



# The Peace Issue . . .

The Newsletter of *Just Peace Queensland Inc*

Issue No. 49

April 2015

**Just Peace Meetings:** all members and supporters are welcome at our meetings.

**When:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month

**Time:** Start @ 07:00pm

**Where:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, QCU Building  
Cnr Grey & Peel Streets  
South Brisbane

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# Iran Deal: A Game-Changer for the Middle East

By **Phyllis Bennis**

April 2, 2015.

**N**egotiators in Lausanne, Switzerland just won a huge victory for diplomacy over war.

The hard-fought first-stage negotiations resulted in the outlines of an agreement that will significantly limit Iran's nuclear program in return for significant relief from crippling economic sanctions imposed by the United States, the European Union, and the United Nations.

Both sides made major concessions, though it appears Iran's are far greater.

Tehran accepted that U.S. and EU sanctions will not be lifted until after the UN's watchdog agency verifies that Iran has fully implemented its new nuclear obligations — which could be years down the line. It agreed to severe cuts in its nuclear infrastructure, including the reduction of its current 19,000 centrifuges for enriching uranium to just over 6,000.

Tehran also consented to rebuild its heavy water reactor at Arak so that it will have no reprocessing capacity and thus cannot produce plutonium. Its spent fuel will be exported. The Fordow nuclear plant, moreover, will be turned into a technology research center without fissile material. And crucially, the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency will be allowed to conduct unannounced inspections.

In return, the United States and its partners — the UK, France, Germany, Russia, and China — agreed that the UN resolution imposing international sanctions on Iran would be replaced by a new resolution that would end those sanctions but maintain some restrictions.

The framework didn't specify whether the new resolution would be enforceable by military force, but it did reject an earlier demand by the United States and some of the Europeans for a "snap-back" trigger that would automatically re-impose sanctions if they claimed Iran wasn't keeping its part of the bargain. Without that, a new Security Council decision — one subject to potential vetoes by at least Russia or China — will have to be voted on.

Additionally, while it didn't explicitly reaffirm Iran's explicit rights under the Non-Proliferation Treaty to pursue "nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination," the agreement did acknowledge Iran's "peaceful nuclear program" and sought to limit, not to end, Iran's enrichment capacity.

Most importantly for skeptics of the talks, there's no question that the broad parameters announced in Lausanne would qualitatively prevent any future Iranian decision — which all U.S. intelligence agencies still agree Iran hasn't ever made — to try to build a nuclear bomb.

The restrictions impose a year-long "break-out" period, meaning it would take at least that long for Iran to even theoretically enrich enough uranium to build a bomb. And, as my colleague Stephen Myles at Win Without War reminds us, "The Iranians would still have to, ya know, build a bomb, figure out a way to hide it all from the inspectors all over their country, and convince the international community to sit idly by without responding while they broke the terms of a deal for one whole year."

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**EDITORIAL: THE FIRING SQUAD****In Indonesia**

A large majority (I am sure) of Australians are sickened by the possible executions by firing squad of Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran, who are guilty. If the executions go ahead, large numbers of Australians will undoubtedly take to the streets in mourning.

*"On Thursday (5 March 2015) morning, MPs from all sides of politics gathered at the Parliament House forecourt to hold a candlelight vigil to call for mercy from the Indonesian Government for Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran. This was by far the most important and most powerful moment this week". Tony Burke, Manager of Opposition Business, Federal House of Representatives.*

**In Gallipoli and Beyond**

A large majority of all Australians will celebrate (sic) the Gallipoli ("Beautiful City") centenary, being the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the landing in Turkey where 8,700 Australian ANZACS (innocent) were sent to be killed by Turkish firing squads over a disastrous eight months of fighting.

*"The Allied campaign was plagued by ill-defined goals, poor planning, insufficient artillery, inexperienced troops, inaccurate maps and intelligence, overconfidence, inadequate equipment and logistics, and tactical deficiencies at all levels". - Wikipedia*

On the 25<sup>th</sup> April 2015 many Australians will undoubtedly take to the streets to celebrate Anzac day, not in mourning but in "remembrance".

From the Australian War Memorial website: *"It is the day on which we remember Australians who served and died in all wars, conflicts, and peacekeeping operations".*

Anzac Day should have been recognised as a moment in Australian history that taught us the folly and tragedy of war and the anguish of its victims. We have lost the true meaning of that day. It has been reinterpreted. Now:

*"The spirit of Anzac, with its human qualities of courage, mateship, and sacrifice, continues to have meaning and relevance for our sense of national identity". Australian War Memorial website.*

**In Australia: Remembrance Day**

The 11<sup>th</sup> of November each year is Remembrance Day in many western countries, particularly those of the British Commonwealth, Europe and the USA (Veterans Day). This day commemorates the cessation of hostilities (Armistice) and also, fortuitously, the end of WW1.

Remembrance Day has long been eclipsed by Anzac Day. This latter event has become the preeminent national day in Australia. We celebrate the beginning of a military disaster as defining the Australian national identity.

**Lessons Learnt from All of This**

A multitude of peace loving groups in Australia prefer that if Anzac Day is to be remembered at all, it signifies our country's collective madness in blindly following Britain, and subsequently the United States, to war:

*"Should the worst happen, after everything has been done that honour will permit, Australians will stand beside the mother country to help and defend her to our last man and our last shilling" - ALP Opposition Leader, Andrew Fisher, 31 July 1914 in an election speech at Colac in Victoria.*

The Blind Follower did not stop there:

On the evening of the 3<sup>rd</sup> September, 1939, Prime Minister Robert Menzies informed Australia of his 'melancholy' duty of taking us to war simply because 'Great Britain has declared war'. He said that the war was 'a struggle which we must at all costs win'.

The top issue of our 1966 Federal election campaign was Prime Minister Harold Holt's enthusiasm for the Vietnam War. He borrowed the slogan from Lyndon Baines Johnson's 1964 Presidential campaign: *"All the way (to the White House) with LBJ"*. Holt won in a landslide.

After the terrorist attack in New York on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001, Prime Minister John Howard committed Australia to the invasion of Afghanistan in support of the United States. Invoking the ANZUS Treaty Howard said that it *"demonstrates Australia's steadfast commitment to work with the United States."*

In March 2003, Australia joined the US-led ["Multinational force in Iraq"](#).

Howard said that the invasion to *"disarm Iraq...is right, it is lawful, and it is in Australia's national interest."*

One wonders whether the best way to remember and honour the dead and maimed of Gallipoli, and all Australia's wars, is to blindly go where English and American men have gone before. One sad legacy of this Gallipoli campaign has been the enormous pressure put upon our soldiers in subsequent wars:

*"Australian soldiers are obliged to adopt a never-too-hard attitude, conditioned by history and training to stick with the fight, against all odds. All very Gallipoli - right up to that moment of withdrawal (from Afghanistan)".*

Chris Masters, ABC News, Remembrance Day, 2013.

Thus it appears that the Australian men and women of our Defence Forces continue to face the prospect of being directed by the great Blind Follower to face unending firing squads.

**Michael Henry**

*(continued from Page 1...)*

**Reshaping the Middle East**

Hardliners in both the United States and Iran opposed the agreement, but so far it appears that the pro-war faction in the U.S. Congress (mainly though not only Republicans) poses a far greater threat to the survival of the accord than the hawkish factions in Iran — especially since Ayatollah Ali Khomeini, Iran's Supreme Leader, has continued to support the nuclear negotiators.

For some of the U.S. opponents, the issue is purely partisan. They want President Obama to fail, and they'll oppose anything he supports.

For many others, military intervention and regime change remain the first choice towards Iran — Senator John McCain already urged Israel to "go rogue" and attack Iran. Republicans in the Senate, following their 47-strong letter to Iran threatening to undermine any agreement signed by Obama, continue to lead efforts to impose new sanctions and to demand a congressional vote to accept or reject the agreement.

But the global potential for this agreement is far more important than

*(continued on Page 3...)*

**JUST PEACE ACTIVITIES**

With so many significant anniversary events happening this year Just Peace has been very active.

In **January** Brisbane member organisations of the Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN) met to plan events for the year ahead. Representatives of 7 seven organisations attended.

**February-** Just Peace met with the General Secretary of the Qld Council of Unions Mr Ron Monaghan to share information about peace activities in 2015. As always a very supportive reception.

A meeting was held with RAC to discuss holding the national refugee rally on Palm Sunday this year. The meeting was positive and agreed to make Palm Sunday a peace and refugee Rally.

**March-** Just Peace formally became a member of the United Nations Association of Qld.

**March 10<sup>th</sup>** a public meeting was held, to hear reports from Sarah Thompson Executive Director of Christian Peacemaker Teams and Peter Arndt EO Catholic Justice and Peace Commission on their recent visit to West Papua. The West Papuan people have been subjected to occupation and abuse so similar to the Palestinians.

**March 29<sup>th</sup>** the Palm Sunday Peace for Refugees Rally was held in King George Square with 3-400 people attending.

The rally heard the Very Reverend Dean of St Johns Peter Catt, West Papuan Leader Benny Wenda, Dr Mohammed Abdullah from the Queensland Council of Imams, Ros MacLennan, the Assistant General Secretary of the Queensland Council of Unions and Dr Penelope Mathews, Dean of Griffith University Law School.

Both RAC and Just Peace agreed the day was successful and hope to work together again in 2016.

Planning is underway for the **Global Day of Action on Military Spending** event on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> with the screening of *Waging Peace* Filmed during the action-packed 2014 Canberra Peace Convergence at the Aboriginal Tent Embassy, *Waging Peace* tracks a convoy of activists who set out to break the world record for the most protest actions

on a single day. Featuring Senator Scott Ludlum, US Iraq War veteran, Vince Emanuele and Bundjalung Elder Vincent Duraux, the film concludes with the powerful, historically significant Frontier Wars March on Anzac Day.

**Anzac peace events** to focus on why we should not forget the human tragedy of war and do all in our power to prevent future wars include:

Sandgate *Pieces for Peace* on April 18<sup>th</sup> Meet at the Sandbag Community Centre 1-5pm All welcome

*Anzac Eve Candlelight Peace Vigil.* Friday 24<sup>th</sup> April 5pm-7pm Roma St Forum with speakers music, choirs and poetry. Please bring candles, friends and family.

Monthly national IPAN teleconferences continue to plan a national IPAN conference to be held on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> July in Brisbane. More information will be provided in the next weeks.

Your support through membership and involvement in these peace activities is essential to the work we do. If you have not renewed your membership please do- the Just Peace brochure is included.

Please take a look at our renewed Just Peace web site [www.justpeaceqld.org](http://www.justpeaceqld.org) and like our Just Peace Facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/JustPeaceQLD>

Facebook offers us an fast easy communication to members and supporters.

**Annette Brownlie**

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the partisan posturing of right-wing militarists and neoconservative ideologues. If it holds — and if the final agreement, with all its technical annexes, can be completed as scheduled in three months — Lausanne can set the stage for an entirely new set of diplomatic relationships and alliances in the Middle East.

Indeed, the region could be significantly transformed by an end to the decades of U.S.-Iran hostility. With Washington and Tehran maintaining normal if not chummy diplomatic relations, joint efforts to end the fighting in Iraq, stop the catastrophic escalation underway in Yemen, and create a real

international diplomatic campaign to end the Syrian civil war all become possible. A U.S. diplomatic posture that recognizes Iran as a major regional power would make a whole set of current challenges much easier to resolve.

**Defending Progress**

Regardless of whether that kind of grand bargain in the Middle East becomes possible, the current diplomatic initiative must be defended.

Efforts to undermine the Lausanne agreement are already underway.

Senate Republicans are hoping to win over enough Democrats to override Obama's certain veto of a bill that would let Congress vote to reject the agreement. Fortunately, Democratic opposition to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's blatant campaign to undermine the Iran negotiations has made that Republican effort more difficult. Defense of President Obama's diplomacy by the Black Caucus and Progressive Caucus of Congress has pulled more Democrats away from the anti-negotiations, pro-war position.

But at the end of the day it will be public opinion that matters. A *Washington Post* poll in the last days before the agreement found 59-percent support for a negotiated settlement — with 70 percent of liberals, two-thirds of Democrats, and at least 60 percent of independents and self-described "moderates" all supporting a deal. Even Republicans — divided more or less evenly — are far more supportive than their party's war-booster representatives in Congress.

What's required now is mobilizing that public support. That means strengthening the backbone of uncertain or wavering members of Congress, challenging extremist anti-diplomacy positions in the media, and most of all reminding everyone of the consequences of failure.

In Lausanne we saw a crucial victory of diplomacy over war. Now we've got to protect it.

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



**MEMORY AND THE ANTI-POLITICS OF ANZAC**

By Jeff Sparrow

24 April 2012

**A**nzac Day celebrates forgetting. Its revival, the transformation of a ceremony nearly extinct in the 1980s into today's turbocharged festival, coincides with the excision from national consciousness of the most important aspects of the Great War.

In their book *What's wrong with Anzac?*, Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds document the funding that the Department of Veterans' Affairs pours into resources promoting Anzac Day. Yet despite such educational campaigns, how many Australians can answer the simple question: what was the war about?

Conservatives, and most liberals, tell us that Anzac Day stands above politics. That's true, in a fashion. But the event's not apolitical so much as anti-political.

Where Carl von Clausewitz defined war as the continuation of politics by other means, Anzac celebrates the battlefield as a realm entirely removed from political life. The Great War spurred an unprecedented degree of social polarisation in Australia, and yet the obsessive retelling of the Gallipoli landing never corresponds to any equivalent interest in, say, the populace's remarkable rejection of conscription in two ballots in 1916 and 1917. The Bush/Blair/Howard War on Terror rendered that period more relevant than ever, since obvious parallels can be drawn between the hysterical patriotism of the 'Freedom Fries' days and the jingoism during which most Australian cities renamed their streets (if you live in Victoria Street, there's a pretty good chance it was once called Wilhelm

Road), while the state-sanctioned suspicion of Arabs and Muslims after 9/11 corresponds to the widespread

persecution of Irish and Catholics in the wake of the Easter Uprising, and the unparalleled freedom granted to security agencies echoes Billy Hughes' promulgation of the open-ended War Precautions Act.

Yet Anzac Day functions not to celebrate but to prevent that kind of history. It lauds bravery yet allows no room for what Bismarck called 'civil courage', a trait that many non-combatants showed in abundance when, against all the newspapers, politicians and mainstream political parties, they opposed the slaughter in Europe.

Again, in these endless discussions about the young men of that time, how often does anyone point out that Australians saw one of the very first anti-war protests anywhere in the world, when the Industrial Workers of the World called a rally on the Domain the weekend the conflict broke out? Everything that the IWW predicted about the war came to pass, just as everything that the official jingoes said proved entirely wrong. But amidst all the Anzac headshaking about the horrors of Gallipoli, there's no room to mention those who tried to stop the killing taking place.

The anti-politics of Anzac Day not only diminishes the experiences of the millions of Australians who did not fight, it renders entirely monochromatic the experiences of the soldiers themselves. We can tell, for instance, the story of the Christmas truce of 1914 but only because a certain version of the story supports Anzac's presentation of war as a time out of time, an experience in a realm where normal rules did not apply. The perversity of men shaking hands and wishing each other luck before obediently ducking back into the

trenches to commence hostilities supports Anzac's general depiction of combat as a social anomaly, a mysterious business entirely disconnected from what Archbishop Mannix called 'a sordid trade war'. That's why there's much less emphasis on the context of those unofficial armistices, which were, initially, made possible because so many ordinary Germans had been working in Britain and felt no particular animosity to the men in the opposite trenches, and which were systematically broken up by authorities terrified that if the soldiers fraternised it would be impossible to make them fight. Indeed, even if you only focus on combat (rather than the widespread mutinies that later took place), it's possible to tell the story of the Great War in terms of measures by officers to force their men to kill. In his fascinating book *Trench Warfare*, Tony Ashworth documents the regularity in which ordinary soldiers on both sides adopted what he calls the 'live and let live' policy, allowing unofficial truces punctuated by ritualistic exchanges of gunfire at certain times and certain places, exchanges specifically designed not to kill anyone and thus avoid retribution. In Ashworth's argument, the official tactics adopted by commanders were attempts to break down these proto-political refusals, to force the men into contact each other and thus ensure that they would fight.

In other words, even in the most extreme circumstances, the Great War was a social conflict, shaped by internal contradictions. That's why, if the origins of the war are now never discussed, there's an equally determined silence about how the slaughter ended, with revolution in Russia and Germany, and near insurrections in many other countries.

At the same time, one of the curious consequences of the anti-politics of Anzac is that the celebrations embrace the literature of disenchantment that emerged from the war, albeit with a distinctive twist. The war is now told, not in the bloodless narratives of contemporary Empire propagandists, but as a compendium of tropes taken from Sassoon and Owen and Remarque

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and Barbusse. Every schoolkid knows about shell shock and bodies hanging on barbed wire and rats feasting on corpses and the rest of it, yet these details, which in the original texts contrasted what had been promised with what war delivered, are now used to bolster the presentation of combat as an experience entirely divorced from normal social relations.

As William James noted, the ‘possibility of violent death [is] the soul of all romance’, which is why showing war’s horrors does not, in itself, foster antiwar sentiment, since ‘the horrors make the fascination. War is the *strong* life; it is life in *extremis*’.

It’s a central part of Anzac’s anti-politics: the hellishness of war separates it from ordinary life, transforming Clausewitz’s ‘politics by other means’ into a transcendental experience at which civilians can only marvel. Whereas for the writers of the twenties and the thirties, the Great War disappointed by representing, in concentrated form, the violent banality of industrial society, today the very bloodiness of the conflict is used to highlight the contrast with our own day-to-day life. The narrative therefore shifts from social critique (why did we allow these atrocities to happen?) to a veneration of sacrifice, the nature of which is largely irrelevant.

The Gallipoli pilgrimage provides the obvious example. The attendees at the dawn service do not ask themselves why Australians died invading a country thousands of miles away. No, that particular issue’s rendered inherently irrelevant, since the backpackers go there not to think about history but to marvel at the height of the cliffs and the sharpness of the rocks, and to feel an awe at people their own age experiencing horrors that they couldn’t imagine. The question arising from the pilgrimage is thus not ‘why did it happen?’ (a query that leads not only into history but into politics) but rather ‘what did it feel like?’, an aestheticisation of the past that’s explicitly anti-political.

Or, rather, it’s anti-political, in one sense. In another, it’s entirely compatible with the trend toward militarisation in the wake of 9/11, not simply because it fits entirely with the new consensus that

there’s something inherently underhand in debating the politics of war (recall how long the Afghan conflict had been running before Parliament convened a formal discussion) but because the question ‘what did it feel like?’ always implies a follow-up: ‘I wonder what it would be like.’

Senator Scott Ludlam’s fascinating diary from his visit to Afghanistan illustrates how this plays out in recruits. Speaking of the soldiers he meets, he writes:

All the same, there’s an eagerness to prove themselves. The further forward you get, the happier crew are to be there and the less interested in being pulled back into safety. Having spent years training, most of them really, really want to be in theatre.

“This is a great battle lab for us.”

[...]

“I’d do this whether you paid me or not.”

If its horrors make war a transcendental experience, the contrast with the banality of late capitalist life make combat a perpetual source of fascination, in precisely the way James describes.

What are the consequences of this recognition of Anzac as an anti-politics?

Most obviously, it implies a certain futility about debating its meaning, even through posts like this.

Because Anzac’s not an argument so much as an aesthetic event, it’s largely impervious to critique. Everyone knows the newspaper formula: you devote most of your space to praising the diggers and republishing various twenty-first century versions of the ‘old lie’ – and then you give half a column to someone to ponder what it all means. The ritualistic debates about the nature of Anzac are, to a large extent, part of Anzac, a means for keeping the commemoration in the centre of Australian life.

Which is not to suggest that critiques should not be mounted, nor that it’s not important to foster genuine historical debate about the Great War, but simply to suggest that the terrain will not shift substantially without the re-emergence of anti-war movement that offers a

different way of thinking about conflicts.

If you look back at the shifting attitudes to Anzac, that’s the real correlation. Alan Seymour’s *One Day of the Year*, usually cited as evidence of post-war disenchantment, obviously emerged from the anti-Vietnam movement, just as the near collapse of the celebrations in the 1980s stemmed from the rise of the anti-nuclear movement.

Contrary to conservative revisionism, peace activism has never involved an indifference to the plight of soldiers themselves. We’re often told that anti-war activists spat at conscripts returning from Vietnam. What we don’t hear is that huge numbers of the soldiers themselves supported the movement, both once they returned and, sometimes, while they were actually in theatre. In terms of the memory of the Great War, many of the most interesting studies of what was done to the troops have come from writers influenced by the peace movement, precisely because they’re more likely to eschew the top-down approach of reactionary historians.

Some 16 million people died in the First World War. It is an extraordinary statistic. In the face of such overwhelming suffering, such tremendous devastation, the only decent commemoration entails ensuring that nothing comparable ever happens again.

**Jeff Sparrow** is the former editor of *Overland*. He is the co-author (with Jill Sparrow) of *Radical Melbourne: A Secret History* and *Radical Melbourne 2: The Enemy Within*, the editor (with Antony Loewenstein) of *Left Turn: Essays for the New Left* and the author of *Communism: a love story*, *Killing: Misadventures in violence*, and *Money Shot: A Journey into Censorship and Porn*. On Twitter, he’s [@Jeff\\_Sparrow](https://twitter.com/Jeff_Sparrow).

*“The European wars of religion were more deadly than the First World War, proportionally speaking, and in the range of the Second World War in Europe. The Inquisition, the persecution of heretics and infidels and witches, they racked up pretty high death tolls.”*

Steven Pinker

**AUSTRALIA IN AFGHANISTAN***The Failings of Operation Slipper*by **Binoy Kampmark**

March 24, 2015

**I**t was made as a special statement. The Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott wanted it known that Australian soldiers who had fought in Afghanistan in what has been the country's longest war should not be treated like those who had fought in Vietnam. "Afghanistan is a better country because Australia was there," he explained to returning soldiers on March 21. Then, a nice little contortion of language, and reality. "That war ended, not with victory and not with defeat, but with hope, hope for a better Afghanistan and a safer world."

This statement of ritual stalemate on Operation Slipper – the Australian mission in Afghanistan – is suggestive. The Vietnamese War was marked by false logic, misguided ideology, and hare-brained cultural assumptions that led to a generation of Australian soldiers being ridiculed and vomited on as cultural abominations. Prime Minister Robert Menzies, on April 29, 1965, spoke of fears how "the takeover of South Vietnam would be a direct military threat to Australia and all the countries of South and South-East Asia. It must be seen as a part of a thrust by Communist China between the Indian and Pacific Oceans." Tinker with such terms as "communism" and replace with "global fundamentalism," and the *raison d'être* for unlimited war is revived.

A great evasion has therefore developed towards the role of Coalition forces in Afghanistan, clothed in the language of humanitarianism and the stuffing of good feeling. Notable Australian voices such as Professor Hugh White have argued that Australia's mission, and by implication those of others, was a "total failure". White, writing in 2013, was examining the withdrawal of Australian forces from Oruzgan province. Its objectives, he argued, had not been achieved. "That means that Australia's military operation in Afghanistan has failed."

Every measurement of success, taken through the doctrine of counter-insurgency (COIN) suggested the

converse. The Afghan government backed by foreign forces continues to be debilitating in its corruption. "Any government that is too weak to win a counterinsurgency without massive outside help is too weak to be worth supporting." The reasons for placing troops in Afghanistan to deny it to al-Qaeda "never made sense" – the terrorist franchise was out of Afghanistan and sprouting like well-fed fungi "long before we went to Oruzgan."

Others like Peter Jennings of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute engage in acts of gymnastic overstretch, hoping to grasp a rationale as to why Australia was there. He is only left with naked, circular presumptions – Australian soldiers were obviously engaged because it was necessary for Canberra to have a presence. "My view is that Australia's participation in the war was necessary; it has produced some positive outcomes and created the basis for cautious optimism that Afghanistan will have a better future." Jennings takes it as a given that, if the US was in Afghanistan to fight that grand nonsense of "global terrorism," then Australia had to be as well.

Standard economic measures are wheeled out in the manner Graham Greene so significantly skewered in *The Quiet American* – the good forces of modernisation fighting nationalist primitives in the name of a civilising mission finds virtue in buildings, infrastructure, and roads. "Progress in social and economic development has been made of a type that probably looks more impressive to Afghan than Australian eyes." Abbott's own commemorative address noted those materialist achievements: "girls' schools, roads and bridges where there were none."

The mid-road here comes from such commentaries as those of Army veteran and Lowy Institute fellow James Brown. First, the deployment of Australian troops was deemed necessary to back US interests – every satrap needs his calling, and "it was entirely correct to support this mission with our military forces."

But the mission changed. Brown, without any evidence, suggests that the deployment did reduce the threat of

terrorism in Australia, another example of how empirical evidence persists in being an enemy of the good, let alone necessity. Neither side of politics could quite explain the "why" of Australian involvement as the torpor began setting in. This, Brown chewed over, had little to do with reality and everything to do with image. The ADF had "forgotten many of the lessons of the East Timor conflict. Like finding a way to tell your story and get the media on side." The right war was simply fought in a "dumb" way.

For all of that, former Afghan President Hamid Karzai, on whose behalf foreign forces were fighting and dying for, found little room for sympathy. His reflections typify how gratitude can never be possible for occupation forces, however efficient their mission or purpose. "The war on terror was not conducted where it should have been, which was in the sanctuaries and the training grounds beyond Afghanistan, rather than what the US and NATO forces were conducting operations in Afghan villages, causing harm to the Afghan people."

Importantly, the most brutal observation from Karzai lies in the failings of the mission. It is something that will, and should haunt, endeavours of such intrusion and blindness. This was a defeat of NATO and US forces, since there was never any victory to define, let alone gain.

**Dr. Binoy Kampmark** lectures at RMIT University, Melbourne and was a Commonwealth Scholar at Selwyn College, Cambridge. Email: [bkampmark@gmail.com](mailto:bkampmark@gmail.com)

*"What is the only provocation that could bring about the use of nuclear weapons? Nuclear weapons. What is the priority target for nuclear weapons? Nuclear weapons. What is the only established defense against nuclear weapons? Nuclear weapons. How do we prevent the use of nuclear weapons? By threatening the use of nuclear weapons. And we can't get rid of nuclear weapons, because of nuclear weapons. The intransigence, it seems, is a function of the weapons themselves."*

— Martin Amis, *Einstein's Monsters*



**THE POWER VACUUM***Sending More Troops to the Middle East*by **Binoy Kampmark**

March 11, 2015

*"Five hundred Australian soldiers on the ground is boots on the ground. They will be on the frontline... Their lives will be at risk and you've got to ask why."*

-Andrew Wilkie, MP from Tasmania, Mar 2, 2015

Last Tuesday, Tony Abbott, Australia's war crazed, and somewhat enfeebled prime minister decided that a further three hundred troops were needed for operations in Iraq. The decision has historical form, demonstrating again how Australia's standing status as a vassal of greater powers has conditioned its politicians to disgorge men, women and material, when seemingly required. In Australia, the syndrome has been termed that of "great and powerful friends", a childlike Freudian craving for the security of the grand bosom and warm embrace.

Such conduct indicates against how a prostrate country before the altar of power relationships finds it hard getting up – the habit is simply too hard to break. The confirmation last year of a 25 year agreement to rotate US marines and air force personnel through the northern city of Darwin in the Northern Territory; and the tagging of Australia to the American ballistic missile defence systems in north Asia, suggested that the wind was only blowing one way – away from Australia, and favourably towards the power centre of the United States.

The communique issued after the annual Ausmin talks in Sydney spoke of how Australia and the United States had "committed to continue to work together to counter the growing threat of ballistic missiles in the Asia Pacific region – including by establishing a bilateral working group to examine options for potential Australian contributions to ballistic missile defence in the region". Fictional threats beget actual consequences.

Togetherness, in such relationships, is always forced, a form of tarring up on the part of Australia for the military taking on the part of the United States. Another reading of same words in the

communique should be clear: Australia will make avail itself of its resources and its personnel for Washington's grand power game, however specious, however misguided.

The terminology in such ties is deemed important. When the Prime Minister and cabinet need to convince the Australian public that troops are required in theatres they can barely locate on a map, the public relations strategists get busy. Don't upset the voters with the most accurate details. Deem any troop mission to be one of "trainers" and "assistants" – in the of Iraq, the "building partner capacity training mission". Use the terms "phase" to segment time and periods of deployment – this gives the impression that such missions have definite ends to meet, with an immaculate timetable to police.

Then comes the humanitarian mash to add to the sauce. In Abbott's paternalistic words, "This is a training mission, not a combat mission. Nevertheless, it is a mission which is necessary, because obviously in the face of the initial death cult onslaught, the Iraqi regular army melted like snow in summer. That's been a disaster for the people in Iraq, millions of whom now live in a new dark age."

In addition to murdering the English language with managerial lingo, the fundamental inconsistency between sending more troops on the one hand, and emphasising the damage done to the enemy, must be avoided. Air Chief Marshal Binskin, for instance, emphasises that the fighters of the Islamic State have been impaired by coalition air strikes. Losses lie somewhere in the range of 2000 fighters, notably around Kobane in Syria.

This begs the question as to why any extra deployment would be necessary. Australia already has 200 special forces operating in Iraq. There are also six Super Hornets, a K-30 airborne refuelling aircraft and a Wedgetail airborne control aircraft in use.

The mania for such futile deployments is such that local funding opportunities – the sort that actually obtain results – are neglected. Even as Australia persists in draining its resources in interminable,

open-ended conflicts that draw in resources, its government is undertaking a local sacking of the science brains trust, with 27 science research facilities at risk from June 30 because of the withdrawal of \$150 million in funding.

The National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Scheme (NCRIS) is set for the chop. "Ultimately," lamented astronomer and Nobel laureate Brian Schmidt, "this is not the way a grown up country behaves. It's very childish and it's having a profound impact on something that is going to increase the productivity of a nation."

Australia's local loss there will be the gain of other countries. The difference there is that such people, instead of running around with arms bolstering dubious regimes against dubious foes, will be working in labs on funded projects.

The New Zealand Prime Minister, John Key, has also joined his colleague across the Tasman in a similar exercise of muscular brawn over brain, attempting to explain to the country's parliament that the 143 soldiers he has decided to send form part of a 400-strong joint "Australia-NZ training team". What exactly such training such a mission entails should be obvious. Such soldiers are hardly there to be idle footnotes in the military plan. They will be shot at. In the end, they will achieve nothing, other than more harm than has already been inflicted.

*"Russia [USSR] was a woman of the streets, and whether her dress was new, or just the old patched, it was certainly the same whore underneath."*

– President Eisenhower, speaking at the three power summit in December 1953. He was expressing his view on superpower relations, and his comments were made in light of the new, post-Stalin Soviet Union. America intended to drive the USSR off her present "beat" into the back streets.

[Editor: From the book *Embers of War: The Fall of an Empire and the Making of America's Vietnam* by Fredrik Logevall. This quote epitomises the imperialist mindset of the rulers of the one indispensable nation. I suggest this attitude towards Russia still exists today.]

**AUSTRALIA'S FUTURE ALLY**By **Peter Coates**, 5 February 2015

**A**s the political reputation of our Prime Minister, currently Tony Abbott, plummets, some of his more outlandish foreign policy ideas are being seen for what they are. This article doesn't raise the bright ideas of rushing Australian troops to Ukraine, to hold back Russian tanks, or to the Middle East, to wait for an invitation for the first two months, but the policy of buying into an alliance with Japan.

*News.com.au* reported on July 9, 2014 that: "AUSTRALIA and Japan have become partners in a "special relationship" that will see both countries join with the US in a powerful military alliance aimed at curbing China's influence in the region. During an extraordinary day in the long Australia-Japan relationship, yesterday in Canberra both Prime Minister Tony Abbott and his Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe pledged to create a partnership for "peace, prosperity and the rule of law". Fresh from reversing almost 70 years of pacifism embedded in his nation's post-World War 2 constitution, Mr Abe placed Australia alongside the US at the forefront of Japan's future defence strategy."

Alliance maintenance through weapon system purchases has long been a factor in Australia's relationship with the US. However, as the US has no conventional submarines to sell, there is a joint US-Japanese scheme to sell Japanese submarines to Australia. The purchase price for Australia to secure this alliance with Japan is now around \$25Billion (with the recent depreciation of our dollar compared to the US dollar). This is specifically for 12 Made in Japan submarines. Abbott's budgetary ideas have skimped on health, education and welfare but money is no object when paying for a military alliance from Abbott's friend, the likeminded conservative Japanese Prime Minister Abe.

By having Japan build our submarines Abbott can also run down Australia's ship and submarine-building industry, which he sees as a hotbed of Labor, leftwing, union interests anyway.

So what's in it for Japan? Well the money helps. Japan also frets about what

it sees as rising threats from China, North Korea and increasingly Russia. However Japan is mainly thinking about the potential economic benefits of contested islands in the South China and East China Seas.

Few Australians know or care about several disputes in the East China Sea involving China, Taiwan, Japan and others. Possibly the most dangerous Japan versus China dispute is over a small island chain - which is known as the Senkaku Islands in Japan, the Diaoyu Islands in China and the Diaoyutai Islands in Taiwan. The importance of the Senkakus are that great unmentionable factor - oil. Oil draws military forces - be they Australian forces in the Middle East or future Australian forces in Northeast Asia.

The US, for its part, is worried about the cost of keeping the world's oceans open for trade, including oil. Although the US, in the next 12 months, will be spending many extra \$Billions to maintain the Asia-Pacific "pivot" against China the US increasingly wants Japan to spend more on defence. Japan's current defence spending is only about 1% of its GDP. The US also wants Japan to secure military alliances - that is with the few countries interested - not South Korea or most Southeast Asian countries - after Japan's horrific conduct in World War Two.

The US and Japan are quite explicit in seeing a submarine sale as Australia-Japan strategic alliance cement. A US Admiral has condescended to interpret what an Australian Defence Minister really wanted. The *Japan Times* of January 18, 2015 reports: "Vice Adm. Robert Thomas, commander of the U.S. Navy's 7th Fleet, reportedly said Oct. 24 [2014] in Tokyo that then-Australian Defense Minister David Johnston was very interested in Japan's Soryu-class subs. "I talked to him about it four years ago and I said: 'You want to find the finest diesel-electric submarine made on the planet - it's made at Kobe works in Japan.'..."

Also in that *Japan Times* article retired Japanese submarine admiral Masao Kobayashi said, "The U.S., which has close but separate security pacts with Japan and Australia, probably wants Australia to buy Japanese submarines

because it would greatly strengthen their strategic military ties."

When anyone bothers to ask ordinary Australians whether Australia should be drawn into a conflict by an additional senior ally (Japan) the response appears encouragingly negative. *ABC News* (online), January 6, 2015, reported the results of a Survey of over 1,000 Australians, which indicated "Australians would overwhelmingly reject siding with close ally Japan against top-trade partner China over a dispute in the East China Sea and prefer to remain neutral." In the article Australia's former Foreign Minister Bob Carr said "...as far as the public was concerned, Australia was not obliged under the Australia-New Zealand-United States (ANZUS) treaty to make a commitment..."

Now it needs to be explained that the Survey, *Australian Attitudes on ANZUS and the East China Sea*, was commissioned by the Australia-China Relations Institute (ACRI). ACRI was established in December 2013 with a grant of \$1.8 million from a citizen of China. Bob Carr is the Director of ACRI.

Before one writes off ACRI as a support system for Chinese interests and for Bob Carr it must be said that ACRI was officially launched on May 16, 2014 by Foreign Minister Julie Bishop. Given the Coalition's declining fortunes Bob may be a "former Foreign Minister" for a very short time. He may again be Foreign Minister after the next Federal Election.

If Abbott has his way Australia will be junior ally not only of the US but of Japan with either of those two drawing Australia into their wars. It must be asked "If or when Abbott stands down as Prime Minister would a Coalition Government still pursue an alliance with Japan?"

If Labor wins in the next election would Bill Shorten (who agrees with Abbott's Middle East policies) pursue an alliance with Japan?

Is a survey a genuine gauge of what Australians' want? How else can we, the public, influence basic foreign and defence policy changes - including multi \$Billion defence alliances with "friends" likely to draw Australia into wars? [See Page 32 for author credit]



**Extract from News Review,  
Sydney Morning Herald**

28 March 2015

**Yes Mr. President**

**A**llies for more than 70 years, we are losing our future to America

Here's a date to think about: April 6, 1944. Seventy-one years ago, almost to the day. That's the day John Curtin, Australia's wartime Labor prime minister, left Sydney on a US troopship carrying Australian "war brides" and American servicemen to San Francisco, running a submarine gauntlet in a Pacific war still raging another 16 months.

With Curtin was his wife Elsie, who was ill for days; two senior advisers, one of whom was sozzled most nights; and his press secretary Don Rodgers, the Newcastle journalist who'd drafted Curtin's iconic New Year message more than two years earlier, published in late December, 1941, as Japanese troops poured down the Malay Peninsula to overwhelm Singapore.

That was the message, historian David Day would write in his Curtin biography 55 years later, that "outraged" Britain's prime minister Winston Churchill and caused US President Franklin Roosevelt to suggest "[one sentence] smacked of panic and disloyalty". Curtin's supposedly offending words: "Without any inhibitions of any kind, I make it quite clear Australia looks to America, free of any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom."

You can understand why Curtin thought so in December 1941. The Australian warship HMAS Perth had just been sunk off the West Australian coast. Japanese troops were landing in New Guinea. Darwin was about to be bombed. Two British warships would be sunk in waters north of Java. Singapore was about to fall, and almost 2000 Australian troops, on the orders of a British general, surrendered to death and brutality in Japanese prison camps for almost four years.

By April 1944 everything had changed. Like German forces in Europe, Japan



was in retreat across the Pacific. Now John Curtin was on his way to see Roosevelt in Washington and Churchill in London. He was away two months. At home, our first 90,000 citizen troops were being released back into the Australian civilian workforce. The end was in sight. The end of World War II, that is.

In Australian political life, there was a beginning.

Curtin's visit to Washington in April 1944 set the tone for 14 successive Australian prime ministers who would, in the following 71 years, trek to Washington to pay court to 11 presidents on 33 separate occasions. There might have been more visits. Certainly there were no fewer.

Two Liberal PMs – Bob Menzies and John Howard – were serial visitors: Menzies on nine occasions to confer with four presidents (Harry S. Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson); and Howard on seven occasions, six of them to chat with his little mate, George Bush, the son, during which the pair talked their way into invading Iraq and then mumbled their way out.

Thus, at least on the numbers, there has been, since that New Year message all those years ago, a very great deal of "looking to America". So much so that among our political elite and their hangers-on there has evolved, over the past half century, the automatic response, "But what will the Americans say?" any time some brave soul suggests maybe we should or could do something less cringeing, even independent, such as say "no" on military or security matters.

And when Washington isn't smoodging its Australian visitors into accompanying the US into some war involving its strategic interests, though not necessarily ours, it has lately been talking up with the Australians what it could do with some of its troops just sitting about in countries that don't want them.

Like Japan, which doesn't want so many US Marines (50,000) on its island of Okinawa. They've been there since that war Curtin was so concerned about 71 years ago ended in August, 1945, after Truman dropped two atomic bombs on two Japanese mainland cities that resolved all argument as well as the lives of 150,000 Japanese civilians.

Guess where Washington would like to stable an uncertain number of these Marines? Of course! And when the Obama administration got the nod from Julia Gillard's government more than three years ago – in November 2011 – Barack Obama actually flew to Canberra from Washington to jointly announce what was going to happen.

That is, "rotate" the Marines from Okinawa, in relatively small numbers, to Darwin, base them there for six months of the north's dry season to train and acclimatise with the Australian military, then fly them out. A year later, in the next dry season, they would "rotate" another lot to Darwin, only more this time. And keep on doing it, with the numbers gradually increasing.

When the first Marines arrived, in April 2012, they numbered 250. The following year it was again 250. Last year it was 1150. The new lot, again 1150, get to Darwin some time in the next fortnight. Always in early April, always gone again in early September. The numbers are supposed to peak at 2500 in 2017. What happens then should be interesting.

What did our Parliament say to all this?

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Nothing. Any debate in either the House or the Senate? No. Any individual MP ask a question of the Parliament as to what was going on? No. For the first time in the 225 years of Australia's white settlement, excluding World War II, we have opened our doors to foreign troops to be based here – and they are based here, despite what the politicians and the military say – and almost nobody says boo. Malcolm Fraser got angry and wrote about it in a book. Still nobody said anything, least of all Canberra. Our politicians are too busy “looking to America”.

In 2001, at a packed “True Believers” Federation dinner in Melbourne, one of three former Labor prime ministers who spoke was Paul Keating. He said, in part: “This [2001] election may well decide whether we have an Australian century in the 21st century or an American century, as America resists multilateralism and a multipolar world and tries to soak up its allies. The conservatives, you can bet on this, will forelock-tug their way to Washington, and our future as an independent nation, as a republic in Asia, in our neighbourhood, will be lost.”

You can have no doubt where Keating stands, just as you can have no doubt Australia is losing its future as an independent nation. Malcolm Fraser learnt that years ago. Gough Whitlam found out when he became prime minister in 1972 and was sand-bagged by a furious Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger, Nixon's poisonous security adviser at the time. Nixon had Whitlam at No. 2 on his self-styled “shit list”, and Kissinger said of the new Australian prime minister: “He is a bastard.”

Why? A book to be published in May will tell you. Written by a Sydney University associate professor, James Curran, it is as important a book as you will likely ever read. Whitlam wanted to establish a more independent role for Australia in its relations with Washington. He refused to bend. Nixon and Kissinger were determined to crush him. Curran's book, wonderfully told, says much about how ugly the US monolith can be.

## PHILIPPINE CRISIS

Published on Wednesday, March 18, 2015  
by [Foreign Policy In Focus](#)

### *The US Military Just Plunged Philippine Politics into Crisis*

*American fingerprints are all over a botched commando raid in the southern Philippines that left dozens dead and shocked the country.*

By **Walden Bello**



Moro Islamic Liberation Front fighters in 2008.  
(Photo: Keith Bacongco / Flickr)

**E**arly in the morning of January 25, commandos belonging to the Special Action Force of the Philippine National Police crept into the southern town of Mamasapano — a stronghold of the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front. The elite Seaborne Unit had come for Zulkifli Abdhir, a Malaysian bomb maker better known as “Marwan.”

By the end of the morning, dozens lay dead.

The episode has severely discredited the administration of Philippine President Benigno Aquino III, jeopardized decades of progress on peace talks with Moro separatists, and underlined the perils for developing world governments that put themselves at the beck and call of Washington.

The commandos were able to kill Marwan, who'd sat high on the FBI's list of “Most Wanted Terrorists.” But then all hell broke loose. The insurgents woke up and opened fire on the intruders, forcing the commandos to leave Marwan's body behind. They had to content themselves with cutting off the corpse's index finger to turn over to the FBI.

As they retreated, nine of the Seaborne commandos were killed. They radioed for help, but they were told that the “Quick Reaction Force” charged with covering their withdrawal was already pinned down in a flat cornfield with little cover. Over the next few hours, that separate unit of 36 men was picked off one-by-one by Moro snipers. Only one of the 36 survived, by running for his life and jumping into a nearby river.

All in all, 44 policemen died in the bloody battle. Moro fighters estimated that 18 of their combatants and about four civilians were killed.

A timely rescue effort was not even mounted, since an infantry battalion in the area wasn't informed till late in the morning that the commandos were under fire. When ceasefire monitors finally reached the cornfield late in the afternoon, long after the battle ended, they found corpses that had been stripped of their weapons and other gear, some exhibiting wounds that indicated they had been shot at point-blank range.

### **Biggest Casualty: Moro Autonomy**

The “Mamasapano Massacre,” as it has come to be called, upended Philippine politics.

The biggest casualty was the Bangsa Moro Basic Law that was in the last stages of being shepherded through the Philippine Congress. Known as the “BBL,” the bill was the product of nearly five years of intensive negotiations between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front to put an end to almost 50 years of fighting in the southern Philippines. It

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would have created an autonomous region for the Muslim Moros, a fiercely independent people that have long resisted integration into the broader Filipino polity.

With emotions among the Christian majority running high, congressional approval of the BBL was thrown into doubt, threatening an eventual return to hostilities. Some politicians rode on the incident to stoke the latent anti-Muslim prejudices of the dominant culture — not just to derail prospects for Moro autonomy, but also to advance their own political ambitions.

Under congressional questioning, the facts of the raid were extracted piece by piece — on national television — from high administration officials. Their feelings seemed to run the gamut of guilt, grief, disbelief, and resentment at not being “in the know” about the planned incursion.

The decisive element in the unraveling of the operation, it appears, was the deliberate withholding of information from key people at the top of the police and armed forces hierarchy. Only the president, the Special Action Force commander, and the national police chief, General Alan Purisima, knew about the mission. Though suspended from office on corruption charges, Purisima — a trusted aide of the president — was effectively in charge of the operation, bypassing the acting police chief and the secretary of the interior, who knew nothing of the mission until disaster overtook it.

Emerging in the hearings was the following portrait of the tragedy: The officials who conceived and implemented the operation to nab Marwan chose not to inform the top people in the police and military leadership. They also ignored and subverted the carefully negotiated procedures for territorial access worked out among the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, the government, and third-party monitors.

The Liberation Front fighters — along with fighters from a die-hard separatist group, the Bangsa Moro Islamic Freedom Fighters — responded that morning to what they perceived as a large invasion force. Once the battle

began, it became very difficult for their leaders to realize the intent of the commando contingent and get their forces to disengage.

It seemed evident, too, that some wounded policemen were finished off execution-style, though it was not clear which group was responsible for these atrocities.

### Washington's Hand

The big puzzle for many was why a government that was in the last stages of negotiating an autonomy agreement to end 50 years of warfare would endanger this goal — said to be a major legacy priority for President Aquino — with a large-scale commando intrusion into Moro territory without informing its negotiating partner.

To an increasing number of people, the answer must have something to do with Washington.

Indeed, Washington's fingerprints were all over the operation: There was a \$5-million bounty placed by the Americans on Marwan's head. A U.S. military helicopter appeared in the area after the long firefight, allegedly to help evacuate the wounded. Marwan's finger disappeared after the battle and showed up at an FBI lab in the United States a few days later.

Filipino officials have remained tight-lipped on the question of U.S. participation in the raid, invoking “national security” or choosing to make revelations only in secret executive sessions with the Senate. Thus it has fallen on the media to probe the U.S. role.

Perhaps the most reliable of these probes was conducted by the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, which found that U.S. drones had pinpointed Marwan's hiding place, guided the commandos to it, and provided the capability for real-time management by the Philippine commanders away from the battlefield. American advisers, the paper claimed, were the ones who had vetoed informing top officials of the police, the armed forces, and the Liberation Front of the planned raid on the grounds that news of the action would be leaked to Marwan.

Finally, the original plan was to have a fused team of Seaborne Unit

commandos and the Quick Reaction Force. But that was reportedly rejected by the American advisers, who favored having the Seaborne Unit carry out the raid itself and the Quick Reaction Force provide cover — a plan that proved disastrous. The Seaborne Unit, it emerged, had been trained by “retired” Navy Seals and functioned as the Americans' special unit within the special forces of the Philippine National Police.

The full extent of U.S. involvement remains to be unearthed, but it's now clear to many that taking out Marwan was a major priority for Washington — not Manila. As one congressman put it, the Mamasapano tragedy was a case of “the Americans fighting to the last Filipino.”

### Into the Bunker

As the details of the American role emerge, the pressure is on President Aquino to admit complicity in a Washington-directed operation, which he has so far refused to do.

Aquino has come under intense fire from nationalist quarters that earlier criticized him for negotiating a military pact that allows the United States to use Philippine bases to implement President Obama's so-called “Pivot to Asia” strategy to contain China.

Already under attack for putting a suspended police general in charge of the fatal mission and refusing to admit command responsibility for it, the charge of laying down Filipino lives for an American scheme appears to have forced the president further into his bunker, creating the widespread impression of a drift in leadership that, it was feared, coup plotters and other adventurers — of which there is no shortage in the Philippines — could take advantage of.

There is a personal postscript to this. As a sitting member of the Philippine House of Representatives, I withdrew my political support for President Aquino when he refused to accept command responsibility for the operation. Since my party Akbayan remains allied to the administration, I resigned as the congressional representative of the party.

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[See Page 32 for author credit]



**WHERE IS THE TRUTH?**

March 18, 2015

*U. S. Interventions in Venezuela, Peru, and Paraguay*by **W.T. Whitney Jr.**

**T**o refute official explanations for U.S. interventions in Latin America and the Caribbean is easy sometimes. Critics recently highlighted falsehoods and contradictions given off from President Obama's executive order of March 9 that imposed sanctions against Venezuela, and the job was done.

That document mentioned "erosion of human rights guarantees" in Venezuela, attacks on press freedom, police violence in response to anti-government protests, and arbitrary arrests. Alternative voices told the truth: private media flourishes there, U.S.-financed counterrevolutionary groups recruited anti-government agitators of last year who accounted for most of the deadly violence cited by Obama. Critics highlighted abuse of Black people's rights in the United States and the scandals of U.S. torture, poverty, and prisons. The Guantanamo prison was mentioned repeatedly.

There are other interventions, however, with other rationalizations. These too are poorly explained, but in a different way. They seem to shift depending on circumstances, and look like they are contrived for propaganda purposes. These official justifications marked by scatter apply particularly to military incursions in the region.

The U.S. military, for example, is implementing a scheme of collaboration with Peru. The Peruvian Congress passed enabling legislation in January and February. Some 3500 U. S. Marines will be in Peru for short or long periods during the coming year. Their purpose, according to an official Peruvian military source, is instructional. The first contingent of 58 U.S. troops arrived on February 1 and will stay for a year working in five districts.

Two weeks later, 67 more marines arrived for a six-week stay. On September 1, 3200 soldiers will disembark from the amphibious assault vessel "America." That ship visited Peru in September 2014.

On September 1-6, the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS George Washington calls at Puerto Callao in Peru. The U. S. Fourth Fleet, reactivated in 2008 to support missions of the U. S. Southern Command, has operational control of both vessels.

The official Peruvian and U.S. story is that the troops will be helping out with Peru's war on drug-trafficking. Two years ago Peru did regain its former status as the world's top producer of coca. But it's clear also the troops are there to strengthen Peru's hand in anti-insurgency warfare. There are references to war on terrorism. The Maoist Shining Path Guerrillas have shown signs of reviving.

Peruvian academician and drug policy expert Roberto Soberon insists the United States intends to "retake the initiative in South America and implement a more visible military presence in the Andes and Western Pacific always taking into account open and covert actions developing in Venezuela and other countries that distance themselves from Washington." The United States has "capabilities for intervening automatically in scenarios of socio-political convulsion." He worries about U.S. targeting of "social organizations that are protesting, [especially] against the presence of mining and/or petroleum companies."

Another local writer characterizes the arriving U.S. troops as "a true army of occupation." And the intervention is midway between "Evo's multicultural Bolivia and the region more to the North where the actions of Rafael Correa's government don't exactly depend on Washington's approval."

The drug-war rationale for U.S. intervention famously has applied to Colombia. That's a worrisome precedent what with drug-war interventions like Plan Colombia having led to direct U.S. participation in "dirty-war" atrocities associated with counterinsurgency. One rationale merged into another.

Teams of U.S. military personnel purporting to deliver humanitarian aid represent slippage of yet another sort. Over many years the Southern Command has had U.S. soldiers settling down throughout the region to offer medical, dental, technical and/or engineering assistance. In 2012 military teams in Peru provided medical services in 11 locations for over six weeks. Since the 1980s this kind of military outreach has been called "New Horizons."

In 2008 the Southern Command adjusted terminology to "Beyond the Horizon." Aid-dispensing soldiers have traveled to Paraguay, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Belize, Haiti, Chile, and elsewhere.

The Southern Command opened its Center for Emergency Operations in Santa Rosa, San Pedro department, in northern Paraguay on February 22, 2014. The U. S. ambassador attended the inaugural ceremony. The facility cost \$1.7 million, and U.S. military personnel would be there to provide "help to the Paraguayan people in the event of emergencies and natural disasters." The Southern Command notes the area's history of "seasonal floods, droughts and wildfires that have driven thousands of families from their homes and threatened the livelihood of its inhabitants." Medical and dental care would be available.

At the time, Southern Command humanitarian aid specialist Steve Carro indicated "the U.S. military forces had in mind a network of 100 [such] centers (...) in 25 Latin American and Caribbean counties."

U.S. military planners, however, had not taken on a new worldview of beneficence. Two days before the opening, Paraguay's defense minister met with U. S. Defense Attaché Bárbara Fick and Rear Admiral George Balance. They discussed increased military cooperation, and Admiral Balance requested that Paraguayan soldiers attend U.S. military schools on scholarships. Drug war cooperation was mentioned.

All along, according to a November 2013 news report, the Paraguayan government had been projecting its own \$2 million military base in Northern Paraguay. Its purpose, said the same defense minister, was "to bring back peace to the people." The project was in response to the increasing presence in the area of Marxist Leninist guerrillas known as the Army of the Paraguayan People.

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A local newspaper revealed that, "The initiative for fitting out a military base (...) came from the United States." The Paraguayan soldiers presumably would be working in tandem with U.S. counterparts nearby, that is, if the latter could break away from their good works.

Pablo Ruiz of the School of the Americas Watch says U.S. interest in Northern Paraguay stems from the strategic importance of the underlying Guarani aquifer (largest in the world), copious natural resources, the vantage point provided for spying on nearby Brazil and Argentina, and growing peasant resistance in the area to a land monopolization for soy production.

Ultimately the larger story is of adjustable, slippery motives. The phenomenon seems to cover up the truth as to why the U.S. government meddles. A process of mystification ends up in lies and contradictions, little different in essence from explanations as to why sanctions were imposed against Venezuela.

Obfuscation is the order of the day. Southern Command head Major General John Kelly responded to a reporter's question about whether or not events in Caracas on February 12, 2015 represented a coup attempt, as Venezuelan leaders allege.

"A coup? You know, I don't know anyone that would want to take that mess over, but it might be that we see, whether it's at the end of his term or whatever, I wouldn't say — I wouldn't (say) necessarily a coup, but there might be with — the same ruling party ... some arrangements to change leadership."

**W.T. Whitney Jr.** is a retired pediatrician and political journalist living in Maine.

*"If history is to be creative, to anticipate a possible future without denying the past, it should, I believe, emphasize new possibilities by disclosing those hidden episodes of the past when, even if in brief flashes, people showed their ability to resist, to join together, occasionally to win. I am supposing, or perhaps only hoping, that our future may be found in the past's fugitive movements of compassion rather than in its solid centuries of warfare."* — Howard Zinn

## US-ISRAEL WAGE WAR ON IRAN IN SYRIA

By **Tony Cartalucci**

April 05, 2015 "[ICH](#)" —

**T**he ongoing conflict in Syria has always been a proxy conflict aimed at Iran, as well as nearby Russia, and more distant China. As far back as 2007, two-time Pulitzer Prize winner Seymour Hersh warned in his 9-page New Yorker report "*The Redirection Is the Administration's new policy benefitting our enemies in the war on terrorism?*," that a region-wide sectarian war was being engineered by the US, Saudi Arabia, and Israel — all of whom were working in concert even in 2007, to build the foundation of a sectarian militant army.

The report would cite various serving and former US officials who warned that the extremists the West was backing were "preparing for cataclysmic conflict."

In retrospect, considering the emergence of the so-called "Islamic State" (ISIS), Hersh's warning has turned out to be prophetic. The destabilization of Syria and Lebanon were noted in particular as prerequisites for a coming war with Iran. Confirming this would be the lengthy policy treatise published by the Brookings Institution in 2009 titled, "Which Path to Persia?"

In it, it is openly discussed that regime change for the purpose of establishing regional hegemony is the only goal of the United States and its regional partners, with attempts to frame the conflict with Iran as an issue of "national security" and "global stability" serving as mere canards.

Throughout the document, US policymakers admit that negotiations with Iran over its nuclear program are merely one of several pretexts being used to foster political subversion from within and justify war from beyond Iran's borders.

More importantly, Brookings details explicitly how the US will wage war on Iran, through Israel, in order to maintain plausible deniability. It states specifically under a chapter titled, "Allowing or Encouraging an Israeli Military Strike," that:

*...the most salient advantage this option has over that of an American air campaign is the possibility that Israel alone would be blamed for the attack. If this proves true, then the United States might not have to deal with Iranian retaliation or the diplomatic backlash that would accompany an American military operation against Iran. It could allow Washington to have its cake (delay Iran's acquisition of a nuclear weapon) and eat it, too (avoid undermining many other U.S. regional diplomatic initiatives).*

Various diplomatic postures are discussed in consideration of the best formula to mitigate complicity amid a "unilateral" Israeli strike on Iran. Of course, and as the report notes, US-Israeli foreign policy is unified with Israel's defenses a product of vast and continuous US support. Anything Israel does, therefore, no matter the political or diplomatic facade constructed, it does with America's full backing — hence the inclusion of "encouraging" in the title of the chapter.

Today, an alleged "fallout" between the US and Israel has been grabbing headlines. Beyond the most superficial of political commentary, there have been no real manifestations of this "fallout." Israel is still receiving immense aid both military and political from the United States, and Israeli foreign policy is still one with Washington.

The purpose of the feigned "fallout" is to produce room between the US and Israel, so that possible upcoming "unilateral" actions taken by Israel can be disavowed by a "cold" US.

The BBC's article, "Netanyahu row with Obama administration deepens," reported that:

*A row between the US and Benjamin Netanyahu has deepened, with the Israeli leader accusing America and others of "giving up" on trying to stop Iran obtaining nuclear weapons. The US secretary of state questioned Mr Netanyahu's judgement on the issue.*

This is precisely the political charade implied by the Brookings Institution in their 2009 report as being necessary before any so-called "unilateral" action by Israel could be taken.

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In reality there is no row, simply a need for establishing plausible deniability ahead of an egregious act of unwarranted, unjust military aggression.

### **The War on Syria: Containing Iran Before, During, and After Airstrikes**

Such theatrics are but one troubling sign that aggression toward Iran is still very much in the cards, that current negotiations are but a smokescreen for preparations to strike Iran anyway regardless of what concession it is willing to make, and that such aggression may take place once the US and its regional partners believe Syria has been reduced to its weakest state possible – if outright regime change is seen as impossible.

Brookings states clearly that:

*As the conclusion discusses, an air campaign against Iran's nuclear sites would likely have to be coupled with a containment strategy—before, during, and especially after the strikes. Containment would be necessary to hinder Iran from reconstituting its nuclear program, prevent it from retaliating against the United States and its allies, and to deal with Iran's support for violent extremist groups and other anti-status quo activities.*

Admittedly, part of that containment strategy have been attempts to destroy Syria and Lebanon – where the majority of Iran's regional support is based and where Iran would marshal support from in the immediate aftermath of an unprovoked attack on its territory by US-Israeli aggression.

In addition to propping up terrorists across the region to attack Iran's allies abroad, the Brookings report dedicated an entire chapter to "Inspiring an Insurgency: Supporting Iranian Minority and Opposition Groups." Here, Brookings talks about backing the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) and its military wing, the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK) – the latter being a verified terrorist organization, previously listed by the US State Department as such, and guilty of killing not only Iranian civilians throughout decades of terrorism, but also US military personnel and US civilian contractors.

For those who have difficulties believing the US would back Al Qaeda terrorists for the purpose of overthrowing the governments of Libya, Egypt, and Syria, they need only look at overt and continuous support for MEK terrorists in a bid to overthrow the government of Iran to uncover the reality of Washington's willingness to sponsor terrorism.

Brookings would openly admit that: *...even if U.S. support for an insurgency failed to produce the overthrow of the regime, it could still place Tehran under considerable pressure, which might either prevent the regime from making mischief abroad or persuade it to make concessions on issues of importance to the United States (such as its nuclear program and support to Hamas, Hizballah, and the Taliban). Indeed, Washington might decide that this second objective is a more compelling rationale for supporting an insurgency than the (much less likely) goal of actually overthrowing the regime.*

Brookings describes in exceptional detail how the US would organize its proxy terrorists. It would claim:

*Insurgencies take a long time to succeed, when they succeed at all. It takes time for insurgents to identify leaders and recruit personnel, establish bases and gather equipment, and learn tactics and proficiency with weapons. It takes even longer to win popular support, erode the morale of the government's armed forces, and then undermine the government's legitimacy.*

It would also claim:

*The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) could take care of most of the supplies and training for these groups, as it has for decades all over the world. However, Washington would need to decide whether to provide the groups with direct military assistance...*

And finally, it would admit:

*To protect neighboring countries providing sanctuary to the insurgents. Any insurgency against the Iranian regime would need a safe haven and conduit for arms and other supplies through one or more of Iran's neighbors.*

*This precise strategy has been implemented regarding Syria. Material support for terrorists operating in Syria has been provided for years by the West, with the West's vast media monopolies providing rhetoric to undermine the legitimacy of the Syrian government, and US-created sanctuaries outside of Syria (primarily in Turkey and Jordan) for terrorists to seek safe havens in and through which a torrent of arms, cash, equipment, and fighters flow.*

When understanding that the war in Syria is but a lead up to a larger conflict with Iran – with a literal signed confession created by US policymakers clearly serving as the foundation for several years of American foreign policy across the Middle East – one begins to understand the urgent imperative incumbent upon those who, for the sake of their own self-preservation, are tasked with stopping it.

Russian and Chinese efforts to obstruct US designs in Syria are about more than selfish regional interests, they are a matter of self-preservation, stopping the conflict in Syria from spilling into Iran next, southern Russia afterwards, and eventually enveloping western China as well.

That the US has committed itself to fueling chaos in Syria despite the unlikelihood of actually overthrowing the government in Damascus, costing tens of thousands of innocent people their lives, illustrates the callousness of US foreign policy, highlighting that Western sponsorship of terrorism around the world constitutes perhaps the most egregious, continuous, and most horrifically demonstrable threat to global peace and stability in our age.

As the US and Israel conduct their latest diplomatic charade, a harbinger of even more chaos to come, those concerned must read the policy papers of the West and understand the true nature of their methodology if ever they hope to expose it and stop it.

**Tony Cartalucci**, Bangkok-based geopolitical researcher and writer, especially for the online magazine "New Eastern Outlook".



**PALESTINIAN DEMANDS***Eight Urgent 'Musts' Needed for Palestinians to Defeat Apartheid:*By **Ramzy Baroud**April 02, 2015 "[ICH](#)" –

**W**aiting on Israeli society to change from within is a colossal waste of time, during which the suffering of an entire nation – torn between an occupied home and a harsh diaspora – will not cease. But what are Palestinians and the supporters of a just peace in Palestine and Israel to do? Plenty.

Those who counted on some sort of a miracle to emerge from the outcome of the recent Israeli elections have only themselves to blame. Neither logic nor numbers were on their side, nor the long history laden with disappointing experiences of “leftist” Israelis unleashing wars and cementing occupation. Despite a few differences between Israel’s right and the so-called left on internal matters, their positions are almost identical regarding all major issues related to Palestine. These include the Right of Return and the status of occupied Jerusalem to the illegal settlements.

Equally important, most sectors of Israel’s political classes that are dominated by Zionist Jews are also in concord regarding the status of Israel’s Palestinian Arab population (1948 Palestinians). Don’t let the racist fearmongering of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu – terrifying Israeli Jews of Arabs voting in “droves” – blind you to the fact that the Zionist Labor bloc is equally racist, although, in a less vulgar fashion.

But Palestinians are not without options. Sure, the odds against them are great, but such is the fate of the oppressed as they are left between two options: either a perpetual fight for justice or unending humiliation and servitude.

**1. Abbas, Oslo Must Go**

First, the most difficult obstacle to overcome is the stronghold of Mahmoud Abbas and his corrupt circle on Palestine’s political discourse at home. This is not an outcome of Abbas’s particular savvy or the genius of his class. The post-Oslo circle only exists to

maintain the status quo: US interests and involvement as a mediator in the conflict, Israel’s security – thus the constant crackdown on Palestinian opposition and resistance – and ensuring that the Palestinian Authority (PA) has a reason to exist for the sake of ensuring the many privileges that come with the job.

This whole apparatus must be overcome and eventually removed entirely from the Palestinian body politic if Palestinians are to have any chance at formulating an alternative strategy.

**2. Factionalism Must Be Defeated, Crushed**

But for that to take place, the very ailments that have afflicted Palestinian society for years, leading to the creation of the ineffectual PA in the first place, would have to be confronted head on. One such condition is factionalism, which has to be overpowered by a collective that defines itself first and foremost as Palestinian.

Factionalism, in its current form, has destroyed much of the social fabric of Palestine. It has divided the already divided people into fragments making them easy to be controlled, manipulated, suppressed – and when necessary – besieged. 67 years are just too long a period for a nation that lives mostly in exile, trapped or confined behind walls, to sustain its political identity and remain unified around the same “constants” without proper leadership.

Yet somehow many Palestinians persisted, insisting on one Palestine, one people, one identity, one goal. For these energies to be streamlined into a meaningful push against Israeli colonial designs, factionalism would have to be put to rest. Additionally, the Palestinian flag must occupy every public place currently occupied by red, yellow, green or any other factional colour or symbol.

**3. But the Transition Must Be Smooth**

Such seismic change cannot come easily. It must be gradual and part of a national initiative. It must be a conversation that brings friends and rivals not to divide material perks,

useless “ministries” and worthless “government” posts, but rather to mend the broken unanimity that once existed. In fact, once upon a time, Palestinians were not united or disjointed around the frivolous “peace process,” but instead around “national constants,” where the Right of Return took central stage.

The transition from disunity and chaos into something visionary and not confined by short-term political interests, must be smooth, calculated and led by respected Palestinian figures, not those with hands soiled by blood and corruption.

**4. Right of Return Must Be Brought Back to Center of Discourse**

One major issue that must dominate the new political discourse is the Right of Return for Palestinian refugees, guaranteed by international law. The issue is not only essential in its centrality in the lives of millions of Palestinians suffering in Syria, Lebanon and elsewhere, but is also essential to any sensible understanding of the conflict and its resolution.

The struggle in Palestine doesn’t date back to the war of 1967, but the Zionist takeover of Palestine between 1947-48 that resulted in nearly a million refugees, the expropriation of their land, homes, rights and the attempt at erasing any evidence of their existence.

By marginalizing the Right of Return, one diminishes the very roots of the conflict, and any serious attempt at reconciling the painful past with the equally agonizing present.

**5. Palestine 48 Must Be Fully Incorporated into National Agenda**

Not all Palestinians became refugees. Some remained in Palestine as it was being transferred to some other entity before their own eyes.

The Palestinians of 1948 have always, and will remain a major component of the Palestine question and the Palestinian struggle for freedom and human rights. The fragmentation between the communities were imposed by calculated political realities, enforced by Israel or circumstances. That said, the issues have never been truly separated: the plight of Palestinians in Israel, those under

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military occupation in the occupied territories, and refugees in the diaspora all go back to the same historical point of reference – the Nakba of 48. These common struggles continue to be sustained by Israel, its racist laws, its military occupation and its refusal to adhere to international law.

Without the Palestinians of 48, the Palestinian national identity will remain politically fragmented and scarred. The persistence and collective strength of that population is an important asset, and their struggles are part and parcel of the struggle and resistance of Palestinians in the occupied territories and those in the diaspora.

#### 6. Resistance Must Be Respected

However, fuel is needed to urge that new collective awareness forward, and nothing can possibly achieve such an end but the insistence on resistance, in both the real and cerebral sense.

The term “resistance” once dominated references made by Palestinian leaders in yesteryears, but was purposely marginalised following the signing of Oslo in 1993. That was driven by two subtle understandings that resistance was ineffective, and that to achieve a degree of validity and stateliness in the eyes of their US benefactors, the new rulers of Palestine needed to abandon seemingly unsophisticated references to a bygone era.

Yet without resistance there is only submission and defeat, which is precisely what took place. Only popular resistance in the West Bank and Jerusalem, the steadfastness of 48 Palestinians, crowned by the legendary resistance of Palestinians in Gaza under a harsh siege and repeated wars, continue to frustrate Israel. Yet, the harsher Israel tries to destroy Palestinian resistance, the more emboldened Palestinians become, for resistance is a culture, not a political choice.

Without resistance, Palestinians may as well raise white flags and sign on whatever dotted line is dictated by Israel. And then, they would simply be agreeing to perpetual subjugation.

#### 7. BDS Must Continue to Grow, Bridge Gaps

Resistance is part and parcel of the ongoing global campaign, to boycott, divest from and sanction Israel. The outcome of the Israeli elections, and the rise of a more self-assertive Palestinian political collective by 48 Palestinians, would mean that BDS must enlarge its mission, not just rhetorically by practically as well.

The BDS movement had already emphasised equality for 48 Palestinians as a main objective that is as vital as all other objectives. The Joint List Arab party which won 13 seats in the Knesset solidified the relationship between Palestinian Arab communities within Israel as the BDS movement has to a large extent solidified the rapport between Palestinian communities across political and geographical divides. But more is needed. The new self-assertive Palestinian community in Israel deserves greater engagement. By doing so, BDS would defeat Israel’s constant attempt at diminishing the collective aspiration of the Palestinian people.

#### 8. One State Must Become Rally Cry for Equality and Freedom

There is no need or time for despair. In fact, the opposite is true. The more empowered and racist Israel becomes, and the deeper it digs into the roots of its Apartheid and racist institutions and walls, the more obvious the answer becomes: a state for two peoples with equal rights. Both Palestinians and Jews exist in that very space, but they are governed by two sets of laws that make peaceful co-existence impossible. In order to speed up the achievement of that moment and lessen suffering, Palestinians have some urgent work to do.

It is time for Palestinian communities everywhere to surmount ideological, factional and political divides, reach out to one another, unite their ranks, and harness their energies, for no matter how deep the divide, Palestine is, should and will always be one.

**Ramzy Baroud** – [www.ramzybaroud.net](http://www.ramzybaroud.net) – is an internationally-syndicated columnist, media consultant, author of several books and the founder of PalestineChronicle.com. His latest book is *My Father Was a Freedom Fighter: Gaza's Untold Story* (Pluto Press, London).

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#### THE TERROR WE GIVE IS THE TERROR WE GET

Monday, February 09, 2015

By Chris Hedges

**W**e fire missiles from the sky that incinerate families huddled in their houses. They incinerate a pilot cowering in a cage. We torture hostages in our black sites and choke them to death by stuffing rags down their throats. They torture hostages in squalid hovels and behead them. We organize Shiite death squads to kill Sunnis. They organize Sunni death squads to kill Shiites. We produce high-budget films such as “American Sniper” to glorify our war crimes. They produce inspirational videos to glorify their twisted version of jihad.

The barbarism we condemn is the barbarism we commit. The line that separates us from the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) is technological, not moral. We are those we fight.

“From violence, only violence is born,” Primo Levi wrote, “following a pendular action that, as time goes by, rather than dying down, becomes more frenzied.”

The burning of the pilot, Jordanian Lt. Muath Al-Kaseasbeh, by ISIS militants after his F-16 crashed near Raqqa, Syria, was as gruesome as anything devised for the Roman amphitheater. And it was meant to be. Death is the primary spectacle of war. If ISIS had fighter jets, missiles, drones and heavy artillery to bomb American cities there would be no need to light a captured pilot on fire; ISIS would be able to burn human beings, as we do, from several thousand feet up. But since ISIS is limited in its capacity for war it must broadcast to the world a miniature version of what we do to people in the Middle East. The ISIS process is cruder. The result is the same.

Terror is choreographed. Remember “Shock and Awe”? Terror must be seen and felt to be effective. Terror demands gruesome images. Terror must instill a paralyzing fear. Terror requires the agony of families. It requires mutilated corpses. It requires anguished appeals from helpless hostages and prisoners.

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Terror is a message sent back and forth in the twisted dialogue of war. Terror creates a whirlwind of rage, horror, shame, pain, disgust, pity, frustration and impotence. It consumes civilians and combatants. It elevates violence as the highest virtue, justified in the name of noble ideals. It unleashes a carnival of death and plunges a society into blood-drenched madness.

During the Bosnian War of the 1990s, relatives paid enormous sums to retrieve the bodies of their sons or husbands being held by corpse traders on the opposing side. And they paid even more in attempts to secure the release of sons or husbands when they were alive. Such trades are as old as war itself. Human beings, whether in our black sites or in the hands of Islamic militants, are war's collateral.

Not all hostages or prisoners evoke the same national outcry. Not all command the same price. And not all are slated for release. The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), which turned kidnapping and ransom negotiations into an efficient business and took hundreds of captives, held tiers of hostages. Celebrity hostages—including politician Ingrid Betancourt, who was captured while she was running for the presidency of Colombia and who was freed by the Colombian military after being held six years—were essentially priced out of the market. FARC also had middle-priced hostages such as police officers and soldiers and low-priced hostages who included peasants. Celebrity hostages are worth more to all sides of a conflict while they are in captivity. These celebrity hostages—onetime Italian Prime Minister Aldo Moro, who was kidnapped and executed by the Red Brigades in 1978, is another example—heighten war's drama. Saddam Hussein in a cage served this purpose. Celebrity hostages, because the price demanded for their release is so extravagant, are often condemned to death in advance. I suspect this was the case with the American journalist James Foley, who was beheaded in captivity. The proposed ransom was so wildly exorbitant—100 million euros and the release of Islamic radicals

being held by the United States—that his captors probably never expected it to be paid.

The Jordanian government is struggling to contain a virulent, if small radical Islamic movement. There is unease among Jordan's population, as there is unease in the United States about American air assaults on ISIS. The death of the Jordanian pilot, however, bolsters the claims by Washington and Amman that the battle with ISIS is a struggle between democratic, enlightened states (although Jordan is not a democracy) and savage jihadists. And Jordan's hanging of two al-Qaida members Wednesday was calculated, along with Jordanian fighter jet strikes in Syria on the de facto capital of ISIS, to highlight these supposed differences and intensify the conflict.

Sajida al-Rishawi, one of the two who were hanged, had been on death row since 2005 for her role in the attacks on Amman hotels that left 60 people dead. She had been an associate of the Jordanian-born al-Qaida leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who was killed in Iraq in 2006. The tit-for-tat executions by Jordan and ISIS, like the airstrikes, are useful in playing the game of terror versus terror. It fosters the binary vision of a battle between good and evil that is crucial to maintaining the fevered pitch of war. You do not want your enemy to appear human. You do not want to let your population tire of the bloodletting. You must always manufacture terror and fear.

France and most other European states, unlike the United States, negotiate with kidnappers and pay for hostages. This has devolved into an established business practice. The tens of millions of dollars raised by ISIS through kidnapping is a significant source of its revenue, amounting to perhaps as much as half of its operating budget. The New York Times, in an investigation, wrote in July 2014 that "Al Qaeda and its direct affiliates have taken in at least \$125 million in revenue from kidnappings since 2008, of which \$66 million was paid just last year." But negotiating and paying ransoms has consequences. While French and other European citizens are more likely to be ransomed, they are also more likely to be taken hostage. But France is spared the scenes that Americans, who refuse to pay, must endure. And because of this France is able to remain relatively sane.

Terror serves the interests of the war mongers on both sides of the divide. This is what happened during the 444-day Iran hostage crisis that took place from 1979 to 1981. And this is why Jordan—unlike Japan, which saw two of its nationals executed but is not involved militarily against ISIS—has reacted with sanctimonious fury and carried out retaliation. It is why Foley's murder strengthened the call by the war lobby in Washington to launch a bombing campaign against ISIS. Terror—the terror we commit and the terror done to us—feeds the lusts for war. It is a recruiting tool for war's crusade. If ISIS were not brutal it would have to be made to seem brutal. It is the luck of the fanatics we oppose, and the fanatics in our midst, that everyone's propaganda needs are amply met. The tragedy is that so many innocents suffer.

Mideast governments allied with the West, including Jordan, Iraq and Saudi Arabia, have watched in horror as ISIS has carved out of parts of Syria and Iraq to create a self-declared caliphate the size of Texas. ISIS has managed through oil exports and the business of hostage taking to become financially self-sufficient. The area under its control has become a mecca for jihadists. It has attracted an estimated 12,000 foreign fighters, including 2,000 from Europe.

The longer the rogue caliphate remains in existence the more it becomes a mortal threat to the West's allies in the region. ISIS will not invade countries such as Saudi Arabia and Jordan, but its continued existence empowers the discontented and the radicals in those countries, many groaning under collapsing economies, to stoke internal upheavals. The United States and its allies in the region are determined to erase ISIS from the map. It is too destabilizing. Dramas like these, because they serve the aims of ISIS as well as those of the nations seeking to destroy ISIS, will be played out as long as the caliphate exists.

Terror is the engine of war. And terror is what all sides in this conflict produce in overabundance.

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**AMERICAN HELL FOR YEMEN**

By Margaret Kimberley

April 02, 2015 "ICH" "BAR"

**T**he U.S.-spawned whirlwind of carnage and destruction has wrecked the societies of Iraq, Libya, Syria, Somalia and Yemen, yet most Americans feel themselves blameless. "The people, the corporate media and the political system all accept that their government has the right to intervene in the affairs of other nations and that it is always right and moral in its claims." They behave like zombified cogs in an imperial death machine.

The United States used the Al Anad airbase in Yemen as the staging area for drone attacks which killed some 1,000 people since 2009. Those crimes were committed under the guise of fighting terrorism but now that same place is the location of karmic justice for the American government and its ally, Saudi Arabia. United States Special Forces fled from Al Anad before it was overrun by Ansar Allah rebels, also known as the Houthis.

It is true that Saudi Arabia bombed Houthi positions and threatens to start a ground invasion with the help of Egypt. Both of these countries are American client states and would not contemplate these actions without having a green light from Washington.

The story of Yemen and the shifting international alliances which have brought it to civil war are somewhat complicated. The Houthis ousted the American and Saudi backed president Hadi who is now on the run. His predecessor, Ali Abdullah Saleh, was at one time also a Saudi favorite but is now leading the Houthi advance. While the details can be confusing, one thing is simple. American imperialism and the war of terror unleashed on that region are ultimately at fault and continue to destroy nation after nation.

In its zeal to have and maintain hegemony the United States resorts to

brute force and supports others who do likewise. The result is dead bodies in Iraq, Libya, Syria, Somalia and Yemen, but the decisions that lead to these crimes are endemic to American policies.

To say that Barack Obama and his Oval Office predecessors made a mess of the Middle East is the very definition of understatement. Because America's goals are never benevolent its policies lurch from one awful decision to the next with human suffering being the only common denominator.

Washington used jihadists in Libya to overthrow the Gaddafi government only to have those same groups kill the

the conquest of North America in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but the thinking behind it is still a part of this country's consciousness.

Most Americans know little or nothing about Yemen or Saudi Arabia, but still happily refer to themselves in the first person plural when speaking of their government. They ask, "What should 'we' do about Syria/Iraq/Yemen/Libya?"

While presidents go in and out of office, the people, the corporate media and the political system all accept that their government has the right to intervene in the affairs of other nations and that it is always right and moral in

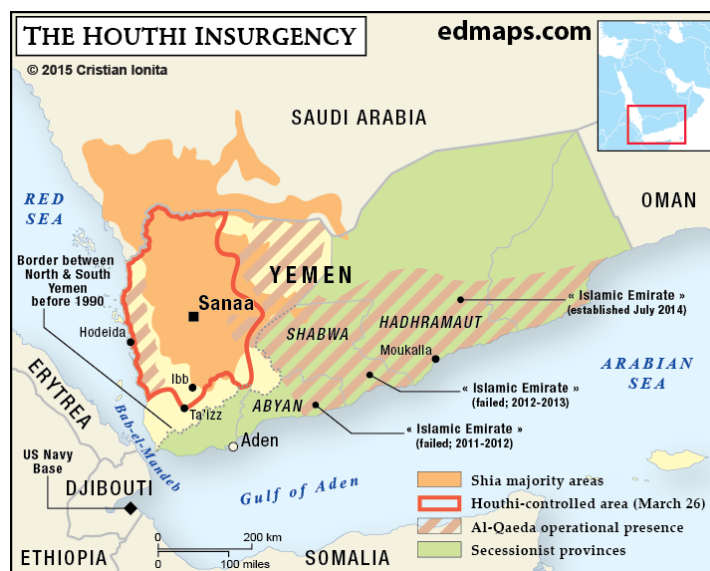
its claims. The numbers of Americans who question whether Barack Obama ought to be in the business of ousting the president of Syria or supporting the president of Ukraine are quite slim.

The examples of foolish decisions are endless. President Reagan made deals with Iran but then instigated an Iraqi attack on Iran. Later the U.S. attacked Iraq in two different wars. The destruction of that country led to a brutal sectarian war, and to the rise of the Houthis in Yemen.

Yemen is now the epicenter of imperialism run amuck. The Saudis fear that the Shi'a Houthis will be supported by their rival Iran, which the United States now wants to come to terms with in nuclear energy negotiations. Saudi Arabia is therefore on the side of Israel in attempting to scuttle any agreement. There is still no honor among all the thieves.

Whatever policy decisions Washington chooses to make will result in unintended consequences and more violence. Every escalation brings greater danger and America still has no rival for bringing destruction to millions of people. Violence and chaos have become not just the means to certain ends, but ends in and of themselves. That is just how America rolls.

[See Page 32 for author credit]



American ambassador. Now the U.S. is fighting the same people it supported there just a few years ago. America fights with al Qaeda and ISIS in Syria but against those same two groups in Iraq. Washington eventually chose to accept the overthrow of Mubarak in Egypt but now supports the restoration of a dictatorial regime with another leader. The United States calls the president of Sudan a war criminal but now fights on the same side in Yemen. When imperialism is the intention, events will never turn out as predicted.

The chaos makes sense only when the true nature of American foreign policy is acknowledged. The shifting alliances and seemingly strange bedfellows are part of the longstanding doctrine of Manifest Destiny. Manifest Destiny asserts that the United States has the right to expand its reach anywhere it wants to. The term originally referred to

**SHATTERED***Nothing is Right in the Middle East*

by Andre Vltchek

Weekend Edition April 3-5, 2015

**T**here is nothing, absolutely nothing right in the Middle East these days. There seems to be no hope left, and no fervor. All that was pure was dragged through filth. All that was great here was stolen or smashed by the outsiders. Enthusiasm had been ridiculed, then drowned, or burned to ashes, or shattered by tanks and missiles.

Corruption thrives – corruption that inundated this entire region since the early days of Western colonialism, and then was sustained through the present-day imperialist global regime.

The land of the Middle East is tired; it is crying from exhaustion. It is scarred by wars. It is dotted with oil wells and rotting armor vehicles. There are corpses everywhere; buried, turned into dust, but still present in minds of those who are alive. There are millions of corpses, tens of millions of victims, shouting in their own, voiceless way, not willing to leave anyone in peace, pointing fingers, accusing!

This land is where so much began. Europe was nothing, when Byblos and Erbil stood tall, when a fabled civilization was forming in Mesopotamia, when Aleppo, Cairo and Al-Quds could only be rivaled by the great cities of China...

And this is where greatness, progress, decency and kindness were broken and bathed in blood by the crusaders, and later by the colonialist scum.

Europeans like to say that this part of the world is now 'backward', because it never experienced renaissance, but before it was broken and humiliated; it went much farther than renaissance, following its own way and direction. A primitive and aggressive medieval Europe took most of the knowledge from here.

All this means nothing now. Almost nothing is left of the glorious past. Grand Arab cities, once exhibiting their fabulous socialist concepts, including public and free hospitals and universities, even several centuries before Karl Marx was born, are now

choking in smog, polluted, with almost nothing public remaining. Everything is privatized, and corrupt monarchs, generals and mafias are firmly in charge, from Egypt to the Gulf.

People wanted to have it exactly the opposite way. After the WWII, from North Africa to Iran, they were opting for various socialist concepts. But they were never allowed to have it their own way! Everything secular and progressive was smashed, destroyed by the Western masters of the world. And then came the second wave of semi-socialist states: Libya, Iraq and Syria, and they were bombed and destroyed as well, as nothing socialist, nothing that serves the people is ever allowed to survive in the 'third world' by Washington, London and Paris.

Millions died. Western imperialism orchestrated coups, sent brothers against brothers, bombed civilians and invaded directly, when all other means to achieve its hegemonic goals failed.

It created, it 'educated' a substantial layer of cynical servers of the Empire, the layer of new elites who are accountable to the governments in Washington, London and Paris, and treat their own people with spite and brutality. This layer is now ruling almost entire region, is fully backed by the West, and therefore there is extremely difficult to remove it.

Recently, at the "American University" in Beirut, one of the local academics told me "this region is doomed because of corruption". But where did corruption come from, I wondered aloud. One after another, secular and socialist leaders in the Arab world were removed, overthrown. The Empire put the lowest grade of thugs, the most regressive monarchs and dictators, on the thrones.

The truth is, like in Africa, the people of the Middle East lost all hope that they could ever be allowed to elect the governments that would defend them and represent their interests. They sank to bare 'survival mode', to extreme individualism, to nepotism and to cynicism. They had to, in order to survive, in order to make their families and clans to stay afloat in the world forced on them by the others.

The result is atrocious: one of the most advanced civilizations on earth was converted into one of the most regressive.

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And as a result, there is bitterness, humiliation and shame in the entire Middle East. There is an unhealthy, unnatural mood.

The thugs in Beirut, Amman, Erbil, Riyadh and Cairo are driving their shiny SUV's and latest European sedans. New and newer luxury malls are offering top designer brands for those who make huge profits from the refugee crises triggered by the Empire, or from the crude which is being extracted by mistreated migrant workers. Humiliated Southeast Asian maids, often tortured, raped and abused, are sitting on the marble floors of the shopping centers, waiting for their masters who are engaging in unbridled food and shopping orgies, spending money that they never had to work for.

Collaborators are extremely well rewarded, for serving the Empire directly, for keeping business rolling and oil wells pumping, for staffing the UN agencies and through them providing legitimacy to this grotesque state of things, for brainwashing local youth in West-sponsored schools and universities.

All this is extremely hard to observe and to stomach, unless one is on a certain 'wave', immunized and indifferent, lobotomized, resigned to this state of the world.

The Middle East is of course not the exception – it is just a part of what I often describe as the 'belt' of client states of the West; a belt that winds from Indonesia through almost the entirety of Southeast Asia, then via the sub-Continent and the Middle East, down to Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda.

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Now Saudi Arabia is bombing Yemen. It does it in order to give full support to the outgoing pro-Western regime, and in order to damage Shi'a Muslims. Recent Saudi actions, as so many previous actions by that brutal client state of Washington, will open the doors to terrorism, and will kill

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thousands of innocent people. Shockingly, that is probably part of the plan.

I am now constantly invited to talk shows and radio and television interviews, to speak on the topic. But what more could be said and added?

The horrors of Western, Israeli, Saudi and Turkish aggressions (direct and indirect) are repeating themselves, year after year, in various parts of the Middle East. People are killed, many people, even children. There are some protests, some accusations, some 'noise', but at the end, the aggressors get away with everything. It is partially because the mass media in the West is twisting all the facts, again and again, and it does it extremely successfully. And most of the Arab media outlets are taking Western propaganda directly from the source, feeding it to their own people, shamelessly.

It is also because there is no effective international legal system in place that could punish aggressors.

The UN is nowhere to be found, when the acts or real terror are committed. Once in a while it is 'concerned', it even 'condemns' aggressors. But there are never any sanctions or embargos imposed against Israel or the United States, even Saudi Arabia. It is understood that the West and its allies are 'above the law'.

This sends powerful signals to the rulers of the Middle East. The Egyptian military, which killed thousands of poor people right after it grabbed the power in a 2014 coup (which is commonly not defined as a coup, there), is now once again 'eligible for US military aid'.

Fully prostituted Egyptian elites danced on the streets of Cairo when the coup took place, as did the elites in Chile, in 1973. I saw them, when I was making a documentary film for the South American Telesur, a film on how the West derailed the Arab Spring. They were posing for my cameras, cheering and hugging me, thinking that I am one of their handlers from the US or Europe.

Recently, I found an Egyptian UN staffer staring threateningly into my face:

"A coup?" she whispered. "You call it a coup? Egyptian people don't call it a coup."

How would I dare to argue with such a respectable representative of the Egyptian nation? I noticed that the pro-Western Egyptian elites love to pose as 'Egyptian people', as those species that are far removed from their mansions and chauffeur-driven limousines.

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There are tens of millions of people displaced in this part of the world. They come from Iraq and Syria, and from Palestine. There are new refugees and decades old refugees. Now, most certainly, there will be millions of Yemeni refugees.

In Lebanon alone, 2 million Syrian refugees live all over the place, some renting huts and houses, others, if they can afford it, leasing apartments in Beirut. But the UN and local authorities do not even register hundreds of thousands of them, those in Bekaa Valley and elsewhere. Refugees told me that many of them get turned away. If there is no registration, there are no food rations, no education for children and no medical care.

I saw refugees from several Iraqi cities, in Erbil, in Iraqi administered Kurdistan. They were escaping from the ISIS, which were created by the West.

A nuclear scientist Ishmael Khalil, originally from Tikrit University, told me: "All that I had was destroyed... Americans are the main reason for this insanity – for the total destruction of Iraq. Don't just me, ask any child, and you will hear the same thing... We all used to belong to a great and proud nation. Now everything is fragmented, and ruined. We have nothing – all of us have become beggars and refugees in our own land... I escaped five months ago, after ISIS devastated my university. And we all know who is behind them: the allies of the West: Saudi Arabia, Qatar and others..."

Then I stood by what was left of a bridge, connecting the two shores of the Khazer River, just a few kilometers from the city of Mosul. ISIS blew up the bridge. A few villages around it were flattened by the US bombing. A Kurdish colonel who was showing me the area was proud to mention that he was

trained in the UK and US. It felt like total insanity – all forces united in destroying Iraq, had the same sources: the US, the NATO, and the West!

A few kilometers from the frontline were oil fields, but local people said that oil companies were just stealing their land; nothing was coming back to local communities. As the flames of the oil refineries were burning, local people were digging out roots and herbs, in order to survive.

And there was a camp for Syrian refugees, too, nearby. But refugees were screened. Only those who expressed their hatred for the President al-Assad were allowed to stay.

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Beirut is symbolic to what is happening in the entire Middle East.

Once glorious, the city now ranks near the bottom of quality of life indexes. With basically no public transportation, it is choking, polluted and jammed. Electric blackouts are common. Miserable neighborhoods are all around. Education and medical care are mostly private and unaffordable to the great majority. Dirty money propels construction of expensive condominiums, posh malls and overpriced restaurants.

Luxury cars are everywhere. Expensive condominiums, yachts, vehicles and designer clothes are the only measure of worth.

It is all thoroughly grotesque, considering that there are 2 million Syrian refugees struggling all over this tiny country. There are old Palestinian refugees in depressing camps. There are the hated and discriminated Bedouins, there are the abused Asian and African maids...

"Work is punishment", says local credo. Nobody bothers to work too much.

There is plenty of money, but most of it does not come from work. Huge amounts come from drugs, from 'accommodating refugees', from business in Africa and elsewhere, from remittances of those who work in the Gulf.

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Israel is next door. It is threatening, and periodically it attacks.

Hezbollah is the only large movement in the country that is fighting for social welfare of the people. It is also fighting Israel whenever it invades. And now, it is locked in an epic battle with ISIS. But it is on the terrorist list of the West, because it is Shi'a, and because it is too 'socialist' and too critical of the West.

In Beirut, everything goes. The rich are burning their money like paper. They ride their luxury cars and bikes without mufflers, run people over on pedestrian crossings, and never yield. They are mostly educated in the West and trilingual (Arabic, French and English). They commute back and forth to Europe as if it is a next-door village.

The need of the upper classes to show-off is all that matters in Beirut.

The poor – the majority of the Lebanese people – do not exist. One never hears about them. They are irrelevant.

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Those who rule over the Middle East are corrupt, cynical, and unpatriotic.

And they are scared, because they know that they have betrayed their own people.

The more scared they are, the more brutal are their tactics. I see them in action, in Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq and elsewhere.

Most of the left-wing movements and parties in the Middle East were destroyed, bought or derailed. Politics are about clans and religious sects and money. There is hardly any ideology left. There is no knowledge about Venezuela and Ecuador, China and Russia. The poor people love Russia, because "it stands against the West", but there is very little understanding of the world outside the Middle East and the old colonial master – Europe.

Nothing feels right in the Middle East, these days.

New reports are coming in, alleging Israel of interrogating, torturing young Palestinian children.

Yemen, that ancient land with which I fell in love with from first sight, many years ago, is bleeding and burning.

Two cradles of civilization – Iraq and Syria – are totally torn to pieces, devastated.

Libya is breaking apart, most likely beyond repair, absolutely finished as a country.

Egypt is once again squeezed in an horrendous military grip.

Shi'a people in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia are suffering great discrimination and violence.

People are dying; people are displaced, discriminated against. There is no justice, no social justice for the majority, the same scenario like in Indonesia, like in sub-Continent, like in East Africa, like everywhere where the Western imperialism and neoliberalism managed to have their way.

The West worked very hard to turn the Middle East into what it is now. It took centuries to transfigure this culturally deep and great part of the world into the horror show. But it is done!

The rest of the world should watch and learn. This should not be allowed to happen elsewhere. The "Southeast Asia – East Africa Corridor" is what the West wants to convert entire planet into. But it will not succeed, because there is Latin America, China, Russia, Iran, South African, Eritrea and other proud and determined nations standing on its way.

And the Middle East, one day, will stand up, too! The people will demand what is theirs. They will demand justice. Recently, they tried but they were smashed. I have no doubt that they will not give up – they will try again and again, until they win.

**Andre Vltchek** is a philosopher, novelist, filmmaker and investigative journalist. He covered wars and conflicts in dozens of countries. His latest books are: "*Exposing Lies Of The Empire*" and "*Fighting Against Western Imperialism*". Discussion with Noam Chomsky: *On Western Terrorism. Point of No Return* is his critically acclaimed political novel. *Oceania* – a book on Western imperialism in the South Pacific. His provocative book about Indonesia: "*Indonesia – The Archipelago of Fear*". Andre is making films for teleSUR and Press TV. After living for many years in Latin America and Oceania, Vltchek presently resides and works in East Asia and the Middle East.

## POEM: BERTOLT BRECHT

### Legend of the Unknown Soldier beneath the Arch Triumphal

Translator unknown

We came from the heights, from the depths we came  
To slay him.

We set snares to catch him: they stretched  
From Moscow to the city of Marseilles.

We stationed our cannon to keep him in range  
No matter wherever he ran  
When he saw us.

For four years we gathered;  
Our work we abandoned to stand  
In the crumbling cities; we called out,  
the one to the other,  
In so many tongues, from the heights  
to the depths we called out  
To tell where he was:  
Then in the fourth year we slew him.

Those who were there were as follows:

The ones he was specially born to see  
standing

Around at the hour of his death:  
Yes: all of us.

And

The woman who'd given him birth,  
Who spoke not a word as we led him away.

Let her womb be ripped out!  
Amen!

But when we had slain him  
We handled him so that his face was forgotten

Under our pummelling fists.  
In that way we blotted him out  
To make of him nobody's son.

So we then dug him out from under the metal.

We carried him home to our city  
And buried him under a huge stone,  
an

Arch, which we named  
The Arch Triumphal:

It weighed one thousand hundredweight, so  
The Unknown Soldier  
Would never, no matter what happened, stand up  
On Doomsday,  
Or be hauled up into the light,  
With his blotted out face before God,  
Or point at us, making us known,  
And hale us to judgement.

**WASHINGTON IS EVIL***Lithuanians Under Police State Attack and the world under Washington's attack*

By Paul Craig Roberts

**A**ccording to news reports and to this appeal by Kristoferis Voishka <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X6MDj2uvyLk> the pro-American government installed in Lithuania is persecuting Lithuanians who dissent from the anti-Russian propaganda that is driving Washington's NATO puppets to war with Russia. Unlike their puppet government, Lithuanians understand that war with Russia means that Lithuania on the front line will be utterly destroyed, a result that would not bother Washington in the least, just as Washington is undisturbed when its forces obliterate weddings, funerals, and children's soccer games.

What is Lithuania? To Washington it is a nothing.

Kristoferis Voiska runs an alternative Internet news site in Lithuania. Not long ago he interviewed me, and the interview appeared in both Lithuanian newspapers and on his Internet news program in video form. I found him to be sincere and well informed. I advised him that interviewing me would bring trouble for him, and he already was aware of that.

As I have said so many times, Americans are the worst informed people on the planet. They are unaware of the growing momentum toward war with Russia. The prostitute media throughout Europe, especially in the Baltic states and Poland, is hard at work creating in people's minds the fear of a Russian invasion. The orchestrated fear then provides the basis for the American puppet governments to beg troops and tanks and missiles from Washington, and the US military/security complex, counting its profits, is pleased to comply.

But what Russia sees is a threat, not a money-making opportunity for the US military/security complex and payoffs to the corrupt Lithuanian and Polish governments, which are increasingly perceived as neo-Nazi like the government that Washington bestowed on Ukraine.

The situation is dangerous, as I keep telling you, a message that some are too weak to accept.

In about one week I will be 76 years old. I was born in 1939 as World War II was

unfolding as the direct consequence of the Versailles Treaty that broke every promise President Woodrow Wilson made to Germany in exchange for the end of World War I.

I remember as a child Cold War nuclear attack drills in elementary school during which we would cower under our school desks. We were issued dog tags with our blood type just like the dog tags ripped by their comrades off US soldiers killed in the war movies by Germans or Japs (no longer a permissible word) and sent home to the dead GI's family.

To us it was more romantic than scary. We loved wearing the dog tags. I have no idea what happened to mine. They must be collectors' items by now.

I have seen a lot. As kids playing war—in those days you could have toy guns without being shot down by the police who are protecting us—we reveled in America's World War victories. We understood, thanks to our parents and grandparents, that the Red Army won the war against Germany, but we Americans beat the heartless Japs.

That was enough. We knew that the US was tough.

I was 14 when the Korean War broke out. We expected to win, of course, and our expectations, we thought, were proven correct when General MacArthur's amphibious landings rolled up the North Korean army. But what MacArthur and Washington had overlooked is that China and the Soviet Union were not about to accept a US victory.

Before Americans could cheer, the Third World Chinese Army rolled in and pushed the conqueror of Japan back town to the tip of South Korea. It was a humiliating defeat for American arms. In his dispute with President Truman about the conduct of the war, MacArthur, America's most famous general, was removed from command.

Washington accepted defeat in Korea and again in Viet Nam where a 500,000 US force consisting of US Army, Marines, and Special Forces was defeated by a Third World guerrilla army.

To these defeats we can add Afghanistan and Iraq. After 14 years of killing, the Taliban controls most of the

country. Jihadists have carved a new state out of parts of Syria and Iraq. The Middle East reeks of American defeat. Just like Korea. Just like Viet Nam.

Despite these facts insouciant Americans and their crazed rulers in Washington imagine that the US is a Uni-Power, the world's only superpower against whom no country can stand. Arrogance, ignorance, and hubris are leading the US into conflict with Russia and China, either of which can destroy the US with ease. And Europe as well. And the stupid bought-and-paid-for Japanese government, a total non-entity, a disgrace to the Japanese people, a collection of well-paid American puppets.

As Andrew Cockburn has documented, the US military is lost in abstractions and is no longer capable of conducting conventional warfare. Any American or NATO army sent to attack Russia will be destroyed almost instantly. Washington cannot accept the loss of prestige from defeat and would take the war nuclear. Life on earth would end.

The only conclusion that informed analysis supports is that Washington is the greatest threat to life on earth. Washington is a greater threat than global warming. Washington is a greater threat than the exhaustion of mineral energy sources. Washington is a greater threat than the rise in world and US poverty from Washington's policy to enrich the few at the expense of the many.

The only possible conclusion is that unless Washington collapses from its economic house of cards or is abandoned by its NATO puppet states, Washington will destroy life on earth.

Washington is the greatest evil that the world has ever faced. There is no good in Washington. Only evil.

**Dr. Paul Craig Roberts** was Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Economic Policy and associate editor of the Wall Street Journal. He was columnist for Business Week, Scripps Howard News Service, and Creators Syndicate. His latest books are *The Failure of Laissez Faire Capitalism and Economic Dissolution of the West* and *How America Was Lost*.

**WASHINGTON'S WAR ON RUSSIA***Only Moscow Can Stop It*

by Mike Whitney

March 18, 2015

*"In order to survive and preserve its leading role on the international stage, the US desperately needs to plunge Eurasia into chaos, (and) to cut economic ties between Europe and Asia-Pacific Region ... Russia is the only (country) within this potential zone of instability that is capable of resistance. It is the only state that is ready to confront the Americans. Undermining Russia's political will for resistance... is a vitally important task for America."*

-Nikolai Starikov, *Western Financial System Is Driving It to War*, Russia Insider

*"Our first objective is to prevent the re-emergence of a new rival, either on the territory of the former Soviet Union or elsewhere, that poses a threat on the order of that posed formerly by the Soviet Union. This is a dominant consideration underlying the new regional defense strategy and requires that we endeavor to prevent any hostile power from dominating a region whose resources would, under consolidated control, be sufficient to generate global power."*

-The Wolfowitz Doctrine, the original version of the Defense Planning Guidance, authored by Under Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, leaked to the New York Times on March 7, 1992

**T**he United States does not want a war with Russia, it simply feels that it has no choice. If the State Department hadn't initiated a coup in Ukraine to topple the elected president, Viktor Yanukovich, then the US could not have inserted itself between Russia and the EU, thus, disrupting vital trade routes which were strengthening nations on both continents. The economic integration of Asia and Europe—including plans for high-speed rail from China ("The New Silk Road") to the EU—poses a clear and present danger for the US whose share of global GDP continues to shrink and whose significance in the world economy continues to decline. For the United States to ignore this new rival (EU-Russia) would be the equivalent of throwing in the towel and accepting a

future in which the US would face a gradual but persistent erosion of its power and influence in world affairs. No one in Washington is prepared to let that happen, which is why the US launched its proxy-war in Ukraine.

The US wants to separate the continents, "prevent the emergence of a new rival", install a tollbooth between Europe and Asia, and establish itself as the guarantor of regional security. To that end, the US is rebuilding the Iron Curtain along a thousand mile stretch from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea. Tanks, armored vehicles and artillery are being sent to the region to reinforce a buffer zone around Europe in order to isolate Russia and to create a staging ground for future US aggression. Reports of heavy equipment and weapons deployment appear in the media on nearly a daily basis although the news is typically omitted in the US press. A quick review of some of the recent headlines will help readers to grasp the scale of the conflict that is cropping up below the radar:

"US, Bulgaria to hold Balkans military drills", "NATO Begins Exercises In Black Sea", "Army to send even more troops, tanks to Europe", "Poland requests greater US military presence", "U.S. Army sending armored convoy 1,100 miles through Europe", "Over 120 US tanks, armored vehicles arrive in Latvia", "US, Poland to Conduct Missile Exercise in March – Pentagon"

Get the picture? There's a war going on, a war between the United States and Russia.

Notice how most of the headlines emphasize US involvement, not NATO. In other words, the provocations against Russia originate from Washington not Europe. This is an important point. The EU has supported US-led economic sanctions, but it's not nearly as supportive of the military build up along the perimeter. That's Washington's idea and the cost is borne by the US alone. Naturally, moving tanks, armored vehicles and artillery around the world is an expensive project, but the US is more than willing to make the sacrifice if it helps to achieve its objectives.

And what are Washington's objectives?

Interestingly, even political analysts on the far right seem to agree about that point. For example, check out this quote from STRATFOR CEO George Friedman who summed it up in a recent presentation he delivered at The Chicago Council on Foreign Affairs. He said:

"The primordial interest of the United States, over which for centuries we have fought wars—the First, the Second and Cold Wars—has been the relationship between Germany and Russia, because united there, they're the only force that could threaten us. And to make sure that that doesn't happen." ... George Friedman at The Chicago Council on Foreign Affairs, Time 1:40 to 1:57)

Bingo. Ukraine has nothing to do with sovereignty, democracy or (alleged) Russian aggression. That's all propaganda. It's about power. It's about imperial expansion. It's about spheres of influence. It's about staving off irreversible economic decline. It's all part of the smash-mouth, scorched earth, take-no-prisoners geopolitical world in which we live, not the fake Disneyworld created by the western media. The US State Department and CIA toppled the elected-government in Ukraine and ordered the new junta regime to launch a desperate war of annihilation against its own people in the East, because, well, because they felt they had no other option. Had Putin's ambitious plan to create a free trade zone between Lisbon to Vladivostok gone forward, then where would that leave the United States? Out in the cold, that's where. The US would become an isolated island of dwindling significance whose massive account deficits and ballooning national debt would pave the way for years of brutal restructuring, declining standards of living, runaway inflation and burgeoning social unrest. Does anyone really believe that Washington would let that to happen when it has a "brand-spanking" trillion dollar war machine at its disposal?

Heck, no. Besides, Washington believes it has a historic right to rule the world, which is what one would expect when the sense of entitlement and hubris reach their terminal phase. Now check

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out this clip from an article by economist Jack Rasmus at CounterPunch:

*"Behind the sanctions is the USA objective of driving Russia out of the European economy. Europe was becoming too integrated and dependent on Russia. Not only its gas and raw materials, but trade relations and money capital flows were deepening on many fronts between Russia and Europe in general prior to the Ukraine crisis that has provided the cover for the introduction of the sanctions. Russia's growing economic integration with Europe threatened the long term economic interests of US capitalists. Strategically, the US precipitated coup in the Ukraine can be viewed, therefore as a means by which to provoke Russian military intervention, i.e. a necessary event in order to deepen and expand economic sanctions that would ultimately sever the growing economic ties between Europe and Russia long term. That severance in turn would not only ensure US economic interests remain dominant in Europe, but would also open up new opportunities for profit making for US interests in Europe and Ukraine as well..."*

*When the rules of the competition game between capitalists break down altogether, the result is war—i.e. the ultimate form of inter-capitalist competition." (The Global Currency Wars, Jack Rasmus, CounterPunch)*

See? Analysts on the right and left agree. Ukraine has nothing to do with sovereignty, democracy or Russian aggression. It's plain-old cutthroat geopolitics, where the last man left standing, wins.

The United States cannot allow Russia reap the benefits of its own vast resources. Oh, no. It has to be chastised, it has to be bullied, it has to be sanctioned, isolated, threatened and intimidated. That's how the system really works. The free market stuff is just horsecrap for the sheeple.

Russia is going to have to deal with chaotic, fratricidal wars on its borders and color-coded regime change turbulence in its capital. It will have to withstand reprisals from its trading partners, attacks on its currency and plots to eviscerate its (oil) revenues. The

US will do everything in its power to poison the well, to demonize Putin, to turn Brussels against Moscow, and to sabotage the Russian economy.

Divide and conquer, that's the ticket. Keep them at each others throats at all times. Sunni vs Shia, one ethnic Ukrainian vs the other, Russians vs Europeans. That's Washington's plan, and it's a plan that never fails.

US powerbrokers are convinced that America's economic slide can only be arrested by staking a claim in Central Asia, dismembering Russia, encircling China, and quashing all plans for an economically-integrated EU-Asia. Washington is determined to prevail in this existential conflict, to assert its hegemonic control over the two continents, and to preserve its position as the world's only superpower.

Only Russia can stop the United States and we believe it will.

**Mike Whitney** lives in Washington state. He is a contributor to *Hopeless: Barack Obama and the Politics of Illusion* (AK Press). *Hopeless* is also available in a Kindle edition. He can be reached at [fergiewhitney@msn.com](mailto:fergiewhitney@msn.com).

## SPY KIDS

*'Pernicious' BBC children's show collaborates with MI5*

Published: January 15, 2015

**P**opular BBC children's television show Blue Peter will team up with intelligence agency MI5 to launch a competition aimed at finding three fledgling spies.

Codenamed "Project Petra," next month's competition will see eight children attend a special spy school where they will learn what it takes to become intelligence agents.

They will be tested on key observational and analytical skills over a weekend of "challenges."

Eight applicants will then be whittled down to the three "CBBC Intelligence Officers," who will go on an unprecedented tour of MI5's headquarters in London.

It will be the first time TV cameras have ever been allowed inside the usually impenetrable, top-secret building.

*"We're aware that children are fascinated by the mysterious world of*

*intelligence and we're thrilled to be in a position to feed their passion for intrigue and adventure with this unique proposition,"* said CBBC controller Chery Taylor.

Far from celebrating the collaboration, however, investigative journalist Tony Gosling described the teaming up of MI5 and a BBC children's show as "pernicious."

Speaking to RT, he said: *"They realize they are losing the battle for the hearts and minds of the younger generation because of the Snowden revelations."*

*"This is pernicious, the idea that our young people have to be won over by the security state,"* he said.

He added the main problem with the intelligence services is the lack of proper government oversight, making them effectively above the law.

Gosling also said such close cooperation between MI5 and BBC is disconcerting.

*"There's a whole history of the incursion of intelligence services into the BBC,"* he said.

*"The reason for that is pretty simple, because the biggest threat to the intelligence services is that the BBC might do an investigation into them."*

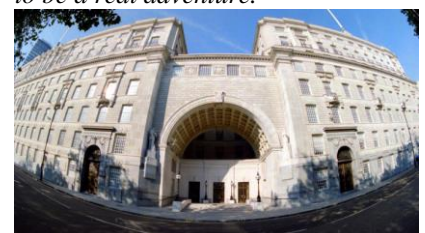
However, Blue Peter editor Ewan Vinnicombe said Project Petra was an "exciting" way to educate children.

*"We're always looking for new ways to help kids understand the world around them and join in with our content, and this is a brilliant example of how we can do this on the show,"* he said.

Bestselling children's author Anthony Horowitz will sit on a panel of "expert" judges overseeing the competition.

*"Children are fascinated by the world of spies and secret intelligence and so, for that matter, am I,"* Horowitz said.

*"I'm really thrilled to have been invited to join this top-secret panel – it's going to be a real adventure."*



The MI5 building, London (Image [mi5.gov.uk](http://mi5.gov.uk))

**HOWLING IN DONETSK***Anger and Unbounded Contempt*by **Pepe Escobar**

April 01, 2015

**I**'ve just been to the struggling Donetsk People's Republic. Now I'm back in the splendid arrogance and insolence of NATOstan.

Quite a few people – in Donbass, in Moscow, and now in Europe – have asked me what struck me most about this visit.

I could start by paraphrasing Allen Ginsberg in *Howl* – “I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness.”

But these were the Cold War mid-1950s. Now we're in early 21st century Cold War 2.0.

Thus what I saw were the ghastly side effects of the worst minds of my – and a subsequent – generation corroded by (war) madness.

I saw refugees on the Russian side of the border, mostly your average middle-class European family whose kids, when they first came to the shelter, would duck under tables when they heard a plane in the sky.

I saw the Dylan of Donetsk holed up in his lonely room in a veterans' home turned refugee shelter fighting the blues and the hopelessness by singing songs of love and heroism.

I saw whole families holed up in fully decorated Soviet-era bomb shelters too afraid to go out even by daylight, traumatized by the bombings orchestrated by Kiev's “anti-terrorist operations”.

I saw a modern, hard-working industrial city at least half-empty and partially destroyed but not bent, able to survive by their guts and guile with a little help from Russian humanitarian convoys.

I saw beautiful girls hangin' out by Lenin's statue in a central square lamenting their only shot at fun was family parties in each other's houses because nightlife was dead and “we're at war”.

I saw virtually the whole neighborhood of Oktyabrski near the airport bombed out like Grozny and practically deserted except for a few lonely babushkas with

nowhere to go and too proud to relinquish their family photos of World War II heroes.

I saw checkpoints like I was back in Baghdad during the Petraeus surge.

I saw the main trauma doctor at the key Donetsk hospital confirm there has been no Red Cross and no international humanitarian help to the people of Donetsk.

I saw Stanislava, one of DPR's finest and an expert sniper, in charge of our security, cry when she laid a flower on the ground of a fierce battle in which her squad was under heavy fire, with twenty seriously wounded and one dead, and she was hit by shrapnel and survived.

I saw orthodox churches fully destroyed by Kiev's bombing.

I saw the Russian flag still on top of the anti-Maidan building which is now the House of Government of the DPR.

I saw the gleaming Donbass arena, the home of Shaktar Donetsk and a UFO in a war-torn city, deserted and without a single soul in the fan area.

I saw Donetsk's railway station bombed by Kiev's goons.

I saw a homeless man screaming “Robert Plant!” and “Jimmy Page!” as I found out he was still in love with Led Zeppelin and kept his vinyl copies.

I saw a row of books which never surrendered behind the cracked windows of bombed out Oktyabrski.

I saw the fresh graves where the DPR buries their resistance heroes.

I saw the top of the hill at Saur-mogila which the DPR resistance lost and then reconquered, with a lone red-white-blue flag now waving in the wind.

I saw the Superman rising from the destruction at Saur-mogila – the fallen statue in a monument to World War II heroes, which seventy years ago was fighting fascism and now has been hit, but not destroyed, by fascists.

I saw the Debaltsevo cauldron in the distance and then I could fully appreciate, geographically, how DPR tactics surrounded and squeezed the demoralized Kiev fighters.

I saw the DPR's military practicing their drills by the roadside from Donetsk to Lugansk.

I saw the DPR's Foreign Minister hopeful there would be a political solution instead of war while admitting personally he dreams of a DPR as an independent nation.

I saw two badass Cossack commanders tell me in a horse-breeding farm in holy Cossack land that the real war has not even started.

I did not see the totally destroyed Donetsk airport because the DPR's military were too concerned about our safety and would not grant us a permit while the airport was being hit – in defiance of Minsk 2; but I saw the destruction and the pile of Ukrainian army bodies on the mobile phone of a Serbian DPR resistance fighter.

I did not see, as Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe international observers also didn't, the rows and rows of Russian tanks and soldiers that the current Dr. Strangelove in charge of NATO, General Breedhate, sees everyday in his exalted dreams invading Ukraine over and over again.

And I did not see the arrogance, the ignorance, the shamelessness and the lies distorting those manicured faces in Kiev, Washington and Brussels while they insist, over and over again, that the entire population of Donbass, traumatized babushkas and children of all ages included, are nothing but “terra-rists”.

After all, they are Western “civilization”-enabled cowards who would never dare to show their manicured faces to the people of Donbass.

So this is my gift to them.

Just a howl of anger and unbounded contempt.

**Pepe Escobar** is the author of *Globalistan: How the Globalized World is Dissolving into Liquid War* (Nimble Books, 2007), *Red Zone Blues: a snapshot of Baghdad during the surge* and *Obama does Globalistan* (Nimble Books, 2009). His latest book is *Empire of Chaos*. He may be reached at [pepeasia@yahoo.com](mailto:pepeasia@yahoo.com).

This piece first appeared in Asia Times.

*One is left with the horrible feeling now that war settles nothing; that to win a war is as disastrous as to lose one.*

~Agatha Christie

**ANZAC DAY FOOTY MYTHS**

April 24, 2012

*How Anzac Day footy myths fail to tell the whole truth*

By Ian Syson

**T**o write about sport and war is to risk censure: Why bring sport into it? Why bring war into it? Why combine the two? Moreover, in trying to balance personal attitudes towards war and military institutions with feelings of sympathy for the individuals and families killed and maimed by war, writers invite contradiction and ambiguity into their argument. The writer's taste for one can turn sour because of the lack of appetite for the other. So why bother to struggle with this dilemma?

Like it or not, in contemporary Australia, in late April, it becomes necessary, if not mandatory, to contemplate sport and war. Our leading football codes put the connection front and centre. The AFL and the NRL both conduct highly publicised and highly popular Anzac Day matches. It's a new tradition to which supporters of both codes have been drawn in large numbers. Since 1995 Collingwood and Essendon have battled for Anzac supremacy at the MCG. St George and the Roosters commemorate the day in the NRL. In recent years a cross-Tasman NRL game between Melbourne Storm and New Zealand Warriors has also been added to the Anzac Day mix.

And there's something to be said for it. Both codes provided a great number of troops who served at Gallipoli and across Europe, many of whom were never to return. Collingwood lost six players, Essendon seven. So these clubs' own histories add to the solemnity of Anzac commemorations.

Yet something is missing in these memorialisations. Many things in fact. Whole segments of a bloody and divided story are left out of the tale we are usually told.

We were not a nation united in support of Britain's prosecution of the First World War. Many Australians were set against it. The voting patterns in the conscription referenda, first in 1916 (the 'Yes' vote lost narrowly) and again in 1917 ('Yes' lost by a wider margin) make that clear.

Opponents to the war came from many quarters. Catholics, republicans, the Irish, socialists, unionists and pacifists all had reason to be anti-war and anti-conscription. And they came together as a united force. The ANZAC Day Commemoration Committee of Queensland web site claims:

One reason why so many opposed conscription was that it provided a focus for a lot of different points of view about the war. Some people opposed the war; others were opposed to conscription as a principle; others were saying that they were hurt by the economic situation of the war, and were protesting against that; still others were voting to protect unionism; others were protesting at the British treatment of the rebels in Ireland. Normally these people might not have agreed with each other on many things, but they all agreed on the conscription question, and the issue gave them all a chance to express their opposition.

As Melbourne's dominant sporting code, Australian Rules football reflected that diversity and opposition. One of the leading figures in the anti-conscription movement, Cardinal Daniel Mannix, happened to be a cultural and spiritual powerbroker within the Irish-Catholic community of Collingwood and his opinions and instructions carried great weight for many supporters of the Collingwood Football Club. While Mannix's influence was counterbalanced by Collingwood Football Club patron, John Wren's support for conscription, this tension underlines the point that there was little collective sense of unity of purpose in relation to the war.

In a fascinating piece of writing in 1916, ostensibly a letter to Oriel (writer of 'The Passing Show' column in the Argus), a strange and ambiguous attitude to the war is taken by a Victorian 'sport'. The correspondent answers the frequent calls for footballers and barrackers to give the game away and join up to support their brothers in the trenches.

Abandon football! Give up our glorious winter pastime, which affords us the very best opportunity of exercising our lungs, in shouting objurgations at our brave boys' opponents over the fence! No, no; the

proposal is likewise 'over the fence.' Can we forego the intellect-stimulating pleasure of instructing the umpire in the rules which he ought to know but doesn't? You ask us to go to the war; but if we did who would advise Dido Denver, that bonzer 'wing' man, as to his play? Dido should go too, you say? Well, that's the limit. Who's to feed the forwards if Dido goes? Unpatriotic? Who's unpatriotic? You should hear us sitting at the tailboard of the van singing 'Australia Will Be There.'

No, mister; if the Germans come here they'll soon have the sense to know that the Australian game is the best – better than all your Rugby, or Soccer, and all those. Supposing all the footballers went to the war, what would become of the old game? Supposing all the 'barrackers' went, the sport would go bung just the same. The crowd makes the 'gate,' and the 'gate' makes the game. What you ask is out of the question; but we'll tell you what we'll do. Appoint a German as umpire, and we'll show you what loyal Australians we are. We'll call him everything we can lay our tongue to, and deal with him after the match. There's a fair dinkum offer. We're sports, we are. (22 January 1916)

Bristling away behind the attempts at humour and the wanting to appear good-natured might be a sarcastic anger that questions why we are fighting in this war. Perhaps it also puts the suggestion that this war would best be fought by the exponents of "Rugby, or Soccer", the Poms. On the other hand, maybe the piece is simply an ironic 'white feather' attack on those who refused to enlist. One way or the other, it points to a social resentment that runs deep.

The problem of the contemporary remembering of ANZAC is that the narrative it drives is wrong, one of an already united nation forging its identity on a Turkish beach. When we see the Collingwood and Essendon players lining up before the clash we are led to see them in unity, as different factions of one overarching national brotherhood. We are encouraged to believe in a myth.

A mature and sophisticated Anzac Day footy narrative would see the teams as  
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representing divergent positions across the Catholic/Protestant, republican/imperial divides. It would tell stories of both protest and loyalty. We would be asked as viewers/spectators to reflect on how diverse and antagonistic communities came to see themselves as united (or not) through the sacrifices made in war. It might even encourage the radical idea that our presently diverse and divided communities are similarly capable of establishing symbols of unity.

Nowhere does the myth as it stands acknowledge that at the time of the Gallipoli landing many Collingwood supporters (aligning themselves with Cardinal Mannix) would have been very strongly against what they saw as the British imperialist war. Nor does the myth reveal the fact that the AIF (Australian Imperial Force) was largely made up of protestant soldiers. The embarkation lists in 1914-15 indicate that a small percentage were Catholic. In the three nominal rolls I looked at around 12 per cent of the initial enlistments were Catholics. Maybe I got a bad sample. But I don't think so.

Another point lost in the telling of Anzac is that between 20 and 25 per cent of troops in the very first Australian troop ships were British born, many of them recently arrived migrants. (Now revisit a crucial vehicle in the re-building of the legend, Peter Weir's Gallipoli and see if the soldiers' accents reflect that statistic.) The first to fall at Gallipoli (from the 11th Battalion) were in about equal measure Australian and non-Australian born.

If it is important to commemorate Anzac Day then it is important that we remember it well and not just via slick commercialised performances. We should remember it in as much detail as we are able. We need to remember who was there, who wasn't, why they were there and why many refused. Until the commemorations do this they will remain evasive moments of myth-making. We need to remember all, or nothing.

Lest we forget, indeed.

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## ERIC BOGLE: ANZAC DAY

*Eric Bogle's Gallipoli anti-war song continues to resonate despite Anzac Day's surge in popularity*

Roy Eccleston 29 March 2015

**Interview with Scottish-born folk singer-songwriter Eric Bogle, who in 1971, wrote "And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda," a song about a soldier wounded at the Battle of Gallipoli.**

**O**n Anzac Day in 1971 a Scottish migrant keen on cigarettes, his own opinions, and the idea of swapping an accounting career for the life of the protest singer, watched his first commemorative march slowly work its way up the main street in Canberra.

There wasn't a lot of interest in Anzac Day parades back then. For some people, especially the young, it was a lightning rod for anti-war protests. For many others, it was an anachronism. For Eric Bogle, then in his early 30s, it was the inspiration for what would become one of Australia's great songs.

Despite growing up in Scotland, Bogle knew quite a bit about Australia's war history. Two great uncles had died in World War I. He'd read about Gallipoli, about Simpson and his donkey, about Lone Pine. So when he arrived in Australia in 1969 the part-time folk singer was keen to get involved in the moratorium movement at the capital's home of peace and free love, the Australian National University.

But Bogle, who admits to being a bit of a sucker for the pomp and polished brass of a military parade, didn't feel any anger at the soldiers as they passed by that day. He was upset with the politicians who sent them to fight. "I thought it was an immoral war, as most Australians did," he recalls in his thoughtful, soft and still-Scottish brogue as we sit in his Adelaide study, on a bright day more than 40 years later.

"Then, I can assure you, Anzac Day – not just in Canberra but everywhere – was not as well attended or accepted as it is now. And I was watching the parade come past me in Northbourne Ave in Canberra and one of the bands was playing Waltzing Matilda as it passed, you know.

"And there were a couple of old diggers behind it, World War II boys, and then some World War I boys in cars or jeeps behind them. So I thought, the time is right for an anti-war song. But I didn't set it in Vietnam because even at the time, with Aussie boys dying there, most Australians couldn't point to the f\*\*\*ing place on a map. They had no idea where it was.

"So I thought, I'll set the song in Gallipoli, because it doesn't matter what war you're writing about – the end result is exactly the bloody same: lots of dead young blokes."

With centenary commemorations about to begin for the beginning of World War I, and then next year, the Gallipoli landing, Australians are about to be inundated with stories about those dead young blokes. Sixty thousand Australian men were killed in the Great War. Imagine the new Adelaide Oval filled with the dead, and you are still not there.

A lot has changed since Bogle watched his first Anzac Day parade.

For one thing, his trademark folk-singer beard has turned grey. The protest singer has also found himself taking a more nuanced view of the world – he still gets angry at Tony Abbott and Bill Shorten, but he is less certain he always knows the answer to the world's problems.

Another change has been our perception of Anzac Day. Now, Bogle is worried that the message of his song – that war is an obscenity – has been lost in the years since it was written, somehow twisted into the jingoism that he was railing against.

When he wrote the lyrics, he described World War I as a "forgotten war" and suggested Anzac Day seemed likely to fade with the old soldiers. Instead, to Bogle's dismay, it has surged in popularity.

Australia's military expeditions from the 1990s onwards put new troops into the parade, but that hasn't been the only boost. The day itself has become a powerful national touchstone in a way Australia Day hasn't managed. And, far from forgotten, the Great War is back in the spotlight.

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Yet despite this – or maybe because of it – Bogle’s anti-war song continues to resonate. In Australian terms, only John Schumann’s *I was Only 19* rivals it for emotional force.

Matilda tells the story of one man’s Gallipoli horror, contrasting the nationalistic jingoism that draws this swaggie from the bush and aboard a troop ship, with the bloody reality of war and the cold reception and wiser reflections on his return. It uses Banjo Paterson’s song to first evoke Aussie innocence, then government manipulation and warmongering, and finally sadness and regret.

So, wouldn’t it be a grand idea for Bogle to tune his guitar for the 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli landings, to sing that song, and strike a powerful and unmistakably Aussie note, at the place where it all happened?

For Bogle, getting to the end of his career, it’s a question that comes at an interesting time. The invitations are certainly there. But he is having none of it. It is plainly wrong to play songs like his at such occasions, he says. He already knocked on the head an idea to sing at the dawn service in Adelaide. “I think it’s distracting,” he says. “It takes the focus off why people are there.”

And there’s another thing. Bogle also doesn’t think his own song has the authenticity that some want to give it. Not like the works of the World War I poets he keeps in a box in his bedroom. “In one line, most of them have written far better stuff than I’m ever capable of,” he says.

“I get embarrassed when people seem to think what I write A, has any real quality and B, has any real truth. I don’t believe it has. Besides these people, the ones who were there... I’m a real pale cypher, me.”

Bogle worries that the commemoration of the conflict will be an overblown media event. “I mean Gallipoli itself, I’ve never been there – and if I ever do go there it certainly won’t be on Anzac Day,” he says.

Never been to Gallipoli? That seems extraordinary. Why not?

Bogle lets out a big, slow sigh.

“Confronted with the reality I’m not sure I could have lived with the song,” he says.

“It’s cowardice more than anything else. I thought maybe the ghosts would rise up and say, ‘It’s a shit song, why don’t you f\*\*k off and write something decent?’”

Some singers have many hits, some songwriters produce multiple award winners. I’ve liked Bogle’s music for decades, and long ago as a police reporter in Melbourne made many good contacts among Victoria’s detectives singing his songs in the pub on boozy Friday nights. They’re not everyone’s cup of tea. But folk songs have power, especially at an emotional level.

Bogle’s good at hitting that mark.

As he puts it, he doesn’t write for people to dance to, or make love to; he writes to get to the heart. And it’s been his war songs especially – another is the *Green Fields of France* – that do it best.

But he’s had just one really well-known success (“one is more than most get” he points out) and, he insists, never any real commercial good fortune.

So his tough assessment of Matilda seems odd. It continues to win him invitations all over the world. It was a hit in Ireland (for other singers) and is still recorded five or six times a year. It’s been a question for *Trivial Pursuit* and *Sale of the Century*, and made the *Australasian Performing Right Association’s* list of the best 30 Australian songs of the past 75 years.

Yet Bogle, as he sits there occasionally puffing on his electronic cigarette, seems a bit uncomfortable with the song. Matilda was only the sixth or seventh he ever wrote. It was originally eight verses, although he can’t remember exactly what they were, and went for way too long at 12 minutes.

Some lines weren’t completely accurate either, although he never pretended to be writing a history – there weren’t tin hats in 1915, nor were the Australians the ones to land at Suvla Bay.

He insists he is not uncomfortable with it, though.

“Uncomfortable with the way it’s accepted and used perhaps,” he says.

“But there is a danger, and I’ve been accused of it, of encouraging Anzac jingoism by my songs.

“One bloke accused me of starting the whole f\*\*\*ing bullshit actually. He reckons – as I did – that Anzac Day was on its way out and then people like me started ‘romanticising’ – these are his words, not mine – and ‘popularising’ it.

“I said ‘You’ve got to be joking – I mean accuse Channel 7 or Nine or Ten, or even the ABC and the media, but I just wrote a song mate’. But there is some truth there. Because the war was 100 years ago, there is a strong move... to mythologise and romanticise it.”

All of this is adding to Bogle’s questioning of whether it is time he took a final bow.

He and wife Carmel – they have been together since those Canberra days – are now winding back their lives. Editing it, he says.

On his blog recently, Bogle told readers he was contemplating packing it all in. He is, after all, due to turn 70 in September.

“It’s a natural thing, as you grow older you try to simplify your life,” he explains, sitting in the study of the eastern suburbs home the couple recently moved to.

“Too many people hang on to the things through habit rather than conviction or feeling of love and commitment.”

That means he’s got rid of things like his shack on the Murray, and his lifetime smoking habit. Now, might it also see him finish his career? He’s a protest singer after all. Now he’s older, he tends to see the other side more.

“I’m not as impatient or intolerant as I used to be,” he confesses. “It takes me longer to figure out what to say now because I see all different sides I never saw before. But I don’t want to sit on the fence. I used to think my truth was Truth with a capital T, now I know my truth is different to other people’s truth.”

He says Australians are pretty apathetic when it comes to social issues, anyway. And even when they have got out on the streets to oppose the government in big numbers, as they did in the case of

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the Iraq War in 2003, nothing changed.

“So you keep fooling yourself you’re living in a democracy where things can change,” he says, “but that’s not the case.”

Maybe he should write protests songs about getting old then?

US singer Glenn Campbell’s best work in years came when he sang about his decline through ageing. Too close to the bone, Bogle thinks.

“Society needs angry young men, they don’t need angry old farts like me. We’re an embarrassment.”

Bogle long ago saw what happens to singers who pass their use-by date – and he hasn’t forgotten.

“My very first gig, professionally, was in the Western Suburbs Aussie Rules football club in Sydney in 1980. And I shared the bill with a fellow called Buster Noble... a Vaudevillian.

“He was wonderful. He had a checked suit, the revolving bow tie, and played the banjo/ukulele and sang music hall stuff. Tap danced. He was a classic of his type. His time was well over.

“We shared the bill. Me playing the Band Played Waltzing Matilda, him singing When I’m Cleaning Windows. And the audience, such as it was, gave him a real hard time. They gave me a hard time as well, but not as much as poor Buster.”

Going home that night, Carmel was very quiet.

“She’d been hugely supportive... I used to be an accountant earning good money and then I became a musician...,” Bogle says. “She said promise me you’ll go, promise me you won’t hang on, you won’t keep going along after you should stop, and make a fool of yourself in front of total strangers.

“And that was a big fear, that I’d outstay my welcome, and I’d just keep going through habit, but not through conviction.

“And I think I’ve reached that stage now, where I’ve got to question whether what I do is worth doing. Is it worth doing?”

The paradox is that he could get quite a lot of work now he’s relevant again

thanks to the centenary – and “that’s part of why I’m questioning it.”

“I feel a bit guilty sometimes that people seem to think I’m some sort of authentic voice,” he says. “I’m a sympathetic voice, but there’s no way I could write about wars. I wasn’t there.”

It’s a weight, clearly. “I get asked to a lot of things... but I sometimes wonder why I should be there. This year, I lied to everybody. I got invitations to Tasmania, and said ‘No I’ll be in Victoria’, and invitation from Victoria and said ‘No I’ll be in South Australia’.”

So what did you do on Anzac Day? “I sat here and kept out of the f\*\*\*in’ way.”

For 2015 he has four or five different invitations... “I’ve delayed a couple of them. I will do something for them. But not on Anzac Day.”

He is disappointed the day hasn’t faded away as the last lines of his song once forecast. That’s where he wasn’t clear, he says now. He didn’t mean Anzac Day would be gone once the Gallipoli veterans died, but that it would happen in a future time when we no longer fought wars.

“It’s a careless song, that’s one of the reasons I get embarrassed,” Bogle says. “I was still learning my craft. What I meant at the end... I was just expressing a hope or belief, I can’t remember which, that one day Anzac Day would just be a footnote in history.”

It will happen, he still believes, and points to Britain’s now-forgotten Waterloo Day as an example of a once great commemoration no longer honoured.

“We need a national day,” he agrees. “And we should always honour and remember all those who died in our name. But if we are still defining ourselves as a nation in a hundred years’ time largely by the blood shed and the sacrifices made by our servicemen and women, then we haven’t matured much as a nation.”

Source: [adelaidenow.com.au](http://adelaidenow.com.au)

“The number of people killed by the sanctions in Iraq is greater than the total number of people killed by all weapons of mass destruction in all of history.” — Noam Chomsky

*“Palestine belongs to the Arabs in the same sense that England belongs to the English or France to the French. It is wrong and inhuman to impose the Jews on the Arabs... Surely it would be a crime against humanity to reduce the proud Arabs so that Palestine can be restored to the Jews partly or wholly as their national home”*  
— Mahatma Gandhi

#### THE UNITED FRUIT CO.

When the trumpet sounded, it was all prepared on the earth, the Jehovah parcelled out the earth to Coca Cola, Inc., Anaconda, Ford Motors, and other entities: The Fruit Company, Inc. reserved for itself the most succulent, the central coast of my own land, the delicate waist of America. It rechristened its territories as the ‘Banana Republics’ and over the sleeping dead, over the restless heroes who brought about the greatness, the liberty and the flags, it established the comic opera: abolished the independencies, presented crowns of Caesar, unsheathed envy, attracted the dictatorship of the flies, Trujillo flies, Tacho flies, Carias flies, Martines flies, Ubico flies, damp flies of modest blood and marmalade, drunken flies who zoom over the ordinary graves, circus flies, wise flies well trained in tyranny.

Among the blood-thirsty flies the Fruit Company lands its ships, taking off the coffee and the fruit; the treasure of our submerged territories flow as though on plates into the ships.

Meanwhile Indians are falling into the sugared chasms of the harbours, wrapped for burials in the mist of the dawn: a body rolls, a thing that has no name, a fallen cipher, a cluster of the dead fruit thrown down on the dump.

**Pablo Neruda**





## POETRY

### HEROES OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

They were heroes  
who fought in the mud, there flowed their warm blood  
midst the noise and the horror and slaughter,  
were courageous and game, but would not want the same  
for their own grandson or granddaughter.

'Adventure for all' had come out the call,  
and the war would be finished up fast,  
and they'd see the world. Instead they were hurled  
into war that was destined to last.

They fought in the sand, and outposts were manned,  
And faced perils of Gallipoli Cove.  
For country and king, empire glory they'd bring  
and for freedom they valiantly strove.

For freedom they fought, believing they ought.  
They gave up their glorious youth.  
They felt they had to go, but they all didn't know,  
War's no adventure, that's truth.

England entered the war, as they had a pact for  
helping a neutral country,  
but underlying were reasons from so many seasons,  
war that should not have been, began easily.

What had happened  
Empires rivalled for trade, and fortunes were made.  
An arms race had gone on for some years.  
For colonies they vied, for resources they eyed,  
Then Austria taking Bosnia raised fears.

And so for protection and maybe some flexion  
of muscle when need was to be strong,  
to fight alongside, teams of allies were tied  
by pacts to each empire's throng.

Came the crisis -  
A Serb shot their Duke, and Austria's rebuke?  
They made war on the Serbian nation.  
Then treaties applied, and allied countries were tied  
to join the war's cruel duration.

Our men had so many dead, sometimes not well led,  
and their bravery we honour today.  
And sinners or saints, they made few complaints,  
cared for mates till the end of the fray.

Bound to the cause, they fought without pause,  
But later, even with memories waned,  
Perhaps after some years, with a couple of beers,  
to each other said, "Never again."  
But they *were* heroes, they were heroes, they were heroes.

Anita Reed ©

### THE WASTE OF WAR

It's the waste of war, the waste of war,  
the incredible, terrible waste...of war!

It's the billions of dollars for missiles and guns,  
money to make sure the war will still run.  
It's the effort expended by generals and men  
urged by the will of the powerful again.

It's some leaders and media don't tell the whole story,  
just rhetoric that 'our' side has right and the glory,  
ignoring the suffering, the starving, the weak,  
babies and children, and youth at their peak.

It's buildings made rubble, lives laid waste by hate,  
by greed and for power, by choice not by fate.  
It's the lives that are ruined forever by war,  
lost limbs, hurt souls, nightmares evermore.

The waste of war!

What if they used all that energy and cash  
to make the world better instead of this clash  
of ruin, destruction and negative things,  
but used to shape futures from which hope will spring.

Not the waste of war, the waste of war,  
not the incredible, terrible waste of war!

Anita Reed, performance poet

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### The Answer Is No

by Jon Taylor

March 1st, 2015

Is a videotaped beheading  
More barbaric than a double-tap  
Signature drone strike on a wedding  
Or funeral gathering?

Is burning prisoner alive  
More barbaric than running  
A secret and world-wide gulag  
Of torture chambers?

Is the execution of non-believers  
More barbaric than the assassination  
By a government of its own citizens  
Without due process of law?

Is blowing up cultural monuments  
More barbaric than enforcing sanctions  
That deprive millions of food and medicine  
And clean drinking water?

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**EARLIER WARS**By **Peter Stanley**

25 April 2014

**O**n Anzac Day, Australia remembers its war dead, with one tragic exception. Australia is apparently disinclined to acknowledge the fact or the importance of frontier conflicts. What's the nexus between the day on which Australians (and New Zealanders) acknowledge what past wars have cost and the intermittent wars fought across the Australian continent as settlement advanced from 1788?

There's no question now that conflict occurred. Soldiers, police and settlers fought Indigenous inhabitants as the frontier of occupation advanced during the colonial period and into the early 20th century. At the time (as Henry Reynolds shows in his recent book *Forgotten War*) colonists had no difficulty owning up to the fact that it was the war they had to have if they were also to have the land.

Yet the fact of conflict was largely forgotten or denied from the late colonial period up to our lifetimes (except for, say, the journalist Clive Turnbull, whose *Black War* appeared in 1948).

From about the mid-1970s a string of historians documented the fact, spread and impact of frontier conflicts. Humphrey McQueen, Geoffrey Blainey, Noel Loos, Henry Reynolds and a host of authors writing about regions and peoples have for over 30 years built up a credible, detailed and often shocking picture of the extent of the wars that claimed the land for the invaders.

It's not a noble or edifying story, but there's now no doubt it happened. For me it was the acceptance by two conservative, traditional military historians, Jeff Grey and John Coates (who included frontier conflicts in their *Military History of Australia* and *Atlas of Australia's Wars* respectively) that signalled the historiographical battle was over.

**Forgetting our own first war**

But what do we do with that acceptance? The answer, so far, is not much. On the eve of the biggest year of commemoration in Australia's history, when the story of the nation's part in the Great War will be retold over and over in

books and on screens big and small, Australia seems unable to incorporate the story of its first war – the war for possession of the continent – into its military history.

It's not a problem for the historians, regardless of political or ideological hue. But the nation's pre-eminent military historical institution, the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, has been unwilling to accept that those who fought for Australia could have done so naked with spears as well as in khaki with Lee-Enfields.

The War Memorial has for about 30 years declined to accept that "Australian military history" – which it is charged with conveying and interpreting – includes the conflicts that occurred all over Australia for over a century. These cost the lives of about 30,000 people – most of them Indigenous, of course.

Successive directors of the War Memorial have claimed – without foundation – that its governing act only allows it to deal with "overseas conflicts" or with "wars Australia has fought as a nation". That ignores the fact that its galleries present the bombing of Darwin and wars fought by Australia's colonial armies. It could deal with conflicts fought by, say, British military mounted police raised in Sydney. It continues to choose not to.

That's the connection between Anzac Day and the recognition of frontier conflicts. The power of the idea of Anzac in the national imagination – which the coming year can only enhance – explains why Australia's foremost repository of military history has been so resistant to accepting and interpreting the historical reality of frontier war.

**Completing our picture of the past**

Anzac means many things to many people, but it essentially conveys a positive view of Australia's part in war. If, as the great war historian Charles Bean said, Anzac stands for "reckless valour in a good cause, for enterprise, resourcefulness, fidelity, comradeship and endurance that will never own defeat", then frontier conflict seems to have no relevance to Anzac.

Or this is what so many people assume – except that Bean's words could also summarise the spirit in which Indigenous people fought to defend their land, couldn't it?

Except that the War Memorial has no brief to be, as it has become, the custodian of "the Anzac spirit". The term is not even mentioned in the War Memorial's enabling legislation. It would be perfectly possible, if Australians wished, to commemorate and explain what Anzac means, and to interpret and commemorate the cost of the frontier wars.

Except that if Anzac (in all its variegated meanings) is a part of Australia's understanding of its military past, so is the horror of massacre and degradation of frontier conflict. They both happened, even if Australians seem to find only one acceptable.

Australians have to accept that not everything in their military history can be praiseworthy, heroic or worthy. Some things happened, whether we like them or not. They're part of our national history, just as we as individuals have to accept that we sometimes do things we're not proud of.

If we're to understand our history honestly we have to heed, as Charles Bean also wrote, "the good and the bad, the greatness and the smallness" of Australia's military history. Accepting frontier conflict does not diminish Anzac, but it would prove that a century on from Gallipoli we had perhaps grown up as a nation.

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**Disclosure Statement**

Professor Peter Stanley of UNSW, Canberra, worked at the Australian War Memorial 1980-2007 and became its Principal Historian. His latest book is *Lost Boys of Anzac*.

*"You can no more win a war than you can win an earthquake." And, "The work of educating the world to peace is the woman's job, because men have a natural fear of being classed as cowards if they oppose war."*

**Jeanette Rankin**, (1880-1973) First woman to enter U.S. House of Representative in 1917. Lost her seat in Congress when she voted against entry in WWI.

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Author credit is:

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Author credit is:

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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