



# The Peace Issue . . .

The Newsletter of *Just Peace Queensland Inc*

Issue No. 47

July 2014

**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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# Is Killing Civilians Part of Israel's Plan?

By Jonathan Cook

July 30, 2014 "[ICH](#)"

**A**nother day, another UN school hit by Israeli shelling in Gaza. Israel’s attack this morning killed at least 16 civilians sheltering at the school and wounded dozens. The casualties figures are expected to rise.

Israel and even most of its critics tell us that the civilian casualties are accidental, caused by Israel’s need to wage its war against Hamas in heavily built-up areas of Gaza. Israel is accused of “disproportionality”, or of recklessness, or of inflicting unfortunate collateral damage.

But here’s another possibility: that the people of Gaza, not just Hamas, are the target. That Israel’s generals don’t see much difference between the two.



Israel’s army is “degrading” – or “mowing the lawn”, in even worse military parlance – Gaza’s ability’s to resist. Not Hamas’ abilities, but Gaza’s. Because the problem lies not with Hamas. Hamas is simply a symptom, of the people of Gaza’s determination to liberate themselves from Israel’s siege.



Blood is seen among school desks in a UN-operated school after an Israeli attack in Beit Hanun town, northern Gaza strip, 24 July.

That is why the power plant was destroyed yesterday. That is why Israel has been starving Gaza for years through its siege, limiting the entry of basic foods and counting the minimum calories people need for bare survival - putting them on a diet, as one senior adviser jokingly termed it. That is why Gaza’s infrastructure is being trashed - the notorious Dahiya doctrine, devised by Israeli generals in 2006 as way to force hostile populations back into the Stone Age, keeping them preoccupied with the essentials of life rather than demanding, or fighting, for their rights.

Israel knows it cannot destroy Hamas’ will to resist without destroying Gaza’s will to resist too. And that is what it looks like we are seeing played out here day-in, day-out. Civilians, it seems, must die to teach Gaza a lesson: you will submit.

**Jonathan Cook** is a Nazareth- based journalist and winner of the Martha Gellhorn Special Prize for Journalism - See more at: <http://www.jonathan-cook.net/blog/2014-07-30/is-killing-civilians-part-of-israels-plan/#sthash.L0DwRpmw.0izKxXCm.dpuf> He is a Nazareth- based journalist and winner of the Martha Gellhorn Special Prize for Journalism <http://www.jonathan-cook.net>

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**EDITORIAL:**

This edition is published at a time when events around the world are once again spiralling into the darkness of military conflict. And once again it's the same puppeteer pulling the strings – the US – the imperialist instigator, paymaster and cheerleader for most of the world's wars and inter-state conflicts.

The events in the Ukraine, Gaza and Iraq (in particular), but also in “lesser” conflicts or threats of conflict in Africa and Asia, have echoes going back through history to at least the time of the First World War. The bloodletting of that war – the horror of industrial scale warfare – and its ongoing consequences even after it finished are still being felt today.

The First World War led to the Second World War led to the Cold War led to the “War on Terror” leading now to the possibility of another global or widespread conflict.

The connecting thread is capital – the need for capital to extend its control over more and more of the globe in order to satisfy its insatiable desire for markets and profits.

It is in the Ukraine that the drive for unfettered markets and resources to exploit is reaching globe-threatening proportions. Whether or not there is an actual plan, the goal of the US seems to be the neutering if not the destruction of Russia, followed by the rape and pillage of the country's resources.

The neocons pulling the strings behind the puppet, Obama, seem to have no qualms about bringing on a military confrontation with Russia, which could easily spiral into nuclear war and inevitable destruction of Europe, Central Asia and possibly America itself.

Consistent with its modus operandi ever since it took on the mantle of an imperialist power, the US funded the fascist coup in Ukraine, and continues to fund the coup regime in its drive to

ethnically cleanse Eastern Ukraine of its Russian-speaking population. The aim of the US is to capture Ukraine's resources (particularly its agricultural potential) and to use the country as a springboard to seizing Russia's vast natural resources for its own exploitation and use.

Of course, you would never get this picture from anything read in the Murdoch press or other propaganda outlets for US imperialism (the New York Times being a particularly egregious purveyor of whatever disinformation the White House wants promulgated). They would have us believe that Putin is another Hitler and that Russia is a revived Soviet Union hell bent on territorial expansion.

Even the tragic downing of MH17 has been portrayed by the West as a direct consequence of Russian actions. Despite having the most sophisticated surveillance network in the world, the US has not been able to produce one scrap of verifiable evidence of involvement by Russia – or even of the resistance fighters inside Ukraine. I suspect we may never know the truth (especially if the Ukrainian military is responsible, which is a distinct possibility based on evidenced gleaned from various sources).

But the truth is not the aim – the aim is to build a case against Russia and, preferably, to provoke Russia into taking action to defend its interests which can then be portrayed as aggression and thus allow NATO to respond militarily. The risks of nuclear confrontation are clear but this does not seem to deter the cretins running the world's most militarily powerful country (but which, by all other measures, is a decaying state).

One can truly describe the US as a rogue state – it represents the greatest threat to world peace today.

Although not representing an immediate threat to world peace, the genocide in Gaza – aided and abetted by the US and its lackeys (including Australia, the lap dog extraordinaire) – represents a further escalation in the ongoing crimes committed by the Israeli state against the Palestinians.

We all risk being labelled anti-Semitic whenever we take a position in opposition to Israel. But I find it harder and harder to escape the conclusion that the Israeli state is acting more and more like the Nazi state. It is using the same techniques that were used against Jews during the Second World War

(collective punishment, ghettoization, disproportionate responses – multiple killings in response to their own losses). I find it staggering how the experience of the Holocaust can be turned around and used in kind (up to a point) against people suffering in the same way as Jews suffered during that horrendous time.

Of course, from the point of view of Israel's paymaster, the game is to control the resources of the Middle East. Israel provides that control at the barrel of a gun (and via its nuclear threat). I cannot see peace in Palestine until the US is forced to withdraw its support for Israel, and Israel does a “South Africa” or “Northern Ireland” by voluntarily giving up its privileged position and creating a peace of the brave.

Until then, the Palestinians – led by their elected officials ( Hamas and Fatah) – have the right to self-defence, the only dignified response to the ongoing punishment and dehumanising treatment they receive from Israel.

What can we in Just Peace do about any of this?

We can continue disseminating information that is counter to the propaganda spewing forth from the capitalist controlled media. We can be active in campaigns in support of the victims of imperialist aggression.

I will finish by quoting from Mickey Z, an American activist whose sarcastic writing style appeals to me. In a short article talking about activism, he says:

*Even in the face of urgent, ecocidal issues, dissent is a marathon, not a sprint. With authentic solidarity, a daily ego check, and an enduring willingness to evolve, we can each find our pace and help make a difference.*

Together we can change the world – or at least have the vision to sustain us in the years of struggle that will be necessary to create a better world for all human beings and living things.

**Adrian Pollock**

July 2014

[# Editor's note: The reality can be better gleaned from reading web sites such as the Information Clearing House, Counter Punch, Dissident Voice or Common Dreams.]



**JUST PEACE ACTIVITIES**

Following the Canberra Peace Convergence covered in the previous Peace Issue, several Just Peace committee members took a well-deserved break traveling to visit family and friends overseas.

The areas of activity over the past months include:

**Just Peace for Palestine**- this sub-group headed up by Vikki Henry has maintained the regular petition stalls in the Queen St Mall. Currently the petitions relate to the incursion of settlers into the West Bank and the detention of Palestinian children in Israeli military prisons. If you would like to help out on the stalls please contact Vikki on [vicki4peace@yahoo.com](mailto:vicki4peace@yahoo.com)

**Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN)**- Just Peace is represented on the national steering committee of IPAN. Following the national conference of IPAN in April this year, the petition to the Senate on the purchase of the F35 fighter jets will be presented in the last week of August by Senator Lee Rhiannon or Senator Scott Ludlam. IPAN will start a new petition in the coming weeks. The national steering committee meets monthly with a view to planning effective strategies to advance the vision of a peaceful, just and independent Australia.

The obsequious tail gating of US proclamations continues with Julie Bishop condemning the criminal bombing of Gaza's civilians with over 1800 deaths and untold trauma, ONLY after the US finally did...and currently it seems Tony Abbott is chafing at the bit to involve the ADF in returning to Iraq and provoke a major powers war in Ukraine. These are all good examples of Australia's lack of independence.

**United Nations Association of Australia Qld** branch has 2 Just Peace members on its executive currently working to bring together the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Day of Peace Lecture on Sunday September 21<sup>st</sup> at St John's Cathedral. Human Rights lawyer Larissa Behrendt will deliver this year's lecture with the focus on Indigenous Australians. The White Poppies campaign will be launched at this year's event.

**Correspondence** to political representatives continues on issues of concern to Just Peace. The horror of Gaza and Palestine in full is repeatedly addressed.

**Upcoming events:**

Friday August 22<sup>nd</sup> A dinner to **Remember George Georges**- 7pm QCU see flier

Sunday August 31<sup>st</sup> **March Australia**- 11am Queens Park Brisbane City-see flier

Sunday 31<sup>st</sup>- Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September- Canadian/Palestinian **Lawyer Diana Buttu** Brisbane leg of National tour-venues and times to be arranged.

Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September- screening of **The People and the Olive** 730 pm BEMAC Kangaroo Pt

Sunday September 21<sup>st</sup> - **Brisbane Peace Lecture**- see flier

October Just Peace AGM- date to confirmed

**Annette Brownlie**

**FROM A JUST PEACE MEMBER**

Dear Comrades

Please feel to use in the cause of peace  
John

**A time for turning**

It was mid July 2014, I was walking down a crowded street in the Granville Island Markets, Vancouver. It was the day after more than 100Palestinians, many of them children, had been killed in the Israeli invasion of Gaza. Immediately in front of me were two Orthodox Jewish men accompanied by their wives. I wanted to kill the men. As I stared into their backs I noticed the troubled face of a young girl aged about 18 months, who the man closest to me was carrying in his arms. Her piercing dark eyes seared my soul, asking "Why do you want to hurt my family?" It made me realise I did not know what if anything these men had done or thought about Gaza or the occupation of the West Bank. I turned away hoping that the Israeli soldiers in Gaza will look into the eyes of the Palestinians and turn away.

Posted by: **John Tomlinson**  
[<j.tomlinson@qut.edu.au>](mailto:j.tomlinson@qut.edu.au)

**WOMAN VOTER**

*Woman Voter*, 11 August 1914:

'Shall the mothers of the world "rejoice"? Shall they not rather weep?

The reports from Europe which reach us lead us to suppose that Britain and her allies have been victorious over the German arms. Twenty five thousand casualties are reported, though it is denied that there has as yet been a naval engagement of importance. Our own losses and those of the nations allied with us are not reported ...

The press asks us to "rejoice" over these victories over the 25,000 men who have paid the price of human hate and human greed. We cannot rejoice in the victory without at the same time applauding the carnage. We must pay for victory with death. The thunder of shot and shell, the shouts of victory, cannot drown in women's ears the wailing of children left fatherless in a stricken country.

Not all the bands and banners, not all the patriotic demonstrations, or the pride of conquest can make us forget that every man who lies dead on the field of battle, or mutilated and dying in the hospitals, represents for his father and mother their pain, love, their toil and care, and their humanity - the hope and promise of the future ...

Why and Wherefore? And all for what? - The wisest apologists for this war can only tell us that Germany must be crushed because she and her military oligarchy threaten European liberty and peace. We may indeed crush Germany but are we then to see the end of military tyranny? We know that by carrying our campaign to victory we shall crush the German peasant who works to give us food, the German artisan who makes our clothing, the German student who in art and science and music could do much to make life full and happy for all the world.

We know that by starvation and by dire poverty we can crush the German women, the mothers and young girls, and the little German children upon whom the future depends. But are we sure that with an impoverished, industrial population, militarism will be destroyed?

The Russian Menace - Crush German arms and exalt the power of a much more complete system of militarism and tyranny, that of Russia.'

Women's Web - Women's Stories, Women's Actions: [www.womensweb.com.au](http://www.womensweb.com.au)

Women Working Together suffrage and onwards: [www.womenworkingtogether.com.au](http://www.womenworkingtogether.com.au)

Prejudice and Reason: [www.prejudiceandreason.com.au](http://www.prejudiceandreason.com.au)

**"DISPUTED" OR OCCUPIED?***In the Middle East a word can mean a lot*By **Graham Cooke**

Posted Tuesday, 17 June 2014

**T**he fact the Australian Government is surprised at the international reaction to what Prime Minister Tony Abbott now refers to as a "terminological clarification", over the word 'disputed' rather than 'occupied' regarding the status of East Jerusalem, reveals an appalling lack of knowledge of the sensitivities around the terms when used in the context of lands captured by Israel during the 1967 Six Day War.

Even worse, this appears to have emerged from some domestic spat between the Attorney General, George Brandis, and the Greens which Mr Abbott, half a world away on his overseas tour, jumped into with both feet.

Foreign Minister Julie Bishop, who appears to have been a spectator to the imbroglio, has been left with the repair job, blaming the media (as usual) for its "overreaction".

If the media is overreacting it is certainly not alone. Israeli lobbyists have been virtually dancing jigs over the Prime Minister's announcement while Arab countries throughout the Middle East are now giving serious consideration to what kind of sanctions they can apply against Canberra.

An American diplomat and close friend, recently in charge of a well-funded program to strengthen Palestinian institutions in preparation for statehood, has written to me expressing incredulity at Mr Abbott's comments.

He now tries to say that nothing has changed and Australia continues to support United Nations Resolutions 242 and 338 aimed at finding a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation. However 242 specifically refers to territories 'occupied' by Israel in 1967 while 338 simply refers back to 242 on the question of occupation.

Mr Abbott cannot have it two ways. The very fact he has highlighted that Australia regards East Jerusalem as 'disputed' rather than 'occupied', puts Australia firmly in Israel's camp. It cannot, can never, be simply a question of semantics.

To explain further, I will quote the words of Robert Fisk, a multiple award-winning journalist who has covered the Middle East, first for *The Times* and subsequently the *Independent* newspapers for 38 years.

Writing in his book *The Great War for Civilisation*, Fisk recalls that in 2001, George W. Bush's Secretary of State, Colin Powell, issued instructions to US Embassies in the region that they were no longer to refer to occupied Palestinian territories as 'occupied' and should henceforth refer to them as 'disputed' – a ruling that was followed by most American publications and some British.

After Fisk continued to use the term 'occupied' he was asked to contribute to a BBC World Service program along with an Israeli Government spokesman.

"The moment I referred to the Israeli-occupied territories an Israeli voice boomed back: 'But Mr Fisk the territories are not occupied by Israel!' I waited for a second. Aha, I countered, so you mean that the soldiers who stopped me on the road to Ramallah and Jenin last week were Swiss! Or were they Burmese?"

But as he continues, this is no laughing matter.

"An occupied territory might generate violent resistance which could demand international legitimacy. But violence over a 'dispute' – a real estate problem, something which might be settled in the courts – was obviously illegitimate, criminal, mindless; indeed, it could be portrayed as the product of that well-worn libel 'mindless violence'."

There would be no problem with 'dispute' if there was a mechanism for the 'dispute' to be resolved; if the case could be brought before some impartial authority for judgement. But of course there is none, or at least not one that Israel will recognise. The International Court of Justice exists for disputes between states, and as Jerusalem will quickly point out, Palestine is not a state therefore the court cannot have jurisdiction.

So we are on the slippery slope. Palestine is not a state and its lands are

subject only to a dispute. How long therefore before Israel claims the dispute is an internal matter, to be settled on its terms?

While in the Middle East in 2012 (by which time US diplomats had either abandoned or ignored Powell's dictum) I met a number of high-ranking Palestinian officials one, who on a strict condition of anonymity, set out what he believed to be a basis for settlement.

The official said the more isolated Israeli settlements on the West Bank would have to go, but others might be consolidated and incorporated into Israel providing an equal amount of territory could be swapped elsewhere, presumably in parts where Israeli Arabs were in the majority.

On Jerusalem he suggested that Israel and a future Palestinian state simply share a capital – "just because it has never been done before is no reason why it shouldn't be tried here". If these two things were agreed he believed other outstanding issues, such as rights of return, could be negotiated.

"But what happens?" he asked. "[Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu keeps building more and more settlements on our land; the Israeli Army occupies large parts of the West Bank and launches raids into the rest when it feels like it.

"When we hit back and a settler is killed they call it a massacre and we are called terrorists; when the Israeli army bulldozes a house or shoots innocent women and children it is called a regrettable incident during an incursion.

"So we keep on throwing rocks. What else can we do?"

Which is why the Australian Prime Minister needs to choose his words more carefully if he insists on playing a role in Middle East politics.

**Graham Cooke** has been a journalist for more than four decades, having lived in England, Northern Ireland, New Zealand and Australia, for a lengthy period covering the diplomatic round for *The Canberra Times*.

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### THE SAMURAI STIRS

By Tom Clifford

Posted Friday, 4 July 2014

**F**or the economy Japanese prime minister Abe has arrows, for foreign policy he wants missiles and for the constitution, well, has just driven a tank over it. The world changed on July 1. That sentence is not a resort to a clapped-out cliché. When the Tokyo cabinet "reinterpreted", in fact overrode, a key clause in its constitution meant to ensure the country's post-war pacifist approach, it ushered in an era of uncertainty. Since 1945 it has been taken as certain that Japanese troops would never be sent in to combat zones should conflict occur in the Far East.



The reinterpretation of the war-renouncing Article 9 by the Tokyo cabinet means that is no longer the case. There was no clamor in Japan for reinterpretation. Quite the opposite. Opinion polls show a clear majority against reinterpretation.

Defenders of reinterpretation claim that the security situation is changing and Japan has to adapt to the new circumstances. China is flexing its increasing military muscle and even has an aircraft carrier, the Liaoning, a refitted hulk it bought from Ukraine. Therefore, their argument goes, Japan must take on a greater burden of its defense responsibilities and free itself from the shackles of a constitution that is outdated and imposed on it by the occupying US forces in 1947.

China sees it somewhat differently. It views the reinterpretation as the latest sign of a Japan that is becoming more aggressive to China and by ditching Article 9, a Rubicon has been crossed.

In 2013, Abe told the United Nations that Japan will "newly bear" the flag of "proactive pacifism". Decoded, it means confront China.

A month before Abe's UN speech, Japan launched the Izumo, a 250-meter-long "flat-topped destroyer." Named after a cruiser that was sunk by the US in 1945, the warship is in reality an aircraft carrier by any other name. However, aircraft carriers imply a force projection well beyond Japan's shores, therefore it must be called a destroyer or a helicopter carrier. China's aircraft carrier sees it accused of a military build-up, while Japan's goes largely unnoticed. Beijing sees this as double standards.

Abe has made it plain that he wants a wholesale revision of the Japanese constitution to be enacted before the Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympics. "By 2020, I think Japan will have completely restored its status and be making great contributions to peace and stability in the region and the world," he said. And the one constitutional restraint that up to now prevented Japan from acting aggressively overseas, has been confined to history.

China also sees the US backing Japan and pushing it to take on the role of a regional policeman. The quaintly named US pivot to Asia is in reality a major naval build up just off its coast.

When all these are added up, Beijing sees the sum of its fears.

Article 9 of the Japanese constitution is written in a language that is crisp and clear and seems, at first hand, not to require any reinterpretation as the official English translation of the article shows.

"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. (2) To accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized."

Abe claims that this allows Japan to export arms, deploy troops overseas and continue with a military build-up.

Policies are often presented in poetry and government is normally

conducted in the less idealistic manner of prose but Abe's skills at reinterpretation require a linguistic flexibility that normally falls under the category of fiction. "By simply changing the interpretation of the constitution to achieve its policy objectives, the Abe administration is violating the status of the constitution as the nation's supreme law to which all other laws and government decisions must conform," the Japan Times aid in an editorial on July 2.

"The move," it continued, "will serve as a dangerous precedent for Japan's democracy that must be based on the rule of law under the constitution. By taking cues from the Tuesday decision, future administrations may try to render clauses in the constitution meaningless by merely reinterpreting the clauses to fit their agenda through cabinet decisions. Abe insisted Tuesday that the cabinet decision does not harm the normative nature of the Constitution. This is a lie."

These are strong words that would defy even Abe's ability to reinterpret.

Tension between Tokyo and Beijing should never have been allowed to get this far but of even greater concern is that having arrived at this situation predictions of an escalation do not seem far-fetched especially as channels of effective communication seem to have dried up. Conflict is not imminent, or probable but more possible that any time since 1945.

A century ago the lamps were being dimmed in Europe. If politicians look out their office windows tonight, as British Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey did in 1914, they will see the lamps are still blazing in Asia but since July 1 their continued burning can no longer be viewed as guaranteed.

**Tom Clifford** worked as a freelance journalist in South America in 2009, covering Bolivian and Argentine affairs. Now in China, he has worked for newspapers in the Middle East, Africa, Europe and the Far East.





## THE OXYMORON OF PEACE

Published on Thursday, July 17, 2014

by Common Dreams

By **Robert C. Koehler**



(Photo: flickr/cc/Jayel Aheram)

“**A**t the same time, values and ideas which were considered universal, such as cooperation, mutual aid, international social justice and peace as an encompassing paradigm are also becoming irrelevant.”

Maybe this piercing observation by Roberto Savio, founder of the news agency Inter Press Service, is the cruelest cut of all. Geopolitically speaking, hope — the official kind, represented, say, by the United Nations in 1945 — feels fainter than I can remember. “We the peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war . . .”

I mean, it was never real. Five centuries of European colonialism and global culture-trashing, and the remaking of the world in the economic interests of competing empires, cannot be undone by a single institution and a cluster of lofty ideals.

As Savio notes in an essay called “Ever Wondered Why the World Is a Mess?,”: “The world, as it now exists, was largely shaped by the colonial powers, which divided the world among themselves, carving out states without any consideration for existing ethnic, religious or cultural realities.”

And after the colonial era collapsed, these carved-out political entities, defining swatches of territory without any history of national identity, suddenly became the Third World and floundered in disarray. “. . . it was inevitable that to keep these artificial countries alive, and avoid their disintegration, strongmen would be needed to cover the void left by the colonial powers. The rules of

democracy were used only to reach power, with very few exceptions.”

Whatever noble attempts at eliminating war the powers that be made in the wake of World War II — Europe’s near self-annihilation — didn’t cut nearly deep enough. These attempts didn’t set about undoing five centuries of colonial conquest and genocide. They didn’t cut deeper than national interest.

And global peace built on a foundation of nation-states is an oxymoron. As historian Michael Howard noted in his book *The Lessons of History* (quoted by Barbara Ehrenreich in *Blood Rites*): “From the very beginning, the principle of nationalism was almost indissolubly linked, both in theory and practice, with the idea of war.”

All of which leads me to the \$400 billion F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, the most expensive warplane ever built, or not quite built. The aircraft, designed by Lockheed, is now seven years behind schedule, but the Pentagon had planned to display its new baby this week at the Royal International Air Tattoo and the Farnborough International Airshow in the U.K. This debut has now been called off because the engine of one of the planes caught fire on a runway in Florida in June, and officials feared the problem was systemic.

In other words, it could happen again. It could happen at the airshow, with the jet’s prospective customers — Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan and eight other U.S. allies — in attendance. Grounding it was a business decision. Indeed, it was a decision made at the delicate intersection of business and war.

“The setbacks follow a series of technical problems and development delays that have affected the F-35, one of the world’s most ambitious weapons programs, with estimated development costs of around \$400 billion,” Nicola Clark and Christopher Drew wrote this week in the *New York Times*. “Analysts said the timing of the problems, just as Lockheed Martin was hoping to demonstrate the plane to prospective export buyers here, could not have been worse.”

What I found interesting — well, overwhelmingly depressing, actually — was the fact that this story ran in the *Times*’ International Business section. When Savio writes, “Attempts to create regional or international alliances to bring stability have always been stymied by national interests,” this may be what he’s talking about. National interests are business interests. In the mainstream media, this is simply a given.

And the ongoing setbacks and escalating cost don’t matter. The F-35 project is still going forward, even though, as Kate Brannen wrote recently in *Foreign Policy*, “over the course of the aircrafts’ lifetimes, operating costs are expected to exceed \$1 trillion.”

The warplane’s supply of funding is inexhaustible, apparently. Congress is behind it all the way. And it’s hardly news. “Lockheed has carefully hired suppliers and subcontractors in almost every state to ensure that virtually all senators and members of Congress have a stake in keeping the program — and the jobs it has created — in place,” Brannen wrote.

Austerity is for losers. There’s always money to wage war and build weapons, indeed, to continue developing weapons, generation after generation after generation. The contractors are adept at playing the game. Jobs link arms with fear and patriotism and the next war is always inevitable. And it’s always necessary, because we’ve created a world of perpetual — and well-armed — instability.

The problem with the United Nations is that it’s a unity of entities defined by their hatred of one another and committed to the perpetuation of “the scourge of war.” We won’t begin creating global peace until we learn how to bypass nationalism and the single, unacknowledged agreement binding nation-states to each other: the inevitability of war.

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**Robert Koehler** is an award-winning, Chicago-based journalist and nationally syndicated writer. His new book, *Courage Grows Strong at the Wound* is now available. Contact him at [koehlercw@gmail.com](mailto:koehlercw@gmail.com) or visit his website at [commonwonders.com](http://commonwonders.com).



**OBAMA IN ASIA**

*Washington Extracts Rent-free Basing from the Philippines. By linking itself to Washington in its territorial disputes with China, the Philippines risks getting caught up in a superpower conflict.*

By **Walden Bello**  
April 28, 2014.



The Obama administration is negotiating a deal with the Philippines that would essentially give the U.S. free use of Philippine military installations, narrowly skirting a Philippine ban on foreign bases in the country. (Photo: U.S. Pacific Command / Flickr)

**A**s U.S. President Barack Obama descends on the Philippines, Manila and Washington are rushing to complete negotiations on an Agreement on Enhanced Defense Cooperation (AEDC) between the two countries.

The Philippines’ territorial disputes with China are one major reason for this new agreement. With Washington’s help, Philippine President Benigno Aquino III wants to make the Chinese respect the Philippines’ claims in the Scarborough Shoal, the Spratly Islands, the continental shelf, and its 200-mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

The truth of the matter, however, is that the deal will do no such thing.

What the agreement boils down to is that the Philippines will give the United States the right to operate bases in the country—for no rent—without the guarantee of U.S. protection of the country’s island territories.

**A Raw Deal**

According to Philippine officials, the new agreement is governed by the U.S.-

Philippine Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT), which they say obliges Washington to come to the Philippines’ defense in the event of an attack on Philippine territory, including its possessions in the West Philippine Sea. Here they cite Article V of the MDT, which says “an armed attack on either of the Parties is deemed to include an

armed attack on the metropolitan territory of either of the Parties, or on the island territories under its jurisdiction in the Pacific, or on its armed forces, public vessels, or aircraft in the Pacific.”

That is not the way the United States sees it.

Indeed, the U.S. government has not deviated from the position explicitly stated several years ago by Morton Smith, a spokesperson of the U.S. embassy. According to researcher Roland San Juan, Smith asserted that the Spratly islands claimed by the Philippines are excluded from the scope of the treaty because the Philippines raised its claim to them over three decades after the MDT was signed in 1951.

This is in contrast to Washington’s implicit support for Japan in its territorial dispute with China over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. “I restated the principles that govern longstanding U.S. policy on the Senkaku Islands and other islands,” Hagel said of his April visit to Beijing. “We affirmed that since [the Senkaku Islands] are under Japan’s administrative control, they fall under Article 5 of our Mutual Security Treaty.” Article V of the U.S.-Japan Mutual Security Treaty provides that “an armed attack against either Party in the territories under the administration of Japan would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional provisions and processes.”

During his recent state visit in Japan, Obama reiterated this commitment to Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. But he will not make the same promise to President Aquino in Manila when it comes to the Philippine possessions in the South China Sea.

Unlike the Scarborough Shoal and the Spratly Islands claimed by the Philippines, the Senkakus were under the administrative control of the prefecture of Okinawa when the U.S.-Japan Mutual Security Treaty was signed and were thus covered by the restoration of Okinawa to Japan’s control in 1972. “At first glance,” said former Rear Admiral Michael McDevitt, “the disputes China has with the Philippines over Scarborough Shoal in the SCS [South China Sea] appear similar to the ECS [East China Sea] with Japan because the U.S. is a treaty ally of the Philippines. Actually, however, the two situations are different. In the case of Scarborough Shoal, the Philippines did not have undisputed ‘administrative control’ prior to the 2012 confrontation over the islet. Second, the U.S. is not directly involved in the Scarborough Shoal dispute because its mutual defense treaty with the Philippines does not obligate Washington to take sides over sovereignty questions.”

If the deal does not provide for U.S. support for the Philippines’ territorial claims in the South China Sea, then what’s in it for the Philippines? Most likely an increase in military aid, including a few antiquated Hamilton class cutters. If so, this is a very poor return for a larger U.S. military presence and a grant to operate U.S. bases out of Philippine installations. This is essentially what the deal is all about, though given local sensitivities and a constitutional ban on foreign bases in the Philippines, both parties studiously refrain from calling the concentration of U.S. personnel, facilities, and war equipment “bases.”

**Pacific Pivot on the Cheap**

So what’s in it for the United States?

The U.S. government has always said that its main interest in the South China Sea is “ensuring freedom of navigation.” The first thing to note here

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is that although China claims the South China Sea as a domestic waterway in its notorious Nine-Dash-Line claim, the threat of its interfering with freedom of navigation has always been remote. China is not about to court world condemnation by enforcing its domestic shipping regulations on a busy waterway through which an estimated one-third of international trade passes. Nor does it have the capability to do so, and won't for a long time to come.

But even if the Chinese were to pose a threat to international navigation, the United States would not need a Philippine outpost to accomplish its stated goal of protecting international shipping. Even after Washington lost its Philippine bases at the end of the Cold War, the Pentagon had the South China Sea firmly under control throughout the 1990s. According to analyst William Berry, during the Mischief Reef crisis in the 1995, then Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Joseph Nye "stated that if any conflict in the South China Sea threatens freedom of the seas, then the United States Seventh Fleet was prepared to provide escort services so that freedom of navigation could be protected." That this was no bluff was revealed in 1996 during the Taiwan Straits crisis, when two aircraft carrier battle groups were deployed swiftly and with ease out of Yokosuka, Japan to show Washington's support for Taiwan. And again in 1998, a U.S. carrier battle group was sent near the Spratlys, apparently to send a message to all parties that the United States would protect freedom of navigation in international waters, once again showing its ability to act without relying on a base in the Philippines for logistics. Indeed, the elimination of the Subic and Clark bases in the Philippines was probably a big plus for the U.S. treasury, since it did away with the great cost of maintaining large fixed bases.

So why does the United States now want a higher military profile in the Philippines? The answer lies in what one might call Washington's "exhibitionist syndrome"—that is, the imperative it feels to "show the flag" to its allies and to China. And if it can do so in an inexpensive way, with a quid pro quo involving just a few of what the Americans call "Excess Defense Articles" like antiquated cutters, then all

the better. This is what John Feffer characterizes as Pacific Pivot on the cheap. As Frank Chang of the Foreign Policy Research Institute writes, "It clearly offers the United States a cost-effective way to enhance its presence in Asia, something that Washington has wanted to do for a long time."

But for the Philippines, the increase in obsolete military donations from Washington will be more than offset by the negative strategic consequences. First of all, the coming agreement will bring the Philippines farther away from a resolution to its territorial disputes with China, which will be marginalized by the dynamics of a superpower conflict. Second, it will turn the Philippines into another of Washington's "frontline states" like Afghanistan and Pakistan, with all the detrimental and destabilizing effects such a status entails—including the subordination of the country's economic, social, and cultural dynamics to Washington's security needs. Third, it will move the region farther away from the negotiation of a collective security agreement, which is a far better alternative to volatile balance-of-power politics, where a simple thing like a ship collision can lead to a bigger conflict.

#### **From Balance of Power to Collective Security**

The Philippines' territorial conflicts with China are real, but the way to resolve them is to rely on international law and diplomacy, and this is a terrain in which the Philippines has a big advantage. The Philippines' submission of a 1,000-page "memorial" delineating the country's entitlements in the West Philippine Sea to the United Nations Arbitral Tribunal at the end of March was a giant step in this direction. Beijing knows it does not have a leg to stand on in international law, which is why it has been pushing the Philippines to drop the case on pain of "damaging bilateral relations."

The Philippines must maximize its diplomatic option as well, where it also has an advantage over Beijing. It must press its ASEAN partners to remind Beijing of China's commitment to negotiate a binding code of conduct on maritime behavior

in the West Philippine Sea, which it made at a foreign ministers' meeting in Brunei in June 2013. It was pressure from ASEAN and internationally that forced Beijing to make this commitment, and it will be consistent pressure that will force it to follow through on it.

The Philippines should also prepare the ground at the United Nations General Assembly for the eventual introduction of a resolution condemning Beijing's unilateral annexation of over 80 percent of the South China Sea, brusquely disregarding other littoral states' rights to their continental shelves and 200-mile EEZs. There's a very good recent precedent: Beijing's aggressive annexationism is essentially similar to Russia's gobbling up of Crimea, which the General Assembly condemned few weeks ago.

The strategic aim of these diplomatic efforts must be to bring about a collective security agreement for the region that would include ASEAN, Japan, the two Koreas, and China. The ASEAN Regional Forum was headed in this direction in the 1990s, despite the opposition of the United States, which arrogated unto itself the role of enforcer of stability in the region. Its momentum was unfortunately derailed by the Asian financial crisis in 1997, which swept the rug from under the credibility of ASEAN's major states. Though the process will be difficult, it is time to revive this project of collective security, since the unstable and volatile balance-of-power politics favored by Washington is not a viable mechanism for regional peace and security.

With the impending basing agreement with the United States, the Philippines is right back to its position during the Cold War, when it played the role of handmaiden to the U.S. containment strategy by hosting two huge military bases. The small window of opportunity to forge an independent foreign policy that the Philippines gained with the expulsion of the U.S. bases in 1992 will disappear with the impending signing of this latest pact with Washington.

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**EYELESS IN GAZA**

*Benjamin Netanyahu's aggressive stance tarnishes Israel in the eyes of the world*

August 6, 2014

By Peter George

**I**srael needs supporters around the world to save it from itself.

The best thing that its boosters in Australia and elsewhere can do now is to abandon myopic support of the nation, its government and its dangerous prime minister.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu urgently needs to be reminded that international diplomatic, political and public support for Israel is not unconditional. Every day in Gaza, every death in Gaza increases the prospect that Israel's great fear of "de-legitimisation" by the international community will be realised.

If Israel is indeed facing an existential threat, then Netanyahu bears the lion's share of blame. For years he has held all the cards in the stand-off between Israelis and Palestinians and failed to use them for his nation's long-term benefit. He has allowed events to deteriorate so disastrously that Israel's Gaza adventure will inevitably diminish his nation's international standing still further.

Netanyahu has taken his nation down a path of confrontation from which it will be hard to return. He has provided Israel's enemies with more ammunition to attack the nation than any other Prime Minister since Menachem Begin launched the misbegotten invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and trashed his reputation as a Nobel peace prize recipient.

Since he took the reins in 2009, Netanyahu has fulfilled the worst fears of Israelis and friends abroad who believed in the prospect of a peaceful settlement with the Palestinians – the only path by which Israel can survive and prosper.

Hand-in-hand with rejectionist politicians, an aggressive settler movement and those who believe in an expansionist Israel, Netanyahu has determinedly blocked Palestinian aspirations for nationhood – the very same aspirations that the Jewish diaspora fulfilled in 1948. Jewish settlements in

occupied territories and the "security wall" are merely physical manifestations of wide-ranging policies that undermine any prospect of an equitable settlement under Netanyahu.

Palestinians in the occupied West Bank have become increasingly despairing while those in the Gaza Strip have become more angry and outraged at their imprisonment. Of course there is a surge in hatred, of course there is a turning to more extreme forms of resistance.

At the same time a succession of international opinion polls has revealed increasing public frustration with Israeli policies. There is declining support for the nation even in the United States.

This view is not new but it is growing. It began as far back as the Lebanon misadventure when Israel's claim to be a "plucky little state amongst a sea of enemies" first slipped. It had become an aggressor. Its complicity in the massacre of Palestinians in two refugee camps under Defence Minister, Ariel Sharon (later to become Prime Minister), merely hastened the fall from grace. Its brutal attempts to suppress the Palestinian uprising, the intifada, in 1987 accelerated the trend.

It took a much more far-sighted and able man than Netanyahu to reclaim some of that lost status.

Confronted yet again by a disaster in the battle for international opinion, then-Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was eventually forced by the intifada to negotiate with "terrorist" Yasser Arafat's PLO. Rabin brought his nation closer to peace than any other Israeli politician and might well have succeeded had he not been assassinated by a right-wing Israeli fanatic opposed to the peace process.

Rabin, a military commander and hero, told me once that every war inevitably ended with opponents talking to each other. This was on the same occasion on which he kicked me out of his office for being impertinent.

Now, as Israel's international reputation takes a renewed hammering, Netanyahu needs to recognise that the other "terrorist" organisation, Hamas, also reflects legitimate Palestinian

aspirations. Israel encouraged the growth of Hamas in the 1980s so it could divide and undermine Arafat's secular PLO – an irony lost on most today. That policy rebounded badly when Hamas won democratic elections in Gaza in 2006 and unsurprisingly proceeded to impose Islamist social mores on its constituents. Its public position was aggressively anti-Israeli but, while reporting from there, it was made clear to me by Hamas leaders that under the right circumstances the public and private postures could be very different – as is always the case in international disputes.

But Netanyahu and his predecessor, Ariel Sharon failed to heed the lessons that Rabin learnt in the 80s.

Their policies of increasing the stranglehold on Gazans in their prison and refusing to deal in any way with their elected government, while tightening the fist of occupation on West Bank and East Jerusalem and leaving no hope for peace have led directly to the latest series of catastrophes.

No one needs to condone the kidnap and murder of three young Israeli settlers – arguably the most immediate trigger for a series of events that led to the battle in Gaza – nor for Hamas rockets being fired indiscriminately into civilian areas of Israel. But these actions are easily understood as an outgrowth of frustration, despair and anger brought about by the policies of Netanyahu's government.

Gaza itself is now isolated from the outside world by Israel and by an antagonistic new regime in Egypt. It leaves Hamas little choice but to continue the battle since the only long-term ceasefire (proposed by Egypt and the US and accepted by Israel) would spell total capitulation. Israel went on to reject a second proposal.

Israel will naturally win the Battle of Gaza. Indeed, it can hardly be described as a battle at all since it is so one-sided. The death toll on both sides makes that abundantly clear.

The Israeli military annual budget of some \$US14 billion is supplemented by a US contribution of \$US3 billion a

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**IRAQ CRISIS**

Published on Friday, June 13, 2014

*Iraq Crisis: Created by Bush & Blair and Bankrolled by Saudi Arabia*

By **Robert Fisk**

**S**o after the grotesquerie of the Taliban and Osama bin Laden and 15 of the 19 suicide killers of 9/11, meet Saudi Arabia's latest monstrous contribution to world history: the Islamist Sunni caliphate of Iraq and the Levant, conquerors of Mosul and Tikrit – and Raqqa in Syria – and possibly Baghdad, and the ultimate humiliators of Bush and Obama.

From Aleppo in northern Syria almost to the Iraqi-Iranian border, the jihadists of Isis and sundry other groupuscules paid by the Saudi Wahhabis – and by Kuwaiti oligarchs – now rule thousands of square miles.

"Bush and Blair destroyed Saddam's regime to make the world safe and declared that Iraq was part of a titanic battle against 'Islamofascism.' Well, they lost."

Apart from Saudi Arabia's role in this catastrophe, what other stories are to be hidden from us in the coming days and weeks?

The story of Iraq and the story of Syria are the same – politically, militarily and journalistically: two leaders, one Shia, the other Alawite, fighting for the existence of their regimes against the power of a growing Sunni Muslim international army.

While the Americans support the wretched Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and his elected Shia government in Iraq, the same Americans still demand the overthrow of Bashar al-Assad of Syria and his regime, even though both leaders are now brothers-in-arms against the victors of Mosul and Tikrit.

The Croesus-like wealth of Qatar may soon be redirected away from the Muslim rebels of Syria and Iraq to the Assad regime, out of fear and deep hatred for its Sunni brothers in Saudi Arabia (which may invade Qatar if it becomes very angry).

We all know of the "deep concern" of Washington and London at the territorial victories of the Islamists – and the utter destruction of all that America and

Britain bled and died for in Iraq. No one, however, will feel as much of this "deep concern" as Shia Iran and Assad of Syria and Maliki of Iraq, who must regard the news from Mosul and Tikrit as a political and military disaster. Just when Syrian military forces were winning the war for Assad, tens of thousands of Iraqi-based militants may now turn on the Damascus government, before or after they choose to advance on Baghdad.

No one will care now how many hundreds of thousands of Iraqis have been slaughtered since 2003 because of the fantasies of Bush and Blair. These two men destroyed Saddam's regime to make the world safe and declared that Iraq was part of a titanic battle against "Islamofascism." Well, they lost. Remember that the Americans captured and recaptured Mosul to crush the power of Islamist fighters. They fought for Fallujah twice. And both cities have now been lost again to the Islamists. The armies of Bush and Blair have long gone home, declaring victory.

Under Obama, Saudi Arabia will continue to be treated as a friendly "moderate" in the Arab world, even though its royal family is founded upon the Wahhabist convictions of the Sunni Islamists in Syria and Iraq – and even though millions of its dollars are arming those same fighters. Thus does Saudi power both feed the monster in the deserts of Syria and Iraq and cosy up to the Western powers that protect it.

We should also remember that Maliki's military attempts to retake Mosul are likely to be ferocious and bloody, just as Assad's battles to retake cities have proved to be. The refugees fleeing Mosul are more frightened of Shia government revenge than they are of the Sunni jihadists who have captured their city.

We will all be told to regard the new armed "caliphate" as a "terror nation." Abu Mohamed al-Adnani, the Isis spokesman, is intelligent, warning against arrogance, talking of an advance on Baghdad when he may be thinking of Damascus. Isis is largely leaving the civilians of Mosul unharmed.

Finally, we will be invited to regard the future as a sectarian war when it will be a war between Muslim sectarians and

Muslim non-sectarians. The "terror" bit will be provided by the arms we send to all sides.

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**Robert Fisk** is Middle East correspondent for The Independent newspaper. He is the author of many books on the region, including *The Great War for Civilisation: The Conquest of the Middle East*.

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year, plus a further \$US235 million for the Iron Dome anti-rocket system Israel deploys to render Hamas' comparatively puny rockets ineffective.

Faced with such overwhelming military firepower and by such political intransigence, Hamas will continue to fight in the only way it can for as long as it can – from amidst the chaos of a devastated city in one of the most densely crowded places on earth. Some of its attacks will inevitably be launched from heavily populated areas of Gaza. Just about everywhere is densely packed while to "come out and fight in the open" – as Israel seems to be daring the resistance to do – is a ludicrous invitation to suicide in the face of such overwhelming and sophisticated force. Armies hate urban warfare where overwhelming force becomes vulnerable to guerilla tactics.

In government, Hamas has proved itself incompetent and aggressive. But it is not, as Netanyahu charges, built in the mould of the extreme Islamist movement in Iraq and Syria, ISIS. It could be brought to the table. It has already agreed to a unity government with the secular PLO – a move blocked by Israel.

The great sadness is that Netanyahu does not appear to be the man for this pivotal moment.

Israel needs someone with enough stature and vision to relaunch the nation on a course that Yitzhak Rabin set when he declared "We who have fought against you, the Palestinians, we say to you today, in a loud and a clear voice: Enough of blood and tears. Enough!"

**Peter George** was the ABC's first Middle East Correspondent and reported the region over 25 years.

**RAVAGING GAZA**

Published on Wednesday, July 16, 2014

*The War Netanyahu Cannot Possibly Win*

By **Ramzy Baroud**

**W**hen the bodies of three Israeli settlers - Aftali Frenkel and Gilad Shaar, both 16, and Eyal Yifrach, 19 - were found on June 30 near Hebron in the southern West Bank, Israel went into a state of mourning and a wave of sympathy flowed in from around the world. The three had disappeared 18 days earlier in circumstances that remain unclear.

The entire episode, particularly after its grim ending, seemed to traumatize Israelis into ignoring harsh truths about the settlers and the militarization of their society. Amid a portrayal of the three as hapless youths, although one was a 19-year-old soldier, commentators have failed to provide badly needed context to the events. Few, if any, assigned the blame where it was most deserved - on expansionist policies which have sown hatred and bloodshed.

Before the discovery of the bodies, the real face of Netanyahu's notoriously right-wing government was well-known. Few held illusions about how "peaceful" an occupation could be if run by figures such as Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, Economy Minister Naftali Bennett, and Deputy Defence Minister Danny Danon. But because "children" - the term used by Netanyahu himself - were involved, even critics didn't expect an exercise in political point-scoring.

There was sympathy elicited for the missing settlers case, but it quickly vanished in the face of an Israeli response (in the West Bank, Jerusalem and later in a full-scale war on Gaza) largely seen in the crucible of world opinion as disproportionate and cruel. Rather than being related to the tragic death of three youths, this response obviously reflected Netanyahu's grand political calculations.

As mobs of Israeli Jews went out on an ethnic lynching spree in Israel, Jerusalem and the West Bank that some likened to a "pogrom", occupation soldiers conducted a massive arrest campaign of hundreds of Palestinians, mostly Hamas members and supporters.

The Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas said it had no role in the death of the settlers, and this appears plausible since they rarely hesitate to take credit for something carried out by their military wing. Israeli military strategists were well aware of that.

This war on Hamas, however, has little to do with the killed settlers, and everything to do with the political circumstances that preceded their disappearance.

On May 15, two Palestinian youths, Nadim Siam Abu Nuwara, 17, and Mohammed Mahmoud Odeh Salameh, 16, were killed by Israeli soldiers while taking part in a protest commemorating the anniversary of the Nakba, or 'Great Catastrophe'. Video footage shows that Nadim was innocently standing with a group of friends before collapsing as he was hit by an Israeli army bullet.

The Nakba took place 66 years ago when the so-called Arab-Israeli conflict emerged. An estimated one million Palestinians were forced out of their homes as they fled a Zionist invasion. Israel was established on the ruins of that Palestine.

Nadim and Mohammed, like the youths of several generations since, were killed in cold blood as they walked to remember that exodus. In Israel, there was no outrage. However, Palestinian anger, which seems to be in constant accumulation - being under military occupation and enduring harsh economic conditions - was reaching a tipping point.

In some way, the deaths of these Palestinian youths were a distraction from the political disunity that has afflicted Palestinian leadership and society for years. Their deaths were a reminder that Palestine, as an idea and a collective plight and struggle, goes beyond the confines of politics or even ideology.

Their deaths reminded us that there is much more to Palestine than the whims of the aging Palestinian Authority 'President' Mahmoud Abbas and his Ramallah-based henchmen, or even Hamas's regional calculations following the rise and fall of the 'Arab Spring.'

The Israeli reaction to the settlers' death has been different. After the discovery of the bodies, fellow settlers

and right-wing Israelis began exacting revenge from Palestinian communities. The mob was united by the slogan "death to the Arabs", reviving a long-disused notion of a single Palestinian identity that precedes the emergence of Fatah and Hamas.

Perhaps paradoxically, the grief and anger provoked by the death of Mohammad Abu Khdeir, 17, who was burnt alive by Israeli settlers as part of this lashing out, has furthered this reawakening of a long-fragmented Palestinian national identity.

This identity that had suffered due to Israeli walls, military tactics and the Palestinians' own disunity, has been glued back together in a process that resembles the events which preceded the first and second uprisings of 1987 and 2000 respectively.

However, unlike in the previous Intifadas, the hurdles towards a unified voice this time seem insurmountable. Abbas is a weak leader who has done so much to meet Israel's security expectations and so very little to defend the rights of his people. He is a relic from a bygone era who merely exists because he is the best option Israel and the US have at the moment.

In the aftermath of the Israeli violent response to the killing of the settlers, Abbas laboured to coordinate with the massive Israeli search. At times, he stayed away as Israeli troops brutalised Palestinians in the West Bank.

It is clear that there can be no third Intifada that leaves Abbas and his wretched political apparatus in place. This is precisely why Palestinian Authority goons prevented many attempts by Palestinians in the West Bank to protest the Israeli violence unleashed in the occupied territories, which finally culminated into a massive war against Gaza that has killed and wounded hundreds.

Whatever credit Abbas supposedly gained by closing ranks with Hamas to form a unity government last June has been just as quickly lost. It has been overshadowed by his own failures to live up to commitment under the unity deal, and the relevance of his 'authority' was quickly eclipsed by Israeli violence, highlighting his and his

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government's utter irrelevance to Israel's political calculations.

When Israel launched its massive arrest campaign that mainly targeted Hamas in the West Bank, Hamas's political wing was already considering "alternatives" to the unity government in Ramallah.

Hamas's objectives were not being met. The unity deal was meant to achieve several goals: end Hamas's political isolation in Gaza, resulting from the intensifying of the siege by Egypt's Abdul Fatah al-Sisi, solving the economic crisis in the Strip, and also allowing Hamas to revert to its old brand, as a resistance movement first and foremost.

Even if Hamas succeeded in establishing a new brand based on the resistance/political model, Israel was determined to deactivate any potential for Palestinian unity. Destroying that unity became almost an obsession for Netanyahu.

The disappearance of the settlers gave Netanyahu's quest a new impetus. He immediately began a campaign pressuring Abbas to break away from Hamas.

But there is still more to Israel's war on Gaza than this. Fearing an intifada that would unite Palestinians, threaten the PA, and slow down the construction of illegal settlements, Netanyahu's war on Gaza means to distract from the slowly building collective sentiment among Palestinians throughout Palestine, and among Palestinian citizens in Israel.

This unity is much more alarming for Netanyahu than a political arrangement by Fatah and Hamas necessitated by regional circumstances. The targeting of Hamas is an Israeli attempt at challenging the emerging new narrative that is no longer about Gaza and its siege anymore, but the entirety of Palestine and its collectives regardless of which side of the Israeli "separation wall" they live on.

A true Palestinian unity culminating in a massive popular Intifada is the kind of war Netanyahu cannot possibly win.

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**Ramzy Baroud** ([www.ramzybaroud.net](http://www.ramzybaroud.net)) is an author and editor of [PalestineChronicle.com](http://PalestineChronicle.com). His latest book is *My Father Was a Freedom Fighter: Gaza's Untold Story* (Pluto Press, London).

## ISRAEL IS CAPTIVE TO ITS 'DESTRUCTIVE PROCESS'

Published on Monday, July 14, 2014

By **Chris Hedges**

**R**aul Hilberg in his monumental work "The Destruction of the European Jews" chronicled a process of repression that at first was "relatively mild" but led, step by step, to the Holocaust. It started with legal discrimination and ended with mass murder. "The destructive process was a development that was begun with caution and ended without restraint," Hilberg wrote.

The Palestinians over the past few decades have endured a similar "destructive process." They have gradually been stripped of basic civil liberties, robbed of assets including much of their land and often their homes, have suffered from mounting restrictions on their physical movements, been blocked from trading and business, especially the selling of produce, and found themselves increasingly impoverished and finally trapped behind walls and security fences erected around Gaza and the West Bank.

"The process of destruction [of the European Jews] unfolded in a definite pattern," Hilberg wrote. "It did not, however, proceed from a basic plan. No bureaucrat in 1933 could have predicted what kind of measures would be taken in 1938, nor was it possible in 1938 to foretell the configuration of the undertaking in 1942. The destructive process was a step-by-step operation, and the administrator could seldom see more than one step ahead."

There will never be transports or extermination camps for the Palestinians, but amid increasing violence against Palestinians larger and larger numbers of them will die, in airstrikes, targeted assassinations and other armed attacks. Hunger and misery will expand. Israeli demands for "transfer"—the forced expulsion of Palestinians from occupied territory to neighboring countries—will grow.

The Palestinians in Gaza live in conditions that now replicate those first imposed on Jews by the Nazis in the ghettos set up throughout Eastern Europe. Palestinians cannot enter or

leave Gaza. They are chronically short of food—the World Health Organization estimates that more than 50 percent of children in Gaza and the West Bank under 2 years old have iron deficiency anemia and reports that malnutrition and stunting in children under 5 are "not improving" and could actually be worsening. Palestinians often lack clean water. They are crammed into unsanitary hovels. They do not have access to basic medical care. They are stateless and lack passports or travel documents. There is massive unemployment. They are daily dehumanized in racist diatribes by their occupiers as criminals, terrorists and mortal enemies of the Jewish people.

"A deep and wide moral abyss separates us from our enemies," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said recently of the Palestinians. "They sanctify death while we sanctify life. They sanctify cruelty while we sanctify compassion."

Ayelet Shaked, a member of the right-wing Jewish Home Party, on her Facebook page June 30 posted an article written 12 years ago by the late Uri Elitzur, a leader in the settler movement and a onetime adviser to Netanyahu, saying the essay is as "relevant today as it was then." The article said in part: "They [the Palestinians] are all enemy combatants, and their blood shall be on all their heads. Now this also includes the mothers of the martyrs, who send them to hell with flowers and kisses. They should follow their sons, nothing would be more just. They should go, as should the physical homes in which they raised the snakes. Otherwise, more little snakes will be raised there."

The belief that a race or class of people is contaminated is used by ruling elites to justify quarantining the people of that group. But quarantine is only the first step. The despised group can never be redeemed or cured—Hannah Arendt noted that all racists see such contamination as something that can never be eradicated. The fear of the other is

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stoked by racist leaders such as Netanyahu to create a permanent instability. This instability is exploited by a corrupt power elite that is also seeking the destruction of democratic civil society for all citizens—the goal of the Israeli government (as well as the goal of a U.S. government intent on stripping its own citizens of rights). Max Blumenthal in his book “Goliath: Life and Loathing in Greater Israel” does a masterful job of capturing and dissecting this frightening devolution within Israel.

The last time Israel mounted a Gaza military assault as severe as the current series of attacks was in 2008, with Operation Cast Lead, which lasted from Dec. 27 of that year to Jan. 18, 2009. That attack saw 1,455 Palestinians killed, including 333 children. Roughly 5,000 more Palestinians were injured. A new major ground incursion, which would be designed to punish the Palestinians with even greater ferocity, would cause a far bigger death toll than Operation Cast Lead did. The cycle of escalating violence, this “destructive process,” as the history of the conflict has illustrated, would continue at an accelerating rate.

The late Yeshayahu Leibowitz, one of Israel’s most brilliant scholars, warned that, followed to its logical conclusion, the occupation of the Palestinians would mean “concentration camps would be erected by the Israeli rulers” and “Israel would not deserve to exist, and it will not be worthwhile to preserve it.” He feared the ascendancy of right-wing, religious Jewish nationalists and warned that “religious nationalism is to religion what National Socialism was to socialism.” Leibowitz laid out what occupation would finally bring for Israel:

The Arabs would be the working people and the Jews the administrators, inspectors, officials, and police—mainly secret police. A state ruling a hostile population of 1.5 to 2 million foreigners would necessarily become a secret-police state, with all that this implies for education, free speech and democratic institutions. The corruption characteristic of every colonial regime would also prevail in the State of Israel. The administration would suppress Arab insurgency on the one hand and acquire Arab Quislings on the other. There is

also good reason to fear that the Israel Defense Force, which has been until now a people’s army, would, as a result of being transformed into an army of occupation, degenerate, and its commanders, who will have become military governors, resemble their colleagues in other nations.

Israel is currently attacking a population of 1.8 million that has no army, no navy, no air force, no mechanized military units, no command and control and no heavy artillery. Israel pretends that this indiscriminate slaughter is a war. But only the most self-deluded supporter of Israel is fooled. The rockets fired at Israel by Hamas—which is committing a war crime by launching those missiles against the Israeli population—are not remotely comparable to the 1,000-pound iron fragmentation bombs that have been dropped in large numbers on crowded Palestinian neighborhoods; the forced removal of some 300,000 Palestinians from their homes; the more than 160 reported dead—the U.N. estimates that 77 percent of those killed in Gaza have been civilians; the destruction of the basic infrastructure; the growing food and water shortages; and the massing of military forces for a possible major ground assault.

When all this does not work, when it becomes clear that the Palestinians once again have not become dormant and passive, Israel will take another step, more radical than the last. The “process of destruction” will be stopped only from outside Israel. Israel, captive to the process, is incapable of imposing self-restraint.

A mass movement demanding boycotts, divestment and sanctions is the only hope now for the Palestinian people. Such a movement must work for imposition of an arms embargo on Israel; this is especially important for Americans because weapons systems and attack aircraft provided by the U.S. are being used to carry out the assault. It must press within the United States for cutoff of the \$3.1 billion in military aid that the U.S. gives to Israel each year. It must organize to demand suspension of all free trade and other agreements between the U.S. and Israel. Only when these props are knocked out from under Israel will the Israeli leadership be

forced, as was the apartheid regime in South Africa, to halt its “destructive process.” As long as these props remain, the Palestinians are doomed. If we fail to act we are complicit in the slaughter.

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### THREE POEMS FOR GAZA

July 29, 2014

By **Nathalie Handal**

#### Gaza

Once in a tiny strip  
dark holes swallowed hearts  
and one child told another  
*withdraw your breath*  
*whenever the night wind*  
*is no longer a land of dreams*

#### The Gazans

I died before I lived  
I lived once in a grave  
now I’m told it’s not big enough  
to hold all of my deaths

#### Tiny Feet

A mother looks at another—  
a sea of small bodies  
burnt or decapitated  
around them—  
and asks,  
*How do we mourn this?*

**Nathalie Handal** is from Bethlehem, Palestine, was raised in France and Latin America, and educated in the United Kingdom, the US, and the Arab world. She is the author of numerous books, most recently the critically acclaimed *Poet in Andalucia*. Handal is a Lannan Foundation Fellow, winner of the Alejo Zuloaga Order in Literature, and Honored Finalist for the Gift of Freedom Award, among other honors.

**ISRAELI GENOCIDE**

July 23, 2014

*Once it was Nazis Levelling the Warsaw Ghetto**Now it's Israel's IDF Leveling Gaza*by **Dave Lindorff**

**A**bout six years ago, as part of his Bar Mitzvah, my son Jed did a project on the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, producing his own graphic novel about the underground fighters who used courage, creativity and the city's sewer system to, in some small way, offer resistance to the murderous program of the Nazis to exterminate Poland's Jews.

In the course of his research, Jed interviewed a friend of my father's, a Polish man who had been a teenager in Warsaw during World War II. He told my son how one day, as he was riding the streetcar to a job, the tram came to a halt near the wall of the ghetto. Everyone was told they had to get out. Standing there in a crowd outside the wall, he saw vast amounts of smoke and heard and enormous gun and cannon fire, and bombs exploding. Asking what was happening, he said he was told by a Polish woman near him, "They're barbecuing the Jews!"

It was, it turned out, the final catastrophic leveling of the Warsaw Ghetto that he was witnessing, and this man recalled, still in horror at the memory, that people had gathered from all over the city to watch it happen, like going to a fireworks display.

Now we're seeing the same phenomenon in Israel, as the Israeli Defense Force enters its second week of bombing and invading the walled-in ghetto of Gaza, where some 1.8 million Palestinian men, women and children have been trapped for years with nowhere to go to escape the bombs, rockets, cannon fire and IDF snipers.

And like the horrific case of the destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto, here too we have a small-scale, improbable, resistance being put up by fighters who use home-made rockets, small arms and a network of tunnels to challenge their much better armed attackers. We also have people — ironically this time it's Jewish citizens of Israel — dragging lounge chairs and refreshments out to

hillsides in the evening to watch the fireworks as the IDF's tanks, bombers and ships off the coast of Gaza pulverize this huge ghetto that is fully under Israeli control.

As the *New York Times* reported in an article about the Israeli spectator sport of watching the leveling of Gaza, where by July 22 nearly 600 Palestinian, including over 100 children, had been killed by Israeli weapons, this was nothing new. Similar crowds gathered, equipped with comfortable seating and refreshments, during the prior bloody assault on Gaza in 2008-9 in which between 1160 and 1400 Palestinians were reportedly killed.

As in the prior Gaza assault, the IDF has been found to have targeted children, hospitals, mosques and populated residential areas. The *Times* reports that Danish reporter Allan Sorensen said at 9 pm local time, when he took his photo of the Israeli spectators, who were cheering each explosion in Gaza, the IDF had just fired what it called a "precision strike," that by either error or design hit a beachside cafe in Gaza where people had assembled to watch the Soccer World Cup semi-final between Argentina and Netherlands. At least eight people died in that bombing.

I know war is always vicious and ugly. But at least, by International Law, it is supposed to be fought between combatants, not by slaughtering innocents and terrorizing an entire population. According to the UN, at least 75 percent of those killed by the IDF in this latest war on Gaza have been civilians, a large percentage of those being children. That compares to two Israeli civilians killed by Hamas fighters, who have also reportedly killed over 30 IDF soldiers.

Sadly, the hatred against Palestinians that has been stoked by politicians in Israel has been so vicious that seemingly civilized people can sit munching popcorn while cheering explosions and gunfire that are slaughtering little kids just a short distance away over a wall. That's not to say that Palestinians don't also cheer when they learn that an Israeli has been killed. I'm sure they do. But let's be real here: the Palestinians trapped in their exploding ghetto hell are in no position to be sitting on couches munching popcorn while watching Hamas's pathetic homemade rockets whiz off into Israel only to be, for the most part, knocked

down harmlessly by the IDF's Iron Dome missile defense system.

Years ago, when President Nixon ordered the criminal "Christmas Bombing" of Hanoi and Haiphong, including hospitals, schools and dikes along the Red River, I wrote an editorial in the *Middletown Press*, where I was a reporter, saying that to the Vietnamese under the bombing onslaught, delivered by giant planes flying almost too high to see, it was like living near an erupting volcano, but I pointed out that we, the Americans, controlled that volcano, and had the power to stop it from erupting.

This one-sided bloody-minded slaughter by the Israeli Defense Force has to stop. Once again, as with Nixon's carpet bombing of North Vietnam, as the major supplier of Israel's arms, the US is in a position to make that happen, but so far, as in prior assaults on Gaza, Washington is not demanding a halt to the killing. Neither, sadly, are most American citizens.

**Dave Lindorff** is a founding member of [ThisCantBeHappening!](http://www.thiscantbehappening.com), an online newspaper collective, and is a contributor to *Hopeless: Barack Obama and the Politics of Illusion* (AK Press).

*'We declare openly that the Arabs have no right to settle on even one centimeter of Eretz Israel... Force is all they do or ever will understand. We shall use the ultimate force until the Palestinians come crawling to us on all fours.'*

- Rafael Eitan, Chief of Staff of the Israeli Defense Forces - Gad Becker, *Yediot Ahronot* 13 April 1983, *New York Times* 14 April 1983.

*'Every time we do something you tell me America will do this and will do that . . . I want to tell you something very clear: Don't worry about American pressure on Israel. We, the Jewish people, control America, and the Americans know it.'*

- Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, October 3, 2001, to Shimon Peres, as reported on *Kol Yisrael* radio.

*"One million Arabs are not worth a Jewish fingernail"*

-- Rabbi Yaacov Perrin, Feb. 27, 1994



## THE PALESTINIANS' RIGHT TO SELF DEFENCE

Published on Wednesday, August 06, 2014 by [Common Dreams](#)

*On Heroes and Preachers: Gaza's New Resistance Paradigm*

By **Ramzy Baroud**

“Where is the Palestinian Gandhi? In Israeli prison, of course!” was the title of an article by Jo Ehrlich published in [Mondoweiss.net](#) on Dec 21, 2009. That was almost exactly one year after Israel concluded a major war against Gaza. The so-called Operation Cast Lead (December 27, 2008 – January 18, 2009) was, till then, the deadliest Israeli attack against the impoverished strip for many years.

Ehrlich was not in the least being belittling by raising the question about the ‘Palestinian Gandhi’ but responding to the patronization of others. Right from the onset, he remarked: “Not that I’m in any way playing into the Palestinian Gandhi dialogue, I think it’s actually pretty diversionary/racist. But sometimes you have to laugh in order not to cry.”

Indeed, the question was and remains condescending, ignorant, patronizing and utterly racist. But the question was also pervasive, including among people who classify themselves as ‘pro-Palestinian activists’.

Now that Israel’s latest war – so-called Operation Protective Edge – has surpassed Cast Lead, in terms of duration, casualties, level of destruction, but also the sheer horrendousness of its targeting of civilians, as dozens of families were entirely wiped out – the Gandhi question seems more muted than usual. To understand why, one needs to first examine the reason of why Palestinians were demanded to produce a non-violent Gandhi alternative in their struggle for freedom in the first place.

The Second Palestinian Intifada or uprising (2000-2005) was inaugurated with an extremely violent Israeli response. Israeli leaders at the time meant to send a message to late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat that they had no patience for any act of collective defiance, as they were convinced that Arafat engineered the Intifada to strengthen his political possession in the ‘peace talks’, which, ultimately proved a farce.

Caught in an impossible situation – massive US-fed Israeli war machine that harvested hundreds of lives every month– and having no faith in their leadership, Palestinians resorted to arms, using suicide bombings as well as other violent methods. The tactic raised much controversy – due to the death toll among Israeli civilians – and was quickly used in Israel-western propaganda to, retrospectively explain Israel’s military occupation, and justify its harsh military tactics.

Those who dared to explain Palestinian violence within its proper and larger context, or underscore that many more Palestinian civilians were still being killed by the Israeli army were shunned by the media, and, at times, were seen as a liability by those who insisted to classify Palestinians within a narrative of victimization.

Many westerners (from presidents, to philosophers, to journalists, to social media activists) deliberated the matter with much enthusiasm. The fact that few western countries have truly experienced anti-colonial national liberation struggle in its modern history, thus lack real understanding of the humiliation and anger experienced by colonized nations, seemed to matter little. Some were simply concerned about Israel, and no one else; others wanted to preserve the image of the Palestinian as an occupied, hapless, eternal victim.

The most obscene presentation of this language was made by then-newly elected US President Barack Obama, who stood at a Cairo university podium on June 4, 2009, to convey to Palestinians a most denigrating, insensitive and highly inaccurate message:

“Palestinians must abandon violence. Resistance through violence and killing is wrong and it does not succeed. For centuries, black people in America suffered the lash of the whip as slaves and the humiliation of segregation. But it was not violence that won full and equal rights. This same story can be told by people from South Africa to South Asia; from Eastern Europe to

Indonesia. It’s a story with a simple truth: that violence is a dead end.”

Obama’s message painted the Palestinian struggle as an abnormality in otherwise perfectly peaceful national liberation struggles around the world. The message is of course untrue. More, he either didn’t know or wished to ignore Palestinian history where popular, nonviolent resistance that goes back to the 1920’s and 30’s, and arguably, earlier than that. Obama, like many others, failed to appreciate the level of extreme Israeli violence, which employs weapons that Obama had himself supplied Tel Aviv, to subdue Palestinian resistance and maintain a relatively easy military occupation and thriving Jewish settlements built illegally on stolen Palestinian land.

But the decisive point in the discussion was the Second Intifada, which wrought much Israeli violence resulting in the death of thousands. The political implications of the uprising were also quite significant as it divided Palestinians between those who were intimidated by the Israeli tactics into submissions (the so-called moderates), and others who seemed unrepentant (the so-called radicals).

For nearly ten years now, the debate raged. Some outrightly condemned Palestinian armed resistance, others offered mutual criticism of Israeli and Hamas violence, while another group simply preached about the futility of armed struggle in the face of a country with nuclear weapons capable of blowing up much of the globe at the push of a button.

That debate, although making for an exquisite discussion on online newspapers and social media, hardly registered amongst ordinary Palestinians, especially those in Gaza. While Gaza intellectuals did contend with new ideas of how to build international solidarity to end the Israeli siege, get their message out to the world, and even question the timing of firing rockets into Israel, few probed the principle of armed resistance.

Of course, Palestinians know best, much better than Obama and other preachers elsewhere. They know that collective resistance is not always a

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Tactic determined through social media discussions; that when one's children are pulverised by US-supplied killing technology, there is no time to lay flat and sing 'we shall overcome,' but to prevent the rest of the tanks from entering into the neighbourhood – be it Shujaiya, Jabalya or Maghazi. They also know that Israeli violence is a result of a decided political agenda, and is not tailored around the nature of Palestinian resistance. But more importantly, history has taught them, that when Israelis come to Gaza as invaders, few will stand in Gaza's defence before the western-financed death machine, but Gaza's own sons and daughters. If Gazans don't defend their cities, no one else will.

Although the disparity of the fight between Israel and Palestinian resistance is as highlighted today as ever before, Palestinian resistance has matured. The fact that they killed dozens of soldiers and only three civilians should be noted, as is Israel's disgraceful targeting of hospitals, schools, UN shelters and even graveyards. Maintaining that level of discipline in the most unequalled fight one can imagine is as close to the very battlefield ethics that the US and Israel often breach, but never, ever respect.

As great as Gandhi was in the context of his country's struggle against colonialism, which remains a source of inspiration for many Palestinians, Palestine has its own heroes, resisters, women and men who are engraving a legend of their own in Gaza and the rest of Palestine.

As for those who have busily asked the question of where is the Palestinian Gandhi, it is much more affective for them to use their energies to block their governments' shipments of weapons to Israel, which, as of August 6, killed nearly 1,900 and wounded over 9,500, vast majority of them are civilians.

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**Ramzy Baroud** (see biographical information on Page 13)

## CRIME (ISRAEL) AND PUNISHMENT (RUSSIA)

By Pepe Escobar

*The horrible thing about the Two Minutes Hate was not that one was obliged to act a part, but that it was impossible to avoid joining it ...*

*A hideous ecstasy of fear and vindictiveness, a desire to kill, to torture, to smash faces in with a sledgehammer, seemed to flow through the whole group of people like an electric current, turning one even against one's will into a grimacing, screaming lunatic*  
- **George Orwell**, "1984"

July 30, 2014 "["ICH"](#)" - "[Asia Times](#)"

**S**o Obama, Merkel, Cameron, Hollande and Italian Premier Matteo Renzi - let's call them the Fab Five - get on a video conference call to muster their courage and "increase pressure" asking for a cease-fire in Gaza. Later in the day, Israel's Benjamin "Bibi" Netanyahu delivers his answer, in plain language: he remains dead set on achieving his version of a Final Solution to Gaza. [1] With or without "pressure".

So what's left for the Fab Five after having their illustrious Western collective behinds solemnly kicked? They decide to dump Gaza and instead sanction Russia - again! How brilliant is that as an exit strategy?

Spectacular non-entity Tony Blinken, who doubles as deputy national security adviser to Barack Obama, was keen to stress to Western corporate media that the unruly Eurotrash mob is now "determined to act". No, not against Israel because of Gaza; against Russia because of Ukraine. Such a lovely Orwellian symmetry: the extended Two Minutes Hate from Israel towards Gazans morphs into the extended Two Minutes Hate from the "West" towards Russia, mirroring the extended Two Minutes Hate from Kiev towards Eastern Ukrainians.

Not even Hollywood could come up with such a plot; Israel gets away with unlawful premeditated mass murder of civilians, while Russia gets framed for a (smaller-scale) airborne mass murder of civilians that has all the makings of being set up by the Kiev vassals of Russia's Western "partners".

I have exposed how sanctions, sanctions, sanctions is the one and only

official Obama administration "policy" on Russia. On top of the next European Union sanctions, coming soon, the US will be piling up - what else - more sanctions. After all, Washington is so "concerned" that Moscow will sooner or later invade Ukraine; that would certainly, and finally, answer all those In God We Trust prayers.

### Where we stand now

Let's follow the facts. Washington from the get-go said it was Russian President Vladimir Putin's missile that downed MH17. They swore they had evidence. Like in "We know. Trust us". The historical record for the past 60 years at least shows they cannot be trusted. There was never any evidence. Just spin.

Moscow, via the Defense Ministry, presented hard evidence. And called for an unbiased international investigation. Washington ignored it all - the call and the hard evidence.

The US Navy, crammed with state-of-the-art missile defense radars, has been in the Black Sea for weeks now. As much as the Russians, they have tracked every particle flying over Ukraine. The NSA goes for signals intelligence; the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency goes for phenomena in the imagery realm; the Defense Intelligence Agency adds Humint; there's the CIA; and there's the all-seeing, all-knowing Director of National Intelligence. How come all this trillion-dollar Full Spectrum Dominance apparatus cannot come up with a single, conclusive piece of evidence?

The only risible "evidence" presented so far pictures the acronym salad of US intel agencies spending their time reading blogs and Twittering. As in the State Department head in Kiev twittering satellite imagery that the New York Times parroted "proved" Russia is shelling Ukraine from across the border. The proverbial "senior US officials" even had to tersely admit on the record they have no proof whatsoever about "Putin's missile". If they had, NATO would be ready to flip burgers in Red Square.

Based on the wealth of info now in the open, the top probability of what

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caused the MH17 tragedy was an R-60M air-to-air missile shot from a Ukrainian Su-25 - and not a BUK (there's also the possibility of a double down; first an R-60M and then a BUK). The R-60M is very fast, with an ideal engagement distance of up to five kilometers. That's how far the Su-25 detected by the Russians (they showed the graphics) was from MH17.

SBU - Ukrainian intel - for its part confiscated the recordings of Kiev control tower talking to MH17. That would certainly explain why MH17 was overflying a war zone (Malaysian Airlines revealed they were forced to). Hefty bets can be made the recordings are now being "doctored".

Then there are the black boxes, which will not be decoded by the Malaysians or by the Dutch, but by the Brits - acting under Washington's orders. As The Saker blogger summed up the view of top Russian specialists, "the Brits will now let the NSA falsify the data and that falsification will be coordinated with the SBU in Kiev which will eventually release the recordings who will fully 'confirm' the 'authenticity' of the NSA-doctored recordings from the UK." To make it more palatable, and erase suspicions about Anglo-American foul play, the Dutch will announce it. Everyone should be forewarned.

NATO heads, for their part, are droolin'. Kiev's forces/militias will hold "joint exercises" with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Ukraine in slightly over a month from now, on September 1; red alert applies, because this is when Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko said the slow motion ethnic cleansing of Donbass will be finished.

As for the R2P ("responsibility to protect") angle, it sounds quite improbable. True, Moscow can always say that unless the slow motion ethnic cleansing of Donbass stops they will recognize the Donetsk and Luhansk Republics. In that case, Moscow would be replaying Abkhazia and South Ossetia; a de facto R2P backed by military muscle.

Under international law - which Washington never respects, by the way - this is not the same as "invading" Ukraine. The frankly scary Samantha Power, the US Ambassador to the United Nations, would obviously freak out - but that's a dose of her own medicine. It would indeed be comparable to what the Americans are doing to the benefit of those Salafi-jihadis in Syria; and better yet, to what the US did in Kosovo.

### The \$50billion vultures

And now, on top of sanctions, Moscow also has to contend with a massive US\$50 billion theft attempt. The International Arbitration Court in The Hague found that the Kremlin's pursuit of Yukos and its main shareholder, Mikhail Khodorkovsky, a decade ago was politically motivated. Moscow can't appeal - but it will pursue all legal avenues for trying to get this ruling "set aside".

Well, it's The Hague's decision itself that is political. Khodorkovsky was found guilty not only by the Russian judicial system but also by the European Court of Human Rights. Yukos and Menotep shareholders were and remain a bunch of oligarch gangsters - to put it mildly.

So here's the Empire of Chaos once again in action, manipulating a Dutch court after literally stealing Germany's gold and fining France for selling warships to Russia. In this case though, the "West" has more investments in Russia than the Russian government in the West. Payback could be a bitch - as in Moscow, for instance, freezing all US and EU energy investments especially in the new ultra-profitable frontier, the Arctic oil fields. Western Big Oil will never allow this to happen.

This could go on forever. The bottom line: the Russian state simply won't allow itself to be robbed by a dodgy ruling on behalf of a bunch of oligarchs. In parallel, a case can be made that not only the Return of the Living (Neo-Con) Dead but also substantial sections of the deep state in Washington DC and environs - as well as "Western" plutocracy - want to provoke some sort of NATO war against Russia, sooner rather than later.

And in another parallel line, Moscow rumor has it that the Kremlin finds this protracted post-Yukos battle just an afterthought compared to the economic war about to convulse Europe and eventually pit Europe against Russia: exactly what the Empire of Chaos is praying - and working - for. "Two Minute" Hate? Talk about hours, days, weeks, and years.

*Note:*

1. [Netanyahu: We're prepared for an extended operation in Gaza](http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Netanyahu-We-re-prepared-for-an-extended-operation-in-Gaza-1.271111), The Jerusalem Post, July 28, 2014.

**Pepe Escobar** is the author of *Globalistan: How the Globalized World is Dissolving into Liquid War* (Nimble Books, 2007) and *Obama does Globalistan* (Nimble Books, 2009). - He may be reached at [pepeasia@yahoo.com](mailto:pepeasia@yahoo.com).

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### RUSSIA SENDS STERN WARNING TO SAUDI ARABIA

Mon Jul 28, 2014 4:18

**TEHRAN (FNA)**- Russia warned Saudi Arabia against providing Syrian rebels with anti-aircraft missiles after the kingdom expressed a keenness to extend its support to the Free Syrian Army.

In a statement to the press, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov expressed grave concerns toward Saudi Arabia's insistence to provide Syrian rebels with high tech weaponry when it has been established that such weapons often found their way to terror cells, Islam Times reported.

Moscow warned that it would not allow Syrian rebels to be given anti-aircraft missiles and anti-tank missiles. Saudi Arabia has recently purchased weapons from Pakistan in view of supplying Syrian rebels against Syrian President Bashar Al Assad.

Minister Lavrov stressed that Riyadh's move aimed to change the war dynamics, especially since Al Assad's forces proved far more superior on the ground than ever anticipated.

Lavrov declared that should such high tech weaponry ever land in the hands of terrorists the entire Middle East region would be thrown in the midst of a violence never witnessed before.

It is important to note that in recent months Saudi Arabia has been keen to tighten its relations with Pakistan as to ensure that it would benefit from a steady supply of weapons.

**NATO IS DESPERATE FOR WAR**By **Pepe Escobar**August 08, 2014 "[ICH](#)" - "[Asia Times](#)"

**T**he North Atlantic Treaty Organization is desperate; it is itching for a war in battlefield Ukraine at any cost.

Let's start with Pentagon supremo, US Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel, who has waxed lyrical over the Russian Bear's "threat": "When you see the build-up of Russian troops and the sophistication of those troops, the training of those troops, the heavy military equipment that's being put along that border, of course it's a reality, it's a threat, it's a possibility - absolutely."

NATO spokeswoman Oana Lungescu could not elaborate if it was "threat" or "reality", absolutely or not, but she saw it all: "We're not going to guess what's on Russia's mind, but we can see what Russia is doing on the ground - and that is of great concern. Russia has amassed around 20,000 combat-ready troops on Ukraine's eastern border."

In trademark, minutely precise NATO speak, Lungescu then added that Russia "most probably" would send troops into eastern Ukraine under the cover of "a humanitarian or peace-keeping mission". And that settled it.

Hagel and his remote-controlled Romanian minion Lungescu obviously have not read [this](#) [1] or simply ignored its detailed explanation by Russian Air Force's spokesman: the "threat" or "build-up" happens to expire this Friday, the last day of Russian military exercises announced in advance.

**Fogh of War gets antsy**

Right on cue, NATO secretary-general Anders "Fogh of War" Rasmussen arrived in Kiev practically foaming war in his mouth, ready to lay down the groundwork for NATO's summit in Wales on September 4 when Ukraine, enthroned as a major non-NATO ally, could be projected to become, in lightning speed, fully NATO-weaponized. Moreover, NATO is about to seriously "build up" in Poland, Romania, the Baltics and even Turkey.

But then all sorts of Khaganate of Nulands (as in Victoria Nuland, US Assistant Secretary of State for European

and Eurasian Affairs) derivatives started to spin out of control. One can imagine the vain Fogh of War vainly trying to regain his composure.

That took some effort as he was presented with the spectacle of Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko - a certified oligarch dogged by dodgy practices - trying hard to evict the Maidan originals from the square in the center of Kiev; these are the people who late last year started the protests that were later hijacked by the Banderastan (as in Saudi Prince Bandar bin Sultan)/Right Sector neo-Nazis, the US neo-con masters.

The original Maidan protests - a sort of Occupy Kiev - were against monstrous corruption and for the end of the perennial Ukrainian oligarch dance. What the protesters got was even more corruption; the usual oligarch dance; a failed state under civil war and avowed ethnic cleansing of at least 8 million citizens; and on top of it a failed state on its way to further impoverishment under International Monetary Fund "structural adjustment". No wonder they won't leave Maidan.

So Maidan - the remix - has already started even before the arrival of General Winter. Chocolate King Poroshenko must evict them as fast as he can because renewed Kiev protests simply don't fit the hysterical Western corporate media narrative that "it's all Putin's fault". Most of all, corruption is even nastier than before - now with plenty of neo-Nazi overtones.

With Fogh of War already fuming because "Russia won't invade", the pompously named "Secretary" of Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council, neo-Nazi Andrey Parubiy - who is the most likely candidate for having ordered the hit last month on the MH17 civilian aircraft - decided to step out; a certified rat abandoning a sinking ship move mostly provoked by the fact he did not get an extended ethnic cleansing overdrive in Eastern Ukraine, and had to endure a ceasefire. Poroshenko is not an idiot; after loads of bad PR, he knows his nationwide "support" is evaporating by the minute.

Compounding all this action, a US missile cruiser enters the Black Sea again "to promote peace". The Kremlin

and Russian intel easily see that for what it is.

And then there's the horrendous refugee crisis building up in eastern Ukraine. This past Tuesday, Moscow during a UN Security Council meeting requested emergency humanitarian measures - predictably in vain. Washington blocked it because Kiev had blocked it ("There is no humanitarian crisis to end"). Russian Ambassador Vitaly Churkin dramatically described the situation in Donetsk and Luhansk as "disastrous", stressing that Kiev is intensifying military operations.

According to the UN itself, at least 285,000 people have become refugees in eastern Ukraine. Kiev insists the number of internal refugees is "only" 117,000; the UN doubts it. Moscow maintains that a staggering 730,000 Ukrainians have fled into Russia; the UN High Commission for Refugees agrees. Some of these refugees, fleeing Semenivka, in Sloviansk, have detailed Kiev's use of N-17, an even deadlier version of white phosphorus.

When Ambassador Churkin mentioned Donetsk and Luhansk, he was referring to Kiev's goons gearing up for a massive attack. They are already shelling the Petrovski neighborhood in Donetsk. Almost half of Luhansk residents have fled, mostly to Russia. Those who stayed behind are mostly old-age pensioners and families with small children.

Humanitarian crisis does not even begin to describe it; there's no water, electricity, communication, fuel and medicine left in Luhansk. Kiev's heavy artillery partially destroyed four hospitals and three clinics. Luhansk, in a nutshell, is the Ukrainian Gaza.

In a sinister symmetry, just as it gave a free pass to Israel in Gaza, the Obama administration is giving a free pass to the butchers of Luhansk. And there's even a diversion. Obama was mulling whether to bomb The Caliph's Islamic State goons in Iraq, or maybe drop some humanitarian aid. He opted for (perhaps) "limited" bombing and arguably less limited food and water airdrops.

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So let's be clear. For the US government, "there might be a humanitarian catastrophe" in Mount Sinjar in Iraq, involving 40,000 people. As for at least 730,000 eastern Ukrainians, they have the solemn right to be shelled, bombed, air-stricken and turned into refugees.

### The new Somalia

Moscow's red lines are quite explicit: NATO out of Ukraine. Crimea as part of Russia. No US troops anywhere near Russia's borders. Full protection for the Russian cultural identity of southern and eastern Ukraine.

Yet the - real - humanitarian crisis (which Washington dismisses) is another serious matter entirely. Kiev's forces are not equipped for prolonged urban warfare. But assuming these forces - a compound of regular military; oligarch-financed terror/death squads; the neo-Nazi-infested "voluntary" Ukrainian national guard; US-trained foreign mercenaries - decide to go for mass carnage to take Donetsk and Luhansk, arguably Moscow will have to consider what NATO types spin as a "limited ground intervention" in Ukraine.

NATO spinsters are foolish enough to believe that if Putin can disguise the intervention as a peacekeeping or humanitarian mission, he may be able to sell it to Russian public opinion. In fact Putin has not "invaded" because Russian public opinion does not want it. His popularity is at a staggering 87%. Only an - improbable - Kiev-perpetrated mass carnage would change the equation, and sway Russian public opinion. Considering this is exactly what NATO wants, Fogh of War will be working overtime to force his vassals to bring about such carnage.

Still, considering the latest developments, what facts on the ground point to is the current oligarch dance in Kiev already unraveling - as in this example [here](#) [2]. Moscow won't even have to bother to consider "invading". Meanwhile, Poroshenko's slow motion genocide in Eastern Ukraine, as well as his crackdown of Maidan remix in Kiev, will keep getting a free pass. All hail Ukraine as the new Somalia; a fitting Frankenstein created by the exceptionalist Empire of Chaos.

**Pepe Escobar** (see biographical information on Page 17)

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Notes:

1. <http://www.airforce-technology.com/news/newsrussian-air-force-begins-military-exercises-near-ukrainian-border-4333822/>
2. <http://beforeitsnews.com/financial-markets/2014/07/ukrainians-ordered-to-war-women-bum-the-military-writes-2747468.html>

## THE CAUSES OF WORLD WAR III

By **Margaret Kimberley**

"Malaysian airlines flight MH17 may be the Lusitania of the modern era."

August 01, 2014 "[ICH](#)" - "[BAR](#)"

**O**n July 28, 1914 the Austro-Hungarian empire declared war on Serbia and began a four-year-long war which engulfed Europe, the Middle East, North Africa, North America, Asia and Australia. The conflict came to be known as World War I, the Great War, the war to end all wars. World War I brought such horrors as trench warfare, the use of aviation as a weapon, poison gas attacks and the flame thrower. Technological advances were used to evil effect against millions of people.

Only twenty years later another war was fought throughout the world. From 1939 to 1945 human beings died on nearly every continent and it ended only when the United States unleashed the power of the atom on Japan. This is still the only nation to have used nuclear weapons against human beings.

World War II was followed by the Cold War between the United States and other western nations and the Soviet Union and its allies. For nearly fifty years proxy wars and crises took place between the two sides until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. During those decades humanity feared a hot war and the use of nuclear weapons but the competition ended without the military conflict that the world dreaded. The break-up of the USSR brought temporary hope that there would never be another catastrophic conflict.

*"Most Americans learn a litany of shallow and simplistic explanations for the first Great War."*

The worldwide commemoration of the World War I centenary is celebrated amongst eerie circumstances, as the world's most

powerful nations are locked in the dangerous type of embrace which preceded past conflagrations. Most Americans learn a litany of shallow and simplistic explanations for the first great war such as the assassination of an archduke and the sinking of the Lusitania. The textbook explanations omit that the quest for expansion and economic competition among the powerful nations led the world into disaster. That cycle ominously appears to be repeating itself in 2014.

The fall of the Soviet Union wasn't the beginning of a new and better age. Americans never got the "peace dividend" they expected as the threat of war seemed to end. Instead they got ever increasing military spending which now dwarfs that of the rest of the world's nations combined. Capitalism is supposedly at its end stage but it seems that it won't go down without a fight with it in an endless series of collapsing "bubbles" and austerity measures which punish the victims of worldwide capital and their collaborators in governments around the world.

The absence of a competing power only emboldened the United States to renew its long history of intervention, invasion and aggression. The Russian Federation was promised by a succession of American presidents that its former allies would not be used against them. Those words meant nothing as former Soviet bloc states were entreated to join NATO and the European Union.

*"Somalia, Libya, Syria, Afghanistan, and the Congo are now shells of their former selves, as the West turns them all to ruin."*

The weaker nations of the world fare even worse. They face outright naked aggression from the United States. Iraq has suffered from two American invasions in twenty years. Nations that were ignored are instead attacked by western nations or their surrogates and then face years of destruction and chaos. Somalia, Libya, Syria, Afghanistan,

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and the Congo are now shells of their former selves, racked by continuing bloodshed as the West turns them all to ruin. The rush to conquest creates odd alliances such as that which began in Afghanistan thirty years ago. The inevitable ending of the relationship between the United States and jihadists resulted in blowback culminating in the attacks of September 11, 2001.

Like a child having a meltdown, the bad behavior of the United States doesn't just continue. It gets worse and worse. Its own goals risk being undone by the same people it once called friends. Iraq is being destroyed yet again as one-time friends represented by ISIS threaten the entire imperial project in the region.

***"Russia is a tough nut to crack."***

Now the United States and European nations aren't content to attack the weak. They openly declare war on Russia. When they backed a coup in Ukraine they happily threw gasoline onto a fire but the fantasy was easier than the reality. Russia is a tough nut to crack and the instigation of civil war in Ukraine brought more than the West anticipated.

The alliances between Germany, Austria and the Ottoman empire on one side and France, Britain and Russia seem quaint in comparison to the United States upending regimes all over the world as its allies follow dutifully along. Malaysian airlines flight MH17 may be the Lusitania of the modern era. Had the West not caused conflict on Russia's doorstep the incident would not have taken place but the propagandists are hard at work evading responsibility and assigning blame they ought to share.

It is impossible to look into the future and see how these conflicts will end. It is clear that they can't go on forever and that great changes are coming. Only defeat will stop massacres in Gaza and regime change around the world. Of course those defeats will bring great suffering to the masses of people. Ironically, that suffering is the only certainty as the chaos continues.

Margaret Kimberley's Freedom Rider column appears weekly in BAR, and is widely reprinted elsewhere. She maintains a frequently updated blog as well as at <http://freedomrider.blogspot.com>.

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## KERRY, KERRY PANTS ON FIRE!

*If You Believed the US Secretary of State's Poison Gas Lie, You'll Love His Latest One*

Sun, 07/20/2014 - 16:31

by: **Dave Lindorff**

**I**f the best the US can do to pin the blame for the Malaysia Flight 17 downing on Russia is to have Secretary of State John Kerry say that "circumstantial evidence" points to Moscow being behind it, we can be pretty certain it was not Russia at all.

Kerry's credibility on such matters has been in the toilet since last August when he claimed during last year's furor and push for war against Syria's Bashar al Assad that he had seen "clear and compelling evidence" that the Syrian government had used poison gas against its own people. That "evidence" turned out (clearly with Kerry's knowledge) to have been ginned up, falsified and staged, and in the end it was evident that Syria had not been the guilty party. Had Kerry and the White House succeeded in duping the world and the American people the way President George W. Bush and VP Dick Cheney succeeded in duping them about Iraq's "WMDs," an armada of US planes and ships already in position around Syria would have begun a massive aerial bombardment of Syria sparking a whole new war in the Middle East, even as Iraq was already in the throes of a civil war.

Fortunately, John Kerry's and the accommodating US corporate media's lies that time were exposed, and that bloody catastrophe was averted.

Now, undeterred by that first attempt at a full-blown campaign of lies, Kerry and the Obama White House are at it again, trying to falsify a *casus belli* against Russia by blaming Moscow for the downing of a civilian airliner that killed 298 people.

The problem for Kerry and Washington's warmongers is that the story they're selling is ludicrous.

Why on earth would the Russians (who have been scrupulously avoiding getting involved in the Ukraine fighting), have provided the separatist

rebels in eastern Ukraine with Buk missiles capable of downing high-altitude planes? Such aircraft pose no threat to the rebels. What they fear is the Ukraine military's ground attack aircraft and bombers, and their helicopter gunships and troop transport planes. And they already have demonstrated that they've got the weapons to deal with those, in the form of shoulder-fired, wire-guided missiles -- weapons that don't have the capability to down aircraft flying at anywhere near 33,000 feet.

The answer to that question is that Russia would gain nothing, and would stand to lose a lot by contributing to the downing of a civilian aircraft. In fact, we can see, in the desperate effort by Kerry to pin the blame on Russia, exactly why they would never have wanted to do such a thing.

That goes for the separatist rebels, too. The last thing they would want would be to give reluctant NATO allies of the US in Europe a reason to join the war-mongering campaign of the US in backing the Ukrainian government's "anti-terrorist" campaign against them. After all, the separatists have actually been doing pretty well at stymying the Ukrainian military as it is. In addition, increasing numbers of Ukrainians in western Ukraine are growing frustrated with the corruption, incompetence and war-making of their government. How do the rebels then gain by angering Western European nations and the Ukrainian people? Answer: They don't.

Indeed the only parties who could conceivably gain by the downing of a civilian airliner would be the US and Ukraine, if they thought they could manage to pin the blame on the Russians and/or the separatist rebels. (For those who find it hard to swallow the idea that the US would deliberately shoot down a plane carrying 298 civilians in order to get a war going, there is another theory out there: that the Ukrainians -- or some rogue element of the Ukraine military -- thought the plane was Russian President Vladimir Putin's own "Air Force One" carrying him back from the Brazil World Cup. In fact the

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flight paths of the two plans actually intersected within a fairly short time frame according to some reports.)

Meanwhile, it has already been demonstrated that the “evidence” that the US and Ukraine are citing -- an electronic communication allegedly between a rebel and a Russian general referring to the downing of Malaysian Flight 17, was made *a day before* the downing happened (a point not mentioned in the breathless corporate media reports). That sounds like something the CIA would have had a hand in, as many believe it did in the also bogus “notice” earlier this year allegedly calling on Jews in eastern Ukraine to register with rebel authorities. As for the claim that the rebels had in their possession a Buk missile launcher, and that it came from Russia, this is highly dubious. First of all, as mentioned, there was no reason for Russia to provide such a weapon to the rebels. Second, if the rebels, often described as a rag-tag group, ever got such a sophisticated weapons, they would not have had the training to use it. Kerry is also saying that the US “has the trajectory” of a missile fired by a Buk launcher in rebel-held territory “near the scene of the crash,” but of course, he also said the US “had the trajectories” of the poison gas rockets and that they came from a Syrian military installation--a claim that later proved false.

On the other hand, Ukraine’s military is known to possess several dozen mobile Buk missile launchers in its arsenal, and some of these were known to have been moved into eastern Ukraine. Why Ukraine’s military would have done this, when the rebels have no air force, is a good question -- one which the Russians are asking (but which the US corporate media have not bothered to speculate about).

So we have Kerry’s lies and the lies of other US government officials, backed by the same complicit and propagandistic US media that ran with their lies so unquestioningly in the Syria poison gas incident, with little but the alternative media and

some of the foreign media to rely on for more honest and forthright investigation into this case. And we have the Ukrainian government, which has been charging all along, against all logic, that the pro-Russian rebels in eastern Ukraine are all “terrorists,” also claiming that it’s the Russians and the rebels who did the deed.

No doubt it will be a while before the truth comes out about this story. In the meantime, the best evidence that it was not the Russians and the rebels in Ukraine who shot down the plane is that Secretary of State Kerry is trying to convince us all that they did it.

Meanwhile everyone would do well to calm down and heed the warning of former CIA analyst Ray McGovern, a 27-year Agency veteran, now retired, who points to the campaign of lies orchestrated during the early Reagan administration concerning the Russian shoot-down of a Korean 747 back in 1983. While the Reagan White House and the Pentagon knew from captured radio transmissions between the Russian fighter pilot and his base that he made efforts to warn the Korean plane to land, including the firing of tracer bullets in the dark sky, and knew that he had become convinced he was dealing with a US military spy plane flying over a highly secret part of Russia’s western defenses, before he fired a missile to shoot it down, McGovern says they doctored those tapes to make it look like he had done the opposite, heartlessly shooting down a civilian plane on orders from Moscow. The goal of this official Washington lie, McGovern says, was to incite American hatred against the Soviet Union, which had been waning since the end of the Vietnam War.

McGovern also suggests that the US government covered up the true cause of the downing of TWA Flight 800 off Long Island in 1996, which he says may well have been caused by an errant US missile, and not, as claimed, by a spark in a fuel tank.

McGovern’s advice in this current campaign of deceit: “There is, sadly,...reason to kick the tires of any fancy truck carrying ‘intelligence’ offered by the U.S. with respect to the Malaysian Airline shoot-down.”

## IS THE APOCALYPSE US?

Published on Thursday, August 07, 2014 by TomDispatch

By Tom Engelhardt

**T**hink of it as the true end of the beginning. Last week, Theodore “Dutch” Van Kirk, the final member of the 12-man crew of the *Enola Gay*, the plane (named after its pilot’s supportive mother) that dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, died at age 93. When that first A-bomb left its bomb bay at 8:15 on the morning of August 6, 1945, and began its descent toward its target, the Aioli (“Live Together”) Bridge, it was inscribed with a series of American messages, some obscene, including “Greetings to the Emperor from the men of the Indianapolis.” (That ship had delivered to the Pacific island of Tinian parts of the very bomb that would turn Hiroshima into an inferno of smoke and fire—“that awful cloud,” Paul Tibbetts, Jr., the *Enola Gay*’s pilot, would call it—and afterward was torpedoed by a Japanese submarine with the loss of hundreds of sailors.)



The atomic bomb “Little Boy” on trailer cradle on Tinian Island in the Pacific before being loaded into *Enola Gay* for its bombing run. (Archive photo / Public domain)

The bomb, dubbed Little Boy, that had gestated in the belly of the *Enola Gay* represented not only the near endpoint of a bitter global war of almost unimaginable destruction, but the birthing of something new. The way for its use had been paved by an evolution in warfare: the increasing targeting of civilian populations from the air (something that can be seen again today in the carnage of Gaza). The history of that grim development extends from German airship bombings of London (1915) by way of Guernica (1937), Shanghai (1937), and Coventry (1940), to the fire bombings of Dresden (1945) and Tokyo (1945) in the last year of World War II. It even had an evolutionary history in the human imagination, where for decades writers (among others) had dreamed of the unparalleled release of previously unknown forms of energy for military purposes.

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On August 7, 1945, a previous age was ending and a new one was dawning. In the nuclear era, city-busting weapons would be a dime a dozen and would spread from the superpowers to many other countries, including Great Britain, China, India, Pakistan, North Korea, and Israel. Targeted by the planet's major nuclear arsenals would be the civilian inhabitants not just of single cities but of scores and scores of cities, even of the planet itself. This week, 70 years ago, the possibility of the apocalypse passed out of the hands of God or the gods and into human hands, which meant a new kind of history had begun whose endpoint is unknowable, though we do know that even a "modest" exchange of nuclear weapons between India and Pakistan would not only devastate South Asia, but thanks to the phenomenon of nuclear winter also cause widespread famine on a planetary scale.

In other words, 70 years later, the apocalypse is us. Yet in the United States, the only nuclear bomb you're likely to read about is Iran's (even though that country possesses no such weapon). For a serious discussion of the U.S. nuclear arsenal, those more than 4,800 increasingly ill-kept weapons that could incinerate several Earth-sized planets, you need to look not to the country's major newspapers or news programs but to comic John Oliver -- or Noam Chomsky in his Hiroshima Day piece "How Many Minutes to Midnight?"

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**Tom Engelhardt**, co-founder of the [American Empire Project](http://www.americanempireproject.org), runs the Nation Institute's [TomDispatch.com](http://tomdispatch.com). His latest book, co-authored with Nick Turse, is *Terminator Planet: The First History of Drone Warfare, 2001-2050*. **His other most recent book is** *The United States of Fear* (Haymarket Books). To stay on top of important articles like these, sign up to receive the [latest updates from TomDispatch.com here](http://tomdispatch.com).

## THE GHOULISH FACE OF EMPIRE

Published on Monday, June 23, 2014

By **Chris Hedges**

**T**he black-clad fighters of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, sweeping a collapsing army and terrified Iraqis before them as they advance toward Baghdad, reflect back to us the ghoulish face of American empire. They are the specters of the hundreds of thousands of people we murdered in our deluded quest to remake the Middle East. They are ghosts from the innumerable roadsides and villages where U.S. soldiers and Marines, jolted by explosions of improvised explosive devices, responded with indiscriminate fire. They are the risen remains of the dismembered Iraqis left behind by blasts of Hellfire and cruise missiles, howitzers, grenade launchers and drone strikes. They are the avengers of the gruesome torture and the sexual debasement that often came with being detained by American troops. They are the final answer to the collective humiliation of an occupied country, the logical outcome of Shock and Awe, the Frankenstein monster stitched together from the body parts we left scattered on the ground. They are what we get for the \$4 trillion we wasted on the Iraq War.

The language of violence engenders violence. The language of hate engenders hate. "I and the public know what all schoolchildren learn," W.H. Auden wrote. "Those to whom evil is done do evil in return." It is as old as the Bible.

There is no fight left in us. The war is over. We destroyed Iraq as a unified country. It will never be put back together. We are reduced—in what must be an act of divine justice decreed by the gods, whom we have discovered to our dismay are Islamic—to pleading with Iran for military assistance to shield the corrupt and despised U.S. protectorate led by Nouri al-Maliki. We are not, as we thought when we entered Iraq, the omnipotent superpower able in a swift and brutal stroke to bend a people to our will. We are something else. Fools and murderers. Blinded by hubris. Faded relics of the Cold War. And now, in the final act of the play, we are crawling away. Our empire is dying.

We should have heeded, while we had a chance, the wails of mothers and fathers. We should have listened to the cries of the wounded. We should have wept over the

bodies of Iraqi children lined up in neat rows in the morgues. We should have honored grief so we could honor life. But the dance of death is intoxicating. Once it begins you whirl in an ecstatic frenzy. Death's embrace, which feels at first like sexual lust, tightens and tightens until you suffocate. Now the music has stopped. All we have left are loss and pain.

And where are the voices of sanity? Why are the cheerleaders of slaughter, who have been wrong about Iraq since before the invasion, still urging us toward ruin? Why are those who destabilized Iraq and the region in the worst strategic blunder in American history still given a hearing? Why do we listen to simpletons and morons?

They bang their fists. They yell. They throw tantrums. They demand that the world conform to their childish vision. It is as if they have learned nothing from the 11 years of useless slaughter. As if they can dominate that which they never had the power to dominate.

I sat in a restaurant Thursday in Boston's Kenmore Square with military historian Andrew Bacevich. You won't hear his voice much on the airwaves. He is an apostate. He speaks of the world as it is, not the self-delusional world our empire builders expect it to be. He knows war with a painful intimacy, not only as a Vietnam combat veteran and a retired Army colonel but also as the father of a U.S. Army officer killed in a 2007 suicide bombing in Iraq.

"In the 1990s there was a considerable effort made in the military, but also in the larger community of national security experts scratching their heads and [asking] what are the implications of all this technology," he said. "They conceived of something called the Revolution in Military Affairs—RMA. If you believed in the Revolution of Military Affairs you knew that nothing could stop the United States military when it engaged in a conflict. Victory was, for all practical purposes, a certainty. People like Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz, and I expect Dick Cheney also, bought this hook, line and sinker. You put yourself in their shoes in the wake of 9/11. An attack comes out of Afghanistan, a country frankly nobody

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cares about, and you conceive of this grand strategy of trying to transform the Islamic world. Where are we going to start? We are going to start by attacking a country [Iraq]—we had it under surveillance and sanctions for the past decade—where there is a bona fide bad guy to make a moral case and where we are confident we can make short work of this adversary, a further demonstration that the American military cannot be stopped. They utterly and totally miscalculated. Iraq is falling apart. And many of these people, either in government or outside of government, who were proponents of the war are now advocating for a resumption of the American war. Not one of them is willing to acknowledge the extent of that military miscalculation. Once you acknowledge it, then the whole project of militarizing U.S. policy towards the Greater Middle East collapses.”

Bacevich blames the concentration of power into the hands of the executive branch for the debacle. He said that since the Kennedy administration “the incoming president and his team, it does not matter which party, see the permanent government as a problem. If we [the new officials] are going to get done what we want to get done we have to find ways to marginalize the permanent government. This has led to the centralization of authority in the White House and means decisions are made by a very small number of people. The consultation becomes increasingly informal, to the point it is not even documented.”

“I do not think we even know when the decision to go to war with Iraq was actually made,” Bacevich said. “There is no documented meeting where [President George W.] Bush sat down with how many people—six, 10, 25—and said, ‘Let’s vote.’ The decision kind of emerged and therefore was implemented. Why would you operate that way? You would operate that way if you viewed the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, the CIA and the State Department as, in a sense, the enemy.”

“The invasion of Iraq was intended to be a catalyst,” he said. “It was supposed to be the catalyst that would enable us ... to change the region. It turned out to be the catalyst that resulted in

destabilization. The big question of the moment is not what can we do or is there anything we can do to salvage Iraq. The question is to what degree have our actions resulted in this larger regional mayhem. And to the extent they have, isn’t it time to rethink fundamentally our expectations of what American power, and particularly American military power, can achieve?”

“We need to take a radically different course,” Bacevich said. “There is an analogy to be made with Great Britain in the wake of World War I. It was in World War I that Britain and France collaborated to dismantle the Ottoman Empire to create the new Middle East. While on the one hand there was an awareness that Britain was in decline, at the level where policy was made there was not a willingness to consider the implications of that fact. It took World War II to drive it home—that the [British] empire was doomed. I think that is where we are.”

Out of this decline, Bacevich said, is emerging a multipolar order. The United States will no longer be able to operate as an unchallenged superpower. But, he said, similar to the condition that existed as the British Empire took its last gasps, “there is very little willingness in Washington or in policy circles to take on board the implications multipolarity would call for in terms of adjusting our policy.”

The inability to adjust to our declining power means that the United States will continue to squander its resources, its money and its military.

“By squandering power we forfeit our influence because we look stupid and we bankrupt ourselves,” Bacevich said. “We will spend \$4 trillion, not dollars spent in the moment but dollars we will have spent the last time the last Afghanistan veteran gets his last VA check. That money is gone forever. It is concealed because in the Bush administration’s confidence that victory would be easily won the government did not bother to mobilize the country or increase our taxes. We weaken ourselves economically. People complain about our crappy infrastructure. Give me \$4 trillion and I probably could have fixed a couple of bridges. And we must never forget the human cost. Lives lost, lives damaged.

And in these two wars [Afghanistan and Iraq] there does seem to be this increase in PTSD that we don’t know what to do about. It is a squandering of human capital.”

Bacevich said the “military mind-set” has so infected the discourse of the power elite that when there is a foreign policy problem the usual response is to discuss “three different courses of military action. ... Should it be airstrikes with drones? Should it be airstrikes with manned aircraft? Special operations forces? Or some combination of all three? And that’s what you get.” The press, he said, is an “echo chamber and reinforces the notion that those are the [only] options.”

The disintegration of Iraq is irreversible. At best, the Kurds, the Shiites and the Sunnis will carve out antagonistic enclaves. At worst, there will be a protracted civil war. This is what we have bequeathed to Iraq. The spread of our military through the region has inflamed jihadists across the Arab world. The resulting conflicts will continue until we end our occupation of the Middle East. The callous slaughter we deliver is no different from the callous slaughter we receive. Our jihadists—George W. Bush, Dick Cheney, Paul Wolfowitz, Donald Rumsfeld, Richard Perle, Thomas Friedman and Tommy Franks—who assured us that swift and overwhelming force in Iraq would transform the Middle East into an American outpost of progress, are no less demented than the jihadists approaching Baghdad. These two groups of killers mirror each other. This is what we have spawned. And this is what we deserve.

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**Chris Hedges** (for biographical information, see details on Page 14 of this newsletter.)

*The First World War killed fewer victims than the Second World War, destroyed fewer buildings, and uprooted millions instead of tens of millions - but in many ways it left even deeper scars both on the mind and on the map of Europe. The old world never recovered from the shock.*

Edmond Taylor, in "The Fossil Monarchies"

**THE RED CROSS**

*The Red Cross needs to reclaim its hijacked neutrality*

*As it turns 150, the ICRC must work to reassert its reputation – undermined by Blair's wars and political adventurism*

**Simon Jenkins**

The Guardian, Friday 1 November 2013



'Noam Chomsky has pointed to the irony of the emergent concept of "a new military humanism".'  
Illustration by Joe Magee

**P**olio has broken out in Syria. What are we going to do about it? There are refugees starving in the Sahara and drowning off Italy. Shias are being massacred in Iraq, Congolese are being raped, Egyptians tortured, Roma trafficked, Pashtun villagers drone-bombed. You can't stand idly by. Do something.

This week is the 150th anniversary of the forming of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), in 1863. Four years earlier a Swiss businessman, Henry Dunant, was passing through the Italian village of Castiglione and found it swamped by soldiers from the battle of Solferino. The armies had departed, leaving 40,000 dead and wounded on the battlefield. Dunant desperately rallied the villagers to bring water and dress wounds on both sides. For him the task was straightforward. He had arrived after the event and needed simply to clear up the mess. His principle of impartiality held. Even during two world wars, the red cross symbolised neutrality, humanity's simple protest against the orgy of suffering.

Today that is not so easy. There are hundreds of similar charities round the world, each with overlapping ambitions. I remember a colleague returning from Ethiopia during the 1983-85 famine dismayed at the chaos of the refugee camps, with charity and NGO tents pitched like rival armies across the field of misery. Each craved publicity for

fundraising back home. There was no co-ordination.

These things are better organised today by the UN and disaster relief committees. The ICRC has itself sprouted national societies and Red Crescent affiliates. But after the catastrophes in Ethiopia and Yugoslavia a spell was broken. The suffering was seen as politically engendered and complex. These were acts not of God but of men. Why pour aid into Ethiopia when it was either stolen or assisted mass relocation? The charitable prerogative was complicated by politics and diplomacy. Soon it was corrupted by a military embrace. Linda Polman wrote a book, *War Games*, arguing that aid was furthering war rather than countering it.

Tony Blair's famous (or infamous) Chicago speech of April 1999, instigating the Kosovan war, was trumpeted by him as signalling "the first of a new generation of liberal humanitarian wars". From then on, liberal interventionism was identified not with Red Cross neutrality but with bombs falling and guns blazing "to save little children".

Noam Chomsky pointed to the irony of the emergent concept of "a new military humanism" and to the obscenity of using the least humanitarian weapon, the air-dropped bomb, in its cause. Even Henry Kissinger called Blair's approach "irresponsible", and Bill Clinton's White House complained of Blair having "too much adrenaline on his cornflakes".

A severe toll was inflicted on the Red Cross. Though its work extends to relieving natural disasters and supplementing healthcare, its classic purpose remains impartial relief in time of war, notably where civilians are caught in crossfire. It struggles to sustain an image of neutrality. In Afghanistan this has worked. The Red Crescent has access to prisoners held by the Taliban and trains Taliban first-aid workers, whereas other aid organisations are seen as in collusion with the Nato occupation.

But even the ICRC cannot avoid the taint of association with western interventionism. The attack on its Baghdad headquarters in 2003 suggested its impartiality was no longer

universally acknowledged. Red Cross staff have been killed in Chechnya, Sri Lanka, Congo and Syria and the tempo of such attacks, as on aid workers of all persuasions, has increased.

In 2005 the ICRC commissioned a report on its neutrality which concluded emphatically that "military force ... as an instrument for gaining peace is for the Red Cross not applicable". That seems ever more like spitting in the wind. Humanitarian agencies spring up by the week, often in the lucrative baggage train of the military-industrial complex. As a result, foreign intervention in today's "wars among the peoples" risks not just being seen as aiding one side but as actually doing so. This is particularly the case when, as often, western military invasion and occupation have been justified as humanitarian. Like "peacekeeping" of old, the parlance of modern war can be contradictory.

As a result, "doing something" has come to imply something political, if not military. On Thursday the former British foreign secretary and champion of Blair's wars, David Miliband, visited the BBC to promote his International Rescue Committee's efforts to get polio vaccine to Syria. He could not resist confusing humanitarian relief with more partisan intervention. He demanded "a humanitarian ceasefire" in Syria and a "rallying of a sense of outrage and also a determination to do something".

The Red Cross may protest its humanitarian purity, but its mission has been hijacked and compromised by political and military adventurism. How can a British NGO be safely neutral in Syria when Britain's prime minister has called for war against the Damascus government? It is dreadful but perhaps not surprising that doctors are targeted at checkpoints for delivering aid "to the wrong side".

The urge to relieve human suffering is profound, even if it means interfering in another country's affairs. It may seem sanitised by being called intervention, but interference it remains. To be lawful, it must be utterly divorced from politics and diplomacy and, above all, it

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**BAD WARS AND THE VOICE OF DISILLUSION**

Tue, 06/24/2014 - 21:31

**War Stories**

by: **John Grant**

*When lo! An angel called him out of heaven,  
Saying, Lay not thy hand upon the lad, . .  
But the old man would not so, but slew his son,  
And half the seed of Europe, one by one.*  
-Wilfred Owen

The *New York Times* recently ran a five-page section of essays on the 100th anniversary of the start of World War One. Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria was assassinated on June 28, 1914, causing Austria-Hungary to declare war on Serbia. Germany sided with Austria-Hungary and European allies sided with Serbia. Thus, one of the cruelest, bloodiest and most corrupt wars was let loose in the world. It did not end until November 1918 and included 17 million deaths, 10 million of them European young men in uniform.

A.O.Scott writes about the sense of innocence and expectant glory at the beginning of the war. Books like Erich Maria Remarque’s *All Quiet On The Western Front* and Robert Graves’ *Goodbye To All That* speak of the horrors of the everyman in the trenches. It was a war created by vainglorious, corrupt and short-sighted leadership. Beside bad leadership at the top, what stands out about World War One is how the war was fought by ordinary men who did the bleeding and the suffering, and how many of them came home to write eloquently about their disillusion.

“[A]s the war unfolded, a new attitude

was taking shape that was rooted in the soldiers’ experiences,” writes Edward Rothstein. “It has had an enduring influence on how war itself is often thought about -- with complicated consequences.” World War One seemed to generate poets like Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon. Owen’s great poem “Dulce et Decorum Est” is about witnessing a young soldier without a mask dying from gas.

*In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,  
He plunges at me, guttering, choking,  
drowning.  
If in some smothering dreams you too  
could pace  
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,  
And watch the white eyes writhing in his  
face,  
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of  
sin;  
If you could hear, at every jolt, the  
blood  
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted  
lungs,  
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud  
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent  
tongues,---  
My friend, you would not tell with such  
high zest  
To children ardent for some desperate  
glory,  
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est  
Pro patria mori.*

*(The old lie: It is sweet and glorious to die for your country.)*  
“[T]his is history written from ‘below’ - through the lens of ordinary participants, not political leaders or military strategists,” writes Rothstein.

World War Two, many argue, came about because the issues at play in

World War One had never been resolved. Similarly, one can argue the Vietnam War evolved out of World War Two and the refusal of France and the US to accept Vietnamese independence and, of course, the rise of the Cold War between two WWII allies. In his 650-page epic *The War of the World: Twentieth Century Conflict and the Descent of the West*, the historian Niall Ferguson sees a fifty-year war that began in 1904 with the Russo-Japanese War to 1953, the end of the Korean War. This was followed by what he calls The Third World War, involving wars of decolonization. Western imperial decline is part and parcel of this last 50 year arc.

As the *Times* essays emphasize, the disillusion at the bottom that sprang from the trenches of WWI was one of that war’s most important legacies to our day, a voice that appears and re-appears in subsequent wars and lives on in our post-9/11 world. It’s part of a human struggle between the top-down justification of decisions about going to war and the bottom-up questioning of basic notions like “Why am I here?” “What are we doing?” Of course, such questions are not acceptable in a military chain of command.

According to Scott, WWI writers like Hemingway rejected “the old, elevated language of honor and glory.” Some 90 years later, he points out, after September 11, 2001, there was “a rehabilitation of the abstract words that Hemingway and his lost generation had found so intolerable. Ordinary soldiers were routinely referred to as ‘heroes’ and ‘warriors,’ even as their deaths and injuries were kept from public view.”

*(continued on Page 26...)*



Dead man carried from the field in WWI



A US soldier in Iraq.



(continued from Page 25...)

It was, he suggests, a reversion to pre-WWI language.

“But the Great War is not quite finished with us,” Scott concludes, referring to the disillusioned voices from below. He cites recent novels by Iraq veterans like *Billy Lynn’s Long Halftime Walk* by Ben Fountain and *Redeployment*, short stories by Phil Klay. I’d add *The Yellow Birds* by Kevin Powers. From Vietnam, there’s Tim O’Brien’s *The Things They Carried*. These works deal with complicated human beings caught up in a confusing set of violent circumstances. Being a *hero* or a *warrior* is not the point.

I suspect the story of Bowe Bergdahl fits into this category. True, no one has written it as a novel, poem or non-fiction. So far, it’s a narrative of which we know only the basic highlights. Due to his traumatic five-year captivity, Bergdahl is now a virtual captive of the US military. He has not even been allowed to see his family. It’s clear the military feels proprietary about his story and sees a need to assure that that story does not become “history written from below.”

I want to understand Bergdahl’s story as that of a human being, specifically a young man from the mountains of Idaho who read widely and did things like try to learn the Pashto language and more than once to walk “outside the wire.” Is he a traitor or an independent-minded young man caught in the meat-grinder of a simplistic, violent US policy? Maybe it was foolish to wander over the wire, but was it the act of a person attempting to link with the enemy to harm his comrades or was it the act of a curious human being, maybe even a little bored, looking for something other than the madness of war? War zones are amazing places. I want his story to be told in all its human complexity and not as the latest installment in the stabbed-in-the-back myth.

The right tells us soldiers died looking for Bergdahl, which is a clear incitement of the stabbed-in-the-back myth, something that always arises at the end of a military debacle. If not for traitors we would have achieved the glory we deserve. But when you look

into it you realize they’re talking about men killed during routine patrols that had nothing directly to do with Bergdahl. They were just supposed to keep their eyes peeled. The right also seems to be pillorying Bergdahl because they can’t exploit him positively for patriotic ends. Complexity and human nuance are not permitted here. If Sergeant Bergdahl is not a hero, then he must be a traitor. He can’t be just a young man caught up in a rotten war.

Strange things happen in war zones. I know a Vietnam combat veteran whose platoon made a separate peace with the Viet Cong unit in its area. It started with a note from the local VC delivered to the American soldiers by a little kid selling bottles of Coca-Cola. The deal was you stop attacking the VC or abusing the Vietnamese in and around the village and the VC would agree not to attack the US unit. The platoon leader gathered his men and they voted to go along with the arrangement. I’m not suggesting anything like this was at stake with Bergdahl -- just that ordinary, young human beings on the ground in a confusing war controlled by politicians 12,000 miles away sometimes make their own peace and find their way to sanity.

Of course, this sort of discreet agreement would be considered subversive the more you go up the ranks. It’s like the famous Christmas truce between the trench lines in World War One. Once the brass learned of it, the peace sentiment was crushed so the killing could continue.

Thus war has been with us and will likely be with us for some time.

In his book *From the Ruins of Empire: The Revolt Against the West and the Remaking of Asia*, Pankaj Mishra writes about “the revenge of the East.” This is what we’re living through right now. The rise of anti-US sentiment in elements like ISIS in Iraq is one extremely angry and violent instance of this. As Mishra puts it, “the spell of western power has finally been broken.” The aging Senator McCain, a man who suffered at the hands of the Vietnamese he bombed, may rattle his saber and decry the weakness of the current president, but what McCain is really upset about is that, after being squandered in Iraq and Afghanistan, the spell of US power has lost a lot of its shock and awe.

Fear is real in America; everyone feels it. They know, with the economy weak, the

nation can’t afford to keep hosing out trillions (that’s with a T!) in resources to keep the image of the US strong and absolute in a military sense. People know in their hearts it can’t go on. What about the infrastructural, educational, environmental and economic crises all approaching disaster levels on the homefront? If you look at it from the correct angle, it’s a classic tragedy unfolding: A nation so full of its own top-down, narcissistic glory that it can’t find the humility to do what it must to re-structure itself as a modestly downsized, healthy nation facing the future and “the rise of the rest.” With more humility and more of a cooperative international spirit, the USA would become much less of an international target.

In one of his recorded messages, Osama bin Laden said his goal was to make the United States so crazy it would bankrupt itself chasing him around. This sounds like what Ronald Reagan is credited with doing vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. Of course, the boogie-man bin Laden got his comeuppance from a seal team hit. But US war architects, state terrorists like Dick Cheney and his ilk, still walk among us and people listen to them. Nothing counters these warmakers like the voices of those who experienced disillusion serving “in the trenches” in our wars.

Two good examples: There’s a fine group of Iraq-era vets called Warrior Writers [1] that works in this area of disillusioned voices of war. (They choose to use the post-9/11 term “warrior.”) They have published several worthy anthologies. *The Yellow Birds* was Philadelphia’s annual *One Book, One Philadelphia* entry this year. It was read all over the city and discussed in countless libraries and other venues.

*Yellow Birds* author Kevin Powers calls his novel “the cartography of one man’s consciousness.” It’s the story of two young soldiers in Iraq trying to make sense of the experience on the ground and later back home. One of them suffers a harsh disillusion, even loses his mental bearings to the point he crosses

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**THE COLOUR OF MEMORY**

*The first world war and the colour of memory*

By **Santanu Das**

[The Guardian](#), Wednesday 23 July 2014

**E**urocentric views of the conflict ignore the millions of people from across the globe who fought on the same side

Last Thursday, the newly refurbished first world war galleries at the Imperial War Museum finally reopened. One of the most poignant moments in the evening was when the director general of the museum, Diane Lees, broke down during her address while remembering her colleague Roger Tolson, who oversaw much of the renovation, and who died early this year. It transformed the sepulchral hall, overhung with fighter planes, into what a first world war gallery must inevitably be: a place of remembrance and mourning.

With the last of the veterans dead, today we can remember only the process of remembering. When I was growing up in Kolkata in the 1980s, the war meant the trenches; the war poets and history books said so. And though I gradually realised that it involved seamen, labourers and women, its colour remained white. Only much later did I find out that British India contributed 1.4 million men to the war.

The centennial commemoration projects – from the museum's thoughtful, more inclusive galleries to its film, *Whose Remembrance?*, from the BBC's forthcoming *The World's Wars* to the *Guardian's* multimedia documentary immersing us in the war's multiple histories – will make us more aware of its global nature. In 1914, Britain and France had the two largest empires, spread across Asia and Africa, and an imperial war necessarily became a world war.

More than 4 million non-white men were recruited into the armies of Europe and the US. In a grotesque reversal of Joseph Conrad's vision, thousands of Asians, Africans and Pacific Islanders were voyaging to the heart of whiteness and far beyond – to Mesopotamia, East Africa, Gallipoli, Persia and Palestine. Two million Africans served as soldiers or labourers; a further 1.3 million came from the British "white" dominions. The

first shot in the war was fired in Togoland, and even after 11 November 1918 the war continued in East Africa.

A South African labourer said he went to war to "see different races". If one visited wartime Ypres, one would have seen Indian sepoys, tirailleur Senegalese, Maori Pioneer battalions, Vietnamese troops and Chinese workers.

Today, one of the main stumbling blocks to a truly global and non-Eurocentric archive of the war is that many of these 1 million Indians, or 140,000 Chinese, or 166,000 West Africans, did not leave behind diaries and memoirs. In India, Senegal or Vietnam there is nothing like the Imperial War Museum; when a returned soldier or village headman died, a whole library vanished.

Moreover, as the former colonies became nation states, nationalist narratives replaced imperial war memories. Stories that did not fit were airbrushed. In Europe, communities turned to their own dead and damaged. Rudyard Kipling remembered the "Hindu sepoy in France" – "This man in his own country prayed we know not to what powers" – and in the next four years it will be interesting to see how he is remembered in his own country. However, just because Britain is obsessed with the war does not mean it is regarded as being equally significant or holds the same meaning in the former colonies: sometimes it may have been the roar of battle, sometimes only a whisper in the fields.

But memory persists – silently, stubbornly. Last month, in a small archive in the former French colony of Chandernagore, I found the bloodstained glasses of Jogendra Sen, the only non-white member of the Leeds Pals battalion, who was killed in 1916. And in my own family, I came across the carefully preserved Military Cross and other memorabilia belonging to a great-uncle who served as a doctor in Mesopotamia. Amnesia is not absence.

Perhaps the most startling discoveries in recent years are the more than 2,000 sound recordings made in German prisoner of war camps by the Prussian Phonographic Commission. One of the most heartbreaking is that of Mall Singh, in December 1916: "There was

once a man. He used to eat butter in his native Hindustan. This man then came into the European war. Germany captured this man. He wishes to return to India." In the absence of an Indian Wilfred Owen, such voices pierce the silence. One has to move beyond conventional archives to recover such histories.

The recent global turn in first world war studies and commemorative events is partly propelled by Europe's changing image of itself: we live in multicultural societies. Baroness Warsi, leading the colonial war commemoration in Britain, recently noted: "Our boys were not just Tommies – they were Tariqs and Tajinders too. They came from many nations and held many different faiths." Warsi's is an important caveat, as much to far-right parties keen to whiten the war as to ethnic and religious groups who may want to hijack its pluralities.

However, the Indian sepoy was always inferior in rank to the Tommy; in the Brighton Pavilion war hospital, he was well looked after but fenced in. In Ypres, the South African Labour Corps was kept in a wired compound and Chinese labourers faced terrible racism. Apparently, when a Caribbean soldier said he could not move because of frostbite, his officer stepped on his foot and said, "I am turning into Christ; I make the lame walk." These are painful histories, but the past must be confronted.

There is an understandable impulse to retrospectively turn these men into heroes and martyrs, even though many enlisted to keep hunger at bay. Colonial war commemoration often slips into celebration (and is occasionally even used to recruit from ethnic minorities). In this narrative, we forget the valuable lessons of the war poets or indeed what the women in Punjab sang when their men left home in 1915: "War destroys towns and ports, it destroys huts / Graves devour our flesh and blood." While it is essential to challenge the colour of war memory, it is also important to keep a watch on the way it is being done.

*The first World War in so many ways shaped the 20th century and really remade our world for the worse.*

**Adam Hochschild**



**POETRY**

**The Telegenic Dead**

by **Jose M. Tirado**

*“[T]hey use telegenically-dead Palestinians for their cause... the more dead the better.”*

*–Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, July 20, 2014*

The leg is in the street.  
 Roughly attached & delicately  
 Arranged, (though  
 Shredded in between)  
 The torso lies quietly on the sidewalk  
 In front of the café.  
 The gray face & glass-like eyes  
 Looking “just so” at Heaven.  
 Nearby, her son, probably 4  
 (Or at least he was 4) has  
 Only one sandal on & the  
 Dirt covers his body in a delicate  
 Wave of sandy colored dustings  
 Distributed properly.  
 (Thankfully,) his face is buried beneath  
 The impeccably coiffed black-red mass  
 That once was his head.  
 Across the street lie more,  
 Posed just right to earn one’s immediate attention.  
 They work so hard it seems,  
 To get each pose, each positioned limb  
 “Just right” for the photogs and reporters.  
 Apparently, one can’t let up for a moment  
 Or they may appear  
 Simply dead.  
 Gaza works so hard these days  
 To get those images right.

July 23, 2014

**José M. Tirado** is a Puertorican poet, and writer living in Hafnarfjörður, Iceland, known for its elves, “hidden people” and lava fields. His articles and poetry have been featured in Counter Punch, Cyrano’s Journal, The Galway Review, Dissident Voice, The Endless Search, Op-Ed News, The International Journal of Transpersonal Studies, and others. He can be reached at [jm.tirado@yahoo.com](mailto:jm.tirado@yahoo.com).

**Where Is This Going?**

by **Paul Lojeski**

July 20th, 2014

I am afraid as I write this.  
 Everyone knows what they’re capable of. It’s on TV and online all the time. Murder is just another meal to them, so I write with shaking hand, knowing full well their history and terrible suffering and the outrage such a question will only incite but, despite it all I want to know: if they could, would the Israelis, finally, genocide the Palestinians, would they build the camps and march them in a cold mist to the waiting boxcars? It seems beyond the pale but honestly, the requisite hatred is the tattered flag they fly high, the cultural biases the precious passed down parent to child and the religious bonafides the stuff of wailing, warring souls. So, if they could; would they toss more wood on the bright bonfires already lighting up the night skies?

**Paul Lojeski’s** poetry has appeared in journals and online. He’s also the author of the satiric novel, *The Reverend Jimmy Pup*. He lives with his wife and daughter in Port Jefferson, NY.

**For Your Security, Freedom & Democracy**

by **Luke Eastwood**

July 13th, 2014

The avenging eagle sweeps down,  
 No longer napalming or waterboarding;  
 The white flash of phosphorus burns the eyes,  
 As the flesh crisps and falls away -  
 An endless feeding frenzy  
 For an appetite that cannot be sated.  
 Give us your hearts and minds,  
 And failing that...  
 Your oil and your corpses  
 Will do damn fine.

**Luke Eastwood** was born in Scotland, lived in England, the US, and now resides in Ireland. He has had a varied career which includes Croupier, Journalist, Sub-Editor, Car Park Attendant, Illustrator, Computer Technician, Musician, Accounts Clerk, Graphic Designer and most recently as a Horticulturist. He also writes books and articles in his spare time. You can read some of his work at [lukeeastwood.com](http://lukeeastwood.com).

Jose Tirado poem from Counter Punch <http://www.counterpunch.org/2014/07/23/the-telegenic-dead/>

Paul Lojeski poem from Voltaire Network <http://dissidentvoice.org/2014/07/where-is-this-going/>

Luke Eastwood poem from Voltaire Network <http://dissidentvoice.org/2014/07/for-your-security-freedom-democracy/>



### WHY DO I HATE AMERICA?

Posted on July 15, 2014

By **Mickey Z**

*“Why do you hate America?”*

**T**his is a remarkably easy question to provoke. One might, for instance, expose elements of this nation’s brutal foreign policy. Ask a single probing question about, say, U.S. complicity in the overthrow of governments in Guatemala, Iran, or Chile and thin-skinned patriots will come out of the woodwork to defend their country’s honor by accusing you of being “anti-American.”

Of course, this allegation might lead me to ponder how totalitarian a culture must be to even entertain such a concept, but I’d rather employ the vaunted Arundhati Roy Defense™.

As Ms. Roy asks: “What does the term ‘anti-American’ mean? Does it mean you are anti-jazz or that you’re opposed to freedom of speech? That you don’t delight in Toni Morrison or John Updike? That you have a quarrel with giant sequoias?”

When pressed about my “hate” for “my” country, I sometimes reply: “I don’t hate America. In fact, I think it’s one of the best countries anyone ever stole.”

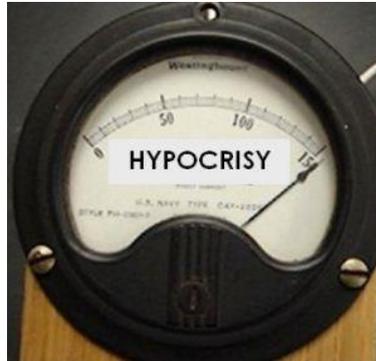


One-liners aside, I *do* have a confession to make: If by “America” you mean the elected/appointed officials, the corporations that fund/own them, and the synchronized behavior of both, well, I do hate *that* America—with passion and plenty of justification.

For starters, I hate America for the near-extirmination and ongoing oppression of this continent’s indigenous population. I hate it for its role in the African slave trade and for openly targeting civilians with atomic bombs.

I could go on for pages with such examples but instead, I’ll sum up like

this: I hate America for being a white supremacist capitalist patriarchal ableist sexist racist ageist homophobic transphobic classist speciesist hypocrisy.



After a declaration like that, you know what comes next: *If you hate America so much, why don’t you leave?*

Leave America? That would potentially put me on the other end of U.S. foreign policy. No thanks.

I kinda like how Paul Robeson answered a very similar question before the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1956: “My father was a slave and my people died to build this country, and I’m going to stay right here and have a part of it, just like you. And no fascist-minded people like you will drive me from it. Is that clear?”

However, since none of my people died to build anything, I could instead borrow from historian William Blum, who proclaims, “I’m committed to fighting U.S. foreign policy, the greatest threat to peace and happiness in the world, and being in the United States is the best place for carrying out the battle. This is the belly of the beast, and I try to be an ulcer inside of it.”

Needless to say, none of the above does a thing to placate the yellow ribbon crowd—you know, the folks who tell you they’re proud to be an American... *as if they had anything to do with it.*



What offends these flag-wavers most is

when someone like me makes use of the freedom they claim to adore.

According to their twisted logic, I am ungrateful for my liberty if I have the audacity to exercise it. For example: If I make the choice to not salute the flag, somehow I’m not worthy of having the freedom to make the choice to not salute the flag.

These so-called patriots not only claim to celebrate freedom while refusing my right to enjoy it, they also conveniently ignore the social movements that fought for and won and such freedoms.

I certainly hate *their* America.

*Take-home message:* Having the courage to admit what we hate is often the first step towards creating something we can love.

#shifthappens

### REFINE YOUR ACTIVIST AIM

Posted on May 26, 2014

By **Mickey Z**



William Burroughs once wrote about how we humans—like the bull in a bullfight—tend to focus on the elusive red cape instead of the matador.

Indeed, we are all-too-easily and willingly distracted from real targets by an attractive image or illusion.

Of course, some bulls see right through the red cape, uh, *bullshit*... and quite justifiably introduce the matador to the business end of their horns.

Of course, such bulls are promptly killed while the matador is mourned as a brave hero.

So, here’s my question: If *every* single bull in *every* single bullfight were to gore *every* single matador, how long would it be before bullfights were a thing of the past?

#shifthappens



(continued from Page 24...)

cannot seem to give moral purchase to war. War has its own logic, its own morality. Charity's business is not to end war but to relieve war's consequences. Of all Blair's legacies, the most outrageous is the jeering accusation that non-violent humanitarianism is "standing idly by", is doing nothing. Blair's wars undermined Dunant's concept of impartial neutrality. Somehow, the ICRC desperately needs to reassert it.

(continued from Page 26...)

the wire to wander naked among mystified Iraqis. Power's first-person narrator and the other characters are all complex human beings dealing with life; they are not reduced to heroes or warriors. We would benefit as a culture by hearing more complex voices like these. To counter all the pro-war madness, we need to hear men and women tell their stories of disillusion with war. It's part of a long and honorable American tradition.

Here's one of my favorite poems of disillusion from Vietnam by W.D. Ehrhart. It's called "Making the Children Behave."

<i>Do they think of me now</i>	<i>hunched</i>
<i>in those strange Asian villages</i>	<i>in lines?</i>
<i>where nothing ever seemed</i>	<i>When they tell stories to their children</i>
<i>quite human</i>	<i>of the evil</i>
<i>but myself</i>	<i>that awaits misbehavior,</i>
<i>and my few grim friends</i>	<i>is it me they conjure?</i>
<i>moving through them</i>	

Links:[1] <http://www.warriorwriters.org/home.html>

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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