



# The Peace Issue . . .

The Newsletter of Just Peace Queensland Inc

Issue No. 50

August/September 2015

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

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## Bombing Syria: What's in it for Australia?

By **CJ Werleman**

August 30, 2015 "[Information Clearing House](#)"

Australia's isolation from its western (white) allies has bestowed on the Australian people a deep insecurity that long ago metastasised into a permanent siege mentality - the belief that "uncivilised" hordes from the Asian continent will invade, conquer, and colonise the Australian mainland the same way the British usurped indigenous Australians 227 years ago.

For the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Australia turned to its colonial master - Great Britain - for its national security blanket. For much of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Britain was the world's unrivaled naval superpower, which assured Australians that no potential foe would "mess with the South Pacific" - equivalent of Texas.

When the natural resource hungry imperialist Japan swept China, and the respective colonial militaries of Thailand, Burma, and the Philippines aside, only Singapore and the British military stood between the Japanese military and Australia.

Long story short: British guns were pointed the wrong way. Expecting a naval invasion, British artillery faced the sea, but the Japanese invaded overland via the Malay Peninsula. And when the British signed the surrender of Singapore on 15 February 1942, what was once Australia's security blanket had been fretted away into a flimsy white sheet.

Out of strategic necessity, Australia promptly adopted a new big brother: the United States of America.

For the past 70 years, Australia has acted like the wimpy kid who sucks up to the schoolyard bully for the purpose of ensuring his own protection. While the US media lavishes accolades and praise on Israel and Britain for their respective "special relationship" with the United States, Australia is the only country to have followed the US into every international conflict it has fought since and including World War II.

When the US invaded the Korean Peninsula, Australian troops were there. When the US invaded Vietnam, Australian troops were there. When the US invaded Iraq in 1990, well, you guessed it - Australian troops were there, and my countrymen were also there in Afghanistan, Iraq 2003, and Iraq 2014.

Former Australian Prime Minister John Howard, a conservative, was so lock step with the US Administration during the early years of the War on Terror, that some in the liberal press anointed Howard with the embarrassing, yet comically accurate, nickname - "Bonsai" - as in a "little Bush". Get it?

Living up to his nickname, Bonsai Howard, speaking at an Asia-Pacific Summit, boasted Australia is America's "sheriff" in the South Pacific region.

"I suppose America wants a puppet of its own in this region whom they can trust who will do whatever they wish," responded Malaysian Deputy Defense Minister Shafie Apdal.

There was no justifiable or valid reason for Howard to follow Bush into a war of choice that was Iraq. All it did was put a target on Australia's back. Australia's involvement in Iraq made it

*(continued on Page 4...)*

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**EDITORIAL: ANNIVERSARIES**

Anniversaries – they can be events to celebrate or events to mourn. In the case of war and peace, 2015 has many important anniversaries, some of which need to be remembered for the good they promised or represented, others need to be remembered as a way of never forgetting and hopefully to prevent future recurrences.

This edition of *The Peace Issue* itself celebrates a milestone promoting the cause of peace. This 50<sup>th</sup> edition (leaving aside some special un-numbered editions) continues to contribute to the aims of *Just Peace* and to the broader anti-war movement.

The major peace and anti-war anniversaries that fall due this year include:

**100 years ago** – the US invasion and occupation of Haiti occurred began on 28 July 1915. This is one of the many wars started by the US in its long and bloody history (the US has been at war for 222 of its 239 years of independent existence). It is a classic case of the “indispensable” nation attempting to use its military power to protect the major US corporations actively involved in imperialist plunder.

**100 years ago** – in contrast to the work of US imperialism, this year sees the anniversary of the formation of WILPF. In April 1915 during the course of the slaughter of WWI, the International Congress of Women agreed to create the International Committee for Permanent Peace, which became the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom in 1919.

**70 years ago** – this year sees multiple anniversaries relating to the end of the Second World War. The end of the war occurred on 8 May 1945 (Victory in Europe) and 15 August 1945 (Victory over Japan – this was the day surrender was announced. The surrender was officially signed on 2 September). This year also sees the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Never has the threat of nuclear war been as real, with the increasing bellicosity towards Russia over the US-sponsored fascist coup in the Ukraine threatening to spiral out of control into another war against Russia.

**70 years ago** – again, in contrast to the ending of the horrors of WWII, this year represents the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the United Nations (on 24 October 1945). This replacement for the failed League of Nations (destroyed by the rise of fascism and Nazism) has been an imperfect forum for promoting peace and trying to prevent wars. But it’s all we’ve got so we need to continue supporting it, but critically and with a hope for improvements in the interests of a better world for all.

**65 years ago** – the Korean War started on 25 June 1950, a war that has never officially ended. This is a war that, like the Vietnam War, should never have started. It only needed the US to stay out and leave the Koreans to make their own peace after the occupation and destruction to their society caused by Japanese imperialism. The same still holds true today where ongoing threats of war and “regime change” by the US keep the threat of conventional or nuclear war alive in this region.

**60 years ago** – the Russell-Einstein Manifesto was released on 9 July 1955 warning the world about the dangers of nuclear annihilation. [see Page 23 of this newsletter for details]

**50 years ago** – on 8 March 1965, the first US troops arrived in Vietnam, thus beginning the full-blown rape and pillage of another Asian country daring to try to create a united country based on its own political and social system.

**40 years ago** – on 30 April 1975, the fall of Saigon heralded the end of the Vietnam War, a war which devastated that country (and neighbouring Cambodia and Laos), a war from which it is still recovering today. One of the few “positives” to be taken from this long war is that it showed to the world that the US military could be defeated by a committed resistance. Unfortunately the US imperialist state has not learned the same lesson, and continues to use its military might in wars against vastly inferior (militarily) countries, but with the same outcomes as it achieved in Vietnam.

**25 years ago** – the reunification of Germany on 3 October 1990 promised much (at least from the mouths of triumphalist Western leaders). Based on Germany’s continuing adherence to the

line lead by the US and NATO, Germany has not yet managed to develop a fully-independent foreign policy. The greatest threat to peace in Europe derives from Germany’s reluctance to oppose US belligerence towards Russia.

**15 years ago** – UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) was adopted unanimously on 31 October 2000. The resolution on women, peace and security acknowledges the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women and girls. Resolution 1325 was the first formal and legal document from the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) that required parties in a conflict to prevent violations of women’s rights, to support women’s participation in peace negotiations and in post-conflict reconstruction, and to protect women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflict. The resolution has since become an organizing framework for the women, peace and security agenda.

We can and should remain optimistic in the face of ongoing use of military and economic force by the triumvirate of US, European and Japanese imperialism whose aim is to subjugate and control other countries which are trying to take independent paths towards better societies.

That is why this newsletter and *Just Peace* will continue to exist and will continue to work towards change for a peaceful and just world.

**Adrian Pollock**  
August 2015

“Have we raised the threshold of horror so high that nothing short of a nuclear strike qualifies as a ‘real’ war? Are we to spend the rest of our lives in this state of high alert with guns pointed at each other’s heads and fingers trembling on the trigger?” — [Arundhati Roy](#)

“Modern fanaticism thrives in proportion to the quantity of contradictions and nonsense it pours down the throats of the gaping multitude, and the jargon and mysticism it offers to their wonder and credulity.” — [William Hazlitt](#)

**JUST PEACE ACTIVITIES****Palm Sunday**

This year the Palm Sunday rally was organised by Just Peace and the Refugee Action Collective. Around 300 people demonstrated their wish for an end to war with the subsequent need for millions of people to see asylum. The reverend Dean of St Johns, Peter Catt, Professor Mohamad Abdulla, Professor Penny Mathew, Ros McLennan Secretary of the QCU and West Papuan peace advocate Octavius Mote

**Anzac eve**

Taking the lead from Canberra and on the centenary anniversary of WW1 Just Peace organised with Brisbane IPAN Groups an Anzac eve candlelit peace vigil and March to the Cenotaph.

**Independent and Peaceful Australia Network National Conference**

Brisbane hosted the 2015 national gathering on July 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. The conference opened with a public forum at The Edge in Southbank. Senator Scott Ludlam Professor Richard Tanter and Professor Kozue Akibayashi addressed a full house. Video recording available for those who missed it. Contact Ross Gwyther on [rgwyther@optusnet.com.au](mailto:rgwyther@optusnet.com.au).

The following day around 100 participants attended the national conference further strengthening the network. Alice Springs is the location for the 2016 national conference. This decision was made as 2016 is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Pine Gap agreement with the US. Pine Gap along with other satellite US bases in Australia is essential to war operations led by the US. Let us know if you would like to be part of this IPAN national conference at [ipan.australia@gmail.com](mailto:ipan.australia@gmail.com)

A number of conference participants joined the Peace Convergence to Rockhampton following the conference.

Just Peace purchased a number of copies of Waging Peace. This doco by David Bradbury documents the 2014 Peace Convergence in Canberra. We have copies available for you to organise neighbourhood screenings.

Contact Annette on 0431597256 if you would like a copy sent to you.

**Hiroshima day**

This year Just Peace and WILPF supported the ARC (Australian Red Cross) who organised a candle lit vigil at Reddacliff Place in the city. The 70 years since the dropping of nuclear bombs on the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is an important reminder of what nuclear weapons do. The term mutually assured destruction MAD is very relevant today with 20000 missiles poised for use and increasingly tense relations between nuclear armed states Russia and NATO.

PACSI and **Just Peace 4 Palestine** as a member of the Australian Palestine Advocacy Network hosted the Brisbane leg of a national tour for Ghada Karmi. Ghada is a Palestinian doctor of medicine, author and academic. She writes frequently on Palestinian issues in newspapers and magazines, including The Guardian, The Nation and Journal of Palestine Studies. Ghada was able to address a gathering of Union leaders at the QCU, speak at a dinner and launch her latest book at Avid Reader **Return: A Palestinian Memoir**. For more information

<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/aug/05/return-a-palestinian-memoir-ghada-karmi-review> or contact our JP4P convenor Vikki [vicki4peace@yahoo.com](mailto:vicki4peace@yahoo.com)

**International Day of Peace Lecture 2015**

This year it was decided by the UNAA Q (Just Peace is a member organisation) to focus on the relationship between climate change and wars. Former leader of the Greens Bob Brown gave a passionate speech to 300 people in St John's Cathedral on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> September. There is no doubt that military preparedness and war are huge obstacles to the urgent need to address rising CO2 levels affecting our climate. We hope this link will be evident in the Peoples Climate Rallies to be held in Brisbane and internationally. Bring along placards to emphasise.

**Peoples Climate March 930-12 November 28<sup>th</sup> Queens Park.**

Prior to the lecture a Conversation on the pope's Encyclical was held with 30 Brisbane leaders connecting on what is the community response to this gift from pope Francis.

White poppies were again given out during the Peace Lecture. If you missed the lecture it is available on youtube.

Part 1:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HAO-HEDwqYA&feature=youtu.be>

Part 2:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y5oP01vobPY>

**Getting out there in the community**

Meetings have been held with MP Terri Butler, Senator Claire Moore, Dr Peter Catt, ETU Leader Peter Simpson, Editor of online newspaper Independent Australia (IA), Retiring QCU Secretary Ron Monaghan and his successor Ros McLennan, Monthly council meeting of the QCU, and the Financial Services Union.

Just Peace was also invited to address the centenary ETU conference in May.

Radio Interviews and Media releases over the past 6 months were attended in relation to the activities above. **IA** and **The Westender** online media have been very supportive in advertising Just Peace events

**Facebook and Twitter**

Just Peace and the Independent and Peaceful Australia post interesting news articles and actions.

Thanks to Donna Weeks for running a workshop on using twitter. Your likes and sharing are helpful.

**Upcoming events:**

**Just Peace AGM - come along and enjoy the party to follow- RSVP to Annette on**

[annettebrownlie@optusnet.com.au](mailto:annettebrownlie@optusnet.com.au)

When: Sunday December 8<sup>th</sup> 2pm-6pm

Where: Magda arts 80 Boundary Rd, Bardon QLD 4065

<http://www.magdacommunityartz.org/>

**Bus route** 475, Stop 17.

**Annette Brownlie**

If we speak calmly, in a businesslike fashion, let me draw your attention to the fact that Russia supplies arms to the legitimate government of Syria in full compliance with the norms of international law. We are not breaching any rules and norms.

[Vladimir Putin](#)



(continued from Page 1...)

precipitously more dangerous for Australian tourists abroad – and several al-Qaeda led attacks specifically targeted against Australian interests and people in Indonesia in the years 2002 to 2009 speaks to that assertion.

The right-wing led argument for supporting the US invasion of Iraq was built upon the contention that read, “If we (Australia) don’t support America over there, America might not support Australia the day the ‘enemy’ comes here.” An absurd argument given Australia and the US share a NATO like treaty (ANZUS), and equally absurd given a number of US dependent military allies sat out the Iraq invasion – including Canada, France, and Germany.

When America rings, Australia answers.

A couple weeks ago, the Australian prime minister’s phone received an incoming call from the office of the US president once again. Obama asked Prime Minister Tony Abbott, a conservative, to increase its commitment towards the fight against the Islamic State (IS) group.

Australia already has six fighter jets and a number of support aircraft involved in the effort to defeat IS, and Abbott has said he is “seriously considering” Obama’s request to expand its role into Syria, and that he’ll make his decision in a “couple of weeks”.

A decision that, as Australian journalist Peter Hartcher contends, has already been made. “In truth, Australia engineered the request from the Obama administration, according to sources involved,” writes Hartcher. “In the customary way, the matter was closely coordinated in secret well before the formal American request arrived last week.”

In other words, the Australian prime minister is so eager to please his American master that he has orchestrated and engineered a narrative that allows Australia to actually volunteer for what amounts to an air invasion of Syria.

In a recent interview, Abbott illustrated his argument for expanding Australia’s airstrikes against IS: “Whether it’s operating in Iraq or Syria it is an absolutely evil movement and in the end,

when they don’t respect the border, the question is why should we?”

Wait, what? I can think of at least one reason why we should “respect the border.” That reason is a little notion commonly known as international law. You know, it’s actually quite illegal to invade a sovereign nation. But Australia’s equivalent of secretary of state, Julie Bishop, echoed Abbot’s line of reasoning when she said, “Under the principle of collective self-defence of Iraq and its people, the coalition have extended that self-defence into Syria because the border between Syria and Iraq is no longer governed.”

It’s extraordinary that Australia’s political leaders are suddenly so indifferent to international borders given said leaders have been incessantly banging on about Australia’s “immigration crisis” – a manufactured pseudo-crisis manufactured by the right to whip Australia’s deep rooted fear of brown-skinned immigrants.

Allow me to put it bluntly: Australia is an isolated Pacific island at the bottom of the earth that shares a border with dolphins and fish. It will never have an “immigration crisis”.

In returning to the overarching point, however, what can Australia possibly gain by bombing yet another country in the Middle East? I mean, what’s in it for us? And more importantly, why aren’t an overwhelming number of Australians asking, “What’s bloody in it for us?”

You don’t need to be a military analyst to know that America is the world’s unrivalled military superpower taking on a terror group that gets around the mostly desert wasteland of Iraq and Syria in the back of pick-up trucks. A Toyota Hi-Lux is the IS equivalent of a F-18 fighter jet. If America needs our airplanes to defeat an enemy like this – maybe Australia needs to remember Singapore – and then appoint China as its new big brother.

Moreover, there is no shortage of fighter jets and bombers in the region. US allies Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, and Qatar are armed to the teeth with US manufactured military aircraft. These allies can see the Islamic State

from their backyard. Australia can’t even see New Zealand from its.

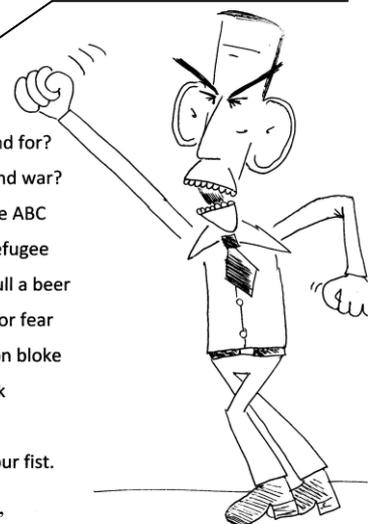
Notwithstanding the fact that US led coalition airstrikes against ISIS have been ineffective. In an interview with VICE News, Paul Stanley, director for a private security firm in Iraq, said, “The air campaign has the appearance of being reactive and opportunistic... but the overall impression is that they are not the force multiplier that was anticipated.”

Australian airstrikes in Syria would be especially counterproductive given the Iran nuclear deal has opened a path to diplomacy with the Assad regime – an opening that has already kick started talks between Assad, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Russia.

Clearly, Australian military involvement in Iraq and Syria offers no measurable or tangible benefit to the US led coalition effort to defeat ISIS. Clearly, there is no measurable or tangible benefit to Australia for bombing another country in the Middle East.

Clearly, Australia’s ever reliable eagerness to please its military minder is yet another reminder that Australia remains an insecure country ever fearful of its brown skinned neighbours.

**CJ Werleman** is the author of *Crucifying America, God Hates You. Hate Him Back, Koran Curious*, and is the host of Foreign Object.



Tony, what do you stand for?  
Other than your coal and war?  
Not sun or wind nor the ABC  
You’re no friend of a refugee  
All know you like to scull a beer  
Boozing in your thirst for fear  
Budgie smuggling action bloke  
Oiled up to Gina’s cloak  
Taking on the terrorist  
To smash us all with your fist.

Hi Adrian,

I attach a cartoon and poem from my son-in-law, Mat Denny, for your consideration in The Peace Issue. It’s not often we have such talent in the Just Peace family.

Thanks, Michael Henry



**THE OPPORTUNITY COST OF WAR**

August 19th, 2015

By John Quiggin

**W**hat is true of natural disasters is even more true of the disasters we inflict on ourselves and others. Of these human-made calamities, the greatest is war. The wars engaged in by the US, Australian and other governments come at the opportunity cost of domestic programs that could save thousands of lives every year. The cost of war, in terms of American (and Australian) lives, is many times greater than battlefield casualty counts would suggest.

That's the theme of this extract from my book-in-progress, *Economics in Two Lessons*. You can find a draft of the opening sections here (<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/29646818/Two%20Lessons%20Book/TwoLessonsDraft.pdf>).

Dwight Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe during World War II was arguably America's greatest military commander, and served as President of the United States at the height of the Cold War with the Soviet Union. It is striking, then, that more than any US political leader before or since, Eisenhower showed an acute understanding of the limitations of military power and of the economic costs of military expenditure. He is, perhaps, best remembered for warning of the dangers of the 'military-industrial complex' as a standing lobby for armaments spending.

Even more penetrating was his observation that

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies in the final sense a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed

The logic of opportunity cost has rarely been put more simply or sharply, particularly as it applies to military expenditure.

Nearly 50 years after Eisenhower's death, the lesson he stated so simply and forcefully has not been learned. Every crisis in the world brings forward a call for military intervention, often from people who regard 'foreign aid' as a proven failure.

The failure rate for these interventions is far higher than for ordinary foreign aid projects. Of the major US military interventions in the past 20 years (Kosovo, Somalia, Gulf War I, Afghanistan, Gulf War II, Libya and Iraq/Syria) only Kosovo could be regarded as a success, and even there the outcome is a bitterly divided between two hostile communities, kept apart by armed peacekeepers.

But even when military action works as planned, it is hard to justify in terms of opportunity cost. The total figures are staggering. The Afghan and Iraq wars between them are estimated to have cost the US between \$4 trillion and \$6 trillion dollars in wartime expenditures and future medical bills for veterans (Bilmes). That's ten times the total amount of aid received by the whole of Africa since 1945, an amount regularly cited to show the futility of foreign aid.

Rather than attempt to apply opportunity cost calculations to such stupendous numbers, let's look at the opportunity cost of maintaining a single additional soldier in Afghanistan. The direct cost has been estimated at \$2.1 million per soldier per year. Support costs and the need to provide for future medical care would almost certainly double this.

We could look at the opportunity cost in terms of alternative ways of providing aid to Afghanistan. The US development agency USAid provides around \$70 million a year in aid to Afghanistan, a sum which is claimed to enable one million additional children to enrol in school.

Obviously there is plenty of room for more expenditure of this kind, in Afghanistan or elsewhere. So, the opportunity cost of keeping 35 soldiers in the field is school education for a million young people. Most advocates of the war, faced with this kind of calculation would say that the object of the war is not (primarily) to promote the welfare of Afghans but to protect Americans from the threat of terrorist attack. It might seem to be impossible to place a monetary value on such protection. However, it is at least possible to identify the opportunity cost, and the US government does so explicitly. As we will see later, US government interventions aimed at

protecting Americans from threats to their life and safety are typically approved only if the cost per life saved is less than the 'Value of Statistical Life' for the agency concerned.

In particular, this procedure applies to policies aimed at protecting Americans from terror attacks within the United States. In a September 2007 Department of Homeland Security proposal to expand air travel security, the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol estimated life-saving benefits using two separate life values: \$3 million and \$6 million.

However, no such analysis is applied to overseas military action. Nevertheless, the logic of opportunity cost applies, whether or not it is taken into account by planners. Each additional soldier deployed in Afghanistan comes at the cost of the alternative use that could be made of the required funding. Taking the high end \$6 million VSL range for the Department of Homeland Security the opportunity cost of the \$6.3 million spent to deploy three additional soldiers is the funding of a domestic security program that would save one American life per year.

If the casualty rate for soldiers in the field were anything like one in three, the war would have ended long ago. Yet the same cost in lives, in the form of foregone opportunities to protect Americans at home, has been accepted with bipartisan support, because it is invisible, unless viewed through the lens of opportunity cost.

Bastiat's contrast between "that which is seen" and "that which is not seen" has never been more apposite.

Since the end of the World War II, the United States has fought three "small" wars...we lost all three of them and for the same reason-- hubris. #

~Andrew Greely

About the quote: Andrew Greely is a columnist at the Chicago Sun-Times. You can read his articles at <http://www.suntimes.com/index/greely.html>

# This obviously excludes the many other wars of America - Editor



### ANZAC EVE PEACE VIGIL

#### *ANZAC Eve Peace Vigil and Candlelight Procession 2015*

*Just Peace* believes that our national obsession with celebrating the centenary of the start of the disastrous invasion of Turkey at Gallipoli is excessive and misdirected. Australia's national day, ANZAC day, is promoted every year by those whose seek to condition the national psyche into accepting the inevitability and desirability of war.

So as the 25<sup>th</sup> of April rolls around, the vast majority of Australians act collectively "like a dog who sees the leash being picked up"<sup>1</sup>. We are all subjected to a barrage of personal stories, events, exhibitions and TV specials, all cloaked in the sombre raiment of Remembrance. In Australia the focus is fixed upon remembering those who bravely fought and usually died for their country, the ghastly horrors and insanity of World War 1 and the misery of those families who lost relatives. And who can seriously question these things?

*Just Peace* does not question these things, although we would ask whose country the ANZACs fought for. We would also ask why celebrate a major military loss as our national day. We would ask why the Lost Generation and the Greatest Generation were unable to prevent the Great Depression and World War 2. We would ask why the Silent Generation was unable to prevent the Korean and Vietnam wars, and why the Baby Boomers seem psychologically and physically addicted to war and the vast industry that supports it.

The power of the ANZAC day tradition is so strong that even *Just Peace* asks these questions around this time, instead of perhaps August 4<sup>th</sup> (1914) when Australia declared war on Germany. Thus while the nation focusses on the 25<sup>th</sup> April as The Day of Remembrance, our group organises the ANZAC Eve Peace Vigil and Candlelight Procession on the previous evening. Our objectives however include not only Remembrance of the ANZACs but also all victims of all wars. In particular we ask why The Frontier Wars (the first Australians fighting the European and Asian invaders of their country) are almost completely

overlooked. After all, these conflicts are the only ones ever fought on Australian soil. The Frontier Wars resulted in the decimation of most of the first Australian cultures and peoples. The Frontier Wars get no apology in Parliament.

In 2015, for the first time, the Peace Vigil began in Emma Miller Place on Roma Street, crossed to a memorial to the Frontier Wars located behind the new Supreme and Districts Court building on George Street, then onto the Shrine of Remembrance located above ANZAC Square, on Ann Street. The organisation of the Vigil was the combined effort of the *Just Peace* team including Anita Reed, Annette Brownlie, Norm Bullen, Ross Gwyther, Mike and Vicki Henry, Margid Bryn-Burns and Dawn Joyce.

The Combined Union Choir led by David Tulip were amongst the first to arrive at Emma Miller Place and begun warming up. More and more people walked in from various bus stops and train stations while Master of Ceremonies Ross set up the public address system and singer songwriter Glenn Major tuned up. By now (5pm) Elder Sam Watson was preparing to speak on behalf of the Indigenous peoples of Brisbane. He gave an impassioned welcome to country, followed by Glenn Major singing two songs of peace. The microphone was then taken up by Dr Daniele Viliunas representing the Medical Association for the Prevention of War. By now it was dark and candles among the 70 members of the vigil were being lit. Anita Reed performed one of her heartfelt poems on the heroism of war, and the Choir sang a rousing medley of peace songs. Margid spoke about the (white) Peace Poppy movement by candle light, and Ross called for the beginning of the march to the Frontier Wars memorial.

This memorial, officially known as the art installation, *Witnessing to Silence*, consists of sculptures by artist Fiona Foley and a series of paving stones inscribed with the names of 94 places where indigenous Australians were massacred in Queensland during the Frontier Wars. The inscriptions show signs of much wear and tear, as Brisbane workers in the CBD walk

over them day after day. Soon they will be gone, along with any visible signs of a Brisbane memorial to the Frontiers Wars.

At the memorial a wreath of white poppies was laid and Sam Watson spoke about the Frontier Wars to the large group of pilgrims gathered around him. We then moved on towards the Shrine of Remembrance in candlelight, accompanied by several police officers making our way safe through the dense Friday evening traffic.

Somehow everyone - 70 strong - arrived at the Shrine with their enthusiasm and the PA system intact. The Combined Union Choir sang songs of peace and we heard speeches by Andrew Bartlett and Annette Brownlie. Another wreath of white poppies was laid at the Shrine and then a minute's silence to consider the need for peace. At 7pm, as Channel 7 set up their impossibly elaborate live recording system at the Shrine, the vigil was over.

"For good, John?" "No, this wasn't the right time for us to meet. But there'll be other nights. Other stars to watch. They'll be back"<sup>2</sup>.

1. From a story by Martie Collins.
2. From *It Came From Outer Space*, screenplay by Harry Essex. 1952.

#### Michael P Henry



**AUSTRALIA'S FOREIGN POLICY***Time for a Rethink*

By James O'Neill

29.08.2015

**O**n Hiroshima Day this year the recently retired Director-General of Australia's premier spy agency, the Australian Security Intelligence Organization (ASIO), Mr David Irvine, addressed a meeting organized by the Griffith University (Brisbane) Asia Institute. The talk was billed as a reflection on Mr Irvine's 45 years in the public service and on the basis of that experience how he perceived the future.

With his considerable foreign policy background as a senior diplomat prior to heading up ASIO, and freed from many of the constraints of government service, it could have been an opportunity for a frank analysis of Australia's foreign policy, past and future.

Instead, Mr Irvine's analysis, while erudite and informed, demonstrated the huge disconnect between the government/public service view of the Asia Pacific region and the realities of the geo-politics in the Asia Pacific region in the post-World War 2 era. Three of the topics canvassed by Mr Irvine illustrate this point clearly and I will discuss each of them briefly.

Mr Irvine asserted that the United States, notwithstanding what he obliquely acknowledged as some of the perils of great power hubris in a unipolar world, had been the major guarantor of 'peace and stability' in the Asia-Pacific region since 1945.

That claim does not withstand scrutiny. The fallacy of the argument may be seen for example in the US's attitude to China in the past 70 years.

When the revolutionary government of Mao Tse Tong took power in China in 1949, the Nationalist regime of Chiang Kai Shek fled to what was then called Formosa, a Chinese island off the coast of the Chinese mainland.

Chiang was able to maintain the fiction that he represented China because the American Navy patrolled the strait between Formosa and China. The then naval superiority of the US prevented the

final overthrow of the Chiang dictatorship.

Over the succeeding 23 years the Formosa Strait was one of the most volatile and potentially dangerous areas in the world. This military support for the Chiang dictatorship was matched by political support, with the Republic of China, as the Formosa regime became known, holding China's permanent Security Council seat. This manifest absurdity, loyally supported by Australia, was not rectified until the dying days of the Nixon administration in the early 1970s. When the Australian Opposition leader Gough Whitlam went to China in 1972 to explore normalization of Australia's relationship to the People's Republic in the event that Labor won the 1972 election, he was attacked by then Prime Minister William McMahon for his "disloyalty" to the American position. McMahon was unaware that at the time of his attack on Whitlam, Nixon's Secretary of State Henry Kissinger was also secretly visiting China aiming to normalize relationships. The Americans had clearly not thought fit to advise their closest ally in the Asia Pacific region of the fundamental shift in their foreign policy.

A second illustration that casts serious doubt on the "peace and security" hypothesis advanced by Mr Irvine was the 1954 Geneva Accords, which concluded the long battle of the Vietnamese people to achieve independence from their French colonial masters. The Accords provided for the holding of a national election in Vietnam, which would in the ordinary course of events, have led to a national government of Vietnam. The Americans refused to allow the holding of the election in the southern part of the country, no doubt because the Northern leader Ho Chi Minh would almost certainly have won. The country was therefore divided into a North and South section, in a manner identical to the post war division of Korea and for the same reasons: maintaining an American foothold in the region and opposing the spread of "communism".

From 1954 to 1975 the Americans supported a succession of dictatorial regimes in the South. A build-up of US military "advisers" in the South had

begun under Eisenhower. When his successor President Kennedy signed a National Security Action Memorandum in 1963 providing for the withdrawal of US troops after the 1964 Presidential election, he undoubtedly contributed to the reasons for his assassination in November of that year. The architects of that assassination were the same military-industrial-intelligence-financial forces that are the effective arbiters of US foreign policy, then as now.

Immediately after Kennedy's assassination President Johnson rescinded the order for the withdrawal of US troops. In 1964 the wholly manufactured Gulf of Tonkin incident gave Johnson the excuse to wage all-out war on the North of Vietnam. That was to cost over two million Vietnamese lives, destroyed Vietnamese infrastructure, and left a lasting ecological disaster from the use of Agent Orange and other toxic substances. Among the many atrocities was the large-scale assassination program carried out in the South under the codename Operation Phoenix under which at least 40,000 suspected opponents of the southern regime were murdered.

The Australian government enthusiastically supported that war and made a significant contribution with troops and other forms of military assistance. Former Australian Prime Minister Harold Holt infamously proclaimed "all the way with LBJ", a perfect encapsulation of Australian subservience to US foreign policy. Quite how that war was a "major contribution to peace and stability" is elusive. The devastation was wrought not only on Vietnam, but also Laos and Cambodia, the latter two countries never officially part of the war, but that was insufficient to protect them from being bombed to a greater extent than suffered by Europe in World War 2.

In 2001 following the events of 11 September of that year, the United States, again with the enthusiastic support of its Australian ally, invaded Afghanistan, ostensibly because the Taliban government of Afghanistan was sheltering Osama bin Laden, the alleged mastermind of the 9/11 attacks.

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That war and occupation continue to the present day. The huge lie upon which it was based has never been part of the official Australian discourse. The official justification for Australia's involvement has morphed from 'combatting terrorism' to 'bringing democracy and human rights' to Afghanistan, to a sheepish withdrawal claiming 'mission accomplished' when the reality on the ground demonstrates that is at best a delusion.

With the death of bin Laden, most likely from natural causes in late 2001, even the flimsy excuse provided by that former CIA asset for the invasion disappeared. The real reasons for the Afghanistan invasion and occupation have never formed part of the official Australian foreign policy discourse. They have a great deal to do with Afghanistan's crucial geographical location viz a viz the Caspian oil and gas resources. We now know for example that the decision to invade Afghanistan was made in July 2001 when the Taliban government awarded a critical pipeline deal to the Argentinian company Bridas, a contract immediately cancelled by the US after the invasion.

Afghanistan is also a convenient staging post for Operation Cyclone, a program commenced in the 1980s using Pakistani training camps and Saudi money. With the assistance of bin Laden, a Saudi fundamentalist whose family had close ties with the Bush family in the US, the program trained Islamist insurgents for infiltration into the Muslim majority republics of the then Soviet Union surrounding the Caspian Sea and into the Muslim population areas of western China. The aim then, as now, was to foment destabilization in those areas as a means of promoting "regime change" among governments unwilling to accept US hegemony.

Today, Russia and China are prime targets of destabilization and "containment", another euphemism for preventing any challenge to US hegemony. A map of US military bases on the Russian and Chinese peripheries emphasizes the point.

Afghanistan also produces 93% of the world's heroin, the production of which has flourished under American

occupation. As Peter Dale Scott, Alfred McCoy and others have amply demonstrated, heroin sales are a major source of funding for clandestine US operations throughout the world. Mr Irvine made no mention of any of this in his presentation, and indeed the subject of US involvement in the international drug trade is a non-topic as far as the Australian media are concerned. Given the enormous damage that heroin does to individual lives again it is difficult to reconcile drug trafficking on a major scale with the maintenance of 'peace and security' in the region.

Mr Irvine did however refer to the tragedy of large-scale refugee problems. Again, the disconnect between cause and effect was apparent. The largest flows of refugee migration in recent years, both in absolute numbers and as a proportion of their populations, include the following: Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Somalia and Syria. Yemen is likely to join that benighted list sooner rather than later.

Their common denominator has been that they are the victims of US aggression, whether through bombings, invasions, occupation or general destabilization. It is little wonder that millions of their people have fled; often taking extraordinary risks to seek refuge elsewhere in the world. A comparative handful of this massive flow has endeavoured to make landfall in Australia. As a comparison, more refugees have landed in Italy and Greece (180,000) from North Africa and the Middle East this year alone than have reached Australia in total in the past twenty years.

Mr Irvine rightly deplored the problems created by uncontrolled refugee flows, but again failed to address one of the major root causes: the very same policies that he says were the major contribution to 'peace and stability' in the Asia Pacific region since World War 2. Again, there is complete resistance to the idea that notions of cause and effect should be debated in this context.

These same policies are closely linked to the scourge of international terrorism, another of Mr Irvine's themes. The drumbeat of fear over terrorism has contributed handsomely to the ASIO budget in recent years. It is less than

surprising that people might react to the invasion and destruction of their countries by retaliating through asymmetrical warfare. But that is only part of the equation and the only part that is tacitly acknowledged in Australian foreign policy discourse. (Not that it has led to any dissent from the US policies that are responsible for a large part of the problem in the first place).

The other part of the equation that is entirely missing from the national dialogue is the use of terrorism as an instrument of state policy. There is a well-documented history of the US creating, fomenting, supporting and otherwise utilizing terrorism for its own policy ends. ISIS is only the latest manifestation of this policy. The original Gladio operations were European based, but the aforementioned Operation Cyclone and the current Gladio B operations throughout Asia are in the same tradition.

In short, it is insufficient, as Mr Irvine did, to refer to the problems without acknowledging western culpability, including Australia, in the creation and continuation of these problems. The dirty secret is that we are largely responsible for the very behavior that our political leaders condemn.

Rather than characterizing the US as the guarantor of 'peace and security' in the Asia Pacific region, a much more realistic view would be one that is encapsulated in the late Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser's book, aptly titled 'Dangerous Allies.'

The imperatives of the 21st century demand a more sophisticated, subtle and nuanced foreign policy for Australia. Being the 'Deputy Sheriff' in the US in the Asia Pacific is not a policy designed to advance Australia's long-term vital interests. The shedding of illusions and false narratives would be a very good place to start.

**James O'Neill**, an Australian-based Barrister at Law, exclusively for the online magazine "New Eastern Outlook".

*The tyranny of a prince in an oligarchy is not so dangerous to public welfare as the apathy of a citizen in a democracy.* ~Charles de Secondat, baron de Montesquieu

**JAPANESE MILITARISM**

Published on Thursday, July 16, 2015

By [Common Dreams](#)*Japan's Continued Lurch Toward Militarism Prompts Public Outcry**'If Japan becomes another regular nation which goes to war like the United States, Japan will lose its singular brand,' says protester*By **Deirdre Fulton**, staff writer

At an anti-war, anti-Abe mobilization in Osaka this week. (Photo: Jonat/flickr/cc)

Inciting public protests and a walkout by opposition lawmakers, Japan's lower house of parliament passed a set of controversial security bills on Thursday, paving the way for the country's military to potentially fight abroad for the first time since World War II.

The move offered further evidence of the pacifist nation's march toward militarism, with one protester telling *NBC News*: "This is going to make it easier to go to war. It's wrong."

According to news outlets, hundreds of protesters stood outside the parliament building on Thursday, chanting anti-war slogans during the debate and vote. Some held banners that read: "No to war legislation!"

"By upholding our constitution, I think we've earned the respect and trust from the world... and its something that has been carefully protected for 70 years. If Japan becomes another regular nation which goes to war like the United States, Japan will lose its singular brand."

—Norikazu Hamada, protester

According to *Irish Times* reporter David McNeill in Tokyo, most members of Japan's opposition parties walked out of the chamber in protest before the vote on Thursday afternoon. Some shouted "shame" and held signs calling the bills "unforgivable."

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, whose ruling coalition put forth the bills, wants Japan's armed forces to join in military activities abroad and defend allies under attack—principally the United States—a policy Abe has dubbed "proactive pacifism."

The *New York Times* reports that "Abe has presented the package as an unavoidable response to new threats facing Japan, in particular the growing military power of China. He seized on the murder of two Japanese hostages by the Islamic State militant group in January as an example of why Japan needs to loosen restrictions on its military, suggesting that the military might have rescued them had it been free to act."

But legal scholars counter that Japan's constitution explicitly disavows war. Article 9 of the nation's constitution, which came into effect on May 3, 1947, states: "Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes."

Opposition lawmaker Yukihiro Fujita told *CNN* this week that the change will "damage the way Japanese people and country is viewed. It will damage the view of Japanese as a diplomatic nation."

And according to the *Associated Press*, polls show about 80 percent of Japanese oppose the bills and the majority believe the legislation is unconstitutional. Sheila Smith, writing at the Council on Foreign Relations' *Asia Unbound* blog, states that "[c]itizen activism against the prime minister's policies is spreading, and on the streets and in town halls across Japan, there is a push to build a coalition of opposition to Abe's effort at defense policy reform."

Abe's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and its coalition partners hold a two-thirds majority, which is needed to approve bills, in the lower house. The upper house, where the LDP and partners also hold a majority, now has 60 days to rule on the bills. Even if it rejects them, the bills would be sent back to the more powerful lower house, which can then pass them into law.

According to the *Japan Times*:

One of the two security bills will establish a new permanent law to allow the [Self-Defense Forces, or SDF] to provide logistic support for a foreign military engaging in U.N.-backed operations, while the second will amend 10 security-related laws and remove various restrictions on the SDF's operations.

The latter bill would allow Japan to use the right of collective self-defense as defined under the United Nations charter, or the right to use force to aid an ally under attack even if Japan itself is not.

Japan marks 70 years since the end of the second World War next month.

"By upholding our constitution, I think we've earned the respect and trust from the world... and its something that has been carefully protected for 70 years," said 34-year-old protester Norikazu Hamada on Thursday. "If Japan becomes another regular nation which goes to war like the United States, Japan will lose its singular brand."

Unsurprisingly, the United States has supported Abe's push. "We certainly welcome, as we've said before, Japan's ongoing efforts to strengthen the alliance and to play a more active role in regional and international security activities," U.S. State Department spokesman John Kirby reportedly said Wednesday.

Late last week, *Reuters* reported that Japan is interested in joining a 12-nation NATO missile building consortium that would give Tokyo its first taste of a multinational defense project. The news outlet wrote: "Two Japanese sources familiar with the initiative said discussions in Tokyo were at an early stage, although joining the consortium would dovetail with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's more muscular security agenda, which included the lifting last year of a decades-old ban on arms exports."

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**SHOULD WE CALL IT GENOCIDE?***4 Million Muslims Killed In Western Wars*

By Kit O'Connell

August 22, 2015 "[Information Clearing House](#)" - "[Mint Press](#)"

**I**t may never be possible to know the true death toll of the modern Western wars on the Middle East, but that figure could be 4 million or higher. Since the vast majority of those killed were of Arab descent, and mostly Muslim, when would it be fair to accuse the United States and its allies of genocide?

A March report by Physicians for Social Responsibility calculates the body count of the Iraq War at around 1.3 million, and possibly as many as 2 million. However, the numbers of those killed in Middle Eastern wars could be much higher. In April, investigative journalist Nafeez Ahmed argued that the actual death toll could reach as high as 4 million if one includes not just those killed in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, but also the victims of the sanctions against Iraq, which left about 1.7 million more dead, half of them children, according to figures from the United Nations.

**Raphael Lemkin and the definition of genocide**

The term "genocide" did not exist prior to 1943, when it was coined by a Polish-Jewish lawyer named Raphael Lemkin. Lemkin created the word by combining the Greek root "geno," which means people or tribe, with "-cide," derived from the Latin word for killing.

The Nuremberg trials, in which top Nazi officials were prosecuted for crimes against humanity, began in 1945 and were based around Lemkin's idea of genocide. By the following year, it was becoming international law, according to United to End Genocide:

*"In 1946, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution that 'affirmed' that genocide was a crime under international law, but did not provide a legal definition of the crime."*

With support from representatives of the U.S., Lemkin presented the first draft of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide to the United Nations. The General Assembly adopted the convention in 1948, although it would take three more years for enough countries

to sign the convention, allowing it to be ratified.

According to this convention, genocide is defined as:

*"...any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, such as:*

- (a) *Killing members of the group;*
- (b) *Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;*
- (c) *Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;*
- (d) *Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;*
- (e) *Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group."*

Under the convention, genocide is not merely defined as a deliberate act of killing, but can include a broad range of other harmful activities:

*"Deliberately inflicting conditions of life calculated to destroy a group includes the deliberate deprivation of resources needed for the group's physical survival, such as clean water, food, clothing, shelter or medical services. Deprivation of the means to sustain life can be imposed through confiscation of harvests, blockade of foodstuffs, detention in camps, forcible relocation or expulsion into deserts."*

It can also include forced sterilization, forced abortion, prevention of marriage or the transfer of children out of their families. In 2008, the U.N. expanded the definition to acknowledge that "rape and other forms of sexual violence can constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity or a constitutive act with respect to genocide."

**A Middle Eastern genocide**

A key phrase in the convention on genocide is "acts committed with intent to destroy." While the facts back up a massive death toll in Arab and Muslim lives, it might be more difficult to argue that the actions were carried out with the deliberate intent to destroy "a national, ethnic, racial or religious group."

The authors of the convention were aware, however, that few of those who commit genocide are so bold as to put

their policies in writing as brazenly as the Nazis did. Yet, as Genocide Watch noted in 2002: "Intent can be proven directly from statements or orders. But more often, it must be inferred from a systematic pattern of coordinated acts."

In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, President George W. Bush employed a curious and controversial choice of words in one of his first speeches. He alarmed some by referencing historic, religious conflicts, as The Wall Street Journal staff writers Peter Waldman and Hugh Pope noted:

*"President Bush vowed ... to 'rid the world of evil-doers,' then cautioned: 'This crusade, this war on terrorism, is going to take a while.'*

*Crusade? In strict usage, the word describes the Christian military expeditions a millennium ago to capture the Holy Land from Muslims. But in much of the Islamic world, where history and religion suffuse daily life in ways unfathomable to most Americans, it is shorthand for something else: a cultural and economic Western invasion that, Muslims fear, could subjugate them and desecrate Islam."*

In the wars that followed in Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. not only killed millions, but systematically destroyed the infrastructure necessary for healthy, prosperous life in those countries, then used rebuilding efforts as opportunities for profit, rather than to benefit the occupied populations. To further add to the genocidal pattern of behavior, there is ample evidence of torture and persistent rumors of sexual assault from the aftermath of Iraq's fall. It appears likely the U.S. has contributed to further destabilization and death in the region by supporting the rise of the self-declared Islamic State of Iraq and Syria by arming rebel groups on all sides of the conflict.

After 9/11, the U.S. declared a global "War on Terror," ensuring an endless cycle of destabilization and wars in the Middle East in the process. The vast majority of the victims of these wars, and of ISIS, are Muslims. And, as extremist terrorists  
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**GENOCIDE IN YEMEN***Western Complicity in Yemen Genocide  
Met With Media Silence***By Finian Cunningham**August 24, 2015 "[Information Clearing House](#)" - "[RT](#)"

**I**n the latest atrocity in Yemen, Saudi warplanes bombed a residential area, killing at least 65 people. Most of the victims are reported to be civilians from the Salah district of Taiz, Yemen's third largest city.

The apparent war crime committed has tragically become an almost daily occurrence during five months of relentless aerial bombardment of Yemen by a Western-backed coalition of foreign powers.

In recent days, there were similar air strikes on civilian centers in the Red Sea port city of Hodeida and the northern province of Saada. In the Hodeida strike, which killed several dock workers, the British charity Save the Children said it believed the attack was a deliberate bid by the Saudis to sabotage aid supplies to the civilian population.

Surely, this should be front page news, with CNN, the BBC and France 24, among other big Western media outlets, splashing it as their top story. The onus is on them because their governments are implicated in grave crimes. However, there has been no news coverage of the tragic events. Aside from some brief, vague reports of a generalized humanitarian crisis, there has been a wall of silence as to how the Western-backed Saudi-led coalition is pulverizing Yemeni civilians and creating the crisis. That suggests a deliberate blackout by Western media.

To date, the death toll in the country has reached near 4,500, according to the World Health Organization. This week, the United Nations put the total number of children who have been killed at 400. Yemeni sources say the civilian casualties are much higher, but can't verify because of the widespread mayhem.

Meanwhile, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the World Food Program say the country is on the brink of cataclysmic famine, with over 50 percent of the 24 million population at immediate risk.

Yemen was already the Arab region's poorest country even before the US-backed and Saudi-led military coalition began bombing on March 26. In just five months, the country is crumbling into a "Syria-level crisis," according to the ICRC.

What's happening in Yemen cannot be described as anything less than "foreign aggression" on a sovereign country, where civilians are being slaughtered by American-supplied "precision bombs" and F-16 fighter jets. The systematic starvation of people by denying them food, water and medical aid as a result of an air and sea blockade on the country adds to the barbarity. This is genocide by any legal definition of the word.

Despite the horror and complicity of Western governments in that horror, the Western news media avoid providing informative reports on the carnage in Yemen. When the media do give occasional brief reports, they routinely distort the nature of the violence as if it is being perpetrated by two warring sides: on the one hand, "Saudi coalition forces"; and on the other, "Iranian-backed Houthi rebels".

Let's quickly dispense with that self-serving distortion. The Houthi rebels are not Iranian-backed. How could they be when Yemen is blockaded by Saudi and American forces? The Houthis are in alliance with the Yemeni national army and other rebel groups, called Popular Committees. Earlier this year, the revolutionary front kicked out the US and Saudi-backed puppet-president Abded Rabbo Mansour Hadi, taking over much of the country's territory, including the capital Sana'a.

That is why the Saudis and their Persian Gulf Arab dictator cronies, plus the Egyptian dictatorship of Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, joined forces to bomb Yemen. They claim to be defending the "legitimate government of Yemen" represented by Hadi and his corrupt clique who are exiled in the Saudi capital Riyadh. No doubt the region's dictatorships fear the spread of revolutionary contagion, as do the Western patrons of these despotic regimes.

Washington, along with Britain and France, is supporting the Saudi-led

bombing coalition, not just politically and diplomatically, but with the supply of warplanes, missiles and logistics. The US has set up a fusion center in Saudi Arabia for the purpose of coordinating the Arab-piloted F-16s.

Germany is also implicated as, according to Der Spiegel, it is the fourth biggest arms supplier to Saudi Arabia, after France, Britain and Italy.

On the ground in Yemen, there are remnant supporters of the deposed Hadi regime. Clashes between these loyalists and the revolutionary forces have indeed contributed to the civilian death toll. But, again, Western media attempts at portraying the conflict as some kind of civil war are grossly misleading.

Among the pro-Hadi forces are troops from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Several Saudi and Emirati soldiers have been confirmed killed in recent battles in the southern areas around the port city of Aden, as well as in fire fights across Yemen's northern border with Saudi Arabia. The Saudi-led coalition has expanded its involvement in the ground war over the past month with the arrival of artillery and armored vehicles and up to 3,000 Saudi and UAE troops, according to the Financial Times.

Also among the pro-Hadi forces are Jihadist mercenaries from across the region that have been trafficked into Yemen by the Saudis, according to Yemeni civilian and military sources. This is the same strategy that the Saudis and the Persian Gulf Arab regimes have been using in Syria over the past four years to overthrow the Assad government, along with covert support from Turkey, Jordan, Israel and Western governments.

Western media have, of course, given copious coverage of the Syrian war, with false narratives about "moderate rebels" fighting against a "despotic regime". Syria gets covered because Washington, London and Paris want to implement regime change there for strategic reasons to do with undermining Assad's allies in Russia and Iran. Whereas in Yemen "regime reinstatement" of a corrupt exiled clique doesn't quite have the same story appeal. Therefore, the Western media

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just ignore Yemen.

The jihadists fighting in Yemen are linked to the Sunni extremists of Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State network, specializing in suicide bomb attacks on mosques frequented by the Shia Houthis.

Washington and its Western allies are thus heavily involved in an illegal war of aggression against Yemen, prosecuted by Saudi Arabia and other Arab dictatorships working in collusion with Islamist terror networks. Adding "efficacy" to this state-sponsored terrorism is the humanitarian siege imposed on the population.

What is happening in Yemen is truly a heinous crime against humanity committed by Western governments. It is an unspeakable crime. And that is why the Western media will not dare talk about it. The Western media are obliged to ignore, obfuscate and distort the shocking truth of what their governments are committing in Yemen.

This makes the Western media just as complicit in the appalling criminality.

**Finian Cunningham**, is a freelance journalist based in East Africa, his columns appear on RT, Sputnik, Strategic Culture Foundation and Press TV.

### WHY I SUPPORT THE BDS MOVEMENT AGAINST ISRAEL

Published on Monday, July 27, 2015 by [TruthDig](http://TruthDig.com)

By **Chris Hedges**



"Gaza, a year after Israel carried out a devastating bombing campaign that lasted almost two months, is in ruins," writes Hedges. (Photo: Agencia de Noticias/flickr/cc)

**T**he Palestinians are poor. They are powerless. They have no voice or influence in the halls of power. They are demonized. They do not have well-heeled lobbyists doling out campaign contributions and pushing

through pro-Palestinian legislation. No presidential candidate is appealing to donors—as Hillary Clinton did when she sent a letter to media mogul Haim Saban denouncing critics of Israel—by promising to advance the interests of the Palestinian people. Palestinians, like poor people of color in the United States, are expendable.

Justice for Palestine will never come from the traditional governmental institutions or political parties that administer power. These institutions have surrendered to moneyed interests. Justice will come only from us. And the sole mechanism left to ensure justice for Palestine is the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel. Sanctions brought down the apartheid regime of South Africa. And they are what will bring down the apartheid regime of Israel. BDS is nonviolent. It appeals to conscience. And it works.

The struggle against apartheid in South Africa was long and hard. This struggle will be too. All Israeli products including Jaffa citrus fruits, Ahava cosmetics, SodaStream drink machines, Eden Springs bottled water and Israeli wine must be boycotted. We must refuse to do business with Israeli service companies. And we must boycott corporations that do business with Israel, including Caterpillar, HP and Hyundai. We must put pressure on institutions, from churches to universities, to divest from Israeli companies and corporations that have contracts with Israel. The struggle against apartheid in South Africa was long and hard. This struggle will be too.

Gaza, a year after Israel carried out a devastating bombing campaign that lasted almost two months, is in ruins. Most of the water is unsafe to drink. There are power outages for up to 12 hours a day. Forty percent of the 1.8 million inhabitants are unemployed, including 67 percent of the youths—the highest youth unemployment rate in the world. Of the 17,000 homes destroyed by Israel in the siege, not one has been rebuilt.

Sixty thousand people remain homeless. Only a quarter of the promised \$3.5 billion in aid from international donors has been delivered—much of it diverted to the Palestinian Authority, the Israeli puppet regime that governs the West Bank. And no one in Washington—Republican or Democrat—will defy the Israel lobby. No one will call for justice or stay the Israeli killing machine. U.S. senators, including Bernie Sanders, at the height of the Israeli bombardment last summer voted unanimously to defend the Israeli slaughter of a people with no army, navy, air force, mechanized units, artillery or command and control. It was a vote worthy of the old Soviet Union. Every senator held out his or her tin cup to the Israel lobby and chose naked self-interest over justice.

Israel, like the United States, is poisoned by the psychosis of permanent war. It too is governed by a corrupt oligarchic elite for whom war has become a lucrative business.

Israel, like the United States, is poisoned by the psychosis of permanent war. It too is governed by a corrupt oligarchic elite for whom war has become a lucrative business. It too has deluded itself into carrying out war crimes and then playing the role of the victim. Israeli systems of education and the press—again mirrored in the United States—have indoctrinated Israelis into believing that they have a right to kill anyone whom the state condemns as a terrorist. And Israel's most courageous human rights campaigners, intellectuals and journalists are slandered and censored in their own country, just as American critics such as Norman Finkelstein, Max Blumenthal and Noam Chomsky are in the United States.

Those who become addicted to the wielding of the instruments of war, blinded by hubris and a lust for power, eventually become war's victims. This is as true for Israel as for the United States.

Israel's goal is to make life a living hell for all Palestinians, ethnically cleansing as many as it can and subduing those who remain. The peace process is a sham.

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It has led to Israel's seizure of more than half the land on the West Bank, including the aquifers, and the herding of Palestinians into squalid, ringed ghettos or Bantustans while turning Palestinian land and homes over to Jewish settlers. Israel is expanding settlements, especially in East Jerusalem. Racial laws, once championed by the right-wing demagogue Meir Kahane, openly discriminate against Israeli Arabs and Palestinians. Ilan Pappé calls the decades-long assault against the Palestinian people "incremental genocide."

In Gaza, Israel practices an even more extreme form of cruelty. It employs a mathematical formula to limit outside food deliveries to Gaza to keep the caloric levels of the 1.8 million Palestinians just above starvation. This has left 80 percent of the Palestinians in Gaza dependent on Islamic charities and outside aid to survive. And the periodic military assaults on Gaza, euphemistically called "mowing the lawn," are carried out every few years to ensure that the Palestinians remain broken, terrified and destitute. There have been three Israeli attacks on Gaza since 2008. Each is more violent and indiscriminate than the last. Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman has said that a fourth attack on Gaza is "inevitable."

Israel is not an anomaly. It is a window into the dystopian, militarized world that is being prepared for all of us, a world with vast disparities of income and draconian systems of internal security. There will be no freedom for Palestine, or for those locked in our own internal colonies and terrorized by indiscriminate police violence, until we destroy corporate capitalism and the neoliberal ideology that sustains it.

During its 51-day siege of Gaza last summer Israel dropped \$370 million in ordinance on concrete hovels and refugee camps that hold the most densely packed population on the planet. Two thousand one hundred four Palestinians were killed. Sixty-nine percent—1,462—were civilians. Four hundred ninety-five were children. Ten thousand were injured. (During the attack six Israeli civilians and 66 soldiers were killed.) Four hundred Palestinian

businesses were wiped out. Seventy mosques were destroyed and 130 were damaged. Twenty-four medical facilities were bombed, and 16 ambulances were struck, as was Gaza's only electrical power plant. Israel tallied it up: 390,000 tank shells, 34,000 artillery shells, 4.8 million bullets. Most of the civilians who died were killed in their homes, many of the victims torn to shreds by flechette darts sprayed from tanks. Children were burned with white phosphorous or buried with their families under rubble caused by 2,000-pound iron fragmentation bombs. Others died from dense inert metal explosive, or DIME, bombs—experimental weapons that send out extremely small, carcinogenic particles that cut through both soft tissue and bone. The Israel Defense Forces, as Amira Hass has reported, consider any Palestinian over the age of 12 to be a legitimate military target. Max Blumenthal's new book, "The 51 Day War," is a chilling chronicle of savage atrocities carried out by Israel in Gaza last summer. As horrible as the apartheid state in South Africa was, that nation never used its air force and heavy artillery to bomb and shell black townships.

A report by Action on Armed Violence (AOAV) found Israel killed and injured more civilians with explosive weapons in 2014 than any other country in the world. Hamas' indiscriminate firing of wildly inaccurate missiles—Finkelstein correctly called them "enhanced fireworks"—into Israel was, as a U.N. report recently charged, a war crime, although the report failed to note that under international law Hamas had a right to use force to defend itself from attack.

The disparity of firepower in the 2014 conflict was vast: Israel dropped 20,000 tons of explosives on Gaza while Hamas used 20 to 40 tons of explosives to retaliate. Israel's wholesale slaughter of civilians is on a scale equaled only by Islamic State and Boko Haram. Yet Israel, in our world of double standards, is exempted from condemnation in Washington and provided with weapons and billions in U.S. foreign aid to perpetuate the killing. This is not surprising. The United States uses indiscriminate deadly force in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen

and Somalia that outdoes even Israel, leaving behind civilian victims, refugees and destroyed cities and villages in huge numbers.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who during his last election campaign received 90 percent of his money from U.S. oligarchs such as Sheldon Adelson, has internally mounted a campaign of state repression against human rights advocates, journalists and dissidents. He has stoked overt racism toward Palestinians and Arabs and the African migrant workers who live in the slums of Tel Aviv. "Death to Arabs" is a popular chant at Israeli soccer matches. Thugs from right-wing youth groups such as Im Tirtzu routinely beat up dissidents, Palestinians, Israeli Arabs and African immigrants in the streets of Tel Aviv. It is a species of Jewish fascism.

Israel is not an anomaly. It is a window into the dystopian, militarized world that is being prepared for all of us, a world with vast disparities of income and draconian systems of internal security. There will be no freedom for Palestine, or for those locked in our own internal colonies and terrorized by indiscriminate police violence, until we destroy corporate capitalism and the neoliberal ideology that sustains it. There will be no justice for Michael Brown until there is justice for Mohammed Abu Khdeir. The fight for the Palestinians is our fight. If the Palestinians are not liberated none of us will be liberated. We cannot pick and choose which of the oppressed are convenient or inconvenient to defend. We will stand with all of the oppressed or none of the oppressed. And when we stand with the oppressed we will be treated like the oppressed.

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**Chris Hedges** spent nearly two decades as a foreign correspondent in Central America, the Middle East, Africa and the Balkans. He has reported from more than 50 countries and has worked for The Christian Science Monitor, National Public Radio, The Dallas Morning News and The New York Times, for which he was a foreign correspondent for 15 years. His most recent book is *Empire of Illusion: The End of Literacy and the Triumph of Spectacle*.

**SHADES OF THE NAZIS?***Israel Sees Nazism in Mirror it Mistakes for Window*

by David Swanson

July 26th, 2015

Israel is trying to expel the population of a village for the crime of not being Jewish, the same crime for which Israel bombs the people of Gaza for a month or so every few years and blockades them in between these bursts of violence.

Meanwhile, Mike Huckabee declares that making peace with Iran amounts to marching Israelis “to the door of the oven.”

Guess which of the two stories will get more coverage!

A crime of over 70 years ago, part of a war that in my unscientific estimate forms the single most common theme of U.S. historical fiction — whether print or film — is more important news in the view of U.S. editors than is a crime of right now.

And that was true 60 years after World War II and 50 years after and 40 and 20 and even 3 years after World War II.

Eve Spangler has just published a wonderfully well documented book that should be the text for universal history classes, called *Understanding Israel/Palestine: Race, Nation, and Human Rights in the Conflict*. Spangler, the U.S. child of two holocaust survivors, was a college professor before she had the slightest idea what had happened in Palestine during the twentieth century. When she found out, she went all-in and found out as much as could be known.

Spangler takes students to Israel/Palestine every year. When visiting the Arab market in Hebron, she learned that the heavy metal mesh screen overhead was hung there to protect shoppers from bricks and chairs thrown down from balconies by Israeli settlers. However, Spangler was struck with the contents of one of the objects settlers had learned could penetrate the screen: a plastic bag of human excrement. Israeli settlers behave like prisoners gone mad from confinement even as they steal the land and homes of non-Jewish people with impunity.

How can this be? What went wrong?

Well, at least a part of what went wrong went wrong from the start, from even before the 1948 Nakba in which Israelis-to-be ethnically cleansed the land without a people for the people without a land. The land without a people was more densely populated than the United States, but was seen as populated by subhuman non-people, not even Untermenschen.

“Clearly, the aspiration to creating a ‘new man,’” Spangler writes, “defined by a hyper-masculine ethos of physical and military strength and by ‘clean and pure blood’ (and a ‘new woman’ defined by fecundity) had echoes of fascist ideology and profoundly racist implications. Consider, for example, the iconic photo of an Israeli soldier gazing reverently at the Western Wall on the day that the Israeli army conquered East Jerusalem in 1967. He is startlingly Aryan in appearance. Nor did the preference for blondes end in 1967. Recently social workers told an Israeli friend of mine who is waiting to adopt a baby, that her family could have a ‘defective’ baby immediately, but would have to wait about a year for a ‘normal’ baby or up to five years if they insisted on having a blond, blue-eyed child. ‘Defective’ children, this family discovered, were dark-skinned.”

Two years after the liberation of the concentration camps in Europe, Jewish militias besieging the town of Beisan (Bet She’an), Spangler notes, “required some Arabs to don yellow armbands, and marked Arab stores with yellow decals, targeting them for looting.” Spangler, whose book covers many subtopics other than the one I’m focusing on, is infinitely careful to stress the obvious, namely that similarities are not exact equivalencies. Her point in noting the similarities is, I think, clearly and legitimately enough to expose the imperfect yet startling mimicry and the motivation of misdirected revenge in the basic policies of the Israeli government from that day to this toward the people who lived in the “uninhabited” land.

Lillian Rosengarten’s forthcoming *Survival and Conscience: From the Shadows of Nazi Germany to the Jewish Boat to Gaza* is an account by a Jewish woman who fled Nazi Germany for the United States as a little girl with her

parents. “Nationalism revisited,” she writes, “is now twisted into a parody of the Nazi credo, ‘Deutschland über alles,’ extolling Germany over all others with only pure Germans as inhabitants. Get rid of the undesirables who are beneath contempt. I must not make such a comparison, you say. Yet I must, for I fear a Jewish State that belongs only to Jews is a dangerous road. I must question the profound psychological impairment suffered and internalized by generations of Jews that follows the Nazi Holocaust. The cycle of paranoia and abuse is playing out its destructive course: this is how I understand Palestinians as the last victims of the Holocaust.”

I would question only how Rosengarten can see into the future and find the *last* victims of the influence of Nazism. After World War II, the military of the United States — which, of course, arms the Israeli military free of charge while whining about how it can’t afford luxuries like schools, housing, and bridges that don’t collapse — hired sixteen hundred former Nazi scientists and doctors, including some of Adolf Hitler’s closest collaborators, including men responsible for murder, slavery, and human experimentation, including men convicted of war crimes, men acquitted of war crimes, and men who never stood trial. Some of the Nazis tried at Nuremberg had already been working for the U.S. in either Germany or the U.S. prior to the trials. Some were protected from their past by the U.S. government for years, as they lived and worked in Boston Harbor, Long Island, Maryland, Ohio, Texas, Alabama, and elsewhere, or were flown by the U.S. government to Argentina to protect them from prosecution. To observe and note the Nazification of the U.S. military is neither to absolve the U.S. military of its pre-WWII crimes nor to pass blame off to the Nazis *instead of* blaming U.S. officials of later generations for their own actions. Blame is not a limited quantity.

I don’t think we can dismiss Huckabee’s comments about ovens as simply a bid to be dumber than Donald Trump and win the pro-stupidity vote in the Republican primaries.

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Transforming Iran from devil to negotiation partner victimizes Israel precisely by stripping Israel of some of its victim-status. Without the status of eternally current victim of the fantasized reenactment of long-past crimes, Israel has to be viewed through a filter of actual facts. Were Jews victimized by Germany? Of course! Did Palestinians deserve to suffer for it? Of course not! Did Iran have anything to do with it? Of course not! Would I support pulling all the U.S. military bases out of Germany and turning all of their land over to Jewish settlers? Sure!

But only those who want to leave Palestine should leave it. Only those who want to stay in a nonviolent, pluralist, secular, democratic, state with equal rights for all and compensation for Palestinians harmed over the past many decades should remain.

**David Swanson** is an anti-war activist and blogger at [War Is a Crime](#).

## ISRAEL'S PROXIES

### *Israel's Proxies Hell-bent on Destroying America for Israel?*

The Conference of 52 Presidents of the Major American (sic) Jewish Organizations and the US-Iran Nuclear Agreement: The Centerpiece of US Foreign Policy Struggle

By **James Petras**

August 12, 2015 "[Information Clearing House](#)" -

**I**n the village of Duma, an 18 month old Palestinian baby died following the fire-bombing of his family's home by Israeli settlers. The father of the child died of burns a week later and the surviving mother and young sibling are barely alive – covered with burns from racist Jewish arson. The United Nations Special Committee to investigate Israel's practices toward Palestinians in Israeli occupied territory have revealed that the 'root cause' of the escalating violence is the 'continuous policy of Jewish settlement expansion (financed and defended by the Netanyahu regime) and the climate of impunity relating to the activities of the settlers [financed and defended by the Presidents of the 52 Major American Jewish Organizations]. (UN News Centre, Aug. 10, 2015).

## Introduction

The recent US-Iran nuclear agreement, entitled Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or JCPOA, has implications far beyond the ending of nearly 40 years of regional confrontation.

Several fundamental issues concerning the nature of US policymaking, the power of a foreign regime (Israel) in deciding questions of war and peace and the role organized power configurations with overseas loyalties play in making and breaking executive and legislative authorities.

To investigate these fundamental issues it is important to discuss the historical context leading up to the rise of this paradoxical situation: Where a 'global power' is subject to the dictates of a second-rate state through the strategic penetration and influence by domestic organizations composed of 'nominal citizens' of the subject state with 'divided (to put it politely) loyalties'.

## The Centrality of Israel's Unchallenged Regional Supremacy

The motor force of Israeli foreign and domestic policy is their drive for unchallenged regional supremacy: Military dominance through wars, territorial occupation, brutal armed interventions, extra territorial political assassinations of opponents and favorable one-sided treaties. To ensure its unquestioned dominance Israel has developed the only nuclear weapons arsenal and largest missile launch capacity in the region and has openly declared its willingness to use nuclear weapons against regional rivals.

Israel's repeated mantra that it faces an 'existential threat' from its Arab neighbors and subjugated Palestinians has no factual basis. On the contrary, history has taught the world that Israel, directly and indirectly, has engaged a series of aggressive wars devastating its Arab and Muslim neighbors. Israel has bombed and/or invaded Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Palestine and Sudan. Israel has assassinated scientists in Iran and Palestinian political leaders as well as intellectuals, writers and poets in the Gulf, Jordan and Europe. Even family members have not been spared Israeli terror.

Israel can brutalize its neighbors with total impunity because of its vast military superiority, but its real power is found in its overseas proxies, the Tel Aviv-dominated Zionist power configurations, especially in North America and Europe. The most important proxy organizations and individuals operate in the United States. Thanks to them Israel has received over \$150 billion dollars in economic and military grants and loans from US taxpayers in the past half-century. Each year Israel rakes in billions in tribute, billions in tax-free donations from billionaire Israel loyalists with dual US citizenship, who extract their wealth from American workers, investors and gamblers, and hundreds of billions via unrestricted investments, privileged market access and technology transfers.

The economic and military transfers to Israel result from the cumulative build-up of political power among powerful US Zionists. No one disputes today that what is dubbed as the 'pro-Israel lobby' is the most powerful configuration inside Washington DC today. Focusing primarily on the 'Israel lobby' overlooks the powerful role that influential, Zionist political officials have played in deciding issues prioritized by the Israeli leadership.

Israeli power over the making and implementing of US Middle East policy has led to the US invasions of Iraq, Syria and Libya; the current economic boycott and blockade of Iran; the breakup of Sudan; and the bombing of Somalia.

Israeli power in the US operates through various political instruments in different institutional settings. The pro-Israel mass media moguls at the Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, the New York Times and all the TV networks unconditionally defend Israel's bombing, dispossession and repression of Palestinians while demonizing any Arab or Muslim states which has opposed its brutality – frequently calling for the US to impose sanctions and/or to launch armed attacks against Israel's critics.

The US military campaign known as the 'Global War on Terror', a series of brutal invasions and 'regime changes',

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launched after the attacks of September 11, 2001 was formulated and promoted by fanatical Israeli proxies in strategic positions within the Bush government, especially Paul Wolfowitz, Douglas Feith, 'Scooter' Libby, Elliott Abrams and Richard Perle. The boycott of Iran was designed and implemented by US Treasury officials Levey and Cohen. The drumbeat for war in Iraq and the phony 'intelligence' about 'weapons of mass destruction' was propagated by New York Times scribe Judith Miller, designed by Wolfowitz and Feith, backed by the 52 President of Major American Jewish Organizations and ultimately paid for with the lives of over five thousand Americans and well over a million Iraqi civilians. The destruction and breakup of Iraq, a long-time supporter of Palestinian national rights, was accomplished without the loss of a single Israeli life – despite the enormous benefit the Jewish state has enjoyed from the war! The extraordinary success of this highest Israeli military priority was due entirely to the machinations of Israel's highly placed US proxies.

Yet the cost of the war has been very high for the American people (and unimaginably high for Iraqis): Over a quarter million physical and mental casualties among US troops; two trillion dollars and counting in military expenditures crippling the US economy and a vast and growing army of Islamist and nationalist rebels opposing US interests throughout the region.

The Israeli power configuration within the US led the US into a war, which enhanced Israel's dominance of the Middle East region and accelerated its annexation of Palestinian land. But Israeli ambition for total regional power is not complete. It still faces a formidable opponent to its conquest of the Middle East: Iran remains a staunch supporter of the people and national sovereignty of Palestine, Syria and Lebanon.

The regime of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, backed by the entire Israeli political opposition and the majority of the Jewish electorate, has been aggressively pushing for a US confrontation with Iran – through economic and eventually military warfare.

There have been scores of public and private meetings in the US and elsewhere, where Netanyahu's regime "informed" (or rather dictated to) the entire Zionist power configuration to launch an economic and military attack against Iran with the open aim of 'regime change' and the ultimate aim of breaking up and destroying the Islamic republic – similar to the destruction of Iraq, Libya and now Syria.

#### **Israel's Proxies and the Obama – Iran Nuclear Accord**

All the major US spy agencies, including the CIA, long concluded that Iran did not have a nuclear weapons program. Its nuclear program has been proven to be limited to legal, internationally sanctioned peaceful civilian use. When the US intelligence establishment went 'off-script' and cleared Iran of a nuclear weapons program, Israel responded by brazenly assassinating five Iranian scientists and engineers, leaking faked evidence of a nuclear weapon program and directing its US proxies to push the US toward greater economic sanctions. They escalated their media campaign demonizing Iran, pushing for an economic and military blockade of Iran using the US naval forces in the Persian Gulf and its military bases in adjoining countries. Israeli officials want yet another US war for Israel along the lines of the Iraq invasion.

With the recent change in the Iranian government leadership via democratic elections there have been serious expressions of greater flexibility with regard to inspections of its nuclear programs and facilities. At the same time Washington has been confronted with multiple escalating insurgent wars in Yemen, Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Afghanistan. This provides the context for President Obama's 'pivot' toward negotiations and diplomacy to secure an agreement with Iran and away from military confrontation.

This has infuriated the Netanyahu regime. Its government leaders and agents met with the Presidents of the 52 Major American Jewish Organizations, leading Zionist Washington insiders like (Dennis Ross), super-rich Zionist billionaires and multiple delegations of notables and told them to launch an all-

out campaign to sabotage the Iran-US-England- France-Russia-China, and Germany ('P5+1') nuclear agreement.

The entire Zionist political apparatus immediately organized a multi-prong, multi-million dollar campaign blitz to undermine the US President. The American (sic) Israel Political Action Committee (AIPAC) mobilized hundreds of its full-time functionaries, invading the US Congress with offers of all expense-paid junkets to Israel, political threats, campaign 'donation' enticements and outright blackmail.

Influential US Zionist Congress people joined the onslaught with their 'leader' the 'Senator from Tel Aviv' Charles Schumer, accompanied by his fellow Zionist one-hundred percenters, Congress people like Steve Israel, Ted Deutch, Eliot Engel and Nita Lowery. They have openly chosen to follow the dictates of the Israeli Prime Minister against their fellow Democrat US President Obama. Schumer, who frequently boasts that his name derives from 'shomer Yisrael' (Israel's Guardian), flaunts his 'role in Washington' to serve Israel's interest. The unannounced (or undenounced) 'elephant in the room' is their primary loyalty to Israel over the US. The Democratic Congressional Zionists have joined hands with the Republican war mongers – both in tow to militarist, Zionist billionaires and media moguls. The 52 organizations brazenly announced a \$40 million budget to fund an Israeli front group "Citizens for a Nuclear Free Iran" to undermine President Obama's (and the other members of the P5+1) push for diplomacy. Netanyahu's 'megaphones' in the US mass media spread his message in their daily reports and editorial pages. The Zionist power configuration ran roughshod over dissident Jewish voters and Congress people who dared to support Obama's Iran agreement – an agreement which has majority support of the war-weary US public and strong support from US scientists and Nobel Prize recipients.

President Obama has finally counter-attacked this campaign to undermine the agreement, calling attention to the fact that "the same people who led us into the Iraq war are pushing us into war

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with Iran". The President discreetly omitted identifying the Israeli links of the "same people".

Obama understands that the alternative to the peace accord opposed by Israel and the Zionist-led US Congress members will be a devastating regional war, costing trillions of dollars in losses to the US economy, thousands of US lives and hundreds of thousands of wounded soldiers – not to speak of millions of Iranian casualties – and an environmental holocaust! While the Zionist power configuration saturates the airwaves with its unending lies and fear mongering, each and every major city and community Jewish Confederation have sent their activists to plant stories and twist arms to sabotage the agreement.

While many US intellectuals, liberals, progressives and leftists support the US-Iran agreement (see the Scientists' Letter to Obama on Iran Nuclear Deal, Aug. 8, 2015 with 29 top scholars and Nobel laureates support diplomacy), few would dare to identify and attack Israel's US proxies as they promote Tel Aviv's agenda pushing the US to war with Iran. A brief glance through the sectarian left press, for example, The Socialist Register, New Politics, New Left Review, finds no discussion of the powerful, well-financed, highly organized, elite-driven Israeli proxies and their role in determining US wars in the Middle East, and more specifically the war agenda toward Iran.

### Conclusion

The success or failure of the US-Iran nuclear agreement will have momentous, world-historic consequences that go far beyond the Middle East. Obama is absolutely right to pose the question as one between a diplomatic accord or a large scale, long-term devastating war. But war is what Israel, its leaders, its majority and its opposition parties are demanding and what its US proxies are pursuing.

The basic question for all Americans is whether we will act as an independent, sovereign country pursuing peace through diplomacy, as we currently see unfolding with Iran and Cuba, or a submissive military instrument, directed by Israel's proxies hell-bent on destroying America for Israel.

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### THE REAL ENEMY IS WITHIN

By Chris Hedges

September 07, 2015 "[Information Clearing House](#)" - "[Truthdig](#)"

**I**f you are not dedicated to the destruction of empire and the dismantling of American militarism, then you cannot count yourself as a member of the left. It is not a side issue. It is *the* issue. It is why I refuse to give a pass in this presidential election campaign to Bernie Sanders, who refuses to confront the war industry or the crimes of empire, including U.S. support for the slow genocide carried out by Israel against the Palestinians. There will be no genuine democratic, social, economic or political reform until we destroy our permanent war machine.

Militarists and war profiteers are our greatest enemy. They use fear, bolstered by racism, as a tool in their efforts to abolish civil liberties, crush dissent and ultimately extinguish democracy. To produce weapons and finance military expansion, they ruin the domestic economy by diverting resources, scientific and technical expertise and a disproportionate share of government funds. They use the military to carry out futile, decades-long wars to enrich corporations such as Lockheed Martin, General Dynamics, Raytheon and Northrop Grumman. War is a business. And when the generals retire, guess where they go to work? Profits swell. War never stops. Whole sections of the earth live in terror. And our nation is disemboweled and left to live under what the political philosopher Sheldon Wolin calls "inverted totalitarianism." Libertarians seem to get this. It is time the left woke up.

"Bourgeois society faces a dilemma," socialist Rosa Luxemburg writes, "either a transition to Socialism, or a return to barbarism ... we face the choice: either the victory of imperialism and the decline of all culture, as in ancient Rome—annihilation, devastation, degeneration, a yawning graveyard; or the victory of Socialism—the victory of the international working class consciously assaulting imperialism

and its method: war. This is the dilemma of world history, either-or; the die will be cast by the class-conscious proletariat."

The U.S. military and its array of civilian contractors operate as enforcers and hired killers across the globe for corporations, many of which pay no taxes. Young men and women, many unable to find work, are the cannon fodder. The U.S. military has served as the handmaiden of capitalism since it committed genocide against Native Americans, carried out on behalf of land speculators, mineral companies, timber merchants and the railroads. The military replicated this indiscriminate slaughter at the end of the 19th century in our imperial expansion in Cuba and elsewhere in the Caribbean, in Central America and especially in the Philippines. Military muscle exists to permit global corporations to expand markets and plunder oil, minerals and other natural resources while keeping subjugated populations impoverished by corrupt and brutal puppet regimes. The masters of war are the scum of the earth.

It was the war profiteers and the military, as Seymour Melman has pointed out, that conspired after World War II to keep the country in a state of total war, deforming the economy to continue to produce massive amounts of weapons and armaments in peacetime. The permanent war economy is sustained through fearmongering—about communists during the Cold War and about Islamic jihadists today. Such fearmongering is used not only to justify crippling military expenditures but to crush internal dissent. The corporatists and the military, which have successfully carried out what John Ralston Saul calls a "coup d'état in slow motion," have used their political and economic clout to dismantle programs and policies put in place under the New Deal. Brian Waddell writes of this process:

The requirements of total war ... revived corporate political leverage, allowing corporate executives inside and outside the state extensive influence over wartime mobilization policies. ... Assertive corporate executives and military officials formed

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a very effective wartime alliance that not only blocked any augmentation of the New Dealer authority but also organized a powerful alternative to the New Deal. International activism displaced and supplanted New Deal domestic activism. Thus was the stage finally set for a vastly extended and much more powerful informal U.S. empire outside its own hemisphere.

The war machine is not, and almost never has been, a force for liberty or democracy. It does not make us safe. It does not make the world safe. And its immense economic and political power internally, including its management of the security and surveillance state and its huge defense contracts, has turned it into the most dangerous institution in America.

Military expenditures bleed the federal budget—officially—of \$598.49 billion a year, or 53.71 percent of all spending. This does not, however, include veterans' benefits at \$65.32 billion a year or hidden costs in other budgets that see the military and the war profiteers take as much as \$1.6 trillion a year out of the pockets of taxpayers. The working and middle class fund the endless wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, Yemen and a host of other countries while suffering crippling "austerity" programs, massive debt peonage, collapsing infrastructures, chronic underemployment and unemployment and mounting internal repression. The war industry, feeding off the carcass of the state, grows fat and powerful with profits. This is not unique. It is how all empires are hollowed out from the inside. As we are impoverished and stripped of our rights, the tools used to maintain control on the outer reaches of empire—drones, militarized police, indiscriminate violence, a loss of civil liberties, and security and surveillance—are used on us. We have devolved, because of the poison of empire, into a Third World nation with nukes. We are ruled by an omnipotent, corporate oligarchy and their Pretorian Guard. The political class, Republican and Democrat, dances to the tune played by these oligarchs and militarists and mouths the words they want it to say.

C. Wright Mills in "The Power Elite" warns of a military machine that not only

holds the political and economic life of the nation hostage but also has the ability to form public opinion. The Pentagon spends \$4.7 billion a year and has some 27,000 employees who work on recruitment, advertising, psychological operations and public relations, according to a 2009 report by The Associated Press. But millions of dollars more for propaganda are hidden within classified budgets. The Pentagon places its commentators and pundits on the airwaves, produces "news" stories for the press, has ubiquitous advertising, runs junkets for Wall Street capitalists and elected officials and manages how Hollywood and television portray war and the military. Mills writes:

... [I]n all of pluralist America, there is no interest—there is no possible combination of interests—that has anywhere near the time, the money, the manpower, to present a point of view on the issues involved that can effectively compete with the views presented day in and day out by the warlords and by those whom they employ.

This means, for one thing, that there is no free and wider debate of military policy or of policies of military relevance. But that, of course, is in line with the professional soldier's training for command and obedience, and with his ethos, which is certainly not that of a debating society in which decisions are put to a vote. It is also in line with the tendency in a mass society for manipulation to replace explicitly debated authority, as well as the fact of total war in which the distinction between soldier and civilian is obliterated. The military manipulation of civilian opinion and the military invasion of the civilian mind are now important ways in which the power of the warlords is steadily exerted.

The extent of the military publicity, and the absence of opposition to it, also means that it is not merely this proposal or that point of view that is being pushed. In the absence of contrasting views, the very highest form of propaganda warfare can be fought: the propaganda for a definition of reality within which only certain limited viewpoints are possible. What is being promulgated and reinforced is the military metaphysics—the cast of mind that defines international reality as

basically military. The publicists of the military ascendancy need not really work to indoctrinate with this metaphysics those who count: they have already accepted it.

The naked greed and violence that define empire, understood by writers such as Joseph Conrad, Eduardo Galeano and Arundhati Roy, is masked within empire behind the cant of patriotism and nationalism, which sanctify self-exaltation and racism. Imperial war is transformed through the magic of propaganda into glorious spectacle. Galeano once wrote that "each time a new war is disclosed in the name of the fight of the good against evil, those who are killed are all poor. It's always the same story repeating once and again and again."

The hypermasculinity of the military, celebrated by Hollywood and the media, is seductive to an underclass trapped in menial, dead-end jobs. Empires feed like vultures on these pools of frustrated surplus labor. They manipulate their feelings of powerlessness. This is why capitalists create pools of surplus labor. Those who are desperate to secure a place in society are easy fodder for the military and ready candidates for underpaid jobs without benefits or job security. Our corporate, neofeudal society is by design.

The sons and daughters of the elites rarely serve in the military. The military, even at the service academies such as West Point, attracts those who have been cast aside by neoliberalism. Often, before joining the military, they lack a clearly defined identity or sense of purpose. They are terrified of being pushed permanently into the underclass. They are especially susceptible to indoctrination. The military teaches soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines not to think, not to challenge assumptions and structures, but to obey and to be "tough" and "strong." This hypermasculine culture glorifies the state and state violence. It renders all human beings outside the sacred national circle as objects to control or exploit. It creates a binary world of good and evil. It sanctifies violence, especially male violence. It is why rape is endemic in the military.

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It is why pornography and violence against women are so pervasive in the culture. Tenderness, nurturing and empathy, along with intellectual inquiry and artistic expression, are banished. The weak and the vulnerable deserve to be cast aside. Our enemies deserve to be killed. It is the culture of death. And we drink deep from this dark elixir.

W.E.B. Du Bois warns that empire was the primary tool used to break the working class in Europe and later in the United States. As workers organized and fought for rights and fair wages, the masters of empire started to shift production to countries more easily controlled, countries inhabited by “darker peoples.” This is a shift that is largely complete.

“Here, are no labor unions or votes or questioning onlookers or inconvenient consciences,” Du Bois writes. “These men may be used down to the very bone, and shot and maimed in ‘punitive’ expeditions when they revolt. In these dark lands ‘industrial development’ may repeat in exaggerated form every horror of the industrial horror of Europe, from slavery and rape to disease and maiming, with one test of success—dividends.”

Du Bois also knew that the costs of maintaining empire were offset by the profits. “What do nations care about the cost of war, if by spending a few hundred millions in steel and gunpowder they can gain a thousand millions in diamonds and cocoa?” he asks.

The reality of empire is nearly impossible to see from the heart of empire. Those who speak its truth are banished from the airwaves. They are condemned as traitors or “anti-American.” The cries of empire’s victims are rarely heard. The crimes that empire commits are rendered invisible. The greed of the war makers, along with the corruption and dishonesty of the political, judicial, academic and media courtiers who serve empire, is blocked from public view. The image of empire is scripted like a Walt Disney movie. This mythical narrative is disseminated in films, on television, by the press, in churches, in universities and by the state. It is a lie. But it is a lie that works. And it works because it is what we want. It appeals to our fantasies about ourselves:

that we are a virtuous people, that God has blessed us above others, that we have the highest form of civilization, that we have been anointed to police the world and make it safe, that we are the most powerful and righteous nation on earth, that we are always assured of victory, that we have a right to kill in the name of nationalist values—values determined by our naked self-interest and that we conveniently define as universal.

Noam Chomsky, more than perhaps any other American intellectual, has laid bare the latent forces of totalitarianism in our midst and warned us against the contagion of empire. He says:

Those with deep totalitarian commitments identify the state with the society, its people, and its culture. Therefore those who criticized the policies of the Kremlin under Stalin were condemned as “anti-Soviet” or “hating Russia.” For their counterparts in the West, those who criticize the policies of the U.S. government are “anti-American” and “hate America”; those are the standard terms used by intellectual opinion, including left-liberal segments, so deeply committed to their totalitarian instincts that they cannot even recognize them, let alone understand their disgraceful history, tracing to the origins of recorded history in interesting ways. For the totalitarian, “patriotism” means support for the state and its policies, perhaps with twitters of protest on grounds that they might fail or cost us too much. For those whose instincts are democratic rather than totalitarian, “patriotism” means commitment to the welfare and improvement of the society, its people, its culture. That’s a natural sentiment and one that can be quite positive. It’s one all serious activists share, I presume; otherwise why take the trouble to do what we do? But the kind of “patriotism” fostered by totalitarian societies and military dictatorships, and internalized as second nature by much of intellectual opinion in more free societies, is one of the worst maladies of human history, and will probably do us all in before too long.

There can be no rational debate about empire with many desperate Americans who have ingested this as their creed. The distortion of neoliberalism has left

them little else. Here lies the virus of fascism, wrapped in the American flag, held aloft by the Christian cross and buttressed by white supremacy. It is a potent and dangerous force within the body politic. And it is growing. The real enemy is within.

**Chris Hedges** – see Page 13 for author details.

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### Only Human

Darwin told us we are cousins of the apes, not the angels. Later on, we learned we emerged from Africa’s jungle and that no stork ever carried us from Paris. And not long ago we discovered that our genes are almost identical to those of mice.

Now we can’t tell if we are God’s masterpiece or the devil’s bad joke. We puny humans:

*exterminators of everything,  
hunters of our own,  
creators of the atom bomb, the  
hydrogen bomb, and the neutron  
bomb, which is the healthiest of all  
bombs since it vaporizes people and  
leaves objects intact,  
we, the only animals who invent  
machines,  
the only ones who live at the service  
of the machines they invent,  
the only ones who devour their own  
home,  
the only ones who poison the water  
they drink and the earth that feeds  
them,  
the only ones capable of renting or  
selling themselves, or renting or  
selling their fellow humans,  
the only ones who kill for fun,  
the only ones who torture,  
the only ones who rape.*

And also

*the only ones who laugh,  
the only ones who daydream,  
the ones who make silk from the spit  
of a worm,  
the ones who find beauty in rubbish,  
the ones who discover colors beyond  
the rainbow,  
the ones who furnish the voices of  
the world with new music,  
and who create words so that  
neither reality nor memory will be  
mute.*

**Eduardo Galeano**

**WHY SYRIA IS WINNING**

*Advancing Towards a Strategic Victory that will Transform the Middle East?*

By Prof. Tim Anderson

*Syria is winning. Despite ongoing bloodshed and serious economic pressure, Syria is advancing steadily towards a military and strategic victory that will transform the Middle East. There is clear evidence that Washington's plans – whether for 'regime change', for rendering the state dysfunctional or for dismembering the country on sectarian lines – have failed.*

**T**hat failure will fatally wound the US dream, announced a decade ago by Bush junior, for a subservient 'New Middle East'. Syria's victory is a combination of coherent popular support for the national army, in face of a vicious sectarian Islamists (*takfiris*), firm backing by key allies, and fragmentation of the international forces lined up against them.

The economic hardships, including regular blackouts, are now worse but have not broken the Syrian people's will to resist. The government ensures basic foods are affordable and maintains education, health, sports, cultural and other services. A string of formerly hostile states and UN agencies are resuming their relations with Syria. An improved security situation, the recent big power agreement with Iran and other favourable diplomatic moves are all signs that the Axis of Resistance has strengthened.

You wouldn't know much of this by reading the western media, which has lied persistently about the character of the conflict and developments in the crisis. Key features of that deception have been to hide NATO's backing for the *takfiri* groups, yet trumpet their advances and ignore the Syrian Army roll-backs. In fact, these western-backed terrorists have made no real strategic advance since a flood of foreign fighters helped them take parts of northern Aleppo, back in mid-2012.

In my second visit to Syria during the crisis, in July 2015, I could see how security had improved around the major cities. In my first visit in December 2013, although NATO's throat-cutters had been ejected from much of Homs

and Qsair, they were in the ancient village of Maloula and along the Qalamoun Mountains, as well as attacking the road south to Sweida. This year we were able to travel freely by road from Sweida to Damascus to Homs to Latakia, with just one minor detour around Harasta. In late 2013 there was daily mortaring of eastern Damascus; this year it was far less common. The army seems to control 90% of the heavily populated areas.

Fact check one: there never were any 'moderate rebels'. A genuine political reform movement was displaced by a Saudi-backed Islamist insurrection, through March-April 2011. In the first few months of the crisis, from Daraa to Homs, key armed groups like the Farouq brigade were extremists backed by Saudi Arabia and Qatar, who practised public atrocities and blew up hospitals, using genocidal slogans and practising sectarian ethnic cleansing. Syrians these days call them all 'Daesh' (ISIL) or just 'mercenaries', not bothering too much with the different brand names. The recent statement by 'moderate rebel' leader Lamia Nahas that Syria's 'minorities are evil and must be disposed of', just as Hitler and the Ottomans disposed of minorities, only underlines that fact. The character of the armed conflict has always been between a confrontation between an authoritarian but pluralist and socially inclusive state, and Saudi-style sectarian Islamists, acting as proxy armies for the big powers.

Fact check two: almost all the atrocities blamed on the Syrian Army have been committed by western-backed gangs, as part of their strategy to attract deeper western intervention. That includes the discredited chemical weapons claims and the collateral damage claims of the so-called 'barrel bombing'. US journalist Nir Rosen wrote back in 2012, 'Every day the opposition gives a death toll, usually without any explanation ... Many of those reported killed are in fact dead opposition fighters but ... described in reports as innocent civilians killed by security forces'. Those opposition reports are still relied on by partisan groups such as Amnesty International (US) and Human Rights Watch, to bolster the war propagandists. The Syrian

Army has indeed executed captured terrorists, and the secret police continue to detain and mistreat those suspected of collaborating with those terrorists. But this is an army which enjoys very strong public support. The Islamist gangs, on the other hand, openly boast of their atrocities and have minimal public support.

Fact check three: while there is a terrorist 'presence' in large parts of Syria, neither Daesh/ISIL nor any other armed group 'controls' much of the populated Syrian territory. Western agencies (such as Janes and ISW) regularly confuse presence with control. Notwithstanding the Daesh/ISIL offensives in Daraa, Idlib and Eastern Homs, the heavily populated areas of Syria are under noticeably stronger army control than they were in 2013. Only a few areas have been held for months or years. In any sustained confrontation, the Army generally wins; but it is under pressure and not infrequently makes a tactical retreat, because it is fighting on dozens of fronts.

The Syrian Army has tightened its cordon around northern Aleppo, Douma and Harasta, and has had recent victories in Hasaka, Idlib and Daraa. With Hezbollah forces the Army has virtually eliminated Daesh/ISIL and its squabbling partners from the Qalamoun mountains, along the border with Lebanon.

Despite years of mass terrorism and western sanctions the Syrian state is functioning surprisingly well. In July 2015 our group visited large sports centres, schools and hospitals. Millions of Syrian children attend school and hundreds of thousands still study in mostly fee-free universities. Unemployment, shortages and power blackouts plague the country. *Takfiri* groups have targeted hospitals for demolition since 2011. They also regularly attack power plants, leading to government rationing of electricity, until the system is back up. There are serious shortages and widespread poverty but, despite the war, everyday life goes on.

For example, there was controversy in 2014 over building the 'Uptown' (continued on Page 21...)



(continued from Page 20...)

complex in New Sham, a large satellite city outside Damascus. The facility comprises restaurants, shops, sports facilities and, at the centre, children's rides and other entertainment. 'How could the state spend so much money on this, when so many people were suffering from the war?' one side of the argument ran. On the other side it was said that life goes on and families have to live their lives. After Ramadan, during Eid, we saw thousands of families making use of this very child-friendly complex.

Security procedures have become 'normal'. Frequent army checkpoints are met with remarkable patience. Syrians know they are for their security, especially against the car and truck bombs used by the Islamists. Soldiers are efficient but human, often exchanging friendly chat with the people. Most families have members in the Army and many have lost loved ones. Syrians do not endure curfews or cower from soldiers, as so many did under the US-backed fascist dictatorships of Chile and El Salvador, in the past.

In the north, the Mayor of Latakia told us that this province of 1.3 million now has over three million, having absorbed displaced people from Aleppo, Idlib and other northern areas affected by incursions of sectarian terrorists. Most are in free or subsidised government housing, with family and friends, renting or in small businesses. We saw one group of about 5,000, many from Hama, at Latakia's large sports complex. In the south, Sweida has been hosting 130,000 displaced families from the Daraa area, doubling the population of that province. Yet Damascus holds the greater part of the six million internally displaced people and, with a little help from the UNHCR, the government and army are the main ones organising their care. The western media only tells you about the refugee camps in Turkey and Jordan, facilities mostly controlled by the armed groups.

The 'regime attacking civilians' or 'indiscriminately' bombing civilian areas only has a basis in the Islamist propaganda on which much of the western media relies. The fact that, after three years, Syrian planes and artillery have not flattened hold-out areas like

Jobar, Douma and parts of northern Aleppo, gives the lie to claims against the Army. You can be almost certain that the next time western media say 'civilians' are being killed by 'indiscriminate' Syrian government bombing, it is the Islamist sources themselves who are under attack.

This war is being fought on the ground, building to building, with many army casualties. Many Syrians we spoke to said they wished the government would indeed flatten these ghost towns, saying that the only civilians left there are the families of and collaborators with the extremist groups. The Syrian Government proceeds with greater caution.

Regional states see what is coming, and have begun to rebuild ties with Syria. Washington still pushes its chemical weapons lies (in face of the independent evidence), but lost its stomach for any major escalation back in late 2013, after the confrontation with Russia. There is still much sabre rattling, but it is noteworthy that Egypt and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), enemies of Syria just a little while back, are now normalising their diplomatic relations with Damascus.

The UAE, perhaps the most 'flexible' of the Gulf monarchies, but also linked by Vice President Joe Biden to support for Daesh/ISIL, has its own worries. It recently arrested dozens of Islamists over a plot to turn the absolutist monarchy into an absolutist caliphate. Egypt, back in military hands after a short-lived Muslim Brotherhood Government that wanted to join in the attacks on Syria, is now dealing with its own sectarian terrorism, from that same Brotherhood. The largest of Arab countries now defends the territorial integrity of Syria and backs (at least verbally) the Syrian campaigns against terrorism. Egyptian analyst Hassan Abou Taleb calls this message 'a condemnation and rejection of Turkey's unilateral moves' against Syria.

The Erdogan Government tried to position Turkey at the head of a Muslim Brotherhood region, but has lost allies, is often at odds with its anti-Syrian partners and faces dissent at home. Washington has tried to use the separatist Kurds against both Baghdad and Damascus, while Turkey sees them

as key enemies and the Saudi-backed Islamists slaughter them as 'apostate' Muslims. For their part, the Kurdish communities have enjoyed greater autonomy and acceptance under Iran and Syria.

Washington's recent agreement with Iran is an important development, as the Islamic Republic remains the most important regional ally of secular Syria and a firm opponent of Saudi-style Islamists. Affirmation of Iran's role in the region upsets the Saudis and Israel, but bodes well for Syria. All commentators see a diplomatic jockeying for position after the Iran deal and – despite Iran's recent exclusion from a meeting between Russian, US and Saudi foreign ministers – there can be little doubt that Iran's hand has been strengthened in regional affairs. An unusual meeting between Syria's intelligence chief, Brigadier-General Ali Mamlouk, and the Saudi Defence Minister, Prince Mohammed Bin Salman, also shows that the Syrian Government has resumed direct discussions with the major sponsor of terrorism in the region.

Syria is winning because the Syrian people have backed their army against sectarian provocations, mostly fighting their own battles against NATO and Gulf Monarchy sponsored multinational terrorism. Syrians, including most devout Sunni Muslims, will never accept that head-chopping, vicious and sectarian perversion of Islam promoted by the Gulf monarchies.

Syria's victory will have wider implications. It spells an end to Washington's roller coaster of 'regime change' across the region, from Afghanistan to Iraq to Libya. Out of the death and misery caused by this dirty war we are seeing the emergence of a stronger 'Axis of Resistance'. Syria's victory will also be that of Iran and of the Lebanese Resistance, led by Hezbollah. Further, the conflict has helped built significant measures of cooperation with Iraq. The gradual incorporation of Baghdad into this Axis will seal the humiliating defeat of plans for a US-Israel-Saudi dominated 'New Middle East'. This regional unity comes at a terrible cost, but it is coming, nonetheless.

**THE MYTH OF A RUSSIAN 'THREAT'**By **Pepe Escobar**August 25, 2015 "[Sputnik](#)"

**C**hairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Martin Dempsey entered certified Donald "known unknown" Rumsfeld territory when he recently tried to conceptualize the "threat"; "Threats are the combination, or the aggregate, of capabilities and intentions. Let me set aside for the moment, intentions, because I don't know what Russia intends."

So Dempsey admits he does not know what he's talking about. What he seems to know is that Russia is a "threat" anyway — in space, cyber space, ground-based cruise missiles, submarines.

And most of all, a threat to NATO; "One of the things that Russia does seem to do is either discredit, or even more ominously, create the conditions for the failure of NATO."

So Russia "does seem" to discredit an already self-discredited NATO. That's not much of a "threat".

All these rhetorical games take place while NATO "does seem" to get ready for a direct confrontation with Russia. And make no mistake; Moscow does view NATO's belligerence as a real threat.

**It's PGS vs. S-500**

The "threat" surge happens just as US Think Tankland recharges the notion of containment of Russia. Notorious CIA front Stratfor has peddled a propaganda piece praising Cold War mastermind George Kennan as the author of the "containment of Russia" policy.

The US intel apparatus don't do irony; before he died, Kennan said it was now the US that had to be contained, not Russia.

Containment of Russia — via the expansion of the EU and NATO — has always been a work in progress because the geopolitical imperative has always been the same; as Dr. Zbigniew "The Grand Chessboard" Brzezinski never tired of stressing, it was always about preventing the — threatening — emergence of a Eurasian power capable of challenging the US.

Ultimately, the notion of "containment" can be stretched out towards the dismantling of Russia itself. It also carries the inbuilt paradox that NATO's infinite expansion eastwards has made Eastern Europe less, not more, safe.

Assuming there would even be a lethal Russia-NATO confrontation, Russian tactical nuclear weapons would knock out all NATO airports in less than twenty minutes. Dempsey — cryptically — admits as much.

What he cannot possibly admit is if a decision had been made in Washington, a long time ago, preventing NATO's infinite expansion, Russia's concerted move to upgrade its nuclear weapon arsenal would have been unnecessary.

Geopolitically, the Pentagon has finally seen which way the — strategic partnership — wind is blowing; towards Russia-China. This major game-changing shift in the global balance of power also translates as the combined military assets of China and Russia exceeding NATO's.

In terms of military power Russia has superior offensive and defensive missiles over the US, with the new generation surface-to-air missile system, the S-500, capable of intercepting supersonic targets and totally sealing Russian airspace.

Moreover, despite short-term financial turbulence, the Sino-Russian combined strategy for Eurasia — an interpenetration of the New Silk Road(s) and the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) — is bound to develop their economies and the region at large to an extent that may surpass the EU and the US combined by 2030.

What's left for NATO is to stage military strength made-for-TV shows such as "Atlantic Resolve" to "reassure the region", especially hysteria-prone Poland and the Baltics.

Moscow, meanwhile, has made it clear that nations deploying US-owned anti-ballistic missile systems in their territory will face missile early-warning systems deployed in Kaliningrad.

And Major General Kirill Makarov, Russia's Aerospace Defense Forces' deputy chief, has already made it clear Moscow is upgrading its air and missile defense capabilities to smash any — real — threat by the US Prompt Global Strike (PGS).

In the December 2014 Russian military doctrine, NATO's military

build-up and PGS are listed as Russia's top security threats. Deputy Defense Minister Yuri Borisov has stressed, "Russia is capable of and will have to develop a system like PGS."

**Where's our loot?**

The Pentagon's rhetorical games also serve to mask a real high-stakes process; essentially an energy war — centering on the control of oil, natural gas and mineral resources of Russia and Central Asia. Will this wealth be controlled by oligarch frontmen "supervised" by their masters in New York and London, or by Russia and its Central Asian partners? Thus the relentless propaganda war.

A case can be made that the Masters of the Universe have resurrected the same old containment/threat geopolitical alibis — peddled by what we could dub the Brzezinski/Stratfor connection — to cover, or conceal, another stark fact.

And the fact is that the real reason for Cold War 2.0 is New York/London financial power suffering a trillion dollar-plus loss when President Putin extracted Russia from their looting schemes.

And the same applies to the entire Kiev coup — forced through by the same New York/London financial powers to block Putin from destroying their looting operations in Ukraine (which, by the way, proceed unabated, at least in the agricultural domain).

Containment/threat is also deployed on overdrive to prevent by all means a strategic partnership between Russia and Germany — which the Brzezinski/Stratfor connection sees as an existential threat to the US.

The connection's wet dreams — shared, incidentally, by the neo-cons — would be a glorious return to the looting phase of Russia in the 1990s, when the Russian industrial-military complex had collapsed and the West was plundering natural resources to Kingdom Come.

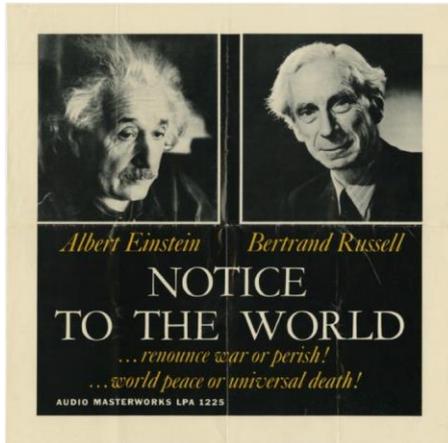
It's not going to happen ever again. So what's the Pentagon Plan B? To create the conditions of turning

*(continued on Page 30...)*

**RUSSELL-EINSTEIN MANIFESTO***Call for Sanity on Sixtieth Anniversary of the Russell-Einstein Manifesto*

Sixty years after Albert Einstein and Bertrand Russell issued their manifesto about the growing threat of world war, the globe continues to face the prospect of nuclear annihilation — coupled with the looming threat of climate change.

By Emanuel Pastreich



*The original Einstein-Russell manifesto*

July 10, 2015 "[Information Clearing House](#)" - "[FPIF](#)"

**I**t was exactly 60 years ago that Bertrand Russell and Albert Einstein gathered together with a group of leading intellectuals in London to draft and sign a manifesto in which they denounced the dangerous drive toward war between the world's Communist and anti-Communist factions. The signers of this manifesto included leading Nobel Prize winners such as Hideki Yukawa and Linus Pauling.

They were blunt, equating the drive for war and reckless talk of the use of nuclear weapons sweeping the United States and the Soviet Union at the time, as endangering all of humanity. The manifesto argued that advancements in technology, specifically the invention of the atomic bomb, had set human history on a new and likely disastrous course.

The manifesto stated in harsh terms the choice confronting humanity:

Here, then, is the problem which we present to you, stark and dreadful and inescapable: Shall we put an end to the human race; or shall mankind renounce war?

The Russell-Einstein Manifesto forced a serious reconsideration of the dangerous strategic direction in which the United States was heading at that time and was the beginning of a recalibration of the concept of security that would lead to the signing of the Nonproliferation Treaty in 1968 and the arms control talks of the 1970s.

But we take little comfort in those accomplishments today. The United States has completely forgotten about its obligations under the Nonproliferation Treaty, and the words "arms control" have disappeared from the conversation on security. The last year has seen the United States confront Russia in Ukraine to such a degree that many have spoken about the risks of nuclear war.

As a result, on June 16 of this year Russia announced that it will add 40 new ICBMs in response to the investment of the United States over the last two years in upgrading its nuclear forces.

Similar tensions have emerged between Japan and China over the Senkaku/Diaoyutai Isles and between the United States and China over the South China Sea. Discussions about the possibility of war with China are showing up in the Western media with increasing frequency, and a deeply disturbing push to militarize American relations with Asia is emerging.

But this time, the dangers of nuclear war are complemented by an equal, or greater, threat: climate change. Even the commander of the U.S. Pacific Command, Admiral Samuel Locklear, told the Boston Globe in 2013 that climate change "is probably the most likely thing that is going to happen . . . that will cripple the security environment, probably more likely than the other scenarios we all often talk about."

More recently, Pope Francis issued a detailed, and blunt, encyclical dedicated to the threat of climate change in which he charged:

"It is remarkable how weak international political responses (to climate change) have been. Consequently the most one can expect is superficial rhetoric, sporadic acts of philanthropy and perfunctory expressions of concern for the

environment, whereas any genuine attempt by groups within society to introduce change is viewed as a nuisance based on romantic illusions or an obstacle to be circumvented."

As the 60th anniversary of the Russell-Einstein Manifesto drew near, I became increasingly disturbed by the complete inaction among the best-educated and best-connected in the face of the most dangerous moment in modern history and perhaps in human history, grimmer even than the catastrophe that Russell and Einstein contemplated. Not only are we facing the increased likelihood of nuclear war, but there are signs that climate change is advancing more rapidly than previously estimated. *Science Magazine* recently released a study that predicts massive marine destruction if we follow the current trends, and even the glaciers of the Southern Antarctic Peninsula, once thought to be the most stable, are observed to be melting rapidly. And yet we see not even the most superficial efforts to defend against this threat by the major powers.

I spoke informally about my worries with my friend John Feffer, director of Foreign Policy in Focus and associate of the Asia Institute. John has written extensively about the need to identify climate change as the primary security threat and also has worked closely with Miriam Pemberton of the Institute for Policy Studies on efforts to move the United States away from a military economy. Between the two of us we have put together a slightly updated version of the manifesto that highlights climate change — an issue that was not understood in 1955 — and hereby have published it in the form of a petition that we invite anyone in the world to sign. This new version of the manifesto is open to the participation of all, not restricted to that of an elite group of Nobel Prize winners.

I also spoke with David Swanson, a friend from my days working on the Dennis Kucinich campaign for the Democratic nomination back in 2004. David now serves as director of World Beyond War, a broad effort to create a consensus that war no longer has any

*(continued on Page 24...)*



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legitimate place in human society. He offered to introduce the manifesto to a broad group of activists and we agreed that Foreign Policy in Focus, the Asia Institute and World Beyond War would co-sponsor the new manifesto.

Finally, I sent the draft to Noam Chomsky who readily offered to sign it and offered the following comment.

Last January the famous Doomsday Clock was moved two minutes closer to midnight, the closest it has been since a major war scare 30 years ago. The accompanying declaration, which warned that the constant threat of nuclear war and “unchecked climate change” severely threaten human civilization, brings to mind the grim warning to the people of the world just 60 years ago by Bertrand Russell and Albert Einstein, calling on them to face a choice that is “stark and dreadful and inescapable: Shall we put an end to the human race; or shall mankind renounce war?” In all of human history, there has never been a choice like the one we face today.

The declaration on the 60th anniversary of the Russell-Einstein Manifesto is displayed below. We urge all people who are concerned about humanity’s future and about the health of the Earth’s biosphere to join us in signing the declaration, and to invite friends and family members to sign. The statement can be signed at the petition page on DIY RootsAction website:

### **Declaration on the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Russell-Einstein Manifesto**

July 9, 2015

***In view of the growing risk that in future wars weapons, nuclear and otherwise, will be employed that threaten the continued existence of humanity, we urge the governments of the world to realize, and to acknowledge publicly, that their purpose cannot be furthered by a world war, and we urge them, consequently, to find peaceful means for the settlement of all matters of dispute between them.***

***We also propose that all governments of the world begin to convert those resources previously allocated to preparations for destructive conflict to a new constructive purpose: the mitigation of climate change and the creation of a new sustainable civilization on a global scale.***

You can sign, and ask everyone you know to sign, this declaration here: <http://diy.rootsaction.org/p/man>

### **Why is this declaration important?**

Although we have so far avoided the nuclear war that [Bertrand Russell and Albert Einstein] dreaded, the danger has merely been postponed. The threat, which has reemerged recently with the conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East, has only grown more dire.

Moreover, the rapid acceleration of technological development threatens to put nuclear weapons, and many other weapons of similar destructiveness, into the hands of a growing circle of nations (and potentially even of “non-state actors”). At the same time, the early possessors of nuclear weapons have failed to abide by their obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty to destroy their stockpiles.

And now we are faced with an existential threat that may rival the destructive consequences even of a full-scale nuclear war: climate change. The rapacious exploitation of our resources and a thoughtless over-reliance upon fossil fuels have caused an unprecedented disruption of our climate. Combined with an unmitigated attack on our forests, our wetlands, our oceans, and our farmland in the pursuit of short-term gains, this unsustainable economic expansion has brought us to the edge of an abyss.

The original 1955 manifesto states: “We are speaking on this occasion, not as members of this or that nation, continent, or creed, but as human beings,” members of the human species “whose continued existence is in doubt.”

The time has come for us to break out of the distorted and misleading conception of progress and development that has so seduced us and led us towards destruction.

Intellectuals bear a particular responsibility of leadership by virtue of their specialized expertise and insight regarding the scientific, cultural, and historical forces that have led to our predicament. Between a mercenary element that pursues an agenda of narrow interests without regard to consequences and a frequently discouraged, misled, and sometimes apathetic citizenry stand the intellectuals in every field of study and sphere of activity. It falls to us that it falls to decry the reckless acceleration of armaments and the criminal destruction of the ecosystem. The time has come for us to raise our voices in a concerted effort.

## **WAR**

Socialist societies, as a rule, don’t wage wars against their neighbours. That is the job of capitalism, and no nation on earth can ever hope to match the accomplishments of the USA when it comes to warfare for profit. Since my birth the land of the free has waged about one war per annum. 60 to 70, depending on how much destruction constitutes a *bona fide* war. There is an official procedure which is always followed. Lies are told to the American public to justify mass-murder and theft of resources. The “enemy” country is bombed into oblivion. A new USA-friendly dictator is placed in the position of power. The demolished country is rebuilt by the very hands that trashed it, leaving the people in debt to their attackers for eternity. National resources are privatized and sold off to American capitalists. The conquered country remains subservient to the USA if it knows what’s good for it.

As Arundhati Roy says in *War Talk*:

*Never counted in the costs of war are the dead birds, the charred animals, the murdered fish, incinerated insects, poisoned water sources, destroyed vegetation. Rarely mentioned is the arrogance of the human race toward other living things with which it shares this planet. All these are forgotten in the fight for markets and ideologies. This arrogance will probably be the ultimate undoing of the human species.*

There’s big money in war. The symbiotic relationship between government (the wagers of war) and capitalists (the profiteers of war) was recently spelled out in the Republican debate by the poster boy for capitalism; Donald Carcinoma Trump. Yes, Virginia, we do wage wars so Boeing, Raytheon, and General Electric can keep cranking those profit numbers in the billions. We’ve even created a new business model with the advent of corporate mercenary armies. But rest assured that your local representatives are being well compensated for their decision to drop more bombs on Syria.

**John R. Hall** is a street-trained agnotologist with an advanced degree in American Ignorance. He’s written three novels ‘Embracing Darwin’, ‘Last Dance in Lubberland’, and ‘Atlas fumbled’. He can be reached via email at: [halls245@msn.com](mailto:halls245@msn.com).

**BOOK REVIEW: THE BLUE BETWEEN SKY AND WATER**

August 26, 2015

*A Palestinian Novel Par Excellence*

by Vacy Vlanza

**T**he *Blue Between Sky and Water*, places Susan Abulhawa among the *Illustrissimi* of Palestinian literature. It is a novel one must read, at minimum twice. Once to follow the ‘what’s next’ of the evolving plot with its larger than fiction characters.

And the second time?

To slowly savour the luminescent beauty of the writing: human life, generically Palestinian, from the minute to the magnificent, is caught in the net of Abulhawa’s lyrical genius and comes up from the depths of her creativity shimmering.

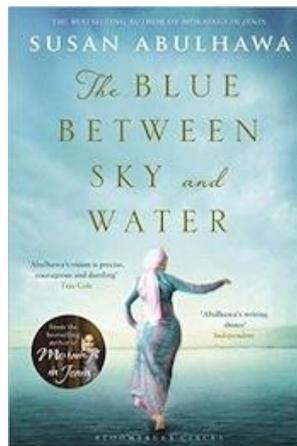
The novel, set in Gaza, spans four generations of the Baraka family’s experience of the great Palestinian tragedy of the Naqba, past and present, ‘*The Naqba, the Catastrophe that inaugurated the erasure of Palestine, started slowly in 1947, one atrocity at a time throughout the country.*’

chronicling the rape of Palestinian land, the rape of Palestinian women, the rape of Palestinian daily life and the rape of Palestinian independence by Zionist terrorists ‘*who were drunk on an ancient virulence that mixed greed and power with God.*’

Duality is a characteristic of Abulhawa’s work: a duality possibly torn from Abulhawa’s own exile in a painful stasis between two intimate existences, Palestine & the diaspora. The novel’s tension is driven by the interplay and/or clash of dualities symbolised by Mariam and Nur’s eyes- ‘eyes, one green and one brown with hazel’: fiction and fact, the traditional and the modern, past and present, Palestine and the diaspora, past and future, close-knit family and fragmentation, innocence and evil, the hero and the brute, life and death.

Like Gaza, the novel, is crammed with heroic legends and love stories.

In defiance of Zionist oppression, *sumoud*, Palestinian steadfastness is expressed in the daily resilience of refugees that turn loss into nobility,



‘In time, mud bricks and corrugated metal replaced the cloth tents and the refugee camps gave rise to a subculture marked by adamant pride, defiance, and

an unwavering insistence on the dignity of home, no matter how long it took or how high the price.’

It is expressed -in the resilience of Gazans after the Zionist blitzkrieg,

“On the surface, life looked like decay. The destruction of buildings and infrastructure was so immense that debris and dust painted the air gray for days. The green earth was scorched then layered with the fragments of broken things and broken bodies. But after the dead were buried and all the tears had fallen, time thinned out to a liquid that rushed over Gaza like a stream over rocks, smoothing the jagged corners and coating them with a new moss of life. The legion of able bodies clearing rubble, rebuilding, recycling, cooking, and gathering was an industry that reconstituted community”

-in the laughter of children,

“Someone threw a plank over a large rock to make a seesaw and children played, their laughter small suns.”

-in Palestine’s young freedom fighters,

“**YOUR BULLET CANNOT TOUCH MY HUMANITY! IT CANNOT TOUCH MY SOUL! IT CANNOT RIP MY ROOTS FROM THE SOIL OF THIS LAND YOU COVET! WE WILL NOT LET YOU STEAL OUR LAND!**”

– in sacrifice,

“Baba ... he screamed at Rhet Shel to run. She was clinging to his leg and he kicked her away before the weight of concrete walls pressing on his back conquered and crushed him.”

*Sumoud* is the élan vital of each of Abulhawa’s characters. Nazmiyah, is the novel’s and the Baraka family’s vibrant core, life and soul. She is “a

strange woman, made of love, who never told a lie and who moved through the world differently than most”.. and who “was not identified by her relation to anyone else, but a testament to the force of her being, a mixture of defiance, motherliness, kindness, sexuality, and sassiness”.

Abulhawa’s beautifully delineated portrait of the exiled Nur gives a profound insight into the inner vulnerability of an abused child, “She scooped up Mahfouz, squeezing the stuffed bear her jiddo had given her, and she lived a night of silent, sleepless sorrow, the beaded necklace of her young life unstrung and scattered on the floor.” and into the torment of Nur as a young woman, “There is something extraordinary about being rejected by one’s mother,” she told Nzinga. “It impoverishes the soul. It leaves holes everywhere and you spend your life trying to fill them up. With whatever you can find.”

Abulhawa has a flair for love; with deft tenderness and sensitivity she weaves a palpably intense tapestry of love; love for a broken land, parental love, sibling love, love between a grandfather and grandchild, and love between a man and woman.

Khaled says of his mother, Alwan and father, Abdel, “My mother loved quietly and lived as if she watched the world through slits in the curtains. People thought piety provoked her to don the niqab when she was young, but it was to complete her invisibility—to take the curtains with her while she roamed her own life. But my father saw her. He stepped behind the curtain and loved her there.” And when Abdel died, Alwan “was like a tree in endless autumn, standing still, leaves drying, weakening, then falling. She became an island unto herself and for some time it was hard to find her in her eyes.”

There are novels we enjoy and then there are enjoyable Novels that speak to our deeper selves. With poetic imagination, Abulhawa lifts her novel to the level of analogical transcendence- where symbol, metaphor and archetypes, the primal language of the psyche, play out the dynamics of the spirit- the blue-between sky and water.

(continued on Page 26...)



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Here, Nazmiyeh, may be viewed as the tripartite Eternal Feminine – sensual maiden, mother of twelve, the irreverent crone – who calls on what appears to be ‘peasant magic’ but is the traditional lore of the ancients that centres human integrity in the moral and social order which in turn is in accord with the order of nature and the cosmos.

And in the symbolic rendering, characters become the dramatis personae of a people’s myth. Nazmiyeh is thus open to symbolising the novel’s true central character, Mother Palestine, “My teta Nazmiyeh hung the sky every morning, like a sapphire sheet on a clothesline pirouetting in the breeze.” Khaled knows the way to return to her, “I began to walk that familiar road, from the small wrinkles on Teta’s left ear, up along the broken paths to her forehead, then the long trek across to the other side of her head. I walked and walked the sandy surface of this desert that was

Teta’s weathered face until I reached the corner of her right eye and sat on the ink spot to wait.”

Mariam could represent the destruction of Palestine’s innocent past that Nazmiyeh resolutely remembers and cherishes and the djinn, Suleyman, represent the raging warrior and protector spirit of Palestine made from “smokeless fire”.

In the Epilogue, Abulhawa in her own voice, salutes with fiery gravitas today’s warriors,

“Through it all, Palestinian resistance fighters, holed up in tunnels with little more than bread, salt, and water, refused to surrender, and continued to fight a vastly superior military force. Despite the horrors and terror they suffered, Palestinians in Gaza supported the resistance because, in the words of one man, “We’d rather die fighting than continue living on our knees as nothing more than worthless lives Israel can use to test their

weapons.” I’d like to salute those Palestinian fighters. They willingly stepped into a realm where death was all but assured, for nothing less than the cause of freedom. Their courage was the stuff of legends.”

Zionists be warned by the novel’s intrinsic prophecy: Susan Abulhawa is a third generation refugee to whom you deny her right of return and yet this definitive Palestinian novel rose from her indestructible roots to her land.

\*Converted from William Shakespeare’s Twelfth Night, “If music be the food of love, play on.”

Dr. Vacy Vlazna is Coordinator of Justice for Palestine Matters. She was Human Rights Advisor to the GAM team in the second round of the Acheh peace talks, Helsinki, February 2005 then withdrew on principle. Vacy was coordinator of the East Timor Justice Lobby as well as serving in East Timor with UNAMET and UNTAET from 1999-2001.

**BOOK REVIEW: UKRAINE**

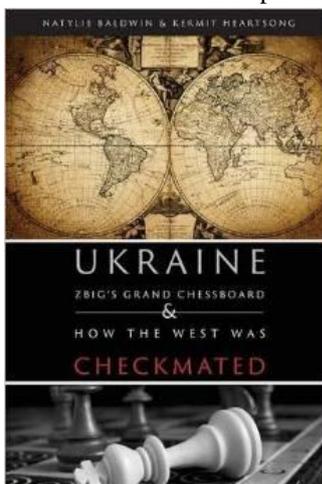
*Ukraine and the Apocalyptic Risk of Propagandized Ignorance*

by David Swanson

June 15th, 2015

I’m not sure if there’s been a better written book published yet this year than *Ukraine: Zbig’s Grand Chessboard and How the West Was Checkmated*, but I’m confident there’s not been a more important one. With some 17,000 nuclear bombs in the world, the United States and Russia have about 16,000 of them. The United States is aggressively flirting with World War III, the people of the United States have not the foggiest notion of how or why, and authors Natylie Baldwin and Kermit Heartsong explain it all quite clearly. Go ahead and tell me there’s nothing you’re now spending your time on that’s less important than this.

This book may very well be the best written one I’ve read this year. It puts all



the relevant facts — those I knew and many I didn’t — together concisely and with perfect organization. It does it with an informed worldview. It leaves me nothing to complain about at all, which is almost unheard of in my book reviews. I find it refreshing to encounter writers so well-informed who also grasp the significance of their information.

Nearly half the book is used to set the context for recent events in Ukraine. It’s useful to understand the end of the cold war, the irrational hatred of Russia that pervades elite U.S. thinking, and the patterns of behavior that are replaying themselves now at higher volume. Stirring up fanatical fighters in Afghanistan and Chechnya and Georgia, and targeting Ukraine for similar use: this is a context CNN won’t provide. The partnership of the neocons (in arming and provoking violence in Libya) with the humanitarian warriors (in riding to the rescue for regime change): this is a precedent and a model that NPR won’t mention. The U.S.

promise not to expand NATO, the U.S. expansion of NATO to 12 new countries right up to the border of Russia, the U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty and pursuit of “missile defense” — this is background that Fox News would never deem significant. U.S. support for the rule of criminal oligarchs willing to sell off Russian resources, and Russian resistance to those schemes — such accounts are almost incomprehensible if you’ve consumed too much U.S. “news,” but are explained and documented well by Baldwin and Heartsong.

This book includes excellent background on the use and abuse of Gene Sharp and the color revolutions instigated by the U.S. government. A silver lining may be found, I think, in the value of nonviolent action recognized by all involved — whether for good or ill. The same lesson can be found (for good this time) in the civilian resistance to Ukrainian troops in the spring of 2014, and the refusal of (some) troops to attack civilians.

The Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004, the Rose Revolution in Georgia in 2003, and Ukraine II in 2013-2014 are recounted well, including detailed

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chronology. It's truly remarkable how much has been publicly reported that remains buried. Western leaders met repeatedly in 2012 and 2013 to plot the fate of Ukraine. Neo-Nazis from Ukraine were sent to Poland to train for a coup. NGOs operating out of the U.S. Embassy in Kiev organized trainings for coup participants. On November 24, 2013, three days after Ukraine refused an IMF deal, including refusing to sever ties to Russia, protesters in Kiev began to clash with police. The protesters used violence, destroying buildings and monuments, and tossing Molotov cocktails, but President Obama warned the Ukrainian government not to respond with force. (Contrast that with the treatment of the Occupy movement, or the shooting on Capitol Hill of the woman who made an unacceptable U-turn in her car with her baby.)

U.S.-funded groups organized a Ukrainian opposition, funded a new TV channel, and promoted regime change. The U.S. State Department spent some \$5 billion. The U.S. Assistant Secretary of State who handpicked the new leaders, openly brought cookies to protesters. When those protesters violently overthrew the government in February 2014, the United States immediately declared the coup government legitimate. That new government banned major political parties, and attacked, tortured, and murdered their members. The new government included neo-Nazis and would soon include officials imported from the United States. The new government banned the Russian language — the first language of many Ukrainian citizens. Russian war memorials were destroyed. Russian-speaking populations were attacked and murdered.

Crimea, an autonomous region of Ukraine, had its own parliament, had been part of Russia from 1783 until 1954, had publicly voted for close ties to Russia in 1991, 1994, and 2008, and its parliament had voted to rejoin Russia in 2008. On March 16, 2014, 82% of Crimeans took part in a referendum, and 96% of them voted to rejoin Russia. This nonviolent, bloodless, democratic, and legal action, in no violation of a Ukrainian constitution that had been shredded by a violent coup, was

immediately denounced in the West as a Russian "invasion" of Crimea.

Novorossiyan, too, sought independence and were attacked by the new Ukrainian military the day after John Brennan visited Kiev and ordered that crime. I know that the Fairfax County Police who have kept me and my friends away from John Brennan's house in Virginia have had no clue what hell he was unleashing on helpless people thousands of miles away. But that ignorance is at least as disturbing as informed malice would be. Civilians were attacked by jets and helicopters for months in the worst killing in Europe since World War II. Russian President Putin repeatedly pressed for peace, a ceasefire, negotiations. A ceasefire finally came on September 5, 2014.

Remarkably, contrary to what we've all been told, Russia didn't invade Ukraine any of the numerous times we were told that it had just done so. We've graduated from mythical weapons of mass destruction, through mythical threats to Libyan civilians, and false accusation of chemical weapons use in Syria, to false accusations of launching invasions that were never launched. The "evidence" of the invasion(s) was carefully left devoid of location or any verifiable detail, but has all been decidedly debunked anyway.

The downing of the MH17 airplane was blamed on Russia with no evidence. The U.S. has information on what happened but won't release it. Russia released what it had, and the evidence, in agreement with eye-witnesses on the ground, and in agreement with an air-traffic controller at the time, is that the plane was shot down by one or more other planes. "Evidence" that Russia shot the plane down with a missile has been exposed as sloppy forgeries. The vapor trail that a missile would have left was reported by not a single witness.

Baldwin and Heartsong close with the case that U.S. actions have backfired, that in fact whether the people of the United States have any idea what is going on or not, the power brokers in Washington have Second Amended themselves in the foot. Sanctions against Russia have made Putin as popular at home as George W. Bush was after he'd managed to exist as president while planes were flown into the World Trade

Center. The same sanctions have strengthened Russia by turning it toward its own production and toward alliances with non-Western nations. Ukraine has suffered, and Europe suffers from a cut-off of Russian gas, while Russia makes deals with Turkey, Iran, and China. Evicting a Russian base from Crimea seems more hopeless now than before this madness began. Russia is leading the way as more nations abandon the U.S. dollar. Retaliatory sanctions from Russia are hurting the West. Far from isolated, Russia is working with the BRICS nations, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and other alliances. Far from impoverished, Russia is buying up gold while the U.S. sinks into debt and is increasingly viewed by the world as a rogue player, and resented by Europe for depriving Europe of Russian trade.

This story begins in the irrationality of collective trauma coming out of the holocaust of World War II and of blind hatred for Russia. It must end with the same irrationality. If U.S. desperation leads to war with Russia in Ukraine or elsewhere along the Russian border where NATO is engaging in various war games and exercises, there may be no more human stories ever told or heard.

**David Swanson** is an anti-war activist and blogger at [War Is a Crime](http://WarIsaCrime.com).

*As has been expressed with clarity by Cuba's Party and government, to advance good will and peace among all the countries of this hemisphere and the many peoples who are part of the human family, and thus contribute to the survival of our species in the modest place the universe has conceded us, we will never stop struggling for peace and the well-being of all human beings, for every inhabitant on the planet regardless of skin color or national origin, and for the full right of all to hold a religious belief or not. The equal right of all citizens to health, education, work, food, security, culture, science, and wellbeing, that is, the same rights we proclaimed when we began our struggle, in addition to those which emerge from our dreams of justice and equality for all inhabitants of our world, is what I wish for all.* **Fidel Castro**



**POETRY**

**ANZAC 'ed out 2015**

As we know....

**They shall grow not old,**

Lives cut short

Terminated

Denied parenthood

Pleasure, creativity

Reflection

Grandchildren

**as we that are left grow old:**

Lamely, sullenly

Prematurely

**Age shall not weary them,**

As they tirelessly

Struggle

To keep their minds

Together

**nor the years condemn....**

The leaders who

Recklessly sent so many

To their deaths

**At the going down of the sun**

As it always does

**and in the morning**

We will still

Avoid asking why

**We will remember them.**

We said

As we ignored

Their problems

The cries of their loved ones

Partners and children

We only want

The official narrative

To prevail

The people who did

What they were told

Even secret, awful acts

Abandoned

Of no more use

Thanked only

With sanctimonious courtesies

For perpetual war

**If There is a War**

It is raining cats and dogs  
outside

Thunders roar

Lightnings flash, illuminating the inky sky

Drops of rain blended with the yellow light

look like mist of surreal power

The candle is flickering in

breaths of the wind

And I am brooding over

which type of conditional I should use

If there *is* a war...

(Is it right?)

I may lose my parents

my homeland which holds my childhood

my friends, my love

I may lose my legs in a battle

Is it for the peace of my country

or for the power of oligarchies?

I think of some boy

who may be growing up as I used to

whose mother can be as caring as the one I have

who loves ebulliently with youthful vim and vigour

and pure innocence, and quiet desperation, as I love

whose stories may be lost

yet untold

forever

It keeps pouring

As it has done for millions of years now.

**KHAI Q. NGUYEN**

**To a War Hero**

No, I'm sorry  
when you're 9,000 miles from home  
and are dropping bombs  
from a multi-million dollar airplane

On people  
who live in thatched huts  
and goatskin tents  
and mudbrick compounds

You are not a hero  
you are a war criminal  
and have no business running  
for president or for dogcatcher

You belong in shackles  
before a tribunal of law  
and should be turned over for justice  
to the survivors of your actions.

by **Jon Taylor** / July 26th, 2015

Willy Bach © 2015  
Footnote:  
Willy Bach 26 April 2015  
After an Evensong at St  
John's Cathedral, Brisbane  
Re Casting the words of  
the famous excerpt from  
Robert Lawrence Binyon's  
poem, "For the Fallen",  
The poem was written in  
mid September 1914, a  
few weeks after the  
outbreak of the First World  
War.

**CHINESE MILITARY PARADE  
FREAK-OUT**

by JP Sottile

September 4, 2015

*The Chinese are coming! The Chinese are coming!*

**W**ell, actually, they were just parading around their capital, celebrating the defeat of the Japanese and end of their bloody part in World War II. But (cue some strangely ominous music plucked on a Chinese guitar) this was no Chinese New Year parade featuring dancing acrobats, red firecrackers and a dragon puppet.

No, this was China showing that it'd come a long way from a century of foreign domination at the hands of the British, through America's "Open Door" policy and then by the brute force of Imperial Japan. Perhaps predictably, this show of national pride and strength caused a funny little freak-out among media establishment-types sitting at their desks halfway around the world.

Although President Xi announced a cut of 300,000 troops and assured the world of China's peaceful intentions, the news media framed the accompanying military parade as a display of "power, not peace" (The Guardian), as a show of military "might" (New York Times), as the kick-off to a dangerous "modernization" of China's military (WaPo) ... and it was juxtaposed against a new report detailing the Chinese Navy's unprecedented encroachment into the Bering Sea (Wall Street Journal).

First, it's not like the US doesn't sail around the world like it owns the seven seas. Uncle Sam has, depending upon your definition of an "aircraft carrier," somewhere between ten and nineteen carriers. China has one, but last year TIME ran story declaring that the Chinese were "doubling" their fleet! That would make for a "fleet" of ... two. On the other hand, Uncle Sam's actual fleet dwarfs the rest of the world combined and the US is currently dropping \$580 million to expand its naval base in the Persian Gulf. And it's deploying drones to its long-standing

base in Guam ... with the intent of monitoring, perhaps, Fiji? Uh, nope.

Second, the freak-out seems comically lacking in circumspection given that the US is "activating" forces on Russia's doorstep, trying to build a new base in Japan and is running a deadly, extrajudicial drone campaign over Africa and Asia (Pakistan is China's neighbor, after all). And the US now has Marines permanently based in Australia, is negotiating greater access to the Philippines and is building the most technologically-advanced nuclear weapon ever made ... under the guise of "modernization."

Third, the US relentlessly touts its alliteratively-alluring "Pacific Pivot" strategy. Yes, US officials never miss an opportunity to talk about "pivoting" its wildly-popular Global War on Terror to a new effort in Asia. Just imagine if Xi has announced that, instead of a cut of 300k troops, China was launching its "South American Sojourn" policy? Exactly.

Fourth, if the US had a similar military parade, it would take over four times as long as the 90-minute Chinese parade that has everyone freaking out about the growing power of China's military. Why four times as long? Because the US "officially" spends over four times as much on defense as the dreaded, island-building Chinese—approximately \$580 billion versus \$129 billion—and it spends more than the next seven biggest defense spenders combined.

But wait, there more.

Literally ... it's actually WAY more ... like nearly a trillion dollars if you calculate all the defense spending in continuing resolutions to fund the Global War on Terror, nuclear weapons development hidden in the Department of Energy and all the other Military-Industrial Complexities peppered throughout the Federal budget.

So, the Chinese military parade—condensed here by the WSJ into 60 seconds from 90 minutes—is, in fact, more like a victory parade for anyone and everyone working in the world's only recession-proof economy—Washington, DC.

And none too soon, either.

The Iran Deal, the Afghanistan phase-out and persistent public war-weariness after Iraq portended a possible realignment of spending priorities away from bombing, invading or merely patrolling in and around nations that didn't attack America. Thank the Gods of War, though, that the lingering thaw from the Cold War could easily be re-purposed into a renewed slush fund for the world's biggest corporate entitlement program.

The least they could do, however, is throw a parade like the Chinese did ... just to let Americans see just what the biggest military ever assembled actually looks like and what you can buy with few trillion dollars.

Then again, maybe that's why America doesn't do military parades.

By the time the final, trillion-dollar F-35 is towed down Pennsylvania Avenue (because it was grounded by morning drizzle or some other snafu), the forthcoming B-3 Bomber will already be well on its way to half-a-trillion dollars in profitable delays, cost overruns and endless redesigns.

And, in the meantime, China will have secured more of Africa's sought-after resources by building roads, bridges and airports around a continent the US prefers to enlist into its Global War on Terror.

And China will keep building its New Silk Road into Europe, while Uncle Sam gathers NATO around the campfire to tell ghost stories about a menacing, dictatorial bear roaming around the woods of Eastern Europe. Of course, they can keep the bear away by redirecting public funds to buy new, whiz-bang military gadgets in the supermarket of America weaponry.

Maybe Donald "China! China! China!" Trump is right. Maybe their leaders *are* smarter. Maybe they *are* beating America. They certainly prefer to spend their money *building infrastructure* to modernize other countries while the US likes to spend its greenbacks *bombing the infrastructure* of other nations all the way back to the Stone Age.

Really, that's how Uncle Sam operates. Pick a nation with some "good" targets. Bomb it to bits. And then go in and (sorta) rebuild the infrastructure. So what if the projects never quite materialize or,

*(continued on Page 30...)*



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created by the unrest increase tensions with their attacks on the West, some Americans are embracing Bush's controversial language of religious warfare, calling for Muslims to be placed in camps or even openly calling for genocide.

(continued from Page 29...)

if they do, they never get used. Either way, there is money to be made. The outcome is irrelevant. And it's okay if the stuff you leave behind ends up falling into the hands of a new enemy. You can just go back and bomb again!

Eventually, Uncle Sam will even be able to fly the F-35 on those bombing runs.

That is, of course, if the weather cooperates.

**JP Sottile** is a freelance journalist, published historian, radio co-host and documentary filmmaker (The Warning, 2008). His credits include a stint on the Newshour news desk, C-SPAN, and as newsmagazine producer for ABC affiliate WJLA in Washington. His weekly show, Inside the Headlines w/ The Newsvandal, co-hosted by James Moore, airs every Friday on KRUU-FM in Fairfield, Iowa. He blogs under the pseudonym "the Newsvandal".

(continued from Page 22...)

Europe into a potential theater of nuclear war. Now that's a real threat – if there ever was one.

✂ Cut here

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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