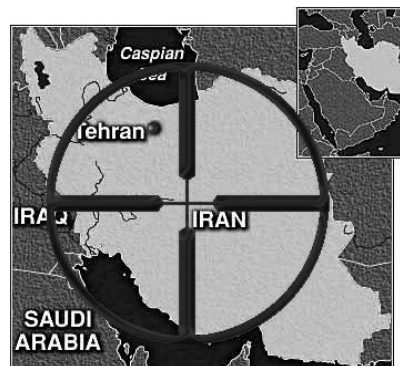
World News Australia reported on March 14 that President Obama is to come under a symbolic attack from a fleet of cardboard 'drones' piloted by anti-war activists during his upcoming visit to Australia. A spokesman for the veterans group Stand Fast says they are angry

that Obama will be given a hero's welcome and that the Nobel Peace Prize winner should instead be held to account for escalating the conflict in Afghanistan. One Stand Fast member said, "From his first day in office he has firmly placed himself in the camp of the warmongers and war-profiteers. We need to take to the streets, in Canberra and wherever he goes, to remind Obama and the warmongers in this country that the anti-war majority demand troops out of Iraq and Afghanistan now." Another added, "A lot of veterans are appalled at the conduct of the wars. I don't expect to get near him, but we are going to have some fun." Stand Fast is holding a cardboard sculpting workshop to create a fleet of two-metre long replicas of the MQ-1 Predator drone being used in Pakistan and Afghanistan....

Afghan civilian death toll—The United Nations has reported that 346 children were killed in Afghanistan last year, more than half of them by NATO forces, mostly in airstrikes. The UN also said that more than 2,400 civilians were killed last year, the deadliest for Afghan civilians since the fall of the Taliban regime in late 2001...

Gearing up for another war of aggression—Scotland's *Sunday Herald* revealed the U.S. was shipping 387 bunker buster bombs to Diego Garcia, a British territory used by the US. as a military base. Some experts suggested the move could be in preparation for a possible strike against Iran's nuclear facilities. The Indian Ocean atoll has played a role in previous attacks on Iraq and Afghanistan...

Tony Blair is oil rich—The UK *Daily Mail* reports that Tony Blair for two years kept secret a lucrative deal with a multinational oil giant which has extensive interests in Iraq as well as a £1million deal advising the ruling royal family in Iraq's neighbor Kuwait. He claimed the deals were commercially sensitive. A large proportion of Blair's earnings comes from patrons in America and the Middle East—a clear benefit from forging a close alliance with George Bush during his invasion of Iraq. MP Douglas Carswell said, "This doesn't just look bad, it stinks."



Iraq Inquiry asks to question George Bush's senior officials

'Smoking gun' a possibility

By Patrick Hennessy

March 20 (*Telegraph UK*): The Chilcot Inquiry into the Iraq War could take an explosive new twist after it emerged that leading figures in George Bush's administration have been asked to give evidence to it.

Sources in Washington said the inquiry sent out emails "about three weeks ago" to senior officials in Mr. Bush's government including, it is believed, the former president himself.

Other requests are understood to have been made to Dick Cheney, Mr. Bush's vice-president, Condoleezza Rice, the former secretary of state, Donald Rumsfeld, the former US Defense Secretary, and Stephen Hadley, an ex-national security adviser—as well as to their deputies and senior assistants.

Members of Sir John Chilcot's panel are believed to be willing to travel to the U.S. to take evidence—almost certainly in private—on the administration's policies between the 2003 invasion of Iraq and 2009.

While the most senior figures are reluctant to give evidence, Washington sources claim about 10 former officials, most involved in the post-invasion period, have agreed to do so.

The surprise development adds to the chances of Sir John's inquiry producing a "smoking gun" on the key questions of whether Britain and the U.S. adequately prepared for the conflict and whether it was justified under international law.

Interviews with U.S. officials—even held in secret—could play a major part in Sir John's final report, expected by the end of this year.

Although it has no legal power to compel witnesses to appear before it, the Chilcot Inquiry has succeeded in obtaining testimony from virtually every single British politician, official, and senior military figure who played a key role in the war.

Both Tony Blair and Gordon Brown have been subjected to six-hour televised grillings.

The Prime Minister may even have to return to the inquiry to "clarify" his previous evidence after admitting providing wrong information in his earlier appearance.

Mr. Blair mounted a vigorous defense of the invasion and insisted he had no regrets over removing Saddam Hussein. The former prime minister denied he took Britain to war on the basis of a 'lie' over the dictator's supposed weapons of mass destruction.

ArrestBlair.com offers a reward to people attempting a peaceful citizen's arrest of the former British prime minister, Tony Blair, for crimes against peace. Money donated to this site will be used to pay the bounties. The four purposes: 1) To remind people that justice has not yet been done; 2) To show Mr. Blair that the mass murder he committed will not be forgotten; 3) To put pressure on the authorities of the United Kingdom and the countries he travels through to prosecute him for a crime against peace, or to deliver him for prosecution to the International Criminal Court; and 4) To discourage other people from repeating his crime.

Depleted Uranium Weapons: Dead Babies in Iraq and Afghanistan Are No Joke

by Dave Lindorff

The horrors of the U.S. Agent Orange defoliation campaign in Vietnam could ultimately be dwarfed by the horrors caused by the depleted uranium weapons which the U.S. began using in the 1991 Gulf War (300 tons), and which it has used much more extensively—and in more urban, populated areas—in the Iraq War and in the now intensifying Afghanistan War.

Depleted uranium, despite its rather benign-sounding name, is not depleted of radioactivity or toxicity. The term “depleted” refers only to its being depleted of the U-235 isotope needed for fission reactions in nuclear reactors. The nuclear waste material from nuclear power plants, DU as it is known, is what is removed from the power plants’ spent fuel rods and is essentially composed of the uranium isotope U-238 as well as U-236 (a product of nuclear reactor fission, not found in nature), as well as other trace radioactive elements.

Once simply a nuisance for the industry, that still has no permanent way to dispose of the dangerous stuff, it turns out to be an ideal metal for a number of weapons uses, and has been capitalized on by the Pentagon.

Much harder than steel, 1.7 times heavier than lead, and with the added property of burning at a super-hot temperature, DU has proven to be an ideal penetrator for warheads that need to pierce thick armor or dense concrete bunkers made of reinforced concrete and steel. Once through the defenses, it burns at a temperature that incinerates anyone inside (which

is why we see the carbonized bodies in the wreckage of Iraqi tanks hit by U.S. fire).

Accordingly, it has found its way into 30mm machine gun ammunition especially that used by the A-10 Warthog ground-attack fighter planes used extensively in Iraq and Afghanistan (as well as Kosovo). It is also the warhead of choice for Abrams tanks and is also reportedly used in GBU-28 and the later GBU-37 bunker buster bombs, each of which can have 1-2 tons of the stuff in its warhead.

DU is also used as ballast in cruise missiles, and this burns up when a missile detonates its conventional explosive. Some cruise missiles are also designed to hit hardened targets and reportedly feature DU warheads, as does the AGM-130 air-to-ground missile, which carries a one-ton penetrating warhead. In addition, depleted uranium is used in large quantities in the armor of tanks and other equipment. This material becomes a toxic source of DU pollution when these vehicles are attacked and burned.

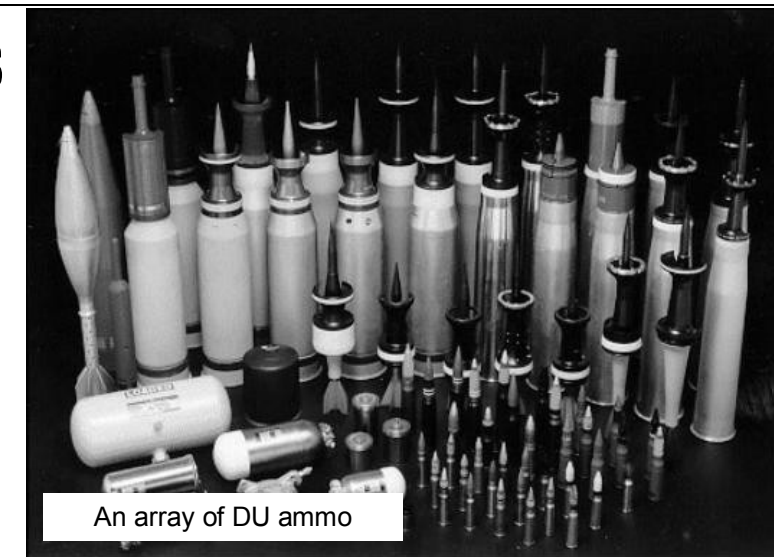
While the Pentagon has continued to claim, against all scientific evidence, that there is no hazard posed by depleted uranium, U.S. troops in Iraq have reportedly been instructed to avoid any sites where these weapons have

been used—destroyed Iraqi tanks, exploded bunkers, etc.—and to wear masks if they do have to approach. Many torched vehicles have been brought back to the U.S., where they have been buried in special sites reserved for dangerously contaminated nuclear materials. (Thousands of tons of DU-contaminated sand from Kuwait, polluted with DU during the U.S. destruction of Iraq’s tank forces in the 1991 war, were removed and shipped to a waste site in Idaho last year with little fanfare.) Suspiciously, international health officials have been prevented or obstructed from doing medical studies of DU sites in Iraq and Afghanistan. But an excellent series of articles several years ago by

Of 170 babies born last September at Fallujah General Hospital: 24% died in their first week; 75% were deformed.

the *Christian Science Monitor* described how reporters from that newspaper had visited such sites in Iraq with Geiger-counters and had found them to be extremely “hot” with radioactivity.

The big danger with DU is not as a pure metal, but after it has exploded and burned, when the particles of uranium oxide, which are just as radioactive as the pure isotopes, can be inhaled or ingested. Even the smallest particle of uranium in the body is both deadly poisonous as a chemical,



An array of DU ammo

and over time can cause cancer—particularly in the lungs, but also the kidneys, testes and ovaries.

There are reports of a dramatic increase in the incidence of deformed babies being born in the city of Fallujah, where DU weapons were in wide use during the November 2004 assault on that city by U.S. Marines. The British TV station Sky News—UK, in a September

2009 report that has received no mention in any mainstream American news organization, found a marked increase in birth defects at local hospitals. Birth defects have also been high for years in the Basra area in the south of Iraq, where DU was used not just during America’s 2003 “Shock and Awe” attack on Iraq, but also in the 1991 Gulf War.

Further, a report sent to the UN General Assembly by Dr Nawal Majeed Al-Sammarai, Iraq’s Minister of Women’s Affairs since 2006, stated that in September 2009, Fallujah General Hospital had 170 babies born, 24% of which died within their first week of life. Worse yet, fully 75% of the

babies born that month were deformed. This compares to August 2002, six months before the U.S. invasion, when 530 live births were reported with

only six dying in the first week, and only one deformity. Clearly something terrible is happening in Fallujah, and many doctors suspect it’s the depleted uranium dust that is permeating the city.

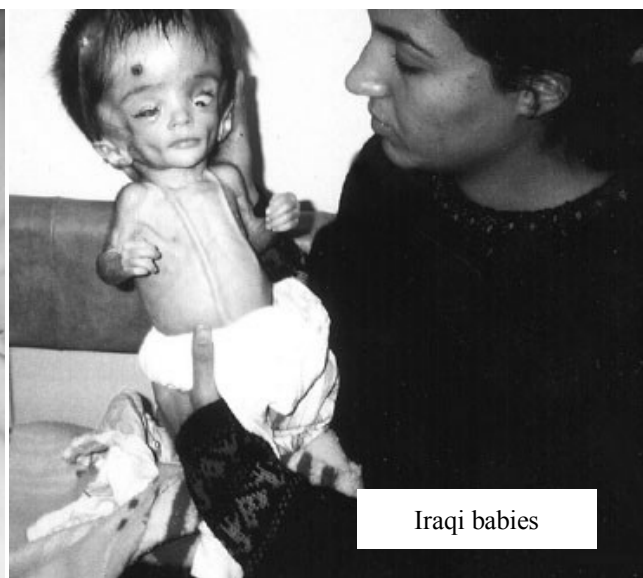
But the real impact of the first heavy use of depleted uranium weaponry in populous urban environments (DU was used widely, especially in 2003 in Baghdad, Samara, Mosul, and other big Iraqi cities), will come over the years, as the toxic legacy of this latest American war crime begins to show up in rising numbers of cancers, birth defects and other genetic disorders in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Of course, as in the case of Agent Orange in Vietnam, the toxic effects of this latest battlefield use of toxic materials by the U.S. military will also be felt for years to come by the men and women who were sent over to fight America’s latest wars. As with Agent Orange, the Pentagon and the Veterans Affairs Department have been assiduously denying the problem, and have been just as assiduously denying claims by veterans of the Gulf War and the two current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan who claim their cancers and other diseases have anything to do with their exposure to DU.

The record on Agent Orange should lead us to be suspicious of the government’s claims.

The deformed and dead babies in Iraq should make us demand a cleanup of Iraq and Afghanistan, medical aid for the victims, and a ban on all depleted uranium weapons.

This article first appeared at the Global Research webpage at www.globalresearch.ca



Iraqi babies



Send your congressperson a subscription to

The War Crimes Times

The People v. Bush: How to Prosecute a President

Our struggle for accountability is a struggle that takes us right to the top, to the “decider” and his gang of criminals. We can no longer afford political timidity.

by Charlotte Dennett

In the main foyer of the Daniel Patrick Moynihan U.S. Court of Appeals in New York, a giant female statute cloaked in white robes literally leaps out at the visitor, bearing aloft the scales of justice, equally balanced. She is blindfolded, signifying that justice must be blind, regardless of rank or class. She’s one of the oldest icons in history, dating back to the ancient Greeks. Her name is Lady Justice, and her plea for equal justice under the law has never been more relevant than today in the United States of America.

Many Americans feel her call, yet find themselves repeatedly let down by an atmosphere of impunity that still reigns in this country despite the departure of George W. Bush from the White House.

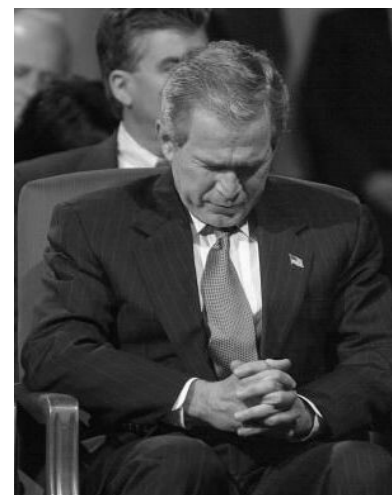


bar counsels of former Justice Department lawyers Jay Bybee and John Yoo the results of a

[regarding Bybee] was close to zero. “

This leaves us with two choices: accepting this grim prognostication, or getting off our duffs and fighting for the soul of America. Because let’s face it: We can no longer afford political timidity. At the heart of our struggle for accountability is a struggle for democracy, a struggle that takes us right to the top, to the “decider” and his gang of criminals who now live in comfort after authorizing the despicable behavior of doctors and lawyers and CIA interrogators and brought shame upon our country.

As I’ve noted previously, Yoo and Bybee are the lynchpins holding together the chain of criminal evidence leading directly to Bush’s White House. Their culpability is not just over justifying acts of torture, which is



the Iraq war is upon us, and that those responsible for sending over 4,000 American troops and a million Iraqi civilians to their graves should be held to account.

And if you are up for an adventure, bring your reps, your lawyer and doctor friends, and anyone else who cares about accountability on a field trip to the Daniel P. Moynihan Federal Courthouse, located in the civic center of lower Manhattan not far from Wall Street. Pay a visit to Lady Justice, and as you do, contemplate the meaning of what you see: a giant white-cloaked apparition crying out to be heard in the midst of security guards and surveillance cameras. You are not allowed to photograph her, but you can walk around her, pay homage if you like, and vow that her message—equal justice for all—one day will be heard.

Charlotte Dennett is the author of the newly released The People v. Bush: One Lawyer’s Campaign to Bring the President to Justice and the National Grassroots Movement She Encounters Along the Way. Formerly a journalist reporting from the Middle East, she now practices law.

Our struggle for accountability is a struggle for democracy

The latest, most public example comes from two eminent physicians who wrote “Doctors Without Morals” in the February 28 *New York Times*. They have written an op-ed that decries the fact that “government doctors and psychologists who participated in and authorized the torture of detainees have escaped discipline, accountability or even internal investigations.” They ruefully point out that government lawyers who tried to legalize illegal torture under the Bush administration were at least subjected to a “transparent investigation of professional behavior,” whereas government doctors received no scrutiny at all from members of their profession.

Those of us who care about justice and accountability can take some solace in the fact that Representative Jerry Nadler of New York has forwarded on to the respective

five-year internal investigation of them by the Justice Department’s Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR). The OPR recommends disciplinary action against the two lawyers for their role in providing legal gloss to torture, a decidedly criminal act.

Yoo and Bybee are the lynchpins holding together the chain of criminal evidence leading directly to Bush’s White House.

Still, even this relatively positive news is a mixed bag. A top lawyer at the Justice Department over-ruled the OPR’s recommendation, instead letting both lawyers off with a mild reprimand for their “poor judgment.” Meanwhile, Georgetown Law Professor David Luban, writing in *Slate*, noted that state bar associations “tend to be cautious and politically timid, and experts have told me that the probability of action from either the DC bar counsel [against Yoo] or his Pennsylvania counterpart

a crime under U.S. and international law. They memo’d up in order to help their boss, President Bush, find a way to push U.S. soldiers into a preemptive, murderous war in Iraq. One of those ways was by issuing secret “legal” memos that created out of whole cloth a “war time president” with nearly dictatorial powers. Another way was giving legal cover to

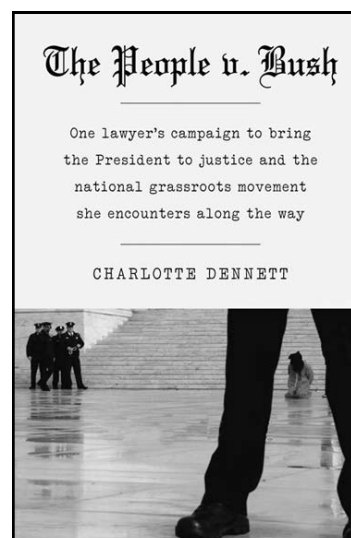
the CIA for its torturing of at least three high-level detainees in 2002 and early 2003 to obtain false confessions concerning their (non-existent) connections to Saddam Hussein.

Yoo and Bybee, along with a slew of compliant doctors in America’s torture chambers, became handmaidens to a policy designed to get us involved in a war based on false pretenses. Evidence abounds that these doctors and lawyers are complicit, along with the top people in Bush’s circle, in murder and war crimes. For

this, they should all be prosecuted.

What can you do? For starters, you can seek out websites that call for disbarment at the very least (hoosagainstyou.org, and disbartorturelawyers.org are two) and for prosecution (lawsnotmen.org, afterdowningstreet.org, warcriminalswatch.org). You can also find ten pages of organizational resources on the accountability movement in my book, *The People v. Bush*, including bloggers and websites, political and religious organizations, sympathetic media outlets, lawyers and physicians. Get involved with the group(s) of your choice. Go to PeoplevBush.com and find a set of Frequently Asked Questions about How to Prosecute a President.

Remind your representatives in Congress that when Obama took office, the number one wish from supporters on his website was for the criminal investigation and prosecution of George W. Bush and his top advisers. A Gallup poll taken a month later found that the majority of Americans wanted an investigation, with one third wanting prosecutions. You need to let Congress—and Obama—know your feelings have not changed, and that you do not accept Obama’s mantra that moving forward is preferable to moving backward. Remind them of a January, 2010 *New York Times* editorial: “The rule of law rests on scrutinizing evidence of past behavior to establish accountability, confer justice and deter bad behavior in the future.” Remind them that the seventh anniversary of



Charlotte Dennett, in this book, is trying to awaken the conscience of the nation. She wants us to recognize not just that our government at the highest level—the president and the people around him—have committed war crimes, but that they should be prosecuted as we prosecute ordinary criminals. She has been carrying this campaign forward with extraordinary persistence and courage, organizing people in her state of Vermont, demonstrating that grass roots action can be powerful. Her book is a clarion call for the people to confront the crimes of government, for democracy to come alive.

—Howard Zinn

Brits

(Continued from page 1)

charged with advising the British government on the legality of the Iraq invasion believed it was illegal.

Although UK Attorney-General Lord Peter Goldsmith had been of a similar persuasion, in the final weeks before the invasion he changed his mind. Despite the FCO opinion, Lord Goldsmith advised Prime Minister Tony Blair that the upcoming invasion would “on balance” be lawful.

It was that advice, handing Blair the legal opinion that he wanted, which led to Ms. Wilmschurt’s resignation.

But what is even more troubling than the readiness of Lord Goldsmith to mold his legal judgment to the political demands of his superiors, or the failure of other UK government attorneys to revolt, is the remarkable fact that no similar inquiry is being conducted—or even seriously considered—in the United States, where the war was initiated.

The Chilcot Inquiry was announced by Prime Minister Gordon Brown on June, 15, 2009. Work began in late July, and the first hearings were conducted on Nov. 24. A report is expected no sooner than this summer.

The mission of the inquiry is not to apportion blame, nor to consider issues of civil or criminal liability. Rather, as stated by Chairman Sir John Chilcot, the inquiry will consider “the UK’s involvement in Iraq, including the way decisions were made and actions taken, to establish, as accurately as possible, what happened and to identify the lessons that can be learned.”

In a statement to Parliament, Prime Minister Brown said the inquiry’s scope would be “unprecedented” with “access to the fullest range of information, including secret

information... No British document and no British witness will be beyond the scope of the inquiry.”

That scope was demonstrated convincingly on Jan. 29, when former Prime Minister Tony Blair testified for six hours.

And this ongoing British inquiry is not the only one—there was a Dutch inquiry as well. Established March 3, 2009, the Dutch Inquiry, like the British, was to be independent.

Unlike the British inquiry, however, the question of legality was specifically mentioned as part of Dutch inquiry’s mandate. One duty was “to investigate preparations and decision-making in the period from summer 2002 to summer

Dutch Commission: “The military action [invasion of Iraq] had no sound mandate under international law.”

2003 with regard to the Netherlands’ political support for the invasion of Iraq in general, and with regard to matters pertinent to international law.”

On Jan. 12, 2010, the Commissie van Onderzoek Besluitvorming Irak (Commission of Inquiry into Iraq Decision-making) issued its report. Among the 49 conclusions is #20: “The military action had no sound mandate under international law.”

These official public inquiries in two European countries highlight by contrast the slim likelihood that there will ever be an American public inquiry of similar scope into the invasion of Iraq.

Nor are Americans likely to hear public testimony from the man who bears the chief responsibility for the war: former President George W. Bush.

The likelihood of any discussion by high-ranking

American officials about the legality of the war in a public forum with official status seems low as well.

Even less likely is the prospect that any American who had any significant role in the decision to invade Iraq will ever be held responsible in any way for the carnage and suffering that followed.

Understandably, perhaps, this is not an issue that has interested a great many American decision-makers or for that matter senior editors of U.S. news organizations that promoted or tolerated the falsehoods that were used to justify the invasion.

Less understandably, neither does it seem to interest President Obama, a critic of the Iraq War who ran a presidential campaign that emphasized the need for Americans to take personal responsibility.

After his election and a few days before his Inauguration, he was asked about the possibility of a U.S. inquiry into some of the outrages, including torture and warrantless wiretapping, associated with the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

“We need to look forward as opposed to looking backwards,” Obama answered. “My orientation is going to be moving forward.”

Judging from the recent reluctance of the Obama administration to hold the authors of the 2002 “torture memos” legally responsible, it’s reasonable to assume that as far as the invasion of Iraq is concerned official U.S. policy is: no inquiry, no discussion of legality, no accountability.

Official Washington appears to have settled on a “don’t ask, don’t tell” response to a core Nuremberg principle, that aggressive war represents the “supreme international crime differing only from other war crimes in that it contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole.”

After World War II, serving as chief prosecutor of high-ranking Nazis at the Nuremberg tribunals, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson also made clear that the princi-



Blair (Blair?) testifies as people demand accountability

ples enunciated there were not just excuses for exacting revenge against a defeated enemy but rather would be universal standards that would apply to all future world leaders.

“The ultimate step in avoiding periodic wars, which are inevitable in a system of international lawlessness, is to make statesmen responsible to the law,” Jackson said, adding: “while this law is first applied against German aggressors, the law includes, and if it is to serve a useful purpose it must condemn aggression by any other nations, including those which sit here now in judgment.”

Bush mockingly replied: “International law? I better call my lawyer.”

Yet, the actions of the Bush administration—and the disinterest of the Obama administration in demanding any accountability—suggest a different de facto standard, one that places senior officials of the United States and allied governments above or outside international law.

In 1999 when complaints were filed in the International Criminal Tribunal against President Bill Clinton and Secretary of Defense William Cohen for war crimes in the bombing of Yugoslavia, John Bolton, who later became U.S. Ambassador to the United

Nations, said: “It is a big mistake for us to grant any validity to international law.”

Like Bolton, President Bush possessed a strong disdain for international law. In December 2003, when asked about the applicability of international law to a decision on granting reconstruction contracts in Iraq, Bush mockingly replied: “International law? I better call my lawyer.”

The Bush administration’s contempt for international law was no secret inside allied governments. Recently Clare Short, who resigned as UK Secretary of International Development in May 2003 in protest of the Iraq invasion, said at the Chilcot Inquiry:

“It was suggested to [Lord Goldsmith] that he go to the United States to get advice about the legal position. Now we have got the Bush administration, with very low respect for international law. It seems the most extraordinary place in the world to go and get advice about international law.”

It remains to be seen whether the Obama campaign promise of “change we can believe in” will affect the legacy he inherited from George W. Bush of contempt for international law.

Indications from the first year are less than promising.

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Mural in UK — Partners in crime?

Guilt

In 1945, the SS executed Albrecht Haushofer for his part in the previous year's July 20 plot to assassinate Adolf Hitler. Haushofer had reservations about the intentions of the Nazi party following its rise to power in the 1930s, but he nonetheless consented to represent it in foreign affairs. With the outbreak of the Second World War, Haushofer distanced himself from his Nazi past and began associating with elements of the German resistance. As the war wore on, he consistently opposed any attempt on Hitler's life, but finally agreed to join the July plot. With the plot's failure, he was arrested by the Gestapo, and executed just days before the Red Army liberated Berlin. Haushofer composed the *Moabiter Sonette* while in prison. One of his most well-known sonnets, "Schuld," attempts to express—in sad retrospect—the weight of his moral guilt in the face of impending death:

"Schuld"

...schuldig bin ich
Anders als Ihr denkt.
Ich musste früher meine Pflicht erkennen;
Ich musste schärfer Unheil Unheil nennen;
Mein Urteil hale ich zu lang gelenkt...
Ich habe gewarnt,
Aber nicht genug, und klar;
Und heute weiß ich, was ich schuldig war.

"Guilt"

I am guilty,
But not in the way you think.
I should have earlier recognized my duty;
I should have more sharply called evil evil;
I reined in my judgment too long.
I did warn,
But not enough, and clear;
And today I know what I was guilty of.

The poem's last line can be variously translated as "And today I know what I was guilty of" or "And today I know what my obligation had been." Through this subtle play on words, Haushofer created a powerful poetic link between his failure to act decisively and the supposed "guilt" — "not in the way you think" — for which he had been condemned. His poems remain a testament to the power as well as the responsibilities of the individual under dictatorship. (Source: ExecutedToday.com)

Holding civilian trials

By Shea Howell

Courtesy of the *Michigan Citizen*

The controversy over the use of civilian courts to try suspected terrorists has intensified over the last few weeks. In our world of polarized politics, basic facts have been turned upside down. Led by the bullying, outlandish claims of former Vice President Dick Cheney, we are told that military tribunals are essential for U.S. security and are the only effective way to deal with terrorists.

Cheney's claims have received little scrutiny from the mainstream media. Instead, the media has devoted attention to those who agree with him. On February 19, the *New York Times* ran a long article about Andrew McCarthy, the former prosecutor of one of this country's biggest terrorism trials of the group of men led by a blind Egyptian sheik, who plotted to blow up the United Nations, the Lincoln and Holland Tunnels, and other city landmarks. McCarthy got his convictions.

Now, however, McCarthy has joined the chorus of critics of the very kind of trials that made his career. Recently he said, "A war is a war. A war is not a crime, and you don't

bring your enemies to a court-house."

This is the real issue behind the opposition to civilian courts. A trial in a civilian court shifts the issue away from Unending War to the recognition that what we label terrorism is a Criminal Act. Criminal Acts are not declarations of war of one nation against another; they are the

Once we acknowledge that bombings, attempted assassinations, killings, and destruction of property are crimes, our justifications for the military invasion and occupation of two countries are called into question.

acts of individuals and small groups. Once we acknowledge this, we open up the intellectual and moral foundations to reveal the grossly criminal activities that our government has been engaged in under its "war on terror."

Once we acknowledge that bombings, attempted assassinations, killings and destruction of property are crimes, our justifications for the military invasion and occupation of two countries are called into question. Moreover, the inhuman and brutal treatment of individuals, so supported by

Dick Cheney, is exposed for just what it is: Torture and a war crime.

So the continuing effort to refuse to acknowledge that the bombings, attempted assassinations, killings and destruction of property are crimes is an effort to prevent serious thinking about the criminality of these wars and our continued commitment to them.

It seems that most of the mainstream media would rather fan the fuel of partisan bullying than look at basic facts. While Cheney, McCarthy & Co. all say they are worried about U.S. security, the list of prominent military thinkers supporting civilian trials gets little coverage. These include CIA veteran Philip Giraldo, Admiral Mike Mullen, former Major General Michael Lehnert and seven of the military lawyers who quit in Guantanamo because of the violations of basic decency there.

While McCarthy was calling for military courts and Dick Cheney was singing the praises of waterboarding, former Secretary of State Colin Powell said that Cheney's claims had no basis in reality. He was especially upset that Cheney was railing against decisions that had been enacted during the Bush administration. Powell pointed out that Bush had ended waterboarding as an interrogation tool and had shifted to criminal courts to try terror suspects. He said Cheney's claims of our being less safe are not "borne out by the facts."

Powell is correct. In the eight years, the Bush administration obtained at least 319 convictions in terrorism or terrorism related cases in the civilian justice system [refer to justice.gov/jmd/2009summary/Part One]. It obtained convictions in 9 out of 10 cases, with an average sentence of 16 years. Meanwhile just three men were convicted in military commissions. Two of them are now free.

The shift away from a commitment to war begins with reclaiming the principles of law that have long been the cornerstone of democracy. We should not be bullied away from this commitment.

Two sage views on President Obama

I've been searching hard for a highlight. The only thing that comes close is some of Obama's rhetoric; I don't see any kind of a highlight in his actions and policies.

As far as disappointments, I wasn't terribly disappointed because I didn't expect that much. I expected him to be a traditional Democratic president. On foreign policy, that's hardly any different from a Republican—as nationalist, expansionist, imperial and warlike. So in that sense, there's no expectation and no disappointment.... I thought that in the area of constitutional rights he would be better than he has been. That's the greatest disappointment, because Obama went to Harvard Law School and is presumably dedicated to constitutional rights. But he becomes president, and he's not making any significant step away from Bush policies. Sure, he keeps talking about closing Guantánamo, but he still treats the prisoners there as "suspected terrorists." They have not been tried and have not been found guilty. So when Obama proposes taking people out of Guantánamo and putting them into other prisons, he's not advancing the cause of constitutional rights very far. And then he's gone into court arguing for preventive detention, and he's continued the policy of sending suspects to countries where they very well may be tortured.

I think people are dazzled by Obama's rhetoric, and that people ought to begin to understand that Obama is going to be a mediocre president—which means, in our time, a dangerous president—unless there is some national movement to push him in a better direction.

—Howard Zinn on Obama's first year in *The Nation*

President Obama is like President Bush in this regard: he doesn't receive dissenting groups in the White House....he's freezing out dissenters, dissenting groups from meeting with him in the White House. They can't get a meeting with him. He's surrounded by warmongers. He's surrounded by the military-industrial complex. But he won't meet, for example, Veterans for Peace. He won't meet Iraq Veterans Against the War. He won't meet the student groups and the religious groups and the business groups and others who opposed the Iraq war back in 2003. What is he afraid of here?

You know, we're supposed to have a new wave with the Obama administration. Instead, we have the same old—the same old same old. And I think the whole idea—just let me make this—the whole idea that Obama is for things, but they're not practical—he's for single payer, he really doesn't like war, but, but, but. But he goes along, and he goes along. We have to have the American people give the White House a measure of political courage here, because it's not going to come from inside the White House. And he ought to open the way to meet with Veterans for Peace—

—Ralph Nader speaking on *Democracy Now!*

WCT Interview: Kathy Kelly— A Pilgrim with Purpose

Kathy Kelly is a gracious warrior. Her friend, the late historian Studs Terkel, called her “a pilgrim with one purpose: to reveal the lives of war’s innocent victims.” Kelly is co-founder and coordinator of Chicago-based Voices for Creative Nonviolence (VCNV at vcnv.org), which grew out of an earlier campaign, Voices in the Wilderness, challenging the deadly U.S.—UN economic sanctions imposed on Iraq before the first Gulf War. Kelly is a risk-taker who faces the pain of the world directly, placing herself time and again in proximity with the suffering borne by victims of U.S. Wars and occupations. She is a passionate and compelling speaker imploring listeners to nonviolently resist the injustices, even at the cost of personal freedom. Kelly has faced arrest for her acts of conscience over 60 times, and has received numerous awards in decades of peace work, including nominations for the Nobel Peace Prize.

I caught up with Kelly by telephone in her Chicago home where she was making ready for another road trip, and we talked again when she reached Duluth, in between stops in her travels as an “itinerant teacher.” We also corresponded by email to pull together this interview. It was a typically busy time for Kelly.

Through writing, teaching, and speaking at community and university forums, and truth-telling in the halls of political power, Kelly seeks to “raise the lament of those who bear the brunt of our wars but whose voices seldom reach U.S. government figures.” When she travels, which is widely and often, she chooses public transportation, taking the slow way of bus and train and minimizing airplane and automobile use out of concern for the environmental impact. “We have looked into the possibility of travel by boat,” she said, of a planned journey to Pakistan.

During January and February this year, Kelly was in Washington, DC for the “Peaceable Assembly Campaign,” a project of Voices for Creative Nonviolence, to raise questions with elected representatives about the folly and the crime of war. Participants held daily vigils at the White House, and engaged in acts of nonviolent civil disobedience to emphasize their refusal to cooperate with the war-makers.

Kelly and I have met on numerous occasions, and we both spent time in federal prison for protest against the tortuous counterinsurgency training at the U.S. Army School of the Americas (now called WHINSEC). More recently we participated on the panel “Women and War Tax Resistance” presented at the Gandhi King Conference in Memphis in 2009 with support of the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee. Kelly has refused to pay for war since 1980.



Clare Hanrahan with Kathy Kelly in Memphis

I talked with Kathy Kelly by cell phone from the backseat of my sister's car, traveling over the snowy Unaka mountain range on I-26 in Tennessee's Southern Appalachians. I was returning to my home place in Asheville, N.C., my broken leg on the heal after some sisterly care. Along the way we passed Erwin, TN, the site of Nuclear Fuel Services where weapons-grade uranium is “downblended” for use in nuclear fuel rods that power the lethal first-strike Trident nuclear submarine fleet, and nearby Jonesboro, TN and Aerojet Ordinance, producer of the weaponized uranium

munitions (so-called depleted uranium) that have left a lingering legacy of mutation and death. I spoke with Kelly about her peace work in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, while passing within a few miles of the source for much of the weaponized uranium that continues to devastate the people of the region long after the shock and awe bombardments—a war crime of immense proportions.

Kelly first became involved in nonviolent civil disobedience by participating in actions protesting re-instatement of the draft, during the summer of 1979. She was deeply involved in the work to end U.S. intervention in Central America, traveling there on peacemaking delegations and participating in demonstrations and public fasts. Her first prison experience came after she participated in “The Missouri Peace Planting” action, sowing corn on land surrounding a nuclear missile silo. She spent nine months in prison for that witness. Leading up to the recent Republican National Convention in St. Paul, MN, Kelly and others from VCNV walked 450 miles from Chicago, building relationships and making connections in communities all along the route. Kathy Kelly is a dynamo for peace and a woman whose courage has ignited a movement.

—Clare Hanrahan

Here are her responses to some of my questions:

WCT: In your rare moments of quiet, what are some of the ways you replenish your spirit and gather courage to carry on?

Kelly: Ernest Bromley, a long time war tax refuser and pacifist, once told me that he believed courage is the ability to control your fears. I think we catch courage from one another. I'm fortunate to have gained perspective on peacemaking from some very strong activists. I'm also pleased to share a home and office space with people whom I greatly appreciate and enjoy. We live together in a rented apartment on Chicago's north side. I also value time to read and study. Sometimes I'll get extra time to do just that during long train and bus rides between cities in the U.S.

WCT: I understand that you have some grounding in the philosophy of the Catholic Worker movement with its emphasis on personal responsibility. Are you part of a Catholic Worker Community?

Kelly: We're not specifically a Catholic Worker house, our Voices community members are not all of the Catholic tradition, though we have a lot of interaction with Catholic Worker communities.

WCT: How do you think the Personalist ethic can grow into the kind of movements that will bring significant change in this oppressive system?

Kelly: The means we use will determine the end we get. Much of this work hinges on relationships and community



building. I think we particularly need people, at this juncture, who will help expand the “circle” of those who are committed to outreach and education through inviting more and more people to join in activism. I'm thinking of people who engage in planning, logistics, outreach, and education.

WCT: In what ways do Catholic Worker communities support activists and activism?

Kelly: Many Catholic Worker communities help young people live in accord with their deepest beliefs—sharing resources, living simply, and building communities of nonviolence. The Catholic Worker communities are a vital sign of a healthy peace movement. We need to become many more than we



are now, as practitioners of nonviolence, but the Catholic Worker communities are like an arrow pointing to what could become a larger and more significant movement. It's good to remember that Dorothy Day was quite marginalized in her earlier years as a peace activist. Some hierarchs in the Catholic Church regarded her with mistrust and, at times, derision. Now, if someone is preparing to become a Catholic, the curriculum includes studying Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker movement.

WCT: How would you define your religious path?

Kelly: I like Thomas Paine's words: My country is the world, my religion is to do good.

[These words from American revolutionist Thomas Paine, were part of the vows recited at Kelly's 1982 marriage to longtime and legendary peace activist Karl Meyer, now working with Nashville Greenlands. Though the couple have since dissolved the marriage, they remain friends and co-conspirators on campaigns for justice and peace, collaborating most recently on the Peaceable Assembly campaign.]

WCT: Could you distill a guiding principle that informs your choices?

Kelly: I believe that eradicating poverty should be our highest priority. I believe that nonviolence can change the world. Larry Rosebaugh's advice makes sense to me. Try to keep one foot planted among people who bear the brunt of U.S. warfare imperialism; keep the other foot planted within efforts to nonviolently resist U.S. wars. [Rosebaugh, a Oblate Missionary priest, political prisoner, and Milwaukee Catholic Worker was murdered in 2009 in Guatemala where he lived and worked among the poor.]



Kelly walks through rubble in Beirut 2006.

"The use of conventional weapons against civilian populations is a war crime."

Kelly: This includes nonviolent resistance to a war against the poor which is waged in the United States.

WCT: What were influences in your early years, family life, neighborhood, events of the times?

Kelly: I was very impressed by religious women, sisters, who taught us at St. Daniel the Prophet grade school (Chicago). They never showed the slightest interest in acquiring personal wealth. These women shared their living space, belongings, and work. They were paid next to nothing. And, yet, most of them exuded a genuine cheerfulness.

WCT: Your Voices for Creative Non-violence's Peaceable Assembly Campaign website notes that "Nonviolence is defined in different ways by different people in different contexts." What would you consider to be a working definition?

Kelly: I think nonviolence necessarily involves simplicity, sharing of resources, and a preference for service rather than dominance. It certainly must involve refusal to kill and a readiness to embrace nonviolent direct action to resist injustice.

WCT: What is the best training in non-violent action available within the peace movement today?

Kelly: It's difficult to point toward the "best training in non-violent action," but I do think it's helpful to engage in training that leads toward subsequent action in the near future. Grassroots training can help get people acquainted with the whole process of nonviolence

in action in their communities and provide opportunities to get their toes wet. They can find out more about themselves and what role they are best able to play and get the hang of the rhythm of campaigns of nonviolent action [while building] a bigger pool of people trained for non-violent action.

WCT: With regard to the Geneva Conventions, certain ways of conducting war and certain types of weapons and targets are considered to be a violation of International Law and are War Crimes. In your travels and accompaniment in war zones, what kinds of war crimes have you witnessed?

Kelly: The use of conventional weapons against civilian populations is a war crime. I was in Gaza during the final days of the Operation Cast Lead assault, in January 2009. Once every

eleven minutes, a bomb exploded near the civilian home where Audrey Stewart [New Orleans Human Rights activist and SOA Watch legal team coordinator] and I were staying. Some of the bombs were Hellfire missiles fired by Apache helicopters. Some were 500 pound bombs dropped by fighter jets. Throughout the 2003 Shock and Awe bombing, I was in Baghdad with the Iraq Peace Team, a project of Voices in the Wilderness. Day and night, explosions took place. Each day, members of our team visited hospitals where civilian survivors were treated. No place in Baghdad was particularly safe. A tank-fired missile hit the Palestine hotel where western journalists were housed, across the street from us, killing a Spanish journalist and wounding several others. I was also in Iraq, and in Baghdad, during the Gulf War in 1991. Again, we heard explosions day and night, and we visited civilian victims in hospitals.

Between those two wars, an economic war brutally and lethally punished children who had no means to control Saddam Hussein's government. The U.S. and the UK governments insisted that the UN maintain, for 13 years, the most comprehensive state of siege ever imposed in modern history. These economic sanctions against Iraq directly contributed, according to UN statistics, to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of children under age five.

WCT: Why are these crimes allowed to persist?

Kelly: These crimes persist without significant coverage from the mainstream media. I think many faith-based leaders are acquiescent, and I think many tenured University professors could do much more to raise their voices on behalf of ending the U.S. addiction to war.

WCT: What can we do to wake Americans up, to change our culture, to engage citizens, so that people become outraged at war crimes including wars of aggression?

Kelly: Education. Education. Education. The mainstream media is filled with distractions, and we can't look to the universities to educate...It takes time and dogged effort. We must create drama around some of these issues and work to build and expand the movement.

WCT: In one interview I read, you stated, if we're going to be strong as a peace movement we have to be willing to take the same risks that the soldiers take. What are some specific risky actions that are akin to the risks expected of our armed forces? Why is it that so few who count themselves as activists are ready

to take personal risk in pursuit of peace?

Kelly: Nonviolent civil disobedience may sometimes result in jail or prison terms. Experiences as a prisoner help us better understand conditions faced by impoverished people. I think it's important not to let inconvenience become an obstacle to living in accord with our deepest beliefs. Ordinary people bear responsibility to participate in organized efforts to end U.S. war crimes. I think activists must do their best to welcome newcomers into this purposeful work and to find creative means to continually educate people about U.S. wars and the ghastly consequences borne by innocent people.

Eradicating poverty should be our highest priority.



Arrested for witnessing against war at Fort McCoy, WI



More information on Kathy Kelly and Voices for Creative NonViolence online at www.vcnv.org.

Clare Hanrahan is a contributing editor to War Crimes Times, a member of VFP Chapter 099, member of the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee, and an organizer with WRL Asheville.

Why do they hate us?

(Continued from page 1)

by Israel that killed over 1,400 Palestinian civilians and wounded over 8,000 other civilians, most of them seriously. The war destroyed the infrastructure; agricultural land was flooded by sewage water; and Israel continues to use collective punishment and blockade on over 1.5 million Palestinians in Gaza where over 300 civilians have died as a result of the blockade. Still, Western officials ignore this horrible tragedy. The same is done by the UN Secretary General, who is supposed to represent international conscience. He equates Israeli generals with their unarmed civilian victims. He and Western officials ignore the testimony of Israeli soldiers who revealed that they were ordered not take any account of the life of Palestinian civilians. The Israeli organization "Breaking the Silence" has revealed new facts about Israeli practices in the West Bank and Gaza. So, why this cover up of the crimes of those generals and why equating criminals with their victims by politicians and journalists who repeat the question: "Why do they hate us?"

Ban Ki Moon's report, which reveals the international community's failure to condemn war criminals if they

were not Muslim or African, came days after President Obama made the State of the Union address, in which he ignored the Middle East completely.

The fact is that hundreds of millions of Muslims all over the world have been watching for decades the behavior of Western leaders towards tragedies caused by their policies, particularly their support for the Israeli occupation, settlement and blockade. They see that international institutions dominated by the West do not care about the killing and dis-

Hundreds of millions of Muslims watch the Western leaders, particularly their support for the Israeli occupation, settlement and blockade.

placement of their brothers and sisters and depriving them of freedom and human rights. If anyone makes a move to insure that justice takes its course, the American veto is there to thwart this effort. After all this, Western politicians still ask: "Why do they hate us?"

Even news of what is happening to Arabs and Muslims in terms of injustice, imprisonment, starvation, and torture have been prevented from reaching international conscience. Here is the United

States, which boasts about the freedom of the press, banning satellite TV stations en masse if they try to uncover the depth of the human suffering of a people under occupation, while the occupiers enjoy unprecedented international immunity. They commit war crimes, and no one has the right to demand that they should be deterred and punished, as if the lives of Arabs and Muslims are not equal to the lives of other humans in Western standards.

This ignoring of human suffering as a result of occupation, injustice, and oppression increases the indignation against this wide gap between this painful reality and the double standards of the powers which control international media and politics.

The enquiry involving Tony Blair shows the fragility of the logic which turns the lives of millions into a daily tragedy. But if Tony Blair—like the Prime Minister who did not notice the racial segregation wall which is destroying the life of the Palestinians, because he does not care about them—cannot see the millions of orphans, widows, and handicapped produced by the war on Iraq, how is he supposed to regret supporting that disastrous war on the whole Iraqi people? Such



Wall art in Palestine (by Banksy)

trials have no significance and are no longer able to polish the image of Western democracy which has revealed its reality through its stances regarding the events in the Middle East.

Violence is the result of using unjust force instead of trying to achieve justice in Palestine. And whether Western politicians understand that or not, Palestine, the cradle of Jesus Christ, is the bleeding wound which will never be healed until the United States, Europe, and international bodies take a just position which restores to the Palestinians

their freedom, rights, and dignity. These countries and bodies, by funding and arming Israel, are responsible for depriving the Palestinians of their freedom and human rights; and when they grant immunity to its war criminals, they become accomplices in Israeli wars and blockades. When the American administration, and with it Europe and the highest international body, ignore atrocious, documented war crimes committed by the occupation forces (only because the war criminals are Israeli) and turn a blind eye to the cruelest forms of suffering imposed on a whole people (only because they are Muslim), there will always be Jews, Christians and Muslims in America, Europe and even in Israel who will support the oppressed against their oppressors.

Dr. Bouthaina Shaaban is the Presidential Advisor for Political and Media Affairs with the Rank of Minister in Syria. She has been a writer and professor at Damascus University since 1985. She has represented Syria as a spokeswoman on the international level. In 2005, Dr. Shaaban was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, and in the same year, was presented with the 'Most Distinguished Woman in a Governmental Position Award' by the Arab League. Dr. Shaaban has published four books, and contributed to numerous others.



Marchers protest occupation, blockade, and war crimes as Waldorf Astoria banquet raises millions for Israel Defense Force

by Tarak Kauff (photos by Ellen Davidson)

On March 9th protesters marched outside the plush Waldorf Astoria Hotel in Manhattan. Inside, thirty soldiers from the Israel Defense Force—with special guest of honor Lt. General Gabi Ashkenazi, commander of the 2008-09 brutal invasion of Gaza—were feted at a gala fund raising \$1000/plate dinner. Jews Say No, Activists Response Team, Adalah-NY and other groups organized and did not intend to remain silent.

The marchers carried more than 400 identically-styled but differently-worded signs condemning Israeli war crimes and demanding justice for Palestinians. Without a permit, they walked in single file on the sidewalk from 5 to 7 PM, vocally silent, occasionally ringing bells and beating drums in a soulful and dignified

manner. They circled the block, passing in front of the Waldorf twice before police rerouted them so they would not march directly in front of the exclusive hotel. Estimates varied between 400 and 800 protesters, with about 80 counter-protesters from the David Project.

Matthew Weinstein, photographer on a bicycle said, "Inside, diners who had paid \$1000 for the privilege, were honoring the Israeli Defense Force. This was the same military that unleashed a savage and criminal war last year, dubbed Operation Cast Lead, against the unarmed and defenseless population of Gaza." More than 1400 Palestinians died in that massacre just over a year ago. And the strangling blockade of Gaza continues.

Fourteen hundred supporters of Israel's

brutal military feasted inside; twenty million American dollars were raised for the IDF war criminals. At the banquet, General Ashkenazi bragged, "As the commander of our soldiers, I tell you upon this stage: We will win over those who seek our destruction. We will win thanks to our soldiers' courage and because of their moral compass. It is our soldiers, Israel's finest, who guarantee that we will stand strong and united for the next 62 years, and long after that."

This is the same military that Israel has the chutzpah to call the "most moral army in the world."

Tell that to the surviving Palestinians in Gaza.



Lt. General Gabi Ashkenazi

Does depravity signal the empire's end?

by Mike Ferner

The *Associated Press* and the online *Times of London* tell us that on December 30, U.S. Special Forces or Blackwater mercenaries executed 10 people in eastern Afghanistan, eight of whom were students in what would be grades 6 to 11 here.

The children were dragged from their beds in the middle of the night, some handcuffed, and then shot.

This nauseating, infuriating evil has gone mostly unnoticed in the U.S. corporate press, unlike the failed attempt to

Executing handcuffed junior-high students. What deeper depravity can we produce in this war?

bomb an airline flight to Detroit and the eight CIA agents killed in a suicide bombing in Afghanistan.

Terrorizing and executing handcuffed junior-high students. What deeper depravity can we produce in this war?

Yes, "we." Make no mistake: whether the perpetrators were Army or Blackwater mercenary thugs, these killings belong to every one of us who pays taxes or has refused to hold our leaders accountable for the uncomfortable details of Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Palestine, and now Yemen.

"Safe...we want to be safe!" we demand of a government happy to fan our worst fears, even as the day draws near when we sleepwalk naked, barcodes on our foreheads, onto an airplane. President Obama repeats the old assurances that with enough of our money and young adults, we can be safe if we do two simple things: A) seal the entrances to Fortress America and B) bomb into submission every challenge to the American Empire abroad.

We hear this endlessly on what passes for news but we never hear the voices of those who can tell us why our occupations generate violent resistance. Defne Barak can tell us. Her husband, a doctor and double agent in Jordan's CIA, was so outraged by the abuses at Abu Ghraib and the invasions of

Iraq and Afghanistan that he blew himself up along with eight of his U.S. CIA colleagues.

Those grievances, along with U.S. support for Israel's occupation of Palestine, are cited repeatedly by those willing to give their lives in retribution. We are not encouraged to know this because our leaders are more interested in the fleeting goals of domination, empire, and our Number One export, weapons, than they are in justice and real security for the peoples of the world.

No, more to their liking are words from Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Carter's National Security Advisor. In his

1997 book, *The Grand Chessboard*, Brzezinski named the Central Asian "stans" as the next center of conflict for world control. In light of Asian economic growth, he called this area, "infinitely more important as a potential economic prize: an enormous concentration of natural gas and oil reserves...in addition to important minerals, including gold."

In sync with decades of U.S. foreign policy he advised, "It follows that America's primary interest is to help ensure that no single power comes to

control this geopolitical space," adding, "That puts a premium on maneuver and manipulation in order to prevent the emergence of a hostile coalition that could eventually seek to challenge America's primacy...To put it in a terminology that harkens back to the more brutal age of ancient empires, the three grand imperatives of imperial geostrategy are to prevent collusion and maintain security dependence among the vassals, to keep (satellites) pliant and protected, and to keep the barbarians from coming together."

Thomas Friedman, another acolyte of Empire who now tries to distance himself from what he considers a mismanaged adventure in Iraq, is more precise. The foreign affairs columnist for the *New York Times* wrote in *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization*, that "Markets function and flourish only when property rights are secure and can be enforced. And the hidden fist that keeps the world safe for Silicon Valley's technologies to flourish is called the U.S. Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps."

No doubt when the first Vandals and Visigoths came together to assault the outer gates of the Roman Empire, the emperor's response was to pour more treasure into military force and violence. We are well down the road to doing the same. Shooting handcuffed schoolchildren is an ominous mile-marker.



Sidewalk Bubblegum ©1996 Clay Butler

Letters

Kudos to Kovel

Many thanks for the outstanding article [*WCT* Fall 2009] by Joel Kovel on the USS Liberty! I just cannot understand the U.S. Government's stance on this subject. I can only surmise that the truth behind the cover-up is so vile, so awful, so disgusting, so horrible, that no sane person would dare reveal it!!

It is with publications like yours who are not afraid to speak the truth that we have some hope of the truth being publicized.

Just think where we would be if the truth were known at the time of the massacre by Israel. Would we have Osama Bin Laden threatening us because of our unilateral support of Israel? Would we have the 9/11 disaster? Would we have had the U.S. attack on Iraq? And would we be in the mess in Afghanistan?

I think NOT—to all questions. Peace... and happiness... and butterflies... and mom's apple pie... etc. All gone because of this damned attack by Israel and, more importantly... the U.S. coverup!!!

John Gidusko
LT, USN, (Ret)

More on USS Liberty

What a great piece on the USS Liberty. Thank you for writing it. As survivors, we have tried to get our government to open a case for us on the war crimes Israel committed against us crew members and our government. To this date nothing has come of it. The exposure you give us is what it needed to help us. Thank you again for doing the article.

John Hrankowski
USS Liberty survivor
Rochester, New York

Afghanistan Coverage

I just sent a letter this morning to the *Baltimore Sun* complaining about its lack of coverage of the war against Afghanistan. This war is an unmitigated disaster sure to be Obama's Vietnam. Thanks, though, is extended to the *War Crimes Times* for its thorough coverage.

I was one of the antiwar protesters at the White House on October 5. We picked that date to commemorate eight years of invasion and occupation with

no light at the end of the tunnel. I have to wonder if the corporate media would give significant coverage to the war, could this cause more people to join us in the protests in the streets.

I searched all week in the *Sun* for news of the disaster in Afghanistan. For sure, Afghanistan was not on the front page. More likely, a story from another news source or possibly an op-ed appeared inside. But this is a story that needs local coverage, more than just reporting when another Marylander dies in that distant land.

Local reporters should be writing about the war and the protests. The *Sun* covered Lyndon Johnson, a Shakespearean character who lost his soul in Vietnam. I see an eerie parallel between Johnson and Barack Obama who promised change, but at this time is continuing the Bush administration game plan.

George W. Bush is possibly the worst president in U.S. history. Barack Obama still has the chance to be considered one of the best if only he ends an imperialist foreign policy, brings justice to the Palestinians, and abolishes the U.S. nuclear arsenal.

Max Obuszewski
Baltimore, MD

Afghanistan History

Before the Brits and before the Soviets and before the U.S., there was this:

*When you're wounded and left
on Afghanistan's plains,
And the women come out
to cut up what remains,
Jest roll to your rifle
and blow out your brains
An' go to your Gawd like a soldier.*
—Rudyard Kipling

Kipling's opinion of attempted military action in Afghanistan...

Kate Carlyle
New Lenox, IL

Economic Boycott

I am 92 now and have been active in the peace movement since the Spanish Civil War. My greatest disappointment is that governments have failed to end war. They love war.

It is up to the people to take the initiative and act independently from the government. One way they can be effective is by creating an economic boycott against the nations and businesses that foment war. However, the boycott has to be wide spread and it has to be managed. That is the role of religious and peace organizations of which Veterans for Peace is a leading member.

I have written a blog (www.end-wars.blogspot.com/) where I explore these ideas and propose some specific ways by which the war in the Sudan can be ended. I believe that an economic boycott is the best way but there may be other ideas. The internet is the way to explore them. It cannot be blocked. It covers the entire world and it is effective.

Jacob Zar
Chula Vista, CA

Gaza is the Worst Crime

Of all the disasters my misguided country has visited on the rest of the world, one stands out as paramount. It isn't My Lai, that Vietnamese Village of murdered civilians. Nor Fallujah, that free fire zone of American imperial ambitions in Iraq. It isn't based on cumulative deaths either. There is no comparing the killing of one million in Iraq with the two million in Vietnam. Numbers of charred bodies don't dictate just how heinous war crimes are.

Oh, places like My Lai and Fallujah certainly count. As do war crimes committed by U.S. allies in East Timor, Guatemala, Chili, and so many others. These names will be markers of shame when the U.S. Empire falters and others begin to write history. When America finally gains its rightful place in the pantheon of countries that ruptured their borders and spread like cancer throughout the rest of the world.

But the disgrace that will stand above them all is the inhuman and terribly racist treatment of the Palestinians by our longstanding partner in war crimes, Israel. The ethnic cleansing of the West Bank and the strangulation and starvation of 1.5 million in Gaza matches the very worst of crimes done in the past 50 years. The genocide of the Palestinian people is a life changing glimpse into the abyss of evil, a permanent stain on our national honor.

We must initiate boycotts, divestments and sanctions on the apartheid state of Israel before it is too late.

Fred Nagel
Rhinebeck, NY

Biggest Cost of War

This article ["The Gunfighter" at left] reminded me of my Uncle Bart. He was the most responsible of men prior to the war. He was in the landing at Normandy and never really recovered from it. When sober he sat and talked very little. When drunk he talked but with little sense to it, seeming never to finish a complete thought. And drinking became his pastime to the point of being an alcoholic. This article is along these lines. Some experiences ruin a person for normal life. This may be the biggest cost of war.

Ron Kuykendall
Asheville, NC

The Gunfighter

reprinted from delanceyplace.com



While most demobilized soldiers return to ordinary lives, a disproportionate number have always turned upon return to a life of crime. Examples abound—from the returning veterans of World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War who filled the ranks of motorcycle and street gangs, to the veterans of the Mexican American War who became the outlaws in the early West. There is no better example, however, than the veterans of the American Civil War whose numbers filled the ranks of the James and Quantrill gangs and became prominent among the cowboys and gunfighters in the most storied days of the American West. Their close familiarity with death gave them advantage against all that they encountered. This was made worse by the bitterness between North and South that remained etched in their minds:

"Among the gunfighters [of the American West] death was never far away; many of them had lived with death as a companion and were conditioned to it. Those who had fought in the Civil War were especially haunted by the specter of imminent death. For most men the ending of hostilities had meant that they could stop killing and return to normal lives. But veterans of frontier conflicts, spies, sharpshooters, and guerrillas were conditioned to view killing as a means to an end. The unwary sentry whose throat had been cut, the unarmed men shot down for the information they could reveal, meant little to such men. Self-reliant and independent men who had learned to abide with death found the restrictions of civilized society intolerable. The idea of a life without danger in a world where they were not masters of their own destiny appalled them. To them there was only one alternative—an occupation suited to their particular talents. A Kansas newspaper editor [in 1867] noted the effect that the Civil War had had on the men who later became scouts and guides for the United States Army against the Indians:



"What a pity that young men so brave and daring should lack the discretion to sheath their daggers forever when the war terminated! But such is the demoralizing effect of war upon those who engage in it and certainly upon all who love the vocation. We learn from a gentleman who has frequently met these wild and reckless young men, that they live in a constant state of excitement, one

continual round of gambling, drinking, and swearing, interspersed at brief intervals with pistol practice upon each other.

"At a word any of the gang draws his pistol and blazes away as freely as if all mankind were Arkansas Rebels, and had a bounty offered for their scalps [sic]. How long these Athletes will be able to stand such a mode of life; eating, drinking, sleeping (if they can be said to sleep), and playing cards with their pistols at half cock, remains to be seen. For ourself, we are willing to risk them in an Indian campaign for which their cruelty and utter recklessness of life particularly fit them."

"Pointed but undiscerning comments of this nature reveal a lack of understanding of the feelings, reactions, and motives of the men who got into gunfights. A man who could draw his gun and shoot another man without hesitation had a cold-blooded attitude toward life that most people were spared. The man-killers of the West thus had an advantage over men basically reluctant to kill. When his life was threatened, the gunfighter could and would shoot to kill. Although he might appear calm and cool-headed under fire, his inner feelings were probably in turmoil. This man, facing death and wrestling with thoughts and emotions, was a far cry from the gunfighter of fiction. For him each fight, which could easily be his last, was a fight for life—his own."

Joseph G. Rosa, *The Gunfighter*, University of Oklahoma Press, Copyright 1969 by the University of Oklahoma Press, pp. 117-118.

I am a veteran of the Second World War. That was considered a "good war," but I have come to the conclusion that war solves no fundamental problems and only leads to more wars. War poisons the minds of soldiers, leads them to kill and torture, and poisons the soul of the nation.

—Howard Zinn

Civilian Casualties

"We deeply regret this tragic loss of life."

—U.S. Army Gen. Stanley McChrystal, after an airstrike killed a dozen civilians on Feb. 14 in Afghanistan

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

—U.S. Army Gen. Stanley McChrystal, after an airstrike killed two dozen civilians on Feb. 21 in Afghanistan



"With the indiscriminate nature of modern military technology (no such thing as a 'smart bomb,' it turns out) all wars are wars against civilians, and are therefore inherently immoral. This is true even when a war is considered 'just,' because it is fought against a tyrant, against an aggressor, to correct a stolen boundary."

—Howard Zinn, historian and WWII bombardier

BAGHDAD/ALBANY

The TV glows green like the obsolete computer in the attic
Blurred shapes that could be buildings or simply the geometry of electrons
Bright circles of lens flare as accents
An abstract electronic image they say is Baghdad.

I don't know Baghdad, don't know where the missiles are falling
I don't know which buildings are burning, which roads are blocked
I don't know Baghdad, but I do know Albany.

They say the missiles are launched from ships 200 miles away
They say they land with "amazing accuracy."
There could be ships in New York harbor
Firing Cruise missiles at the Empire State Plaza, at the Governor's Mansion on Eagle St.
200 Cruise missiles raining down on Albany tonight
With "amazing accuracy"

Taking out Lark St., the Bookstore, the Flower Shop,
Elissa Halloran's gone up in smoke
Ben & Jerry's a sea of mush
Bombers' Burritos blasted to bits by its namesakes.

With amazing accuracy one missile misses by only 1%
Takes out my house, rattles the windows of St. Peter's Hospital.
Wounded shopkeepers and teachers, their children bleeding
Show up at Albany Medical Center; the halls are jammed
With improvised beds; a team of doctors and nurses
Die in an explosion in the parking lot.

The sound of planes overhead, the trucks on New Scotland Ave.
Are the invading army, blasting into Albany.
A young mother driving home from work is shot
By nervous tankers as she drives across the Normanskill Bridge.
On Willett St. the 1st Presbyterian Church is in ruins
Downtown St. Mary's Church burns, City Hall collapses.

Galleries burn, paintings and photographs melt with the wallpaper
No poetry can be heard on Lark St., or Hudson Ave., or North Pearl.

And in Watervliet the homes of laborers and postal workers, of waitresses
And truck drivers are flattened when the Arsenal is hit
(The enemy says it was a cynical and evil move to place a military facility there).

The electricity stops, the water fails, the Price Choppers and
Hannafords are looted, Mobil & Hess stations are on fire
Dunkin' Donuts a pile of plastic and bricks
Next to the broken bottles of what was once Justin's.

And School 19, where citizens sought refuge from their burned houses
Is mistaken for a command center and hit by a bunker buster.

I watch TV, watch a city destroyed by an invading army
It could be Baghdad, or Basra
It could be Saigon, or Leningrad

I don't know Baghdad
But I do know Albany.
And it's burning.

--Dan Wilcox
Veteran For Peace, Albany, NY
April 2003

Where is the justice of political power if it executes the murderer and jails the plunderer, and then itself marches upon neighboring lands, killing thousands and pillaging the very hills?

—Kahlil Gibran



Suicide rampant among soldiers & vets \$50 million for Army's suicide research budget ? That's what we spend in Iraq in 3 hours!

by Michael Anthony

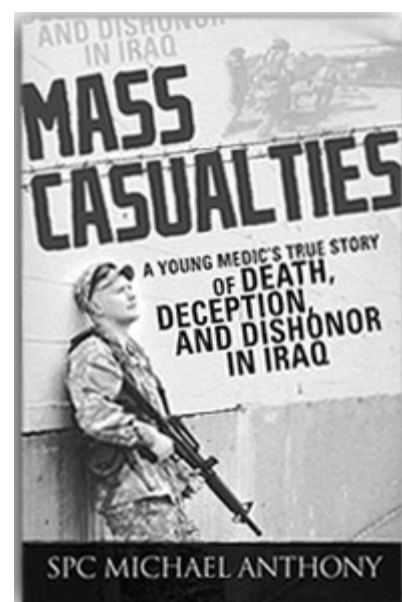
President Obama has stated that sending more troops into harm's way in Afghanistan is a solemn decision—one that he would not rush. As a veteran, I find the decision to send troops into harm's way without an effective military mental health program in place beyond solemn. It's deeply disturbing. Keeping soldiers mentally fit should be as important as keeping them physically fit.

Since the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq started, nearly 2,000 active-service soldiers have killed themselves, according to a 2009 report by the *San Antonio Express-News*. Even more alarming is the fact that every day, five active-duty service members attempt suicide. In the past eight years, that means up to 14,000 have felt their life is not worth living.

The government doesn't want you to know this. In spring of 2008, CBS news journalist Armen Keteyian exposed a Veterans Administration cover-up of suicide stats. The reporting revealed that every day, eighteen veterans kill themselves and roughly 1,000 attempt suicide each month. The VA's head of Mental Health had claimed there were only 790 attempts in all of 2007, a far cry from the reality.

Among all veterans, over the eight years we've been at war in the Middle East, the statistics point that roughly 50,000 have committed suicide, with upwards of 44,000 attempting suicide. These figures only represent data gathered since 2001; this has been an ongoing and persistent problem since Vietnam—and the numbers go up each day.

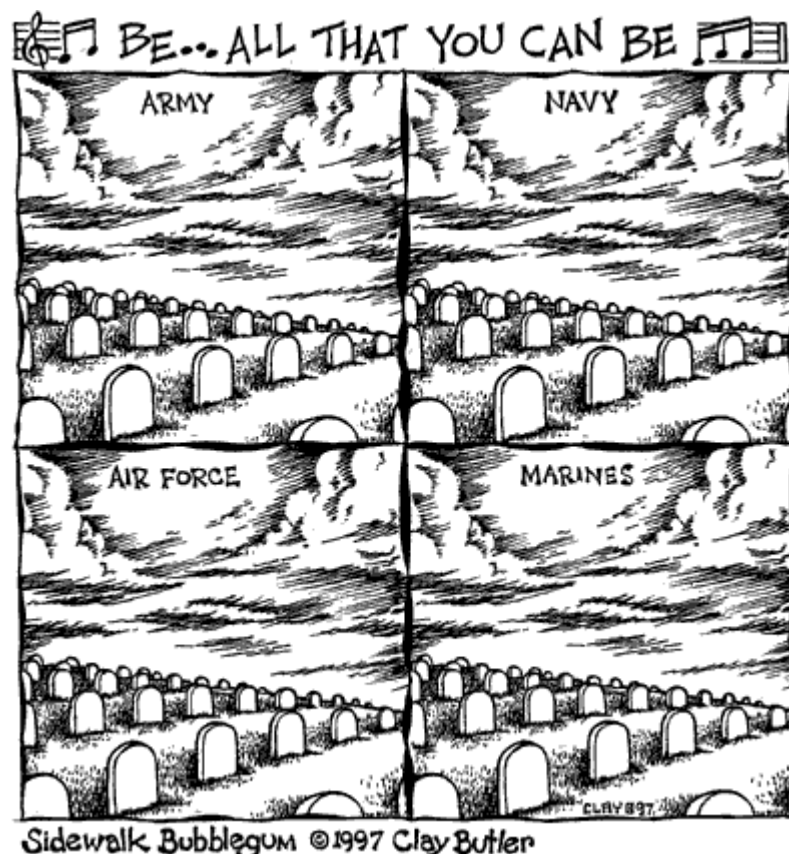
Recently, the Army made a big deal about giving \$50 million to fund a five-year research project on military suicide. In their book, *The Three Trillion Dollar War*, Linda J. Bilmes and Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph E. Stiglitz figured the cost of the Iraq war at \$12 billion a



month. That means we spend more than \$16 million an hour. If you do the math, the \$50 million that went to suicide research is what we spend every three hours in Iraq.

After eight and a half years at war, we've heard a lot about suicide bombers, but what about suicide? Regardless of anyone's feelings about our involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan, these soldiers deserve much more than three hours of our time.

SPC Michael Anthony is the author of MASS CASUALTIES: A Young Medic's True Story of Death, Deception, and Dishonor in Iraq (Adams Media, October 2009). The book is drawn from the personal journals of SPC Anthony during the 1st year he spent serving in Iraq. It is a non-partisan look at what really goes on within the military.



Film Review: "Vietnam–American Holocaust"

reviewed by **Stack Kenny**
written, directed and produced
by **Clay Claiborne**
narrated by **Martin Sheen**

The premise of Clay Claiborne's documentary re-examining the great tragedy of the Vietnam War concerns America's continuing reluctance to accept responsibility for the brutal massacre of as many as 5 million Vietnamese people.

Most of those killed by American Forces were civilians, an estimated 4 million from

both sides of the North/South line established by the Geneva Convention in 1954. Claiborne asks: how many deaths does it take to qualify for holocaust status? As the United States institutes war-making in the Middle East, what lessons can America ever learn from Viet-

nam if there has been a collective denial of our previous atrocities?

The purpose of Vietnam – American Holocaust is to remind us of those atrocities.

Claiborne gives us a concise, if not hurried, "History of Vietnam" to help us understand the steps and missteps which pulled America into full

From Vietnam, the military-industrial complex learned: American citizens would no longer tolerate a draft; and the horrors of war must be whitewashed.

scale war. He emphasizes Vietnam's long subservient role in Colonialism and its desire for autonomy: ruled for centuries by China, then for 100 years by France, taken over by Japan during WWII, given back to France for a Ten Year War in the 1950s, and

then under military assault from the United States in the 1960s and 70s. When Vietnamese dedication finally outlasted American will in 1975, a reunited nation of Vietnam declared its first independence.

Claiborne is unafraid of exposing the American Masters of War and their true reasons for their aggressions in the Far East. Presidents Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon all participated in the conquest of Vietnam, each fearing the nationalization of resources and the possible loss of profit from

rubber, tin, tungsten, and most importantly, cheap labor.

But the main focus of the film is the graphic footage of the horrific atrocities that occurred during the prosecution of the war. America dropped over 8 million tons of bombs on Southeast Asia during the



hard truth about atrocities they witnessed and participated in during the war. Devastating accounts of brutality, orchestrated from upper levels of command giving "ambiguous orders" to "kill anything that moves," eventually add up to a criminal and moral indictment against the politicians and career brass who forced drafted soldiers into a mentality of slaughter and mass death. As one tearful soldier speaks out, "Don't ever let this government do this to you."

Just 87 minutes long, Vietnam–American Holocaust races by and leaves many questions unanswered. The film begins to make comparisons of Vietnam to the new American wars in the Middle East, briefly showing eerie images of victims burned to death by white phosphorus in Iraq next to shots of similar victims in Vietnam. But Claiborne retreats from a thorough examination, most likely because of time constraints.

While maintaining that America has a collective amnesia concerning the holocaust initiated on the Vietnamese people by the United States, Claiborne concludes that the American military-industrial complex *did* learn lessons from Vietnam.

First they learned that American citizens would no longer tolerate a draft; and second, that from Vietnam on there would be a whitewashing of the horrors of war. The Pentagon would control all information to reporters and there would never again be an openly televised war. Even returning caskets would be blacked out. Americans were to be forever shielded from both the atrocities committed and the actual truth of history.

Vietnam–American Holocaust is a must see for seekers of truth and for believers of taking our world back from the war mongers. The film concludes with a simple truth: "Those who forget their history are doomed to repeat it."

Stack Kenny is a musician, poet, and WCT editor in Asheville, NC.

Support the project, buy the DVD, learn more at <http://vietnamamericanholocaust.com/vietnam/>

February 3, 2010

Insanity #3

This picture was taken of a little girl as she walked down the ramp of a military vehicle called an A.P.C.

That stands for Armored Personnel Carrier.

There were many of these weapons in my unit in Vietnam.

This picture was taken near the grounds of a high school in Post Falls, Idaho in 2002.

There were many other military vehicles there that day, along with a rock climbing structure for high school kids to show off their skills.

Ever unzip a body bag?

I have.

The American soldier was shot in the forehead.

It was a suicide.

Ever see an American soldier die after he took an M-16 and shot himself in the head?

I have.

Ever take a dead soldier off of a helicopter who was shot in the head?

I have.

Ever see a young Vietnamese girl take her last breath?

I have.

Ever see an American soldier with half his head gone, because he got too close to the recoil of an artillery gun?

I have.



Ever see an American soldier receive shock therapy after he got back from Vietnam?

I have.

Ever find yourself in a padded cell of a psychiatric hospital, screaming at the top of your lungs that you hate your government?

I have.

Ever hide in a closet and cry your heart out?

I have.

These are just some of the bits of reality that most veterans take to their graves.

Why?

Because the American people don't want to hear it. "When you hide your limp, someone else has to do your limping."

That's the next generation.

Ever see an Iraq veteran break down?

I have.

—Mike Hastie

U.S. Army Medic Vietnam 1970-71

Zinn Called War on Terror "Largest Lie"

By Sherwood Ross

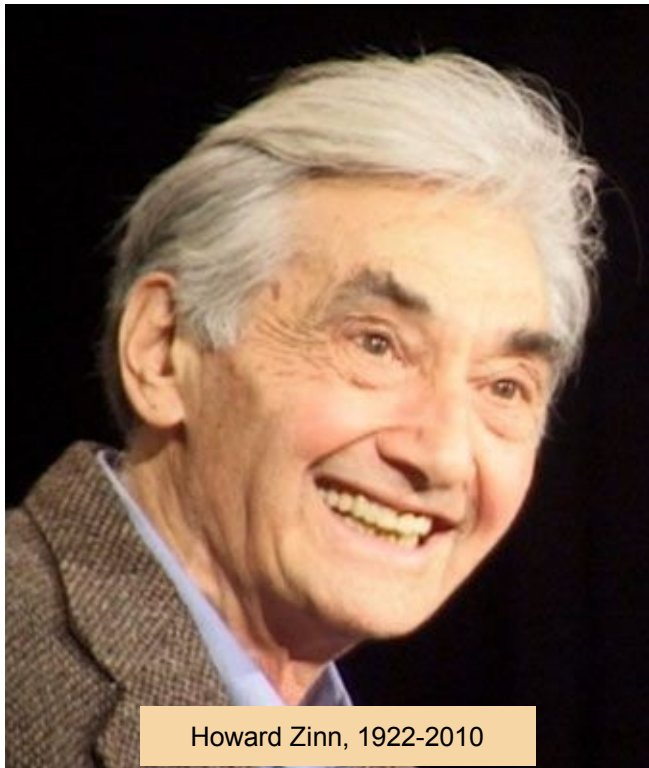
The "largest lie," wrote historian Howard Zinn who died on January 27 at age 87, is that "everything the United States does is to be pardoned because we are engaged in a 'war on terrorism.'"

"This ignores the fact that war is itself terrorism, that the barging into people's homes and taking away family members and subjecting them to torture—that is terrorism, that invading and bombing other countries does not give us more security but less security."

In an article published previously in the *Long Term View* magazine of the Massachusetts School of Law, Zinn said that in the Fallujah area of Iraq, Knight Ridder reporters found there was no Ba'athist or Sunni conspiracy against the U.S., "only people ready to fight because their relatives had been hurt or killed, or they themselves had been humiliated by home searches and road stops."

Zinn, popularly known as the people's historian, pointed out that the U.S. may have liberated Iraq from the tyranny of Saddam Hussein but afterwards it became Iraq's occupier. He noted this is the same fate that befell Cuba after the U.S. liberated it from Spain in 1898. In both nations, the U.S. established military bases and U.S. corporations moved in to profit from the upheaval.

Zinn recalled the words of then Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld before the NATO ministers in Brussels in June, 2002, "the absence of evidence is not evidence of absence" of weapons of mass destruction. "That explains why this government, not knowing exactly where to find the criminals of



Howard Zinn, 1922-2010

September 11, will just go ahead and invade and bomb Afghanistan, killing thousands of people, driving hundreds of thousands from their homes, and still not know where the criminals are," Zinn wrote.

"This explains why the government, not really knowing what weapons Saddam Hussein is hiding, will invade and bomb Iraq, to the horror of most of the world, killing thousands of civilians and soldiers and terrorizing the population," he continued.

The historian pointed out that even if the U.S. experienced few battle casualties in its invasion of Iraq, casualties would mount afterwards in the occupying army

from sickness and trauma, which took a high toll both in Viet Nam and after the Gulf War. In the 10 years after the Gulf War, 8,000 veterans died and 200,000 veterans filed complaints about illnesses incurred "from the weapons our government used in the war."

Zinn predicted accurately that once the American public realized President Bush had lied to them about Iraq they would turn against the government. "When it loses its legitimacy in the eyes of its people, its days are numbered," he said of the Bush administration.

Writing of his personal feelings, Zinn said, "I wake up in the morning, read the newspaper, and feel that we are an occupied country, that some alien group has taken over. I wake up thinking this country is in the grip of a President (George W. Bush) who was not elected, who has surrounded himself with thugs in suits who care nothing about human life abroad or here, who care nothing about freedom abroad or here, who care nothing about what happens to the earth, the water, the air. And I wonder what kind of world our children and grandchildren will inherit."

Zinn called on his readers "to engage in whatever nonviolent actions appeal to us. There is no act too small, no act too bold. The history of social change is the history of millions of actions, small and large, coming together at critical points to create a power that governments cannot suppress. We find ourselves today at one of those critical points."

Sherwood Ross is a Miami-based public relations executive who formerly worked for major dailies and wire services. Contact him at sherwoodross10@gmail.com.

Yes, dissent and protest are divisive, but in a good way, because they represent accurately the real divisions in society. Those divisions exist—the rich, the poor—whether there is dissent or not, but when there is no dissent, there is no change.

Civil disobedience is not our problem. Our problem is civil obedience. Our problem is that numbers of people all over the world have obeyed the dictates of the leaders of their government and have gone to war, and millions have been killed because of this obedience. Our problem is that people are obedient all over the world in the face of poverty and starvation and stupidity, and war, and cruelty. Our problem is that people are obedient while the jails are full of petty thieves, and all the while the grand thieves are running and robbing the country. That's our problem.

The lesson of that history is that you must not despair, that if you are right, and you persist, things will change....the truth

has a way of coming out. The truth has a power greater than a hundred lies My hope is that you will not be content just to be successful in the way our society measures success; that you will not obey the rules, when the rules are unjust; that you will act out the courage that I know is in you.

—Howard Zinn



Zinn in the 1960s:
Acting out of courage

There may be others with great hearts and intellects to match, but Howard Zinn will be missed because he combined those with something much rarer: courage... courage that he practiced often, publicly and boldly, unfettered by the usual shackles of career ambitions, money, or even social acceptance by ones peers. This kind of courage, arguably the least common, Zinn frequently brought to bear in his life-long mission of articulating uncomfortable truths and acting against injustice. —Mike Ferner, Veterans For Peace president

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