



The Peace Issue . . .

The Newsletter of Just Peace Queensland Inc

Issue No. 57

May 2019

Just Peace Meetings: all members and supporters are welcome at our meetings.
When: 2nd Tuesday of each month
Time: Start @ 07:00pm
Where: 2nd Floor, QCU Building
 Cnr Grey & Peel Streets
 South Brisbane

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Trump's new Cold War

By David James
 09 March 2019

There is little doubt that the most warlike nation on the planet is the United States. The country outlays about half the world's total military expenditure, it has over 800 military bases to maintain its influence, and, this century alone, it has mounted, or aggressively supported, wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and Syria. Since its creation in 1776, America has been at war for 222 out of its 239 years. It used to be said that the business of America is business, but it is more the case that the business of America is war.

The nature of the war mongering, however, seems to be changing under President Trump, who came to office vowing to have better relations with competing superpowers and to bring American soldiers home. Those promises are yet to be fulfilled, but he is clearly shifting America's aggression to the economic sphere.



It has been postulated that there are three types of war: kinetic (the physical killing or destroying), informational and economic. Kinetic war between the superpowers has mercifully been limited because of the terrifying potential of the weaponry. Most of the military conflicts tend instead to happen on the fringes against weaker countries. Millions have been killed or wounded, but the toll would be much higher if the superpowers turned their arsenals on each other.

America has been losing its kinetic conflicts in the Middle East and recently has escalated its informational war, propaganda. The accusations against Russia, for example, are reaching comic proportions, with the country accused of weaponising anything in sight. My personal favourite is the report in *The Express* that a 14 legged killer squid has been found two miles beneath Antarctica and may be being weaponised by Vladimir Putin. Another gem was the BBC's report that Putin is weaponising humour (don't laugh, that's what he wants you to do).

Yet in many ways the informational war is a sideshow, a performance to keep domestic audiences fooled about what is really happening (it works: bizarrely the only institution whose reputation in the west is improving is the military). The more significant move is Trump's introduction of an entirely new level of economic warfare. It will reshape the world; in prospect it is a repeat of the Cold War division between the US and its allies, versus Russia, China and countries considered enemies by the US.

The favoured weapon with economic warfare is sanctions, and America under Trump has started to use them to an extreme degree. The favoured targets at the moment are Iran and Venezuela.

The latter country has suffered the equivalent of a medieval siege as America and its allies seek to unseat a democratically elected leader and grab the oil — all the while blaming Venezuela's leadership for the very problems that they are creating. (According to a book written by the former FBI head Andrew McCabe — not necessarily a reliable source, it has to be said — in a 2017 Oval Office meeting, Trump said Venezuela is 'the country we should be going to war with.

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They have all that oil and they're right on our back door.' If that is true, he has been good to his word.)

"America is effectively saying that it sets the economic and business laws for all countries, and will punish anyone who disagrees."

This tactic is stark enough, but the efforts to extradite the Huawei chief financial officer Meng Wanzhou to America from Canada take the imposition of sanctions to an entirely new level. An extraordinary move, the charges are based on the claim that Huawei failed to abide by American sanctions against Iran. Yet such activity was not illegal under Chinese law.

America is effectively saying that it sets the economic and business laws for all countries, and will punish anyone who disagrees, even if they are acting legally according to their own nation's laws. The same kind of aggression can be seen with the threats from the Trump administration against Germany over the Nord Stream 2 gas pipelines from Russia. America's economic interest is to be considered paramount, and even allies must do as they are told. Germany is not cooperating.

As many commentators have observed, this strategy represents an attack on the post-World War II international order, whose basic assumption is that a just international order must be a multi-polar one. It is bad enough that America unilaterally declares Venezuela's president to be invalid, to be 'replaced' by their stooge Juan Guaidó (an illegitimate move that Australia, although not New Zealand, disgracefully supported). The technique is now being used against the biggest economies.

An even more deadly form of warfare is financial. Here, the stakes are getting very high. America has a unique form of financial leverage that no other country enjoys. Since the removal of the gold standard in 1971 by President Richard Nixon, the US dollar has been the most trusted form of global money. Daily, more than \$US4 trillion is transacted in US dollars. That means America can pretty much spend whatever it wants without suffering any penalty.

America also controls the SWIFT system for international transfers, which is the technological architecture of world finance. There have been a number of reports that America intends to remove Russia from SWIFT, and it has already used the threat of penalising any company that deals with Iran by banning them from SWIFT. America under Trump is weaponising the global monetary system, where it enjoys an unassailable advantage, at least for now.

China, Russia and Europe, realising the threat, are moving to create their own systems for international transfers. But this will take time. At least for a while, America can bully anyone who does not bow to its dictates.

Trump, who now is suffering from the usual paralysis on the domestic front after losses in the mid-term elections, is likely to look for his so called 'greatness' in the international arena. This fits the pattern; there has been no American president that can be called a 'peace time president', and Trump is no exception.

This time, however, the main attacks will be economic and financial, rather than military. They are weapons that Trump, a businessman, understands. It may result in fewer deaths and injuries, but it will create havoc and lead to a more divided world.

David James is the managing editor of businessadvantagepng.com. He has a PhD in English literature and is author of the musical comedy *The Bard Bites Back*, which is about Shakespeare's ghost.

EDITORIAL

IPAN and BEYOND

IPAN: Independent and Peaceful Australia Network

Beginning Friday, August 2nd 2019 with a public meeting and extending through to Sunday, August 4th, IPAN (<https://ipan.org.au/>) will hold its annual International Conference in Darwin, NT. This city was chosen because of the foreign military base that has now been established there. Weather is expected to be dry and warm with 10 hours of sunshine per day.

The title of the Conference is: **Australia at the crossroads. Time for an independent foreign policy. Topics Addressed will include:**

- Why Australia needs an Independent Foreign Policy
- The extent of foreign military facilities in Australia
- The impact of militarism on the Environment, and
- The costs of militarism to Australians.

A score of Australian and International experts has been invited to discuss the many facets of these matters. In addition there will be video links with John Pilger (award-winning journalist and film maker) and Abby Martin & Mike Prysner (from *The Empire Files*).

Annette Brownlie (Chairperson, IPAN) and Ross Gwyther, both of *Just Peace QLD*, are members of the National Coordinating Committee of IPAN. They encourage you to register for this exciting, educational event. Go to:

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/ipan-darwin-conf-tickets-56310347766>.

BEYOND: "We have nothing to lose but our brains".

Lost in the regal pomp and ceremony surrounding Trump's visit to England on June 3rd were the statements by the American ambassador to the United Kingdom, Robert "Woody" Johnson IV, billionaire grandson of the founder of pharmaceutical giant Johnson & Johnson. Johnson warned the British government not to involve Chinese tech giant Huawei in the UK's 5G network. In reply, Jeremy Hunt, Britain's Foreign Secretary, emphasized that the UK would "never take a decision that affected our intelligence-sharing capability with the United States".

But Johnson went much further in meddling in the internal affairs of Britain by desiring US private sector involvement in their National Health System (NHS). America senses that post Brexit UK may leave the kingdom searching for trade deals that could support the latter's economy into the future.

The United Kingdom is now as subservient as Australia to the demands – both military and

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economic – of America.

The Trump era has ushered in more honest and open expressions of America's intentions for global domination. More than ever, it is clear that the United States abhors systems of government that create national support of their own resources, including media, health, education, energy, true independence, and true democracy (not the corrupt Electoral College system that put Trump in office) and self-defence.

I wonder what implications the Trump visit to the UK have for Australia. Surely the Morrison Government wouldn't sell off Medicare or the ABC or our farms or our water supplies or our air quality or our ability to withstand the certain ravages of our country caused by climate change?

Not to mention diverting taxpayer's money to military ventures where we are joined at the hip to American technology to the tune of 10's of billions of dollars, with no known, or particularly desirable, surgery to separate us from them.

By **Michael P. Henry**

Co-convenor, *Just Peace QLD*

"We have now managed to acquire bases all over the world—islands distant as the Australian Archipelago which President Roosevelt seized in 1938 without so much as a by-your-leave from Congress. There is no part of the world where trouble can break out where we do not have bases of some sort of which, if we wish to use the pretension, we cannot claim our interests are menaced. Thus menaced there must remain when the war is over continuing argument in the hands of the imperialists for a vast naval establishment and a huge army ready to attack anywhere or to resist an attack from all the enemies we shall be obliged to have. Because always the most powerful argument for a huge army maintained for economic reasons is that we have enemies. We must have enemies, They will become and economic necessity for us."

John T. Flynn, [As We Go Marching: A Biting Indictment of the Coming of Domestic Fascism in America](#)

ACTIVITIES REPORT

Actions and Activities 2019

Just Peace Queensland laid out a calendar of meetings and events last November. At least it was a starting point. As new challenges and opportunities arose this year – on a daily basis, it seemed – our programme of work towards peace expanded rapidly.

Your executive committee continued to meet every first Thursday of the month in a member's home, with afternoon tea, Cherry Strudel and coffee. These meetings lay out the actions and work that need to be done to create successfully events that *Just Peace* organises and also the numerous actions that we support.

There are several major projects that have occupied *Just Peace* throughout most of the year:

1. **IPAN 2019 International Conference for Darwin, August 2nd to 4th.** Title: *Australia at the crossroads: Time for an independent foreign policy.* <https://ipan.org.au/event/conference2019/>
2. **Women as Peace Negotiators.** This forum will be conducted by historian Deb Jordan in conjunction with the release of a booklet and exhibition. July 21st State Library of Queensland.
3. **Education in Action – "Peace and Climate Change"** Workshop, created by teacher Lenora O'Connor. This will involve the active and major participation of high school students and many performing and creative arts professionals. August 14th Kelvin Grove College.

Other Projects Gone, Not Forgotten and Coming Soon:

Jan 19. The year kicked off with a planning meeting amongst peace groups in Brisbane at the Quakers House.

Mar 3. Anita Reed was the primary organiser for the fundraising Annual Peace Concert. Three hundred dollars were raised for Save the Children organization.

Mar 11. Rosie Severin and Robin Taubenfeld were instrumental in creating an event commemorating the 8th year since the Fukushima earthquake.

Apr. 14. The annual Palm Sunday rally for Peace and Refugees was

enthusiastically organised by RAC with the strong support and involvement of *Just Peace*.

Apr. 24. Our yearly vigil was organised by the Brisbane Quakers and took place at the Shrine of Remembrance on Ann St. this year.

May 4. Concert for Peace in Venezuela supported by *Just Peace*.

May 6. Participated in the May Day celebrations at the RNA Showgrounds.

May 15. The NAKBA Commemoration was attended by members of *Just Peace*.

May 19. PUBLIC FORUM: **A Change of Heart.** Building a *Just Peace* with Aboriginal Australia.

Led poignantly and persuasively by Rhonda Kelly.

May 25. *Just Peace* supported the work of the UN Peacekeepers, who held their annual march and ceremony at Anzac Square.

June 8. Premiere Screening: **RISKY BUSINESS.** Australia's Military Alliance with the US.

This short documentary has been created by Casey Davidson with interviews conducted by and involving *Just Peace* members.

July 7. PUBLIC FORUM: SNEAK PREVIEW of IPAN 2019 International Conference. This conference will be held in Darwin, August 2nd to 4th.

July 18. Book launch: Vincent Scappatura:

Book: *The US Lobby and Australian Defence Policy.* Avid Reader Bookshop.

<https://avidreader.com.au/events/vincent-scappatura-the-us-lobby-and-australian-defence-policy>

Old men declare war because they have failed to solve complex political and economic problems.

~Arthur Hoppe

About the quote: Hoppe (1925-2000) was an American writer. (quote from 'The Anti-War Quote Book,' edited Eric Groves, Sr., pub. Quirk Books, 2008)



JUST PEACE MEMBER ACTIVITIES

VIKKI HENRY

One of our members of long-standing, Vikki Henry, was recognized by the United Nations Association for her years of involvement in peace and anti-war activities. Here is the note from her equally long-serving partner, Michael Henry, letting us know about this.

Dear all,

Here is a photo [see below] of Vikki on the occasion of her receiving a Hero's SDG Award (in Brisbane) from the United Nations Association of Australia Queensland (UNAAQ) for her 50 years of peace work. This is a very prestigious award for her anti-war achievements and there were other kinds of awards (environment etc.) that were won by some other very high flyers in the UN and academic community. She is part of a very exalted company.

In the photo (L to R, as you face the computer screen) are the President of UNAAQ, Dr. Donnell Davis; Federal Senator Claire Moore; Vikki; and Rod Welford (barrister, Labor minister par excellence).

Cheers,

Mike.

COUNTRIES ATTACKED BY BOMBING, SABOTAGE OR ATTEMPTED GOVERNMENT OVERTHROW SINCE WORLD WAR TWO

IRAN	USA
Iran 1953	China 1945-46
Guatemala 1954	Syria 1949
Tibet 1955-70s	Korea 1950-53
Indonesia 1958	China 1950-53
Cuba 1959	Iran 1953
Democratic Republic of the Congo 1960-65	Guatemala 1954
Iraq 1960-63	Tibet 1955-70s
Dominican Republic 1961	Lebanon 1982-84
Vietnam 1961-73	Grenada 1983-84
Brazil 1964	Philippines 1986
Belgian Congo 1964	Libya 1986
Guatemala 1964	Iran 1987-88
Laos 1964-73	Libya 1989
Dominican Republic 1965-66	Panama 1989-90
Peru 1965	Iraq 1991
Greece 1967	Kuwait 1991
Guatemala 1967-69	Somalia 1992-94
Cambodia 1969-70	Iraq 1992-1996
Chile 1970-73	Bosnia 1995
	Iran 1998
	Sudan 1998
	Afghanistan 1998
	Yugoslavia - Serbia 1999
	Afghanistan 2001
	Iraq 2002-3
	Somalia 2006-2007
	Iran 2005-present
	Libya 2011

two years - last year "pin wheels" for peace, and this year doves. See the tweet [see below] she sent to radio national who read it out on Anzac Day!

A small but significant push back against the militarism dominating Anzac Day!!” Rossco

Hello

My name is Lenora and I am a Primary School teacher. For the last couple of years our school has promoted the message of peace

alongside the narratives of the ultimate sacrifices our soldiers have made so that we can live in peace. We felt that it was important that they hear a balanced message. Remember those who have sacrificed, acknowledge those who serve now and to strive for peace at all times. Our students marched with doves this year and marched with Pinwheels for Peace to deliver that message to the broader community.



The Doves of Peace on display



The Pinwheels of Peace laid out on the lawn before use in the march

All the best and thank you for the work that you are doing this morning.

Lenora



LENORA O’CONNOR

And one of our other members, Lenora O’Connor, was responsible for a project involving school students from Ferny Grove State Primary School. Here is the note from Ross Gwyther:

“Lenora who initiated our student Nuclear Disarmament project has had students at her school carry symbols of peace in the Anzac Day parade the last



TURKEY'S ANZAC ANGER

Turkey right to be angry at ANZAC aggression

By **John Williams**

Posted Monday, 25 March 2019

The Australian Prime Minister has responded to the politically motivated Turkish president Tayyip Eroganin over his tactless comments on the current NZ catastrophe with the murdering and wounding of worshippers at a Christchurch Mosque by saying that any visitor to Turkey with anti-Muslim views would be sent back in coffins like their grandfathers. He was relating to quotes by the nameless Australian gunman who made threats in his manifesto against Turkey and his pejorative remarks about the Ottoman Empire. Morrison authoritatively stated in Trumpian macho style rhetoric "All options are on the table."

His use of this phrase was obviously an allusion to President Trump in his recent incautious threatening rhetoric. Trump was conveying himself as a powerful leader speaking loudly and carrying a big stick, a departure from President Theodore Roosevelt suggesting in 1903 that a powerful country in international diplomacy should "Speak softly and carry a big stick". Morrison has broken convention on the international stage and, in reality, speaks loudly without any stick.

The political insensitivity will soon be accommodated within diplomatic pragmatism using euphemistic circumventing phrases like "mistaken context" but the strident comment by President Tayyip Eroganin reveals an underlying festering issue about the history of Australian relationships with Turkey. War historians' interpretations aside there is still a residual feeling that Australia's involvement in Gallipoli was an act of aggression whilst its action on the Western Front was an act of defence.

It can be viewed that we claim Gallipoli as a sacrosanct area for the resuscitated annual ANZAC spiritual pilgrimage, now an experience of nationalistic religious dimension, in no small part due to the efforts of former Prime Minister John Howard. It could appear to some that there is a presumption for automatic entrance to

the killing fields in Turkey but let us not forget the disproportionate 900% more Turkish casualties than Australians in that military engagement.

The attempted landing was a British Military, Winston Churchill-planned disaster. Nevertheless, along with brave allied forces, Australia invaded another country and was defeated.

With all the Morrison and Dutton bravado over the past 5 years, regardless of their belated high moral stance, it was directed at potential "invaders" to our shores yet inevitably was vulnerable to be perceived by Muslims that all the hype was directed at them as a collective and open to an inference of racism and Muslimphobia.

Mindful of that lambasting what inopportune compulsion to buy into the debate about Gallipoli, incited by the politically savvy Erogan, by both the Prime Minister and Opposition Leader and the quoting of more enlightened words by the former secular Turkish leader Ataturk made whilst he was transforming his country into a modern secular state. They fail to see that this is the very point for Erogan as he laments the loss of the Ottoman Empire and in that country's complex, cruel divide he is seeking loyal community Muslim support for his return to government.

The Gallipoli casualties were horrendous but the disproportionate cost to Turkey was overwhelming:

- Allies forces had 44,150 killed and 97,397 wounded at Gallipoli
- The Turkish had 87,000 killed and 164,309 wounded at Gallipoli.
- The Australians had 8,709 killed and 19,441 wounded at Gallipoli.
- The Australians had 46,000 killed and 139,000 wounded on the Western Front.

Gallipoli has similarities to Dunkirk in the next World War, which also had high casualties, but for the 1914 -1918 'War to end all Wars' the decisive outcome was achieved in the battles on the Western Front, ironically less acknowledged in Australia, but that was a war against an aggressor who

was defeated and the men who died did not die in vain. Australia's engagement was pivotal and the strategic role of the Australian general, Sir John Monash GCMG, KCB, has been acknowledged by war historians to have been an indispensable contributing factor in that blooded victory.

It may be prudent seeing Australia better served by acknowledging its defeat by the nation it invaded and whilst continuing our ANZAC tradition respecting and remembering the bravery of the warring combatants be conscious of the 87,000 graves of valiant Turks at Gallipoli who died defending their country and quietly turn our national humble reverence and grateful respect to the Western Front victory with its immeasurable cost, away from Turkey where it was defeat with the connotation of invasion, mindful that those who escaped with their lives from Gallipoli went on to fight and die on the Western Front, and in those costly battles, Australians had the highest percentage of deaths and wounded than any other of the participating nations.

John Williams lives in the Southern Highlands and is the son of a soldier who served in WWI.

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GALLIPOLI: A TURKISH VIEW

Turkish view remains neglected in our understanding of Gallipoli

April 8, 2015

By **Erdem Koc**, Lecturer in Journalism, La Trobe University

There was a moment in Russell Crowe's latest film, *The Water Diviner*, that struck a chord with me as a Turkish-Australian. Australian Lieutenant Colonel Cecil Hilton (Jai Courtney) asks Turkish Major Hasan (Yilmaz Erdogan) for help in locating the bodies of the dead Anzacs.

"We lost 10,000 Anzacs here at Gallipoli," Hilton says. "We still don't know where half of them are."

"We lost 70,000 men here at Çanakkale," replies the Turkish officer. "For me, this place is one big grave."

This simple conversation between the
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two characters was one of the stronger points the movie made: the battle resulted in the loss of an entire generation of Turks.

Background to Çanakkale

The Battle of Çanakkale began on November 3, 1914, and lasted until January 9, 1916. For 18 months, Turks were forced to defend their land against invasion. A simple examination of the dates indicates the Anzac battle is but a small part of the larger war.

The first victory came on March 18, 1915. This is a date still celebrated in Turkey as the day of victory in the Battle of Çanakkale.

On that morning, 18 British and French battleships, guarded by other warships, attacked the Dardanelles fort – the narrow strait in northwestern Turkey connecting the Aegean Sea to the Sea of Marmara. The Allied forces were keen to capture the strait. Conquering it would mean direct sea access to Constantinople, now Istanbul, which would subsequently topple the already-shrinking Ottoman Empire.

The British and French would then be linked with the Russians and the stalemate on the Western Front would be brought to an end. It would also be a decisive blow to the Germans, whose side in the war the Ottomans had reluctantly joined.

The sea attack of March 18 was to almost certainly guarantee the passage. As one British officer observed:

No human power could withstand such an array of might and power.

But it wasn't to be. More than 700 sailors were killed when pre-placed Turkish mines in the Dardanelles sank three battleships. The Brits had suffered a heavy defeat.

They subsequently planned invading the peninsula on foot. British troops would take the tip of the peninsula and the task of cutting through the narrow middle would fall to the Anzacs.

And so, on the morning of April 25, 1915, tens of thousands of young, eager

men from Australia and New Zealand arrived at Gallipoli. Their boats mistakenly reached a small cove at Ariburnu, later to be renamed Anzac Cove. What eventuated is a story that has long been told.

Towards a more rounded commemoration

However, what is rare in Australia is an adequate explanation and understanding of the Turkish perspective of the battle.

The rhetoric surrounding Anzac Day is often one of sacrifice. We've been told for decades Australian soldiers "sacrificed" their lives for the freedoms we hold today. The question arising from this is a clear one: which part of the freedoms we enjoy today would have not been possible had the British Empire (which we were fighting for) successfully conquered its Ottoman counterpart?

If anything, the notion of "sacrificing for freedoms" is truer for the Turks. Had the hundreds of thousands of young men not joined the army and headed to Gallipoli, had the bravery displayed on the frontlines not happened, it's without doubt modern Turkey would not have been formed.

For Turks, every piece of soil at Gallipoli is sacred. EPA/Tolga Bozoglu

By the time the Turkish republic had formed in 1923, the British, French, Italians, Greeks, Australian and New Zealanders had invaded Turkey: all of which had a direct or indirect interest in the acquisition of land for political gain. And with each invasion, the body count in Turkey went up.

It's the epitome of martyrdom. Without this sacrifice, there would be no freedoms for the Turks to enjoy today.

For the Australians, the battle was one fought for the imperialistic purposes of a self-serving empire, which had control over young Australia's foreign policy.

For the Turks, it was about defending the nation from enemy invasion.

One of the touching stories of the post-Anzac era is the 1934 address by the mastermind of the Turkish victory and founder of the modern Turkish republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk:

Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives... You are now lying in the soil of a friendly country. Therefore rest in peace. There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehmets to us where they lie side by side now here in this country of ours... You, the mothers who sent their sons from faraway countries, wipe away your tears; your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace. After having lost their lives on this land they have become our sons as well.

These words are familiar to Australians, as they're read at the dawn service in Gallipoli every Anzac Day. They highlight the humility and respect shown by a nation to the fallen – on both sides.

It's hard to imagine other countries in the modern era doing the same. Vietnam, anyone? Afghanistan? Iraq?

A century on, 10,150 members of the Australian and New Zealand public will gather at Anzac Cove to honour the dead. Many – if not all – will whizz through Gallipoli briefly, visiting the Anzac gravesites. But for the Turks, every inch, every corner, every piece of soil is sacred.



Had hundreds of thousands of young Turkish men not joined the army and headed to Gallipoli, it's without doubt modern Turkey would not have been formed. AWM

The Water Diviner marks a small yet significant effort in attempting to tell the Turkish side of the battle. One hundred years on from the event, it's vital we make a collective effort to understand it better.





AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE STRATEGY

Australian defence strategy still locked in a past era

By James O'Neill

According to a report in the Sydney Morning Herald (25 March 2019) the coalition government, if re-elected, would spend \$2.5 billion on an air defence system. The object of the expenditure is said to “bolster Australia’s capacity to intercept enemy aircraft”. The new system will also defend against helicopters, cruise missiles and unmanned aerial systems.

The cost is divided between an initial acquisition price of \$1.5 billion and a further \$1 billion to operate and maintain it over two decades. The Minister for Defence, Linda Reynolds, said that the project had great export potential.

Once again, one has to wonder exactly what planet our defence politicians and their advisors actually inhabit. While the cost of this touted new system is small change compared to the tens of billions of dollars being lavished on expensive boondoggles such as the F35 joint strike fighter and the French built submarines, it is another illustration of wasted expenditure on military equipment not fit for purpose.

The stated object is to be able to defend against four intruders: helicopters; unmanned aerial systems; enemy aircraft and cruise missiles. Why one would need a \$1 billion system to defend against helicopters, with their low altitude, short range, slow moving and noisy character simply boggles the mind.

Exactly what is meant by ‘unmanned aerial systems’ is not defined, but presumably refers to drones. The same point applies here as to helicopters. The more serious question relates to enemy aircraft and cruise missiles, and the source of those hostile intruders.

There is no obvious reason for Australia to be attacked by Indonesia, Papua New Guinea or any other country for whom Australia would be within the range of its bombers. The unspoken “enemy” here is presumably China, although again that raises the obvious question as to why China would wish to attack Australia. The only obvious

answer to this is as a defensive reaction to an attack upon China itself.

Australia would only do that as part of yet another United States led “Coalition”, but why Australia would wish to be involved in such a foolhardy exercise against its largest trading partner should not be seriously contemplated by our defence planners, and if it is they need to spell out their rationale in clear terms.

Let us assume for arguments sake that China did attack Australia. It would not be with helicopters, unmanned aerial vehicles, cruise missiles or bombers. It would be done with one or more of its repertoire of supersonic missiles from the Dong Feng family of missiles, most probably the DF41. This missile system travels at hypersonic speed (Mach 20) and has 8 to 10 independently targetable nuclear warheads.

There is nothing in the current repertoire of United States or Australian missile defence systems that can defend against such an attack, and the heroic claims of former defence minister Christopher Pyne that it will be a “highly effective defence system” is simply nonsense.

If Australia did get into a shooting war with China, that war would likely involve China’s strategic partner Russia, whose missile systems (for example, Zircon, Burevestnik, Avangard and Kinzhal) are decades ahead of US military technology, as even the United States itself admits (www.news.com.au 19 December 2018). For details of these Russian systems see Martyanov www.unz.com 5 March 2018; and Vineyard of the Saker www.thesaker.is 24 January 2019.

If Australia was serious about having a missile defence system then the world leader by a significant margin is the Russian S400 system, recently bought by China, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and India among others. Turkey, a NATO member, is proceeding with the purchase of the S400 despite overt threats by the Americans. The Saudis, huge purchasers of US military equipment in the past, also know where to go in

order to purchase the best available system.

Quite why a similar degree of realism is not allowed to intrude upon discussions of Australian defence strategy remains a puzzle. Has Australia become so “joined at the hip” with the Americans that it is willing to compromise on real military defence strategy? Instead of coherent debate we are fed the mindless pap exemplified in the SMH article referenced above.

James O'Neill is a Barrister at Law and geopolitical analyst. He may be contacted at joneill@qldbar.asn.au

U.S. MARINES – A RISK TO AUSTRALIA?

Do the US Marines in Darwin pose a risk to our peace and security?

By Bevan Ramsden

Posted on [19 April 2019](https://www.foxnews.com/2019/04/19/us-marines-darwin)

A recent US war exercise involving US Marines landing, capturing and securing an island off the coast of Okinawa is touted as a new US military strategy to use in its challenge to China in the South China Sea. Is the imbedding of US marines in war exercises on HMAS Adelaide, which has been fitted with amphibious landing gear, part of US strategy to involve Australia in future hostile actions in the South China Sea ?

The agreement between the governments of the United States and Australia which under-pins the annual stationing of up to 2,500 US Marines in Darwin is called the Force Posture Agreement (FPA). The concept was first announced by US President Obama in 2011 in a visit to Australia and was presented as part of the new US military strategy called the “Pivot to Asia”. A clearer explanation of this strategy would be “the relocation of a major part of the US military forces including naval forces to the Asia/Pacific area to confront and contain China”. Our politicians in Canberra, including then Prime Minister Gillard, enthusiastically applauded Obama when he made this announcement.

The FPA was signed in 2014 and operates for 25 years, unless terminated by either side giving a year’s notice.

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Whilst the stationing of US troops in Darwin is the more visible expression of the FPA, it also includes:

- Giving the United States Air Force unimpeded access to Australia's airfields and RAAF bases for their fighters and bombers as well as seaports for their naval vessels;
- Giving the United States military and its contractors access to and use of "agreed facilities" for training, transit, support and related military activities such as refuelling of aircraft, bunkering of ships, temporary maintenance of vehicles, vessels and aircraft, temporary accommodation of personnel, pre-positioning of communications equipment, supplies, fuel, ordnance and materials and deploying forces and materials as the parties may agree.

It seems clear that, in reality, the FPA allows the United States military to use Australia as a forward base for operations in the Asia/Pacific area. One could be forgiven for thinking that Australia must be in a state of war even though the last Defence White Paper made the point no less than three times that no military threat to Australia could be identified in the foreseeable future. Yet we have this FPA with the US underpinning the stationing of its troops annually in Darwin, defence expenditures raised to 2% of the GDP (\$200 billion over the next 5 years) with pressure from some military/industry quarters to raise this percentage even higher.

Peace groups including the Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN) have questioned successive defence ministers regarding the purpose of the FPA and the US Marines in Darwin. The answers have always been vague and evasive, referring to the ANZUS Alliance, joint training exercises and improving the interoperability of the US and Australian forces. But the FPA has nothing to do with the ANZUS Treaty which simply requires both parties to consult if either party is threatened in the Pacific area. The FPA is a new and significant escalation of the military relationship

between Australia and the US making us even more firmly "joined at the hip".

Public statements about the role of the US Marines include:

- "Its primary role is to provide force projection from the sea, often in cooperation with the United States Navy."
- "It is responsible for conducting expeditionary and amphibious operations with the United States Navy as well as the Army and Air Force."

This throws no light on the reason for the stationing of the US Marines in Darwin unless it is in preparation for projection of US military power in the area to our north.

One indicator of current US military strategy in utilising their Marines was made evident this year when US Marines in a "war exercise" landed, invaded and captured an island off the coast of Okinawa called "Ie Shima". Alex Lockie of the Business Insider (29/1/19) said of their activity: "The U.S. Marine Corps is developing a new concept of naval warfare to allow Marines to take South China Sea islands from Beijing in the context of a massive missile fight in the Pacific."

Global Research (22/3/19) says: "Last week, 31st MEU, backed by the 3rd Marine Division, 3rd Marine Logistics Group and 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, members of the Air Force 353rd Special Operations Group, and Army soldiers with 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group, conducted a series of simulated military exercises attacking and seizing Ie Shima Island located off the northwest coast of Okinawa Island in the East China Sea, reported Task Purpose. The new military strategy, known as Expeditionary Advanced Base (EAB) Operations, will allow Marine units to seize, establish, and operate multiple small bases across the Pacific Ocean, a tactic that will be beneficial in a high-end fight with China."

The Ie Shima island war exercise indicates why US Marines are now embedded in joint training exercises on Australian naval ships such as HMAS Adelaide which has been fitted with amphibious landing gear.

Nick Deane, IPAN spokesperson for the IPAN campaign to end the stationing of US Marines in Darwin, responded in IPAN's monthly publication to this report by saying: "This US Marine exercise affirms the US intent to prepare for war with China. It also reinforces the IPAN campaign to end the stationing of US Marines in Darwin. HMAS Adelaide has been modified to support amphibious landing of troops on island territories and US Marines are now embedded on HMAS Adelaide in training exercises. Clearly this is preparation to draw Australia into the US plans for hostilities with China. Every effort should be made to keep Australia out of yet another US war overseas and especially against China, our major trading partner. In such a war scenario the US Marines operating out of Darwin would also draw fire, perhaps missiles on the Northern Territory. We need, for our own peace and security, to see an end to the stationing of US Marines in Darwin and end these war exercises with the United States."

If the US Marines in Darwin launch hostile acts against islands or countries to our north, a fair question to ask would be who actually controls the US Marines in Darwin? This question has been asked by IPAN of Australian Defence and Foreign Affairs Ministers on several occasions. Chris Pyne, Minister for Defence at the time of writing (4/4/19), has finally answered saying that the US Marines "remain within the US Marine's chain of command at all times." So these foreign troops on our soil are not under Australian Government control. But he also claimed that the Australian Government has full knowledge of and concurs with the US Marines' activities. It is still not clear whether the Australian Government can effectively veto US Marine activities operating from Darwin.

The US Marines' chain of command rests at the top with the recently formed US Indo-Pacific Command (established in June 2018). The area under its "command" embraces Australia, New Zealand, the Pacific Islands, Japan, The Philippines, Guam as well as seeking to

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cover China and the South China Sea, India, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia.

Against this background of the US Pivot to Asia, US confrontation with and containment of China, training to capture islands in the South China Sea and determination to maintain its hegemony in the Asia/Pacific area, the stationing of US Marines in Darwin and implementation of the Force Posture Agreement no longer appears as a benign inter-forces training operation designed "to assist in humanitarian emergencies".

Peter Hartcher, writing in "The Age" of 5 March this year reminded us that: "North Korea publicly painted a nuclear target on Australia in April 2017. Kim Jong-un's government seized on the fact that a contingent of US Marines is now in a permanent, rotating deployment in the Northern Territory."

Australian involvement in a US-led "coalition" in hostilities against China with US Marines operating from Darwin and embedded on Australian naval vessels could well draw fire from China. And the new Chinese DF41 missiles can reach all parts of Australia including Pine Gap, the North West Cape and Darwin.

A reasonable conclusion would be that the US Marines stationed in Darwin and the FPA do indeed draw Australia into dangerous waters and place in jeopardy our peace and security.

Bevan Ramsden is a member of the coordinating committee of IPAN (Independent and Peaceful Australia Network) which has organised a national public conference in Darwin, 2-4th August, 2019 with a focus on the US Marines in Darwin and under the conference banner of "**Australia at the crossroads- time for an independent foreign policy**".

Booking:

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/ipan-darwin-conf-tickets-56310347766>

SUPPORT FOR VENEZUELA

[Editor: the following is a letter sent on behalf of Just Peace to the Venezuelan Embassy in Australia, and the Embassy's reply, regarding the US threats to the integrity and independence of Venezuela.]

De: Asla Brisbane

<aslaborisbane2013@gmail.com>

Enviado el: Sunday, 3 February 2019 11:26 PM

Para: Embassy@venezuelaembassy.org.au

Asunto: Fwd: Venezuela

Honorable Senators,

Please find enclosed a statement from Just Peace Inc, QLD which was sent to Senator the Honorable Marise Payne, Minister for Foreign Affairs, re the critical present situation in Venezuela. Our organization, Australia Solidarity with Latin America - ASLA - fully supports Just Peace Inc, QLD, as we urge all honorable senators to advocate to focus on a diplomatic resolution on this crisis. We urge you to advocate for a peaceful resolution and for the people of Venezuela to have a right to self-determination.

We thank you very much for the attention to this matter.

Yours Sincerely,

ASLA Coordinating Committee.

REPLY:

From: Embassy of Venezuela

<embassy@venezuelaembassy.org.au>

Date: Sun, 10 Feb 2019 at 22:51

Subject: RE: Venezuela

To: <JustPeaceQld@gmail.com>

Cc: Asla Brisbane

<aslaborisbane2013@gmail.com>

Dear Dr. Michael P. Henry,

I have the honour to present our compliments to you on the occasion to express my most deep gratitude for the valuable support that you have indicated through your letter/statement on January 31, 2019 in which you stated your solidarity to the Bolivarian Revolution, the Venezuelan democracy as well as the Constitutional President Nicolas Maduro.

The courage showed by you alerts the world that these continue imperial aggressions, together with a fierce psychological and media war have as main goal to impose a dictatorship by force that follows the interests and thirst for pillaging of the US Government just like Syria, Libya and Iraq with the excuse of the alleged weapons of mass destruction that never existed, so it is concerning how Australia is echoing and supporting the US anti-democratic position on Venezuela that tries to impose a 'president' that no one elected under the Venezuelan Constitution.

In this regard, we reiterate our deep respect for the principles contained under the Venezuelan Constitution and the democratic path that lead the President Nicolas Maduro to be re-elected for a next six-year term, 2019-2025 on May 20th, 2018, obtaining 67,84% of the votes. Elections took place with the presence of international observers, from all the continents, including Australia, to monitor the elections that were recognised by more than 100 countries.

Non-foreign State can determine who exercises the Executive power in our Country. Venezuelan Sovereignty resides untransferable in the People, who exercise it directly in the manner provided for in this Constitution and in the law, and indirectly, by universal, equal, free and secret suffrage, through the organs exercising Public Power. The organs of the State emanate from and are subject to the sovereignty of the People.

Along the same lines I avail myself of this occasion to reiterate that the Bolivarian Revolution, together with its People, once more time will overcome, with a solid and unbreakable strength, this new imperialist attack and will continue to triumph in order to consolidate a sovereign nation, independent and determined to be free.

I also avail myself of this opportunity to renew to you the assurances of our highest consideration.

Daniel Gasparri-Rey

Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in Australia

12 Keyar Street

O' Malley, ACT 2606

Phone: 02 6290 2967-68

<http://australia.embajada.gob.ve>



LESSONS FOR THE PEACE MOVEMENT

What can the peace movement learn from Clarrie O'Shea Penal Powers victory?

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the magnificent struggle against the anti-union Penal Powers Laws and release of Clarrie O'Shea, Victorian State Secretary of Tramway and Bus Union, from gaol.

On 15-21 May 1969 more than a million working people across the country went on strike, held stop work meetings, protested and marched in the streets demanding the government abolish the anti-democratic and anti-union Penal Powers Laws and free Clarrie O'Shea from gaol.

And they succeeded. Clarrie O'Shea was released from gaol immediately and the Penal Powers were pushed back.

industrial action in defence of wages, working conditions and jobs.

Australian workers never had the right to strike. Nevertheless, they did take "illegal" industrial action to protect wages, conditions and living standards. Between early to mid-1950s the Menzies government introduced harsh industrial laws, called the Penal Powers. These industrial laws were designed to prevent working people from exercising democratic rights in their workplaces. The anti-union laws and the courts imposed millions of dollars in fines on unions for taking "unauthorised" industrial action. But this did not deter unions and workers from defying unjust industrial laws. The Tramways and Bus Union refused to pay the heavy fines.

For more than 10 years unions, workers and communities had organised protracted and broad grass roots campaigns against the Penal Powers in workplaces and communities. Unions

the Governor General and conspired with the CIA and the British ruling clique to remove the democratically elected Whitlam government.

After five days of non-stop industrial action, demonstrations and protests in the streets across the country Clarrie O'Shea was released from gaol on 21 May without him or his union paying a cent of the fines. The fine was paid by an anonymous person, (later revealed to Clarrie) on behalf of ASIO. The Penal Powers were not used again for several years.

The broad unions and community campaign against the Penal Powers drew support and assistance from wide sections of society, including Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) lawyers Ted Hill, Jack Lazarus, and Lionel Murphy who later became Attorney-General in the Whitlam government, and many others.

Before and during the Penal Powers struggle many unions were also involved in the anti-Vietnam war movement and campaign against conscription. Many unions and workers supported the young conscientious objectors who refused to register to fight in the US imperialist war occupying a sovereign country. The union movement's involvement, and leadership, in the anti-Vietnam war campaign was crucial to building a broad peace movement. Along with raising awareness about the Penal Powers many unions were also addressing the injustices of conscription and Vietnam War with their members. They pointed out that it's the ordinary workers who are used as cannon fodder in imperialist wars.

Clarrie said many times that the penal powers struggle was much broader than the fight for workers' wages, conditions and the right to strike.

The union movement's mass mobilisation and success against the Penal Powers and its involvement and support for the peace movement had inspired and gave confidence and courage to the broad anti-Vietnam War movement.

At the same time, it was the courage and militant activism of many young
(continued on Page 11...)



How did the broad based anti-Vietnam War and conscription peace movement at that time contribute to the success of Clarrie O'Shea Penal Powers struggle?

Why are the lessons still relevant to the peace movement today after 50 years?

What can the peace movement learn today from the 1969 Penal Powers struggle as we build a broad based campaign to remove US marines from Darwin, end Australia's involvement in US imperialist wars and for an independent and peaceful Australian foreign policy.

O'Shea was gaoled for carrying out his union members' instructions not to pay tens of thousands of dollars in fines imposed on the union for taking

and many community organisations worked hard in educating and raising awareness about the undemocratic Penal Powers and why they needed to be removed. A great deal of time and attention was dedicated to explaining, educating and raising awareness amongst working people in workplaces and communities. Clarrie and many unionists insisted that only a mass campaign and mass movement could push back the penal powers, not relying on parliament and the courts to do justice for working people.

On May 15 1969 he was immediately sentenced to an indefinite gaol term for refusing to pay the fines and answer questions about his union members' finances. The sentencing judge was no other than John Kerr who later became



(continued from Page 10...)

workers and students in the anti-war movement who actively supported the workers' and unions' campaign against the Penal Powers that gave more confidence to workers and many unions to challenge the anti-union Penal Powers.

However, victory against the Penal Powers was short lived. The Penal Powers against unions and workers were never repealed. They were just not used against unions for a few years in fear of another outbreak of mass defiance. In 1977 sections of the Penal Powers were brought back but in the guise of the Trades Practices Act and Secondary Boycotts. Since then the anti-union and anti-worker laws have continued to be strengthened and widened under both major parliamentary parties.

Clarrie O'Shea was a strong supporter and actively participated in campaigns for Australia's independence and removing all foreign military and intelligence bases and troops from Australia.

He wanted to be acknowledged and remembered as a life time Communist dedicated to the working class. He was Vice-Chairman of the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) at the time of the Penal Powers battle. He was active in the anti-Vietnam War campaigns including the massive national Vietnam War Moratorium on 8 May 1970; 12 months after the successful Penal Powers struggle and mass mobilisation.

Spirit of Eureka is an affiliate of Independent and Peaceful Australian Network (IPAN).

Leaflet produced by Spirit of Eureka and IPAN-Victoria.



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VENEZUELA UNDER ATTACK

Silicon Valley giants collaborate with the US Government on Venezuela

By **Caitlin Johnstone**

May 13, 2019

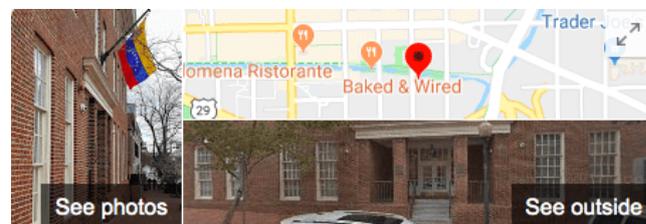
Whenever you speak out on a public forum against internet censorship, like the recent Instagram/Facebook banning of Louis Farrakhan, Infowars, and several right-wing pundits, you always offend two major political groups. The first group are the power-serving authoritarians who identify with the left side of the political spectrum; they argue that it's good and right to trust Silicon Valley plutocrats to regulate political speech on giant monopolistic platforms. The second group are the capitalism cheerleaders who believe there's a free market solution to every problem; they argue that these Silicon Valley giants are private companies which are completely separate from the government, so it's not accurate to refer to what they do with their own property as censorship.

based in? If you look at their behavior, it certainly doesn't seem like it.

The US government is working to topple the government of Venezuela and replace it with a puppet regime. On the off chance that you were still in denial of this self-evident fact, [check out this April 24th fact sheet](#) on the website for the US embassy in Brazil which openly boasts about the way economic and diplomatic pressures are being deliberately placed on the Venezuelan government to install Washington puppet Juan Guaido to the nation's leadership. Trump's National Security Advisor has blatantly threatened that the US will starve the families of Venezuelan military officers if they don't overthrow their government, right there on Twitter.

This is a known, unconcealed US government agenda. And the Silicon Valley giants are actively facilitating it.

For example, as highlighted by journalist Max Blumenthal, if you go to Google and look up Venezuela's embassy in Washington, DC, the result you get looks like this:



Embassy of Venezuela

Website Directions Save

3.1 ★★☆☆☆ 68 Google reviews

Embassy in Washington, D.C., United States

The Embassy of Venezuela in Washington, D.C. is the diplomatic mission of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United States. The embassy is located at 1099 30th Street, Northwest, Washington, D.C. in the Georgetown neighborhood. [Wikipedia](#)

Address: 1099 30th St NW # 2, Washington, DC 20007, USA

Hours: Closed · Opens 9AM Mon ▾

Ambassador: Carlos Vecchio ←

Phone: +20 2 3422214

Google lists Venezuela's ambassador to the US as Carlos Vecchio, who has no governmental power and no authority to issue Venezuelan passports, because he represents no actual government but rather the puppet government that the US is attempting to install. Google has no reason to refer to this US government propaganda construct as "Ambassador", but it does so anyway in support of the US government's

Is that really true, though? Is it really accurate to claim that these sprawling corporations that nobody's been able to compete with are simply private companies, separate and distinct from the government of the nation they're

aggressive campaign to replace the Venezuelan government staff in the DC embassy with the staff of its imaginary puppet regime.

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Google, by the way, has been financially intertwined with US intelligence agencies since its very inception when it received research grants from the CIA and NSA for mass surveillance. It pours massive amounts of money into federal lobbying and DC think tanks, has a cozy relationship with the NSA, and has been a military-intelligence contractor from the beginning.

With Wikipedia, whose leadership allows it to serve as a narrative management operation for the US-centralized empire, it's the same thing. Look up Juan Guaidó, who has no actual political power and no authority whatsoever in Venezuela, and this is what you'll see:

Juan Guaidó



President of Venezuela Acting

It's been that way since January.

With Twitter it's the same. During and immediately after the April 30th failed coup attempt in Venezuela the site suspended numerous Venezuelan government accounts, some permanently, and earlier this year Twitter deleted the accounts of nearly 2,000 pro-Maduro users. In 2017 we saw the same, with thousands more pro-Maduro accounts deleted. Nothing comparable has ever happened with the governments of US-allied nations.

With Facebook we've seen the pages of *Venezuela Analysis* and *TeleSUR English* temporarily suspended, along with the permanent deletion of "inauthentic" Venezuelan, Iranian and Russian accounts in conjunction with Twitter. Facebook's censorship program is directed by the Atlantic Council

narrative control firm, which is funded by the governments of the US and its allies.

There is no legitimate reason for these massive Silicon Valley corporations to be acting in the interests of US State Department agendas, and yet here they are doing exactly that.

Friendly reminder that in an October 2017 Senate Judiciary Committee hearing, senators spoke with top legal and security officials for Facebook, Twitter and Google in a very disturbing way about the need for a Ministry of Truth to silence dissenting voices. Democratic Senator Mazie Hirono of Hawaii demanded that the companies adopt a "mission statement" declaring their commitment "to prevent the fomenting of discord."

Think tank narrative manager and former FBI agent Clint Watts kicked it up even further, saying, "Civil wars don't start with gunshots, they start with words. America's war with itself has already begun. We all must act now on the social media battlefield to quell information rebellions that can quickly lead to violent confrontations and easily transform us into the Divided States of America."

"Stopping the false information artillery barrage landing on social media users comes only when those outlets distributing bogus stories are silenced—silence the guns and the barrage will end," Watts added.

In a corporatist system of government, corporate censorship is state censorship. Anyone who's fine with Silicon Valley plutocrats banning Alex Jones, Louis Farrakhan, or various Venezuelan government figures from having a voice on these giant monopolistic platforms is an idiot.

— Caitlin Johnstone □ (@caitoz) May 2, 2019

These corporations are not separate from the US government in any meaningful way, and their behavior is therefore no better than the state censorship we commonly see US government officials decrying in the governments of non-allied nations. It's arguably worse in some ways, because at least the Chinese know their government is censoring them.

In a corporatist system of government, where there is no meaningful separation between government power and corporate power, corporate censorship *is* state censorship. The US Constitution protects its citizenry from government censorship, but they remain completely unprotected from the brand of corporate censorship we're seeing today which functions in precisely the same way. Whoever controls the narrative controls the world, and they're using corporate censorship to control the narrative.

Our world's fundamental problem is that the people calling the shots are omniscient sociopaths, and the only force capable of stopping them, the collective will of the public, is too thoroughly propagandized to do so. The narratives are too tightly controlled, so the people don't rise up against the oppressors who are driving them toward extinction via climate chaos or nuclear war. We won't make it as a species if we can't find a way to overcome this.

Caitlin's articles are entirely reader-supported, so if you enjoyed this piece please consider sharing it around, liking her on [Facebook](#), following her antics on [Twitter](#), checking out her [podcast](#), throwing some money into her hat on [Patreon](#) or [Paypal](#), or buying her book [Woke: A Field Guide for Utopia Preppers](#). <https://caitlinjohnstone.com>

"How do you know... how do you know anything... US officials are making Maduro sound like a corrupt, evil dictator... almost like a Stalin! Then the alternative voices (Thank God) are saying well they seem to like Maduro just fine over there... and since there must be nothing else to do in the world, US is just playing the old game of 'stop hitting yourself' let's do sanctions, and freeze your assets, and then... THEN LOOK MADURO'S STARVING HIS PEOPLE! Umm. Ya... no. I guess it really doesn't take a lotta brain to be a diplomat."

— Dmitry Dyatlov

<https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/venezuela>

**JIMMY CARTER ON THE U.S.**

Jimmy Carter: US is 'most warlike nation in history'

By **Brett Wilkins**

April 26, 2019 "[Information Clearing House](#)" –

During his regular Sunday school lesson at Maranatha Baptist Church in his hometown of Plains, Georgia, Jimmy Carter revealed that he had recently spoken with President Donald Trump about China. Carter, 94, said Trump was worried about China's growing economy and expressed concern that "China is getting ahead of us."

Carter, who normalized diplomatic relations between Washington and Beijing in 1979, said he told Trump that much of China's success was due to its peaceful foreign policy.

"Since 1979, do you know how many times China has been at war with anybody?" Carter asked. "None, and we have stayed at war." While it is true that China's last major war—an invasion of Vietnam—occurred in 1979, its People's Liberation Army pounded border regions of Vietnam with artillery and its navy battled its Vietnamese counterpart in the 1980s. Since then, however, China has been at peace with its neighbors and the world.

Carter then said the US has been at peace for only 16 of its 242 years as a nation. Counting wars, military attacks and military occupations, there have actually only been five years of peace in US history—1976, the last year of the Gerald Ford administration and 1977-80, the entirety of Carter's presidency. Carter then referred to the US as "the most warlike nation in the history of the world," a result, he said, of the US forcing other countries to "adopt our American principles."

China's peace dividend has allowed and enhanced its economic growth, Carter said. "How many miles of high-speed railroad do we have in this country?" he asked.

China has around 18,000 miles (29,000 km) of high speed rail lines while the US has "wasted, I think, \$3 trillion" on military spending. According to a November 2018 study by Brown University's Watson Institute of International and Public Affairs, the US has spent \$5.9 trillion waging war in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan and other nations since 2001.

"It's more than you can imagine," Carter said of US war spending. "China has not wasted a single penny on war, and that's why they're ahead of us. In almost every way."

"And I think the difference is if you take \$3 trillion and put it in American infrastructure you'd probably have \$2 trillion leftover," Carter told his congregation. "We'd have high-speed railroad. We'd have bridges that aren't collapsing, we'd have roads that are maintained properly. Our education system would be as good as that of say South Korea or Hong Kong."

While there is a prevalent belief in the United States that the country almost always wages war for noble purposes and in defense of freedom, global public opinion and facts paint a very different picture. Most countries surveyed in a 2013 WIN/Gallup poll identified the United States as the greatest threat to world peace, and a 2017 Pew Research poll found that a record number of people in 30 surveyed nations viewed US power and influence as a "major threat."

The US has also invaded or bombed dozens of countries and supported nearly every single right wing dictatorship in the world since the end of World War II. It has overthrown or attempted to overthrow dozens of foreign governments since 1949 and has actively sought to crush nearly every single people's liberation movement over that same period. It has also meddled in scores of elections, in countries that are allies and adversaries alike.

Brett Wilkins is a San Francisco-based freelance author and editor-at-large for US news at [Digital Journal](#). His work, which focuses on issues of war and peace and human rights, is archived at www.brettwilkins.com.

This article was originally published by "[Common Dreams](#)" -

JULIAN ASSANGE

Julian Assange and the Agenda for Global War

by **James Petras**

April 17th, 2019

For almost a decade Washington has sought to silence, jail and eliminate the world's most prominent investigative journalist, Julian Assange (JA) and his team of co-workers at WikiLeaks (WL).

Never has the mass media been so thoroughly discredited by official documents which directly contradict the official propaganda, mouthed by political leaders and parroted by 'leading' journalists.

Washington is particularly intent on capturing JA because his revelations have had a particularly powerful impact on the US public, political critics, the alternative media and human rights groups in turning them against US wars in the Middle East, South Asia, Africa and Latin America.

We will proceed by discussing what JA and WL accomplished and why the particular 'cutting edge' of their reportage disturbed the government.

We will then discuss the 'ongoing' conflicts and the failure of the White House to score a decisive victory, as factors which has led Washington to intensify its efforts to make JA an 'example' to other journalists – demanding that they should 'shape up' or pay the consequences including imprisonment.

Context for Whistleblowing

By the end of a decade of war, opposition to the US involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan had spread to sectors of the military and civilian establishment. Documents were leaked and critics were encouraged to hand over reports revealing war crimes and the toll in human lives. WL, under Assange's leadership, were the recipients of hundreds of thousands of documents which poured in from military analysts, contractors and civilian office holders disgusted by official and mass media lies which perpetrated and covered up war crimes.

As the wars dragged on, and new ones were launched in Libya and Syria and liberal Congress-members were impotent and unwilling to expose the Obama/Clinton regimes' lies and the falsifications accompanying the murder of President

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Gaddafi, WikiLeaks and JA publicized documents which revealed how the US planned, implemented and fabricated Humanitarian Wars to 'save people' ...by bombing them!

The major networks and prestigious press, following the official line, but WL documents discredited them.

The Pentagon, the CIA, the Presidency and their Congressional supporters panicked – as their covert activities came to light.

They resorted to several desperate moves all directed to silence free speech. They accused the investigative journalists of 'espionage' – working for Russia or Islamic terrorists or simply being 'traitors for cash'.

As WL message gained legitimacy, Washington turned to the judiciary in search of rulings to muzzle their critics. Free speech was criminalized. But WL continued. New and more critical whistleblowers came on the scene; Chelsea Manning, Edward Snowden, William Binney and others provided new devastating evidence of Washington's gross distortions and fabrications regarding civilian deaths.

In the Pentagon's eyes, Julian Assange was The Enemy because he refused to be bought or intimidated. WL successfully aroused distrust of the mass media and distrust of the official war news' spread among the public.

The Pentagon, the White House and the intelligence apparatus sought the 'internal' spies feeding documents to WL. Julian Assange was targeted for arrest in the belief that 'beheading' the leader would intimidate other investigative journalists. JA fled for his life, and sought and received asylum in the Ecuadorian Embassy in the UK.

After seven years of pressure the US succeeded in having the Ecuadorean President Lenin Moreno violate his own country's constitution and allow the British police to seize JS, jail and prepare him for extradition to Washington where the regime will find the appropriate judicial setting to condemn him to life imprisonment or... worse.

Conclusion

The war crimes committed by Washington are of such dimension that they have eroded the passive and submissive ethos of their public servants; having lost the trust, the government relies on threats, expulsions and criminal trials.

Investigative journalists are under pressure from the chorus of press prostitutes and face criminal trials.

Today Free speech means 'free' to follow the State.

Julian Assange's upcoming trial is about more than free speech. It is about Washington's ability to pursue global wars, to apply illegal sanctions against independent countries and to recruit vassal states without opposition. Washington, without public awareness, will be able to launch trade wars, and slander competitors with impunity. Once whistleblowers are silenced and/or jailed anything goes.

In the present period many journalists have lost their ability to speak truth to power, and young writers who seek outlets and role models, face the threat of censorship enforced by egregious punishment. The White House seeks to convert the country into an echo chamber of lies for 'humanitarian' wars and 'democratic' coups.

Today the US government pursues a war against Venezuela. Treasury seizes its resources and wealth and State appoints its president in the name of 'democratic values'. The Trump regime is starving the Venezuelan people into submission in the name of a humanitarian mission, a ploy which is only contested by few journalists in the alternative media.

Washington is jailing JA to ensure that the crimes against Venezuela will continue with impunity.

James Petras is author of [*The End of the Republic and the Delusion of Empire*](#), [*Extractive Imperialism in the Americas: Capitalism's New Frontier*](#) (with Henry Veltmeyer), and [*The Politics of Empire: The US, Israel and the Middle East*](#). [Read other articles by James](#), or [visit James's website](#).

This article was posted on Wednesday, April 17th, 2019

NATO: NO NEED

NATO: No Need, NEXIT

by **Peter Koenig**

April 11th, 2019

“EXIT NATO!” was the glaring title on a huge screen greeting the several hundred participants of the Anti-NATO Conference in Florence, Italy, on 7 April 2019. Officially it was called *The International Conference on the 70th Anniversary of NATO*, sponsored by Global Research of Canada and the International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons (ICBUW). I had the privilege to attend this important forum.

Following the EXIT NATO poster, was another huge slide decorating the conference wall proclaiming that NATO, as a reward for all their work for Peace, should be rewarded with the Peace Nobel Prize. No doubt, nuclear armament and eventually nuclear wars to be fought by NATO – by whom else – will make the world a safer place. Wars are actually good for Peace. They are also good for economics, but they are particularly good for Peace.

I'm not kidding you – these are declarations one can read – and has been able to read since practically 9/11, in such prominent “Truth News” papers like the *Washington Post* and the NYT. So, why not the Peace Prize to NATO? It wouldn't make much difference. Considering the track record of the Nobel Prize Committee, it would fall right into place.

Other than that, the conference basically outlined the atrocities committed by NATO, its associate and crony terrorist armies, ISIS, Al Qada, Al Nusra and so on, changing names for revolving terrorists, recruited and trained by the CIA and funded by Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries, and, of course the US directly or through her many State Department funded and subsidiary NGOs, like the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and many others. And, of course, not to forget a prominent funder of terrorism, Turkey, who is now trying to make a smiling face to Russia and the east, even flirting with the idea of entering the club of the Shanghai Cooperation

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Organization (SCO); on the one hand purchasing Russian military defense systems – the S-400 – and at the same time US fighter planes F35, dancing on as many weddings simultaneously as they can. Who would trust Turkey under Erdogan? Turkey also still hosts one of the most strategic and most dangerous nuclear-equipped NATO bases literally between east and west.

The Conference recalled the Cold War. By now everybody knows – really? – well, for those who don't – that the so-called Cold War was one of the best propagated and fakest news of the 20th Century. It's a brilliant idea that sprung out of the McCarthy Nazi-era – like NATO itself – to arm the US to the teeth, maximizing profits of the military industrial complex, under the pretext of halting the advancement of the Soviet Union into just liberated western Europe, just liberated from Hitler's Nazi-Germany. Never mind that western Europe has been saved by the Soviet Union who lost 25-30 million people and basically their transport and production infrastructure. Yes, it was not the so-called allies – US, UK and France – they came in last, when the bulk of the job was already done by what is today Russia. But, of course, no western history book would tell you the truth. In fact, it must be said here too that the US funded Hitler's war against the Soviet Union with money channeled from the FED, through Wall Street banks, and eventually through the Rothschild dominated Bank for International Settlement (BIS), located in Basel, Switzerland, right at the border to Germany, from where it was easy to pass the money on to the Reichsbank – Hitler's Central Bank. Yes- that's how the US was already then dancing on various fiestas at the same time; on the one hand bombing Germany and, on the other, financing Germany's war against what the US already then perceived as an archenemy – The Red Scare – the Soviet Union. Well, these acts of treason then were the precursors of NATO today.

Anything socialist is evil for the US, still today. Trump, himself, and his minion clowns — Pompeo, Bolton and Pence — are lambasting Venezuela and Cuba for being evil and destructive

socialist countries and that socialism will not be tolerated anywhere by the falling empire – sorry, falling it is – of the United States of America.

The other purpose of the Cold War farce was to make the Europeans believe that they were under a constant threat of a Soviet invasion, that they had to arm themselves also to the teeth – imagine war-recovering Europe having to spend their money on arms for no use! – and, of course, most of these weapons had to be bought – yes, you guessed it – from the US military industrial complex meaning more profit for the war oligarchs. The Anglo-media giants even created a virtual barrier between western “free” Europe and the bad-bad Red Scare, the Soviet Union, the *Iron Curtain*. Yes, the Iron Curtain; children in school were indoctrinated to be aware that the enemy is hiding behind the Iron Curtain, and that the enemy always comes from the East. Hilarious, when you think back. At that time (almost) everybody believed it.

And the third, or perhaps first objective of the Cold War, was to block the Soviet Union from developing a viable and autonomous economy with which they could thrive, as most socialist countries do, until they are boycotted, punished and financially “sanctioned” into suffocation by the west. These illegal financial manipulations with and within sovereign countries' economies, are, of course, illegal by any standards of international laws, laws that have become meaningless in the light of US / NATO power, scary nuclear power. These acts of financial and human rights high crimes are only possible because of the all dominating, fraudulent US-imposed – and NATO-protected – western monetary system.

The NATO-driven Cold War, a constant nuclear threat towards the Soviet Union, was intended to force Russia also to arm for their defense, instead of being able to use their economy's added value to rebuild their devastated country. The USSR was never a threat to Europe. There was never an intention of the Soviet Union to invade western Europe. The same today, we are being made believe that Russia wants to invade Europe. That's why NATO needs to build all these military bases at the door step to Russia. Russia is by far the largest country, territory-wise, in the

world, they don't need to add more land. Historically, neither Russia or China have a record of expansionism.

In the end, the NATO-led Cold War managed to dismantle the Soviet Union by “buying” some corrupt Soviet leaders, so that the new Russia, whose socialist system just was made to collapse, unprepared with legislation for what was to come – privatization by fire-sale of their entire economy. Like vultures, the financial institutions, IMF, World Bank, agents of the FED, descended on Moscow to literally steel by indebting whatever had any value. This misery still has not entirely abetted, as the Russian Central Bank was restructured, following the image of the FED – today, under President Putin, much has changed and was reformed; however, the financial sector is still heavily invaded by the Atlantists – or what you may also call the Fifth Columnists. And, of course, even those are protected by NATO as NATO issues threats, nobody knows from where they come, but you know who executes them, in case of...

The Florence Anti-NATO Conference also recalled some of the most abject killing sprees of NATO in its 70 years of existence, the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Sudan, Yemen, Ukraine – the Maidan massacre followed by the so-called Ukrainian civil war – and the crowning of sorts, the ten-year war on Yugoslavia, the total destruction of Yugoslavia, with the final blow 1999, the merciless bombing of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. Why Yugoslavia? Let's dwell just a moment on this war of cruel destruction and killing because it is so typical for Pentagon-driven wars of annihilation. Yugoslavia, a socialist country, in the 1970s and 80s under Maoist President Tito, had a prosperous economy, much more so than the rest of Europe. The US-dominated west cannot let a socialist economy flourish. Other countries, especially stagnating western Europe, could get ideas.

Remember, socialism is evil. So, with what is today called the “Balkanization” – cut into pieces – of Yugoslavia was the old-old tactic of divide to conquer, as well as by creating internal chaos, the western powers kept

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control of the people, and eventually NATO was able to advance closer and ever closer to the Russian border, by occupying former Yugoslav republics with NATO bases (Albania, Croatia, Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia and Kosovo is waiting in the wings), in addition to the further expansion east to Romania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, not to mention the former Soviet Republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

This expansion east, ever closer to Moscow, is a flagrant breach of a promise made by the allied forces. In 1991, then German Foreign Minister Genscher promised Russian President Gorbachev that NATO would not move one inch further east than Germany. In fact, he assured Gorbachev that NATO would not move into what before the German unification was Eastern Germany. This promise was unfortunately never recorded in writing, and Gorbachev was miserably betrayed. As we know by now, a betrayal by the west is very normal. In the meantime, 12 more NATO bases east of Germany, including in former East-Germany, were built.

In their 70 years of existence, US-NATO, allied and proxy forces, as well as mercenaries, have killed between 20 and 25 million people around the globe, in wars and conflicts – in the eternal war against “terror” – that was “justified” by self-inflicted 9/11, the start to the final phase of the PNAC – Plan for a New American Century – to reach *Full Spectrum Dominance*.

Wars have a cost – a financial, economic and a social cost. The US official military budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 is US\$ 700 billion; for FY 2019 Trump proposes US\$ 750. If approved it would be a 40% increase in the last 9 years. But that’s not all. This is just the officially published figure. The real cost for the war, defense and security apparatus to which also the opaque CIA and associated secret services count is well over a trillion dollars, perhaps as much as US\$1.5 trillion *per year*.

The US has currently about one million military personnel stationed in

175 countries around the globe. The Pentagon maintains about a thousand military bases in more than 100 countries. The war cost, in currently seven war theatres, is prohibitive – medical costs for veterans, for social services to returning veterans – and we are not talking about the cost of off-battle ground lives; i.e., by ever-mounting suicide rates. The Veteran Administration released a study that covered suicides from 1999 to 2010, showing that roughly 22 veterans were dying by suicide per day, or one every 65 minutes.

The reality is most likely a much higher figure – and the despair and human depression from anxieties related to the never-ending wars has increased exponentially in the last 9 years – more suicides, more desperation, more broken families, entire generations of kids with fathers at war. This cost cannot be put in figures of dollars and cents. It’s a social cost that bears its toll in years, perhaps generations from now.

The US spends per capita ten times more than the rest of the world together on military / war expenses. President Trump requests European NATO countries to increase their military budget by contributing more to NATO, first up to 2% of GDP, threatening he may decide to withdraw NATO from Europe, if Europe does not comply with his request, still making believe that NATO is a defensive force protecting Europe – from what and from whom? Good-bye NATO. This is the moment to call Trump’s bluff.

But NATO – the Trans-Atlantic Treaty Organization – has also gone overseas to Latin America. NATO has since 2013 a Cooperation Agreement with Colombia, where the US has 5 military bases which will automatically convert into NATO bases. NATO is also negotiating with Brazil’s new Nazi-leader, Bolsonaro, to enter Brazil, and, as such being a threat and a potential attack force to topple the Venezuelan democratically elected socialist government. Washington makes no secret – they want Venezuela’s hydrocarbon resources, the world’s largest reserves, gold and other minerals of which Venezuela is rich. NATO is perfect to do the dirty job.

But it gets worse, this Trump clown or the masters behind him, had recently the audacity to ask for a European military budget increase to 4% of GDP – or

else.... Yes. Let’s decide for *else*. Good riddens, NATO.

The overall NATO budget is well over a trillion dollars per year – yes, *per year*. And that is – people of Europe, people of the world! – that is to finance a killing machine that bulldozes countries into the ground with bombs and tanks, that kill indiscriminately civilians and other countries’ defensive military, countries that have never done any harm to the United States, nor to Europe which follows the Washington mandate like a bunch of vassals, what Europe has become.

Imagine what could be done with more than a trillion dollars or euros per year in terms of building up education, health services, public infrastructure, and other social services and expand these services to developing countries, to those very countries that are now bombarded mercilessly by NATO! This, dear People of Europe, is your tax money. Do you want it to be spent killing people around the world for Washington’s world hegemony? NATO does not protect you. NATO has been designed as an aggressive force. You were just never told. But look out of the window, the window of your ‘safe space’, and you will see the squandering of your tax money.

NATO is invading the space of Russia and China, countries that are seeking friendly relations with the rest of the world, they are seeking a multi-polar world, but encounter instead a response of aggression. NATO is preventing the natural, namely friendly relations and trading as equals within the huge Continent Eurasia, of which Europe has been artificially separated as a continent. This tremendous landmass Eurasia, includes also the entire Middle East and connects to Africa. This enormous mass of land and people and resources does not need the west, the west called America.

Wouldn’t it be wise for countries and people of Eurasia to just live sovereign lives, with friendly interactions, trading as equals not with a one-upmanship as is currently the norm for trading between the rich OECD nations dominating the World Trade Organization (WTO), with the rest of

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the world- which depends on trade but is always on the losing end?

One more point that needs to be understood. Europe, the European Union as it was conceived and is limping along today, has never been the idea of Europeans, but was born during WWII in the heads of the CIA, then transplanted into some “willing” European heads and then ‘defended’ by NATO – the “unifying force”. Europe has no Constitution, only a number of non-binding accords, like Maastricht and Lisbon – but no Constitution that holds it together, that outlines a common vision in defense, in economic development, in monetary policy. The European Union results in a bunch of countries, some even hostile to each other. They have a common currency, the Euro, without even having a common economic base and development objective. This currency, forged as the little brother of the US-dollar, equally is nothing but fiat money, no backing whatsoever; this currency is not sustainable. So, the currency barely 20 years old, will eventually collapse or fade, and so will the European Union. It hasn’t happened yet, because NATO is holding it together, because Brussels is nothing but a puppet of the Pentagon. It is Washington through the Pentagon, and through NATO that is running Europe.

People of Europe, is it that what you want? Your tax money spent killing people and destroying countries around the globe, and having lost all independence, autonomy as a country, as well as monetary sovereignty – by being run by a military killing machine, called NATO?

It’s time to kill NATO, rather than being killed by NATO. Exit NATO now. It’s time for NEXIT.

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RUSSIA’S ONGOING VICTORY DAY

By **Finian Cunningham**

May 11, 2019

As the world again marked the annual Victory Day against Nazi Germany this week, one thing seems more evident with each passing year – Russia holds the highest honour for celebrating this event.

The commemorations in Russia in terms of people numbers and ceremonial splendor far excel similar public events held across Europe and North America. Even though, in theory, those latter countries were allies which defeated Nazi Germany in May 1945

Why have Victory Day celebrations seem to have become more subdued in Europe and North America with each passing year, while in Russia, 74 years on, the “Great Patriotic War” is remembered and revered with undiminished passion?

Russia’s President Vladimir Putin delivered a rousing speech dedicated to the sacrifices of the war dead in front of multitudes attending Moscow’s Red Square. There was also an impressive military parade honoring the fallen heroes, followed by a breathtaking fireworks display, and marches held across all Russia in towns and villages for the “Immortal Regiments”.

Meanwhile, tellingly, an article posted on the BBC website was headlined: “What is VE [Victory in Europe] Day?”

One reason for the difference is because Russia and other Soviet nations paid a far greater human price of suffering in the defeat of Nazi Germany. The memory of the horror is seared into Russian families. And, likewise, so too is the memory of resistance and ultimately the glory of defeating a monstrous enemy – at times against all the odds of victory.

Take the Nazi siege of Leningrad (St Petersburg). For over two years the people of that city endured starvation and cruelties that hardly anyone in Western Europe or North America could imagine. Yet the Nazi barbarity

was finally overcome, the city was liberated by the Red Army, and Russian composer Dmitri Shostakovich who was trapped in the besieged city wrote an internationally renowned symphony heralding the vanquishing of that trauma.

The later final defeat of Nazi Germany in May 1945 was indeed a liberation for all of Europe. But that victory was indisputably due to the resilience and fortitude of Russian and other Soviet citizens. All told, the Soviet people lost about 27 million from Nazi war depredations, including from extermination operations and atrocities inflicted on whole villages. That number is incomparably greater to what other European countries incurred. Yet, in spite of the massive onslaught, it was the Soviet people who rose to the occasion to push back the Nazi invaders all the way to Berlin where the Third Reich was eventually buried in its war bunkers.

Just one more figure is enough to tell the story. Some 90 per cent of all Nazi army casualties during World War II were inflicted in the East fighting against the Soviet nations. That tells you how and where the Nazi war machine was terminated.

There are several current consequences from that horrific war that are still felt today.

One is that Russia will never allow itself to be invaded and threatened as it was by Nazi Germany in June 1941. Russia’s defense forces and weapons are perhaps the best in the world. No wonder Russia is vehemently opposed to NATO expansionism. How would Americans or British feel if the shoe was on the other foot?

Secondly, in a paradoxical way, because Russia suffered such infernal hardships from war, it is perhaps the most peace-loving of all modern nations. In President Putin’s speech this year, he once again extended a hand of friendship and cooperation to others to strengthen global security. That is in spite of the fact that the US and its NATO allies have continually insulted and provoked Russia with slanderous claims, military saber-rattling and economic sanctions.

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A third consequence is that Western nations who claim to have defeated Nazi Germany – thereby trying to undermine Russia’s honorable place in that event – have at the same time an evident historical amnesia. This is not to belittle the sacrifices of hundreds of thousands of ordinary soldiers from the US and Britain who gave their lives in the fight against Nazi Germany. Nevertheless, the boastful claims of Western leaders and media is belied by the diminishing memorials to the Victory in Europe.

The truth is Victory in Europe was predominantly a victory by the Russian and Soviet nations. After all, several of the European countries are guilty from their ruling establishments collaborating with Nazi Germany, as in France, Norway, Poland, and others.

The concomitant of that duplicitous reality is that victory celebrations across Europe – except for Russia – tend to become somewhat hollow and muted with time.

Another reality – one that is shameful and concealed by Western establishments – is that American and British finance capital was very much instrumental in bankrolling the rise of Hitler’s Third Reich. US corporations such as Ford, ITT, General Motors and Du Pont made fortunes from investing in Nazi Germany during the 1930s, making full use of slave camps for cheap labor, before the outbreak of the war.

The ambiguous relationship between Western capitalism and Nazi fascism is testified in today’s cozy alliance between Washington and the Neo-Nazi regime that seized power in Ukraine. The disgusting veneration by politicians in Kiev for Nazi collaborators and their vile blood lust against the ethnic Russian people in Eastern Ukraine are never objected to by governments in Washington or the European Union.

Russia knows the evils of fascism because it stared this force in the face and defeated it 74 years ago. That world-changing event will never be forgotten nor taken for granted.

The Western countries – who by contrast did comparatively little to

defeat Nazi Germany – are the same ones today who feel entitled to wage covert and overt wars for regime change around the world. One may argue, therefore, that the battle against fascism has never ended. Nazi uniforms, soldiers, guns and tanks may have been buried, but the mentality of aggression, superiority, lawlessness and impunity is very much alive. Thankfully, however, Russian vigilance and courage is also alive today.

Finian Cunningham has written extensively on international affairs, with articles published in several languages. He is a Master’s graduate in Agricultural Chemistry and worked as a scientific editor for the Royal Society of Chemistry, Cambridge, England, before pursuing a career in newspaper journalism. He is also a musician and songwriter. For nearly 20 years, he worked as an editor and writer in major news media organisations, including The Mirror, Irish Times and Independent.

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DIEGO GARCIA

Diego Garcia: The “Unsinkable Carrier” Springs a Leak

A court ruling against colonial exploitation could threaten a strategic U.S. military base in the Indian Ocean. Indigenous advocates say it’s about time.

By **Conn Hallinan**

April 11, 2019.



Shutterstock

The recent decision by the Hague-based International Court of Justice that the Chagos Islands — with its huge U.S. military base at Diego Garcia — are being illegally occupied by the United Kingdom (UK) has the potential to upend the strategic plans of a dozen regional capitals, ranging from Beijing to Riyadh.

For a tiny speck of land measuring only 38 miles in length, Diego Garcia

casts a long shadow. Sometimes called Washington’s “unsinkable aircraft carrier,” planes and warships based on the island played an essential role in the first and second Gulf wars, the invasion of Afghanistan, and the war in Libya. Its strategic location between Africa and Indonesia and 1,000 miles south of India gives the U.S. access to the Middle East, Central and South Asia, and the vast Indian Ocean. No oil tanker, no warship, no aircraft can move without its knowledge.

Most Americans have never heard of Diego Garcia for a good reason: No journalist has been allowed there for more than 30 years, and the Pentagon keeps the base wrapped in a cocoon of national security. Indeed, the UK leased the base to the Americans in 1966 without informing either the British Parliament or the U.S. Congress.

The February 25 Court decision has put a dent in all that by deciding that Great Britain violated United Nations Resolution 1514 prohibiting the division of colonies before independence. The UK broke the Chagos Islands off from Mauritius, a former colony on the southeast coast of Africa that Britain decolonized in 1968. At the time, Mauritius objected, reluctantly agreeing only after Britain threatened to withdraw its offer of independence.

The Court ruled 13-1 that the UK had engaged in a “wrongful act” and must decolonize the Chagos “as rapidly as possible.”

“The Great Game” in the Indian Ocean

While the ruling is only “advisory,” it comes at a time when the U.S. and its allies are confronting or sanctioning countries for supposedly illegal occupations — Russia in the Crimea and China in the South China Sea.

The suit was brought by Mauritius and some of the 1,500 Chagos islanders who were forcibly removed from the archipelago in 1973. The Americans, calling it “sanitizing” the islands, moved the Chagossians more than 1,000 miles to Mauritius and the Seychelles, where they’ve languished in poverty ever since.

Diego Garcia is the lynchpin for U.S. strategy in the region. With its enormous

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runways, it can handle B-52, B-1 and B-2 bombers, and huge C-5M, C-17, and C-130 military cargo planes. The lagoon has been transformed into a naval harbor that can handle an aircraft carrier. The U.S. has built a city — replete with fast food outlets, bars, golf courses and bowling alleys — that hosts some 3,000 to 5,000 military personnel and civilian contractors.

What you can't find are any native Chagossians.

The Indian Ocean has become a major theater of competition between India, the U.S., and Japan on one side, and the growing presence of China on the other. Tensions have flared between India and China over the Maldives and Sri Lanka, specifically China's efforts to use ports on those island nations. India recently joined with Japan and the U.S. in a war game — Malabar 18 — that modeled shutting down the strategic Malacca Straits between Sumatra and Malaysia, through which some 80 percent of China's energy supplies pass each year.

A portion of the exercise involved anti-submarine warfare aimed at detecting Chinese submarines moving from the South China Sea into the Indian Ocean. To Beijing, those submarines are essential for protecting the ring of Chinese-friendly ports that run from southern China to Port Sudan on the east coast of Africa. Much of China's oil and gas supplies are vulnerable, because they transit the narrow Mandeb Strait that guards the entrance to the Red Sea and the Strait of Hormuz that oversees access to the oil-rich Persian Gulf. The U.S. 5th Fleet controls both straits.

Tensions in the region have increased since the Trump administration shifted the focus of U.S. national security from terrorism to "major power competition" — that is, China and Russia. The U.S. accuses China of muscling its way into the Indian Ocean by taking over ports, like Hambantota in Sri Lanka and Gwadar in Pakistan that are capable of hosting Chinese warships.

India, which has its own issues with China dating back to their 1962 border

war, is ramping up its anti-submarine forces and building up its deep-water navy. New Delhi also recently added a long-range Agni-V missile that's designed to strike deep into China, and the right-wing government of Narendra Modi is increasingly chummy with the American military. The Americans even changed their regional military organization from "Pacific Command" to "Indo-Pacific Command" in deference to New Delhi.

The term for these Chinese friendly ports — "string of pearls" — was coined by Pentagon contractor Booz Allen Hamilton and, as such, should be taken with a grain of salt. China is indeed trying to secure its energy supplies and also sees the ports as part of its worldwide Road and Belt Initiative trade strategy. But assuming the "pearls" have a military role, akin to 19th century colonial coaling stations, is a stretch. Most the ports would be indefensible if a war broke out.

An "Historic" Decision

Diego Garcia is central to the U.S. war in Somalia, its air attacks in Iraq and Syria, and its control of the Persian Gulf, and would be essential in any conflict with Iran. If the current hostility by Saudi Arabia, Israel, and the U.S. toward Iran actually translates into war, the island will quite literally be an unsinkable aircraft carrier.

Given the strategic centrality of Diego Garcia, it's hard to imagine the US giving it up — or rather, the British withdrawing their agreement with Washington and de-colonizing the Chagos Islands. In 2016, London extended the Americans' lease for 20 years.

Mauritius wants the Chagos back, but at this point doesn't object to the base. It certainly wants a bigger rent check and the right eventually to take the island group back.

It also wants more control over what goes on at Diego Garcia. For instance, the British government admitted that the Americans were using the island to transit "extraordinary renditions," people seized during the Afghan and Iraq wars between 2002 and 2003, many of whom were tortured. Torture is a violation of international law.

As for the Chagossians, they want to go back.

Diego Garcia is immensely important for U.S. military and intelligence operations in the region, but it's just one of some 800 American military bases on every continent except Antarctica. Those bases form a worldwide network that allows the U.S. military to deploy advisors and Special Forces in some 177 countries across the globe. Those forces create tensions that can turn dangerous at a moment's notice.

For instance, there are currently U.S. military personal in virtually every country surrounding Russia: Norway, Poland, Hungary, Kosovo, Romania, Turkey, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Georgia, Ukraine, and Bulgaria. Added to that is the Mediterranean's 6th Fleet, which regularly sends warships into the Black Sea.

Much the same can be said for China. U.S. military forces are deployed in South Korea, Japan, and Australia, plus numerous islands in the Pacific. The American 7th fleet, based in Hawaii and Yokohama, is the Navy's largest.

In late March, U.S. Navy and Coast Guard ships transited the Taiwan Straits, which, while international waters, the Chinese consider an unnecessary provocation. British ships have also sailed close to Chinese-occupied reefs and islands in the South China Sea.

The fight to de-colonize the Chagos Islands will now move to the UN General Assembly. In the end, Britain may ignore the General Assembly and the Court, but it will be hard pressed to make a credible case for doing so. How Great Britain can argue for international law in the Crimea and South China Sea, while ignoring the International Court of Justice on the Chagos, will require some fancy footwork.

In the meantime, Mauritius Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth calls the Court decision "historic," and one that will eventually allow the 6,000 native Chagossians and their descendants "to return home."

FPIF columnist **Conn Hallinan** can be read at dispatchesfromtheedgeblog.wordpress.com and middleempireseries.wordpress.com.

**THE ENEMY IS NOT RESISTANCE**

By Stanley L. Cohen

May 11, 2019

The Islamic Resistance Movement began more than thirty years ago at an historical moment in time which it knew to be fraught with absolute peril for their people. The founders of this national liberation struggle examined the overwhelming military capabilities of Israel, fostered by its global superpower sponsor, the United States. They looked at Israel's expansionist programs—the Zionist project of illegal settlements erasing their homes and villages, dispossessing mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers—and at the failure of the international community to stop them. They knew then that within a generation Palestinians would lose it all—their motherland and patrimony and their nation—leaving them homeless captives to the whims of another man's door. In that moment, resistance was not a lifestyle choice or a revolutionary pose. It was existential necessity, just as it is now.

Everything Hamas predicted then has come to pass. Here, a generation later, it should take no comfort reminding the world that they were right in their analysis. Israel has grown only stronger and more rapacious, more intransigent and murderous in its deeds. Its “democracy” did not save it from becoming a racist, apartheid state presiding over a military occupation of millions of Palestinians. Israel's policy of creating “facts on the ground”—that is, the illegal settlement project—has transitioned from a *de facto* expulsion and annexation policy into a *de jure* one, as its prime minister calls for the removal of Palestinians and the annexation of the West Bank, and the American president and congress pre-emptively applaud the crime-to-be. The Golan Heights—sovereign territory of another nation—is now Israel's by force, cynically annexed, while Syria struggles in the throes of war. And Jerusalem (al Quds) is ringed by new, fortified suburbs and restricted highways demolishing Palestinian neighborhoods and cutting off their city from them. America now calls Jerusalem Israel's capital—in direct violation of international law. Since

1967, successive U.S. administrations have told Palestinians to trust in their good faith as brokers of a just peace. This has been a lie, as Hamas anticipated then, America was running cover, a stalling tactic, for the slow-motion destruction of Palestinian national aspirations. Tragically, tens of thousands of Palestinians have been killed and maimed and many more imprisoned by Israeli state violence since Hamas began. The international community has done little to stop the monstrous crime unfolding.

Palestinians were right to resist then. The world surely can see that now. The tragedy of retrospection should, at the very least, accord Palestinians their due: resistance is morally right, history has proven it so. Yet, even last month, in the pages of America's official paper of record, the *New York Times*, the U.S. administration through its craven spokesman Jason Greenblatt, a Zionist real estate lawyer from New York, charged with shepherding the “peace process” for the President as the Special Representative for International Negotiations, heaps insult upon injury, twisting history and recent events in a grotesque parody of a policy statement, adopting the Likud Party platform as the publicly declared U.S. position. None of us should be surprised by the falsifications in the Trump Administration's official pronouncements. It has proven itself, after all, to be a presidency built on lying. Yet only the most gullible American readers could possibly believe its juvenile “blame Hamas” refrain.

Hamas did not create the thirteen-year siege of Gaza, cutting Palestinians off from the world. It did not commence any of the three wars launched by Israel against Gaza in 2008, 2012 and 2014 or its countless other attacks and outrages since. It did not destroy their industries, their water treatment plant, their power generation, their hospitals, houses, mosques, schools, television stations and roads—Israeli missiles and bombs did that. Hamas does not keep two million people penned in an open-air prison, with a prison economy in tatters—Israel does that. The cynicism of the Administration's statement is unparalleled: “The countries of the world have attempted to help the people

of Gaza,” but their good works have been destroyed by Hamas, according to the Special Representative. Perhaps he had in mind the post-Oslo airport, built by multinational leadership, attacked in 2001 by Israeli air forces, with its runways bulldozed by Israel a few years later? Or the catastrophic damage wrought upon the water system by Israeli air strikes during Operation Cast Lead in 2008? Or the extensive bombing of the sanitation system in Operation Pillar of Defense in 2012? Or Gaza's only power plant, attacked in 2006, 2008 and finally leveled by Israeli missiles in 2014's Operation Protective Edge? All of these key infrastructure projects, indeed, were funded by international donors, but destroyed by American jet planes, flown by the Israeli armed forces. Empty-headed slogans, scribbled by a huckster and moral fraud that has no more business posing as a diplomat than he does as a man of sincere religious belief, cannot smother the truth. The continuing tragedy of Gaza, indeed, all of Palestine, is not so easy to conceal... and Palestinian resistance continues. There is no choice.

Israel daily blocks some 650 basic goods from entry to the Gaza Strip for alleged “security” reasons, including medicines, hospital equipment and even some types of baby formula. Israel denies fishing nets to Gaza's fishermen, or materials to repair boats. Infrastructure materials—from pumping equipment to water and sanitation piping, to electrical supplies and cement—are all but forbidden. Communication supplies and the technology of the internet (server and switching equipment) are embargoed, leaving Gaza lagging behind in poverty and despair, cut off from the world. A United Nations-approved system instituted after the cease-fire in 2014 exists for monitoring so-called “dual use” materials, yet, Israel continues to ignore it as it stifles the free flow of goods needed to rebuild Gaza... in a deliberate policy of attrition. Hundreds of Palestinians die annually, per the World Health Organization, because they cannot travel for medical treatment and the health care infrastructure and

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supply chain is destroyed.

Gaza suffers, but not because of Hamas and its administration. Hamas has done everything in its power to spare the Palestinian people in Gaza the devastating effects of the Israeli siege. It opened the doors wide to facilitate international support reaching Gaza's residents. It accepted that infrastructure and public health projects should be implemented under full international supervision in coordination with government agencies. It has sought to ensure the Rafah border crossing between Gaza and Egypt will be open in both directions as an alternative to the dehumanizing caged passageway at Beit Hanoun (Erez). It has worked in coordination with the United Nations and Egypt to reach understandings that can achieve calm with the occupation and avoid escalation, a step on the road to lifting the siege and alleviating the hardships facing the people in Gaza.

At the strategic political level, Hamas has made great efforts to bring about Palestinian reconciliation, achieve unity, end the division and form an internationally recognized Palestinian unity government. But these efforts have been thwarted by the American veto and Israeli sabotage. Moreover, Hamas has worked with all its Palestinian partners to reach a consensus and internationally recognized formula on the national vision, in order to find a way out of the current crisis, as expressed most recently in May 2017, wherein it again accepted a state configured upon the 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as its capital, while simultaneously preserving the right of return for the millions in the Palestinian Diaspora.

Hamas is a national liberation movement, democratically elected by a majority of Palestinians in 2006 under the watchful eye of the world community. At its core it promotes and fights for the fundamental right of Palestinian self-determination fueled by full equality, independence and return. It does not embrace gratuitous violence. Nor, however, does it leave the people of Gaza defenseless at the mercy of an occupation force that has proven itself unworthy of trust and unwilling to exercise even a modicum of respect for

international law. A long settled tenet of that law is the right of the occupied to engage in resistance, that includes armed struggle. Palestinians continue to resist legally. They do not owe their occupier passive surrender.

Not long ago, Israel sent an assassination-squad surreptitiously into Gaza to kill Palestinian leaders. In the weeks since, it has repeatedly attacked civilian targets and infrastructure. It has been met by Palestinian defensive measures; and Israel responds, predictably, with F-16 attacks and tank shelling throughout Gaza, killing some two dozen including three children and two pregnant women, one who was clutching her 14 month old in her arms as both perished. More than a hundred and fifty other civilians were wounded over several days of Israeli attacks. Almost a thousand civilian housing units, schools and businesses were damaged or destroyed. This latest assault does not yet have an operational name to sell it to the world—marketing Israel's "bravery" narrative—but surely they'll think of something catchy to disguise the carnage.

This past year, the Palestinian people, with all its factions and vital forces, including Hamas, took part in peaceful demonstrations... as affirmed by UN monitoring, along the separation fence at the eastern part of the Gaza Strip, demanding the lifting of the siege on Gaza and the right of return. How did the occupation respond? With live ammunition and sniper fire intended to kill and maim. Approximately 280 Palestinians have died and more than 28,000 have been wounded during this time, many of whom will live the rest of their lives disabled. Not one Israeli on the other side was killed because of the demonstrations. These protests also persist on a smaller scale in the West Bank where Israel continues to steal Palestinian land, destroy Palestinian homes and imprison Palestinian women and children at a pace second to none.

To the Greenblatts and Trumps and their Zionist choir, no amount of campaign sloganeering in puerile public statements can rewrite the palpable facts of Israeli aggression and its deadly occupation or recast Hamas from a lawful indigenous defense force into a mercenary political outlier. Nor can the

soon to come US "deal of the century" entice millions of Palestinians to surrender an age-old history and tradition to the cheap ring of a common real estate cash box.

Hamas is no rogue militant group, with anonymous, shadowy operators. It will not disappear or shirk its leadership responsibility. It remains an authentic and powerful part of the Palestinian experience, for over thirty years, much older than some of the current Israeli political parties in the Knesset. While many of its founders, all those years ago, have been killed by Israel, Hamas continues to speak on behalf of the dignity and hope of millions of Palestinians worldwide. Like them, it carries the kindle of resilience and self-determination of a People rendered stateless but neither hopeless nor powerless by a European colonial project. Like them, it will not cease to exist or fade into silence.

Stanley L. Cohen is lawyer and activist in New York City.

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WHAT I SAW IN GAZA

What I Saw in Gaza Changed Me Forever

My true liberation as a Jewish person is bound up with the liberation of Palestinian people.

By **Ned Rosch**

May 09, 2019

The great Indian writer Arundhati Roy wrote, "The trouble is that once you see it, you can't unsee it. And once you've seen it, keeping quiet, saying nothing, becomes as political an act as speaking out. There's no innocence. Either way, you're accountable." There were numerous times in my life when I "saw" it and felt the strongly reinforced foundations of my Zionist upbringing eventually crack wide open and ultimately turn to dust, but perhaps nothing more deeply touched me and cemented my perspective than a trip to Gaza in November 2014.

For a brief but remarkable week and a half, I had the amazing privilege of being part of a health delegation to this
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small strip of historic Palestine that is one of the most crowded places on earth because its population is literally sealed in by the Israelis—with the assistance of the Egyptians. To be there just two months after Israel's murderous 2014 war on the people of Gaza was to catch a glimpse—through the painful stories I heard and the overwhelming destruction I witnessed—of the grotesque horror of that 51-day war. The bombed-out structures were everywhere, the grief universal, the trauma intense.

Rawya, who translated for a training that I did in Gaza with 15 school counselors, shared with me over a hot cup of tea, "Scared our turn might be next, my husband and I sat our four children, ages nine through fifteen, down, and we and our kids each talked about what we would do if a bomb hit and we were the only survivor of our family. I felt I needed to have that conversation because the possibility seemed so real, and as a mother, I needed to know that our children had a plan." She, the counselors, the children they see, and—according to the counselors, it's safe to say—everyone in Gaza is traumatized. When Israeli jets were heard overhead one evening while we were in Gaza City, the restimulated fear was palpable.

On the way into Gaza City, we saw haunting skeletons of homes, people living in bombed-out buildings, and mosques, hospitals, and factories reduced to rubble. Etched in my mind probably forever will be what we witnessed in heavily bombed civilian neighborhoods. It's hard to find words that even begin to describe the utter devastation.

Palestinian people were living in makeshift structures of cardboard and blankets, surrounded by rubble. Even though I'd seen these images online, somehow the impact of witnessing families squatting next to what was everything they had owned and what in a matter of seconds had been absolutely wiped out took my breath away, as did a large busted-up slab of concrete with names spray-painted on it of family members buried under the mounds of debris, a woman sitting on the rubble staring vacantly off into the distance, and

a wedding party celebrating amid ravaged buildings.

In a refugee camp, a vivacious Palestinian woman named Reem told me she just couldn't think about the future any more. "All I have," she said, "is today and that's OK as it's filled with opportunities to help people." Reem was opening centers in some of Gaza's most destroyed areas, centers where children play, read, sing, learn French, plant seeds in paper cups—to maybe get a taste of what a "normal" childhood might be like. Nothing is normal in Gaza. A decade of siege and three wars has ravaged the economy, snuffed out the lives of thousands of people, wrecked the environment, and ripped apart people's hopes that things will someday get better, that maybe there is a future.

Yasser, a gentle soul and the executive director of Gaza's Community Mental Health Program, lost 28 members of his extended family in the 2014 war. No one in Gaza was spared from knowing someone who was killed or injured in the brutal and relentless Israeli assault. Yasser said his family speaks of 28 empty chairs.

Mohammed's family is now 10 people fewer. One of the deceased was a young girl who was rescued after somehow surviving for 10 days under a massive pile of concrete and rebar, only to die in the hospital two days later. Her name was Yasmin. "I can't get Yasmin and the thought of what her last days were like out of my mind," Mohammed said, tears wetting his shirt.

Everyone yearns for the borders to open so they might be able to breathe, work, travel, study abroad, or get medical care not available in Gaza due to the shortage of everything caused by the Israeli siege. Still, most assert they would return. "Just like a fish can't survive out of water, we can't live out of Gaza for too long. At some point, we need to return," said Walaa, a young woman with two graduate degrees who was unemployed in Gaza's shattered economy.

Imad, a nurse who works full time and had not been paid for over a year, invited me to meet his wife and eight children in their extremely modest but comfortable apartment. When asked

how they survive with no income and so many mouths to feed, Imad explained that everyone in Gaza does what they can to help others out, since they are all pretty much in the same boat. He then shrugged his shoulders and pensively posed the question we heard so often: "What can we do?" It's striking that 2 million Palestinians in Gaza are imprisoned in an area that is only 25 miles long and 5 to 8 miles wide—smaller than the Portland metro area.

A marvelous facilitator, who does support groups for children in Gaza, invited me to a group she runs for 5-year-olds who lost their homes, family members, their innocence—and so much more—in the bombings. I sat in the circle with the children as they chose happy or sad faces to represent how they felt. One girl said she took a sad face because her grandfather was killed by a bomb. Others took sad faces because they had bad dreams. The facilitator told me that her own 10-year-old daughter pleaded with her during the war, "Don't leave me alone. I want to die together."

So, there's more than enough stress, grief, pain, and sadness to go around, but there is also a remarkable amount of love, generosity, and determination. Ramadan, who translated for one of my workshops and who is working on a Ph.D. in psychology, pointed out that just as lots of folks may only appreciate their health when they become sick, Palestinians may feel the lack of a homeland more intensely, having so brutally lost it. "Others have a physical homeland, a place they live in or visit. Our homeland lives in our hearts," Ramadan told me over coffee to the sound of the waves beating on the shore.

While walking through an area of Gaza that was heavily bombed by the Israelis, witnessing homes, apartment buildings, and a school totally leveled, I was approached by a middle-aged man who politely offered me a large manuscript covered with the dust of a blown-up neighborhood. When I asked him what it was and why he wanted to give it to me, he motioned for me to follow him across the street to a huge mound of debris. As we climbed up the

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pile, avoiding broken glass, twisted rebar, and busted up concrete, he pulled out his phone and showed me a picture of quite an attractive and well-maintained home—his home. He explained that we were standing on that home and that absolutely everything had been destroyed except for the manuscript, his doctoral dissertation, which was a literary critique of the works of Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot.

This professor, who had lost it all, was insisting that I take what remained of a life. I will never know for sure why. Maybe it was Palestinian hospitality that required him to give this guest something, and that was all he had to give. Perhaps he wanted me to take it to a safe place, as he well knew that nothing was safe in Gaza. Possibly this professor was saying that in spite of all the destruction the Israelis could unleash at will, there is one thing they can never destroy: ideas—not only about Pound and Eliot, but also about the restoration of justice to a people who have suffered unimaginable brutality and dispossession.

I continue to struggle with many things now, not the least of which is finding words to adequately express the intensity of the experience of getting to know, in some small but profoundly meaningful way, a number of unforgettable and beautiful people in Gaza, and catching a glimpse into the unbelievably harsh reality of their lives. It's difficult to make sense of how the occupation and siege of Gaza, which is slowly but very steadily crushing the life of 2 million people, can be happening, and how the world is doing so little to stop it. Imad's question, "What can we do?" echoes in my head. Some of what I can do is clear: a stronger commitment to, as Arundhati Roy says, speaking out, asserting the Palestinian struggle more broadly and more often, as we Americans are so deeply complicit in the ongoing Israeli occupation of Palestinian land. More of what I can do will surely emerge with time as I continue to think about the people I met who want nothing more than to live. In Gaza, I left behind friends and a piece of my heart—a heart that was broken many years earlier by the conflict between what I had been raised

to believe about Israel and what I had learned was the darker reality of Israel.

Years ago, I sincerely believed I was being more than open-minded when I tried to hold to the conviction that there were two legitimate and distinctly different narratives—one Jewish and one Palestinian, two fundamentally irreconcilable claims to the same piece of land, and that was why the conflict was so unresolvable. But what was really unresolvable was the battle that thunderously raged in my head and even more vigorously in my heart. You see, I had become a progressive on every issue, except one. I marched for civil rights, women's rights, LGBTQ rights, everyone's rights, and an end to war. But when it came to Israel-Palestine, I was extraordinarily torn up. Even if what my Palestinian friends were telling me were true, how could I turn my back on my own people and my own upbringing, especially after the thousands of years of suffering that Jews had endured? Wasn't the Jewish history of pogroms, anti-Semitism, and the horrors of the Holocaust at least as compelling, if not more so? After all, as someone named after a Holocaust victim, I was a link in a long chain. How could I contribute to undermining the Jewish struggle to reconstruct a post-Holocaust decimated people and the state of Israel that had so recently come into existence?

With time and introspection, my dual narrative world began to fray at the edges, and eventually completely unravel. Probably the crushing blow came when a Palestinian friend asked me why Jews have such a hard time incorporating the Palestinian experience into the Jewish understanding of history. I didn't quite grasp his question and, with trepidation, asked him to explain. He challenged me to see not two separate conflicting narratives, but one history—one history of what actually happened. That question and challenge—and exploring and reexploring their answers—took me on one of the deepest and most rewarding journeys of my life. It was the struggle of fundamentally wrestling to reconcile my politics around Israel-Palestine with my bottom-of-my-heart core values, and ultimately understanding, in the very essence of my being, that my true liberation as a Jewish person is now intrinsically bound up with the authentic

liberation of the Palestinian people. My sense of freedom and wholeness will only be achieved when every Jew—and every Palestinian—is free. Zionism imprisons not only Palestinian bodies but Jewish minds as well.

I came to comprehend that the wonderful Jewish tradition of "Justice, justice thou shalt pursue" required me to take a stand with others of goodwill, including many Jews, to support my Palestinian sisters and brothers in their pain, struggle, and resistance. The breakthrough for me was the ultimate realization that standing up for the Palestinian people was not turning my back on my own people. Rather, in supporting the Palestinian struggle for freedom, I was upholding Judaism's highest values and reclaiming them for myself, in—for me—a profoundly new and personally meaningful way. Nelson Mandela said, "We know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians."

Excerpted from "Palestine and my Journey of Self-Discovery," an essay by Ned Rosch in [Reclaiming Judaism from Zionism: Stories of Personal Transformation](#), edited by Carolyn L. Karcher. Published 2019 by Olive Branch Press, an imprint of Interlink Publishing Group. Copyright Carolyn L. Karcher and contributors.

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GAZA AMPUTATIONS

Foreign Aid That Costs an Arm and a Leg — Literally

The U.S.-funded Israeli military is shooting so many unarmed Palestinians that the UN is warning of an amputation crisis in Gaza.

By **Phyllis Bennis**

May 22, 2019.

Originally published in [OtherWords](#).

Palestinian amputees break their Ramadan fast at a community center in Rafah, which was destroyed by Israeli warplanes. (Photo: Abed Rahim Khatib / Shutterstock)

My friend Andrew Rubin is an amputee. He's lost his right hand, lower arm, right foot, and lower leg.

He used to be an avid runner and

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cyclist. He can't do much of that anymore, although his walking is getting much better. Soon he might be able to run with his artificial leg.

Andrew is incredibly lucky.

The medical catastrophe that left his hand and foot so terribly damaged didn't kill him. But when his limbs never healed even after a decade, he decided to undergo the amputations. It was his choice, and it was made much easier because he knew what lay ahead: the most advanced artificial limbs ever imagined. The kids call him Bionic Man now.

Andrew is lucky for another reason: He doesn't live in Gaza.

According to the United Nations, 1,700 young Gazans are facing amputation, mainly of their legs, in the next two years. They're among the 7,000 unarmed Palestinians in Gaza shot by Israeli snipers over the last year.

Since last spring, thousands of Palestinians in Israeli-occupied Gaza have poured out of their teeming refugee camps and houses every Friday to join nonviolent protests, demanding an end to the siege that's destroying their lives, and the right to return to the homes Israel displaced them from.

Even though they were nonviolent, they were met by Israeli snipers from the beginning. Children, journalists, and medics were targeted too.

International law prohibits using live fire against unarmed civilians unless the police or soldiers are in imminent danger of death. That's not the case in Gaza. A UN investigation of 189 killings during the first nine months of the protests found that Israeli forces may have committed war crimes.

More than 220 Palestinians have been killed so far. Stuningly, more than 29,000 have been wounded — including those 7,000 by live fire. So far, 120 have had to endure amputations — including 20 children.

Anyplace else, their limbs might've been saved.

But Gaza has been under Israeli military siege for more than 10 years. Hospitals are massively under-equipped, many of them seriously damaged by

Israeli bombing. The delicate surgery needed to save shattered bones is virtually impossible there, and the surgeons have no access to the most up-to-date methods.

Andrew had a choice about his amputations. Gazans don't.

The UN needs \$20 million to fill the immediate health funding gap in Gaza. Otherwise, those 1,700 young Gazans face the catastrophic loss of arms and legs, or risk dying of infection. They'll have virtually no access to the advanced artificial hands, legs, and feet that my friend Andrew uses.

Unfortunately, U.S. taxpayers are funding this madness.

Every year, we send \$3.8 billion directly to the Israeli military — no strings attached — and American companies make the tear gas and other weapons that Israel deploys against demonstrators. Washington makes sure that no Israeli officials, political or military, are ever held accountable at the United Nations for potential war crimes.

Crueler still, the Trump administration has cut off funding for the very UN refugee agency that staffs health clinics in Gaza, even as it funds the Israeli military that's filling them with gunshot victims.

The protests, overwhelmingly nonviolent, continue — and the killing has continued too, week after week. Meanwhile, there are so many disabled kids in Gaza now that the beleaguered territory is setting up special sports leagues for them.

Israel needs to call off its snipers, lift the siege of Gaza, and stop violating the human and political rights of Palestinians. And until they do, American taxpayers need to close their checkbook.

Middle East expert **Phyllis Bennis** directs the New Internationalism Project at the Institute for Policy Studies.

"It is human nature to seek revenge in the face of relentless suffering. You can't expect an unhealthy person to think logically."

— Izzeldin Abuelaish, [I Shall Not Hate: A Gaza Doctor's Journey on the Road to Peace and Human Dignity](#)

[I Shall Not Hate: A Gaza Doctor's Journey on the Road to Peace and Human Dignity](#)

NICARAGUA

The War of 2018

By **Roger Stoll**

May 19, 2019 "[Information Clearing House](#)" -

Nearly all US regime-change wars (Venezuela, Syria, Honduras, Ukraine, Libya, Yugoslavia, etc.) are wars of deception, fabrication, propaganda, coups and false flags. Sometimes there is a direct US military assault, more often not. These wars are waged by proxies, media puppets, hired hit-men, torturers, rapists, vandals, saboteurs, death squads and criminal gangs, through mock or pretextual social protest movements, denunciations by "human rights" organizations, and by internal and external economic assaults on the country's people, transportation, commerce and communications. These were the methods of the 2018 war against Nicaragua, for which the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) alone, a well-known US regime-change shop, has spent 4.1 million USD on Nicaraguan NGOs since 2014.

There is little mystery why the US would take pains to overthrow the government of little Nicaragua (population 6 million). In addition to Nicaragua's current and historical geo-strategic importance, President Daniel Ortega's administration greatly improved people's lives, presenting what is often called "the threat of a good example."

Prior to the war and during the Ortega administration, poverty and extreme poverty were halved. Basic healthcare and education were free. Illiteracy fell from one-third of the population to nearly zero. Access to electricity went from a little over half the population to 90%. Through state subsidy programs, small and medium agricultural producers had achieved near-complete food sovereignty for the country. In defiance of the dictates of the US and the global neoliberal order, Nicaragua failed to privatize essential public services, and kept friendly relations with Cuba, Venezuela, Russia, China and Iran.

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Also notable, in light of the events of 2018, Nicaragua built a national police force recognized by the UN for its humane, community policing, headed until mid-2018 by Aminta Granera Sacasa, former nun, mother of three and Sandinista revolutionary, who during her tenure was among the most popular politicians in the country.

In the eyes of the US, these achievements are capital crimes.

Pretextual student protests covered the launch of the war on April 18, 2018. The protests came following announced changes to the country's social security programs, falsely presented by the media as austerity measures. In fact, the changes avoided the austerity plan sought by the Nicaraguan business lobby (COSEP) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). COSEP called for student protests, which were led by relatively well-to-do students from the private universities but directed toward the Polytechnic University (UPOLI) campus, one of the two main public universities that serve poor and working class students.

The police killing of a student protestor was mis-reported on the first day of protests (the student later turned up alive and unharmed). The next day, three more killings at the UPOLI were wrongly attributed to the police.

The UPOLI was taken over by armed opposition forces (not UPOLI students) demanding the government resign. The daycare center, reproductive health center and women's dormitories were vandalized. The leader of the UPOLI student union, Leonel Morales, publicly denounced the armed opposition, and was tortured and nearly killed.

Directing operations at the universities and elsewhere was Felix Madriaga, US raised and Harvard trained, and funded by the NED. Madriaga's role was revealed by gang leader "Viper," whose criminal organization was enlisted by the opposition.

By April 22nd the government withdrew the announced social security changes, but opposition forces continued widespread destruction and assaults, now concealed under pretextual protests against police repression.

Opposition tactics included 100s of roadblocks across the country meant to wreak havoc on the country's transportation systems and economy. These roadblocks, called *tranques*, became opposition paramilitary bases, terrorizing the population with killings, beatings, torture, rape and extortion. A 10-year-old girl was kidnapped and raped at the *tranque* in Las Maderas, and the opposition attacked and set fire to public buildings as well as homes of Sandinista loyalists.

The Catholic Church hierarchy, ostensibly mediating between the government and the opposition, played a leading role in organizing the *tranques*, something Bishop Silvio Baez was caught on tape bragging about, as well as calling for President Ortega to be put before a firing squad.

Yet the government agreed to opposition demands to withdraw the police from the streets. For nearly two months the police were confined to barracks while the war continued. This controversial, pacifist move may have saved lives by avoiding police confrontations with opposition forces while they were fresh and well-supplied with money, food, hand-held mortar-launchers, guns and other weaponry. Meanwhile, organized civilian self-defense forces mitigated the violence of opposition forces, even managing to remove many *tranques*. Eventually the police returned to the streets, and after three months of war, relative calm had returned to Nicaragua, although opposition killings of police continued.

Over 250 people were killed and many more injured. More than 250 buildings were burned down or ransacked, with public sector property losses of over \$230 million USD. GDP fell nearly 4%, a loss to the economy of nearly 1.5 billion USD, with job losses of up to 300,000.

Not conceding defeat, both houses of the US legislature unanimously approved presidential authority for sanctions barring Nicaragua from receiving aid from international financial institutions, a virtual economic embargo, illegal under the UN Charter.

From the very first day of the war, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the media spun a relentless and knowingly false "human rights" narrative of police repression by a dictatorial state, uniformly attributing to police the injuries and deaths inflicted by the opposition or from accidents. Aiding this propaganda effort was a tiny political party and grouplets of former prominent Sandinistas, who claim left status but lack popular support and have long been part of the US-backed rightist-led opposition.

Yet Nicaraguans have waged an heroic struggle against the most powerful empire in history. The peoples of the world owe them an incalculable debt of gratitude.

Roger Stoll is a Latin America & Caribbean solidarity activist with the Task Force on the Americas, a three-decades-old anti-imperialist human rights organization. He has published articles (San Francisco Examiner, ZNet), book reviews (Counterpunch.org, Dissident Voice, Jewschool), and poetry (Dissident Voice, New Verse News). He has been arrested numerous times in support of various causes.

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CLASH OF CIVILISATIONS

'Clash of civilizations' or crisis of civilization?

The outlook of current Western leaders suggests that humanity will be hard pressed to survive the 21st century

By **Pepe Escobar**

May 19, 2019 "[Information Clearing House](#)" -

Talk about a graphic display of soft power: Beijing this week hosted the Conference on Dialogue of Asian Civilizations.

Organized under the direct supervision of President Xi Jinping it took place amid an "Asian Culture Carnival." Sure, there were dubious, kitschy and syrupy overtones, but what really mattered was what Xi himself had to say to China and all of Asia.

In his keynote speech, the Chinese leader essentially stressed that one civilization forcing itself upon another is "foolish" and "disastrous." In Xi's

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concept of a dialogue of civilizations, he referred to the New Silk Roads, or Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), as programs that “have expanded the channels for communication exchanges.”

Xi’s composure and rationality present a stark, contrasting message to US President Donald Trump’s “Make America Great Again” campaign.

West vs East and South

Compare and contrast Xi’s comments with what happened at a security forum in Washington just over two weeks earlier. Then, a bureaucrat by the name of Kiron Skinner, the State Department’s policy planning director, characterized US-China rivalry as a “clash of civilizations,” and “a fight with a really different civilization and ideology the US hasn’t had before.”

And it got worse. This civilization was “not Caucasian” – a not so subtle 21st century resurrection of the “Yellow Peril.” (Let us recall: The “not Caucasian” Japan of World War II was the original “Yellow Peril.”)

Divide and rule, spiced with racism, accounts for the toxic mix that has been embedded in the hegemonic US narrative for decades now. The mix harks back to Samuel Huntington’s *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, published in 1996.

Huntington’s pseudo-theory, coming from someone who did not know much about the multi-polar complexity of Asia, not to mention African and South American cultures, was mercilessly debunked across vast swathes of the global South. In fact, Huntington did not even come up with the original, flawed concept. That was the work of Anglo-American historian and commentator Bernard Lewis, who passes for a Middle East guru in the US.

Divide, rule, conquer

As Alastair Crooke, the founder of the Conflicts Forum, has outlined, Lewis consistently preached divide and rule, tinged with racism, in Islamic states. He was a fervent proponent of regime change in Iran and his recipe for dealing with Arabs was “to hit them between the eyes with a big stick” because, in his world view, the only thing they respect is power.

Crooke reminds us that since the 1960s, Lewis has been a master at spotting vulnerabilities in “religious, class and ethnic differences as the means to bring an end to Middle Eastern states.” Lewis is a hero across a certain spectrum – a spectrum that includes former US Vice President Dick Cheney and US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

Now, we live in the era of “Lewis redux.” Given that the Islamic world is largely subdued, in torpor or in turmoil, the clash of civilizations basically applies, on a downsized scale, to containing or destroying Shi’ite Iran.

Meanwhile the real clash – as the State Department insists – is with China.

Huntington, the sub-Lewis, did not include Russia among “The West.” The revisionist State Department does. Otherwise how could “Nixon in reverse” be justified? (“Nixon in reverse,” let us remember, is the Kissingerian recommendation to President Donald Trump: Apply divide and rule between Russia and China – but this time seducing Russia.)

A revisionist Pentagon also came up with the “Indo-Pacific” concept. The only justification for the amalgam is that these two zones should conduct a foreign policy subjected to American hegemony.

The logic is always divide and rule and clash of civilizations – divisions provoking chaos all across Eurasia.

But this strategy is being applied against the background of a crucial historical juncture: The era when BRI is being configured as the road map for progressive Eurasian integration.

Quo vadis, humanity?

It’s not hard to detect the faintest of smiles on the faces of Chinese strategists as they survey “The Big Picture” from the vantage point of 5,000 years of civilization. The Christian West as the unique road map to deliver humanity from evil – in fact, the foundation of Pax Americana – is regarded as an amusing fiction at best.

That fiction is now looking downright dangerous, wallowing in

exceptionalism and demonization of “The Other” in myriad forms. The Other – from the Islamic Republic of Iran to atheist China, not to mention “autocratic” Russia – automatically qualifies as a manifestation of “evil.”

China, by contrast, is polytheist, pluralist, multi-polar – embracing Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism. That is mirrored by the current drive towards a multi-polar world-system. What matters is unity in multiplicity – as Xi stressed in his keynote speech. In it, we find China and Persia, two ancient civilizations – not by accident linked by the Ancient Silk Road – thinking alike.

Then there’s the appalling state of the planet, which dwarfs the current appalling spectacle of political madness. UCLA geographer and global best-selling author Jared Diamond is not being terribly precise, but he estimates there’s a 49% chance “that the world as we know it will collapse by about 2050.”

As encapsulated by author Nafeez Ahmad: “Over the last 500 years or so, humanity has erected an ‘endless growth’ civilization premised on a particular patchwork of ideological worldviews, ethical values, political and economic structures, and personal behaviors. This is a paradigm that elevates the vision of human beings as disconnected, atomistic, competing material units, which seek to maximize their own material consumption as the principal mechanism for self-gratification.”

What we’re living now is not a clash of civilizations; it’s a crisis of civilization.

If the paradigm under which most of humanity barely survives is not changed – and there’s precious little evidence it will – there won’t be any civilizations left to clash.

Pepe Escobar is correspondent-at-large at [Asia Times](#). His latest book is [2030](#).

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**MADONNA'S FAKE REVOLUTION***Eurovision, Cultural Hegemony and Resistance*by **Ramzy Baroud**

May 21st, 2019

Rim Banna, a famous Palestinian singer who translated Palestine's most moving poetry to song passed away on March 24, 2018, at the age of 51. Rim captured the struggle for Palestinian freedom in the most dignified and melodious ways. If we could imagine angels singing, they would sound like Rim.

When Rim died, all Palestinians mourned her death. Although a few international outlets carried the news of her passing at a relatively young age, her succumbing to cancer did not receive much coverage or discussion. Sadly, a Palestinian icon of cultural resistance who had inspired a whole generation, starting with the First Palestinian Intifada in 1987, hardly registered as an event worthy of remembrance and reflection, even among those who purport to champion the Palestinian cause.

Compare Rim to Madonna, an 'artiste' who has stood for self-aggrandizing personal fame and money-making. She has championed the most debased moral values, utilizing cheap entertainment while catering to the lowest common denominator to remain relevant in the music world for as long as possible.

While Rim had a cause, Madonna has none. And while Rim symbolized cultural resistance, Madonna symbolizes globalized cultural hegemony – in this case, the imposition of consumerist western cultures on the rest of the world.

Cultural hegemony defines the US and other Western cultures' relationship to the rest of the world. It is not culture as in the collective intellectual and artistic achievements of these societies, but as a set of ideological and cultural tools used by ruling classes to maintain domination over the disadvantaged, colonized and oppressed.

Madonna, along with Michael Jordan, the Beatles and Coca Cola represent far more than mere performers and fizzy drinks, but also serve as tools used to secure cultural, thus economic and political dominance, as well. The fact that in some cities around the world, especially

in the Southern hemisphere, Coca Cola "flows more freely than water" speaks volumes about the economic toll and political dimension of cultural hegemony.

This issue becomes critical when a pro-Israel Madonna decides to perform in Israel, as she has done repeatedly in the past, as part of the Eurovision contest. Knowing who she is and what she stands for, her decision should not come as a surprise; after all, in her September 2009 Tel Aviv concert, she sang while wrapped in an Israeli flag.

Of course, it is essential that artistes of her caliber and the contestants representing 41 different countries, are reminded of their moral responsibilities towards occupied and oppressed Palestinians. It is also important that Israel is confronted regarding its unrelenting efforts to mask its apartheid and war crimes in Palestine.

Indeed, the whitewashing of Israeli human rights violations using art – also known as "art washing" – should not be allowed to continue when Gaza is under siege, where Palestinian children are shot and killed daily without remorse and without the least legal accountability.

This is why such artistic events are important for the Israeli government and society. Israel has used Eurovision as a distraction from the blood and gore that has been taking place not far from that venue. Those who labored to ensure the success of the event, knowing fully how Israel is using the brand as an opportunity to normalize its war against Palestinians, should be thoroughly ashamed of themselves.

But, on the other hand, should we be the least surprised? Aren't such global music events, as Eurovision, at the heart of the western-centric globalization scheme of cultural hegemony, which sole purpose is to enforce a capitalist view of the world, where western culture is consumed as a commodity, no different from a McDonald's sandwich or a pair of Levi jeans?

Calling on 60-year-old Madonna to refrain from entertaining apartheid Israel can be considered beneficial as

a media strategy, for it helped highlight, although momentarily, an issue that would have been otherwise absent from news headlines. However, by placing so much focus on Madonna, and whatever human rights' values she supposedly stands for, we also take the risk of inadvertently validating her and the consumerist values she represents. More, in this Madonna-driven trajectory, we are also neglecting Palestine's cultural resistance, the core drive behind Palestinian 'somoud' – steadfastness – over the course of a century.

In response to her critics, Madonna answered, "I'll never stop playing music to suit someone's political agenda nor will I stop speaking out against violations of human rights wherever in the world they may be." In the eyes of many who are ignorant of the facts, such an answer may appear as if an 'empowered' response to those who are trying to sway a genuine, pure artiste from following her calling.

In fact, Madonna is an expert in appearing as if morally-guided, yet never translating such morality to anything meaningful in reality. In a speech described as "powerful" by the Rolling Stone Magazine, Madonna declared during a Women's March in Washington D.C. in 2017 "to the rebellion, to our refusal as women to accept this new age of tyranny. Where not just women are in danger, but all marginalized people."

Of course, Palestinian, Lebanese and Syrian women – who have paid a heavy price for Israeli Occupation, war and marginalization – are not to be included in Madonna's false revolution. And the chances are, shortly after she sings and dances in a jubilant, apartheid Israel, she will once more take on many platforms as if the Rosa Parks of revolutionary art.

While it is important that we keep the pressure on those who engage and validate Israel politically, economically and culturally, these efforts should come secondary to embracing Palestine's culture of resistance. Behaving as if Madonna's stage shenanigans represent true culture, while ignoring Palestinian culture

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**POETRY****Trees 1.**

We crouch along the limestone crags,
And far across the valley floor.
We peer from lofts on mountains far,
And flow as rivers to the sun.
Their boulevards we edge with life,
And circle liquids in the sand.

But soon, too soon, they reappear.
The stones they melt, the fire applied.
We suffer noise, metallic edge,
And choke on toxic vapors poured.
The slashing, ripping, silvered knife
Kills leaf and branch and forest deep.

We watch them recreate themselves,
A drive they do not understand.
For humans are a passing phase,
And patiently we wait them out.
Ten thousand more rapacious years,
Then they'll be gone and silence come.

Oh, how we long for star-filled night,
Our shoulders lifted to the light.
While they retreat into their dreams
Of fragments, lost inside their brains.
Their fears crawl in and out their souls.
They all await their final days.

For we have lived upon this earth,
A thousand, thousand, thousand, years,
While Man's brief flash of heat and noise,
Goes by unnoticed from the sky.

Again we claim the empty plains,
Restore the hills and glens and coasts,
Upend the glass and concrete tombs,
Grind down to dust and mud and slime.
Back through the organismic chain,
Atomic prints of memory, gone,
Erasing ev'ry trace of them.

We watch the lightnings pierce the earth,
And listen to the thunder's voice,
Exalting in his newfound space.
In quiet peace we taste the rain.
It courses down our limbs and trunks,
And gathers force in living streams,
Which rush impatiently along,
To join the mighty Amazon,
Down to its mother ocean deep.

And from those deeps we know one day,
Another crawling thing will come,
To hideously crush our souls,
Controlling rock, and tree and hill.
Their cities spawn as oozing death,
A stifling layer, membrane thin,
That gives some meaning to their lives,
But darkens earth's bright promises.

Oh, how we long for death to come.
In half a billion years 'tis said,
The sun in anger will explode,
Destroying earth's blue mantle round,
And kill that obscene thing for all,
To purify its Universe

Michael P. Henry

A quarter of poems published during World War One were by women compared to a fifth written by soldiers. Their poetry reveals how women participated during the war - working and debating, suffering and sacrificing.

June, 1915

Who thinks of June's first rose today?
Only some child, perhaps, with shining
eyes and
rough bright hair will reach it down.
In a green sunny lane, to us almost as far
away
As are the fearless stars from these veiled
lamps of town.
What's little June to a great broken world
with eyes gone dim
From too much looking on the face of
grief, the face of dread?
Or what's the broken world to June and
him
Of the small eager hand, the shining eyes,
the rough bright head?

Charlotte Mary Mew

From Poem Hunter

<https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/june-1915/>



NORTH KOREA: A PERSPECTIVE

A Friendly trip to North Korea

In October 2018 a dozen Australian Quakers spent a week in North Korea on a special study tour. We did not, of course, go near any of the military or nuclear installations but we were able to see some of the agricultural facilities as well as the standard tourist destinations.



Photo 1: The only piece of farming equipment we saw was in very poor condition

It came about because one of us, Sejin Pak, who was born in South Korea, was concerned that North Korea received an unjustifiably bad press. It could lead to acceptance of catastrophic conflict with a country which was regarded as the “Axis of Evil”. To counter this he wished to take a group of Quakers to North Korea to see the country for themselves and to look for ways of better relating to the people of that country.



Photo 2: The Pyongyang streets are wide and attractive, although traffic is almost non-existent

So twelve Australian Quakers spent a week in North Korea on a special study tour travelling with a concern for peace. Despite some alarm by friends and family we all returned without mishap, apart from one of us who fell and cut her head and received good medical treatment. Five of us were vegetarian but that proved no problem for our hosts.

We stayed in the capital Pyongyang which is a modern city about the size of Brisbane. The entire original city was destroyed by US bombing during the Korean War. Having a blank slate to build on the North Koreans have constructed a beautifully planned city with wide streets, predominantly public transport, and safely separated bicycle lanes. The buildings show

startling architectural originality, the public areas are clean and life is orderly – perhaps a little too orderly for Australian tastes!

Because of the UN sanctions petrol is very restricted and there were few cars on the roads.

However, buses, trams, trolleybuses and an underground railway provide very effective public transport. All labour is manual and the roads outside Pyongyang were not in good condition.

We were surprised at the number of tourists, mostly from China and Taiwan and a few from the EU. There is a rather inflexible tourist schedule and at every major monument or centre of cultural interest you will find tourist buses. The aim of tourism is to impress tourists with the achievements and skills of the North Korean people while keeping them separate from the local population. This we found difficult and kept

stressing that ours was a friendship tour and we wished to have a relationship with the local people wherever possible.

We were especially fortunate that American Quakers, through the American Friends Service Committee, have been working in North Korea for the past 40 years and have a good reputation for assisting with agriculture. This made it possible for us to see places not on the usual tourist itinerary.

We met two senior executives from the External Cooperation Department of the Ministry of Agriculture. They were familiar with the farms that had been helped by American Quakers and spoke with surprising frankness about the difficulties imposed by sanctions – lack of oil means a shortage of fertilizer and fuel for agricultural machinery. They pointed out that this makes the life of farmers very labour intensive and they seemed interested in the possibility of Australian Quakers helping a farm in North Korea.



Photo 3: Pyongyang has many avenues and vistas as a well laid out city

We were able to visit a farm where Quakers have worked and had two experts on agriculture in developing countries as part of our group. In our week of travel we saw no more than half a dozen tractors (in poor condition) and only one piece of very old agricultural equipment – a threshing machine.

We were also able to visit the Pyongyang Institute of Vegetable Science – a huge and very modern set of greenhouses which were used for growing food as well as research. The Director lamented that sanctions made it impossible to import new varieties of seed which might increase productivity.

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There were some challenging aspects to the tour. North Korea is a country very concerned with racial difference – the entry form asks you to state your race as well as your nationality. In the hotel the Europeans had a different dining room from the Chinese tourists, so it was a good witness that our group was racially mixed and we were able to eat together.

Apart from some limited Buddhism (we were told the monks pray for the good of the people and leaders) religion is banned. You cannot take a Bible into North Korea but our guides got used to Quakers falling into silence at mealtimes and other meetings. We had no trouble with taking cameras and phones (although of course there are no phone or internet connections for foreigners in North Korea) and had only two or three instances of requests not to take photos.

Another thing that was difficult for Quakers – especially Australian Quakers – is the great respect for authority. The North Koreans revere their leaders, especially their founder Kim Il Sung. We came to see this as a genuine sentiment. At every place we visited we were told it was established by the wish of a Great Leader, and we learned every date on which one of the leaders had visited.

Guides were sometimes flustered when we asked questions about other aspects

of the school, farming cooperative, factory or cultural centre. Sometimes they were amazed that tourists were interested in Korean culture, sometimes they thought our questions intrusive. Our guides, who were used to dealing with Chinese tourists, found us a bit hard to handle but good humour generally overcame our differences.

We visited child care centres and schools, adult schools, a museum and some amazing entertainments. Pyongyang has the deepest underground railway in the world (200m in some places), the largest stadium in the world (150,000 people) and some other remarkable buildings.

Constant through the trip was the call for reunification – the North Koreans see it as ‘one country, two systems’ under which they keep their political structure. However, they see the US as the stumbling block which is why they have developed nuclear weapons as a bargaining point.



Photo 5: Some of the modern architecture is spectacular

We naturally came back with many ideas and questions. Of course our experience was superficial and carefully controlled. Tourism is available in North Korea although not easy to organise. The sanctions are causing severe problems for everyday life of the North Koreans.

Members of our group came from every State except Tasmania and are happy to give talks or provide more information about our trip. If you would like to contact any of us, let me know.

Roger Sawkins, roger@sawkins.name, 07 3398 4222

[Editor: This article was provided by Roger Sawkins and Gary Yong Gee who went on a tour of the DPRK in October last year.]



Photo 4: One of the entertainments we went to comprised tens of thousands of performers

Our party and the Republic's government will go hand in hand with anyone who truly desires the country's reunification and the nation's peaceful prosperity and will make responsible and patient efforts to accomplish the historic cause of the fatherland's reunification.

--- Kim Jong Un

Read more at:

https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/kim_jongun_819274



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altogether, is similar to academics addressing decolonization from the point of view of the colonizer, not the colonized. The truth is, nations cannot truly rid themselves from the colonial mindset without having their narratives take the center-stage of politics, culture and every other aspects of knowledge.

“The intellectual’s error consists in believing that one can know without understanding and, even more, without feeling and being impassioned,” wrote Italian anti-fascist intellectual, Antonio Gramsci. This entails the intellectual and the artist to feel “the elementary passions of the people, understanding them and, therefore, explaining and justifying them.”

The truth is that appealing to Madonna’s moral sense without immersing ourselves passionately in the art of Rim Banna will, in the long run, do Palestinians no good. Only embracing Palestine’s culture of resistance will, ultimately, keep the self-serving, hegemonic and cheap cultural messages of the Madonnas of this world at bay.

Dr. Ramzy Baroud is an author and a journalist. He is author of [The Second Palestinian Intifada: A Chronicle of a People's Struggle](#) and his latest [My Father Was a Freedom Fighter: Gaza's Untold Story](#). He can be reached at ramzybaroud@hotmail.com.

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Editorial Thank you. Thank you also to all those Just Peace members who sent in articles, and other contributions and suggestions. We try to use as much of this material as we can. But we reserve the right to edit articles where necessary to fit the layout of the newsletter. Such editing will be done in a way that, hopefully, doesn't change the essence of the articles. The opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of the individual members of Just Peace.

First they came for the Communists
but I was not a Communist -
so I said nothing.
Then they came for the Social Democrats
but I was not a Social Democrat -
so I did nothing.
Then they came for the trade unionists
but I was not a trade unionist.
And then they came for the Jews
but I was not a Jew -
so I did little.
Then when they came for me
there was no one left
who could speak out for me.

Pastor Martin Neimoller, 1937