



The Peace Issue . . .

The Newsletter of *Just Peace Queensland Inc*

Issue No. 48

December 2014

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

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Going to war is a matter for parliament

By Malcolm Fraser and Paul Barratt

ON Tuesday here, Russell Trood and Anthony Bergin asserted that the idea of parliament voting on decisions to go to war is poor public policy. None of the arguments they advance hold water.

They argue governments need the capacity to react quickly to events. Quite so, but the occasions would be rare when the capacity of the ADF to deploy would be held up by parliamentary process. Apart from the Ready Reaction Force at Townsville, most combat elements of the ADF are held at a low state of readiness. They are not maintained in a battle-ready state, and before they can be deployed a major investment in both personnel training and materiel is required in order to bring them up to the required standard.

Regarding the high-readiness forces, it would be quite easy to draft into legislation requiring parliamentary authorisation a provision for an emergency response, with a requirement for a statement setting out the nature and purpose to be tabled within three or four sitting days.

They also argue the government might have access to information or intelligence which it cannot reveal. This cannot be accepted within the framework of a Westminster-style system. While government may well be in possession of information that cannot be used in parliamentary debate, it is fundamental to our system that today’s opposition leader could be tomorrow’s prime minister, and in times of crisis government share classified information with the opposition.

For purposes of parliamentary debate, situations will be rare in which a direct threat to Australia would emerge without any warning signs being discernible from open sources. Accordingly, governments can simply follow the commonplace practice of presenting a rationale which derives from open sources, and perhaps simply stating that this picture is confirmed by classified information which has been shared with the opposition leadership.

A third argument is the old canard - that a parliamentary vote would “simply hamstring the government of the day to the whim of minor parties”. The minor parties only have an effective say when the major parties disagree, so this sounds more like a concern that parliamentary involvement would make it more difficult for the government of the day to inject the ADF into wars of choice — which is of course the whole point of the exercise.

Trood and Bergin also advance the argument that “in a complicated world the occasions and circumstances in which force in its various manifestations is required is becoming more difficult to describe and define”. This is in fact one of the strongest reasons in support of parliamentary involvement: to guard against the possibility of the leadership of the day rushing us off into ill-thought-out military adventures, with no clear definition of the aims, duration, prospects of success or exit strategy.

We are not advocating that parliament be involved in the management of our involvement in an armed conflict, simply that it be the body that authorises our entry into any particular

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The newsletter of
 Just Peace Queensland Inc
 PO Box 573
 Coorparoo Qld 4151 AUSTRALIA
 Web site: www.justpeaceqld.org
 Co-convenors:
 Annette Brownlie 07 3843 1270
 0431 597 256
annetebrownlie@optusnet.com.au
 Norm Bullen 07 3848 8277
 Publication Editor: Adrian Pollock
 07 3366 3251
 Email: apollock@optusnet.com.au



EDITORIAL: YOU MUST HAVE FAITH

It is now the 1st of January, 2015. The New Year's Eve parties are over and it feels like a new year has begun, because we are so hardwired to the Gregorian calendar. This means that the culture of celebrating anniversaries of certain historical events becomes more apparent and entrenched. Thus 2015 sees the 70th anniversaries of the formation of the United Nations (October 1945), the end of WWII (September 1945), and the nuclear bombings of Nagasaki and Hiroshima (August 1945). 2015 is also the centenary of both the formation of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF, originally the Women's Peace Party, officially April 1915); and, in Australia and New Zealand, ANZAC day, commemorating the invasion at Gallipoli on 25th April 1915. **Just Peace** even has its own 10th anniversary of the "Peace Convergence" to protest the joint US-Australian military exercises in tropical Queensland.

All of these anniversaries are relevant to the aims and objectives of **Just Peace** ⁽¹⁾. Closest to home of course is the planned ANZAC Day commemorations. A staggering \$325 million has been budgeted by the Federal and State governments to support the 2015 ANZAC Day commemorations throughout Australia and elsewhere; together with an estimated \$300 million from private donations ⁽²⁾. Each Federal MP has been allocated \$125,000 to spend in his or her electorate.

We have already experienced the commemoration of the beginning of WWI (July 1914) and in 2018 we will commemorate its official end (November 1918). Back in September 2009 there was the relatively muted 70th commemoration of the beginning of the European theatre of WWII. Undoubtedly the anniversaries of the UN creation, the nuclear bombings, the end of WWII and the WILPF Centenary will come and

go without much fanfare relative to the intense focus on ANZAC.

The effect and purpose of this last celebration is to implant in the minds of almost all Australians a connection between the sacrifices ⁽³⁾ of tens of thousands of fighting men and women of our country, and the universal acceptance of the need to go to war. In some cases we go to war at the behest of the United Kingdom and more recently, the United States. In this respect our Government behaves "like a dog who saw the leash being picked up" ⁽⁴⁾. In other cases we don't even wait to be asked.

The year 2015 is therefore certain to be one of multiple setbacks to attempts by **Just Peace** and dozens of other peace groups to find "alternatives to war and the necessity of justice in achieving lasting peace" ⁽¹⁾. **Just Peace**, soon to be in its 13th year of existence, and through its planned series of activities during 2015 ⁽⁵⁾, continues in the unshakable belief that it stands and acts for the "future we have to have".

For many years governments and other zealous groups across the world have fought oil wars, resource wars and religious wars. The looming, catastrophic and unavoidable changes in earth's climate will create new types of wars. It often, perhaps always, seems as if we are fighting a lost cause – many lost causes. For what can **Just Peace** accomplish on its own? What influence do we have on the vast and powerful forces that "furiously" rage against us? A belief in the fact of climate change, proposed as a result of sciences of unimaginable complexity, comes down to faith. Likewise I believe that continuing to promote alternatives to war when no end is in sight, comes down to faith. Faith in the fundamental correctness of our pathway.

I suspect that when peace and justice come, it may be at the hands of organizations or persons who are not necessarily closely identified solely with the peace movement. In June 2014 Angelina Jolie, as Special Envoy of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, gained effortless media attention for co-chairing (with British Foreign Secretary, William Hague), the immense Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict zones. This issue is contained in the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 passed unanimously on October 2000. As yet only 48 countries have even formulated national actions plans to implement the resolution. Real action on one part of this

resolution may therefore come from the immensely talented and charismatic movie star.

I suspect that when peace and justice come, the activities of **Just Peace** over many long years, may similarly be overlooked. At least we can say we kept the faith.

1. <https://www.facebook.com/JustPeaceQLD>
2. <http://www.themonthly.com.au/blog/james-brown-2014/02/17/1392601420/anzacs-long-shadow-cost-our-national-obsession>
3. As in: "an act of slaughtering an animal or person or surrendering a possession, as an offering to a deity".
4. Adapted from a short story by Martie Collins.

by **Michael Henry**
01 January 2015

Quote About Nuclear Weapons:

"The thought that human beings are considering saving lives by killing millions of their fellow human beings is so preposterous that the words 'saving life' have lost all of their meaning. One of the most tragic facts of our century is that this 'No' to nuclear weapons has been spoken so seldom, so softly, and by so few."



— [Henri J. M. Houwen](#)

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overseas operation requiring or likely to require the use of armed force, such authorisation to last for the duration of the circumstances to which it applies.

Those who would rule out any role for the legislature other than post hoc debate would have us increasingly out of step with the practice of other representative democracies. Last year the question of British participation in air strikes against Syria was resoundingly defeated in the House of Commons — an outcome which rapidly came to be seen as wise.

At the end of the day it all comes down to whether we trust the parliament, or trust a single individual. A strong prime minister will be able to convince the cabinet, and that is a one person decision as was the case in the Iraq war. We most certainly should have parliamentary approval before Australia can be taken to war.

Malcolm Fraser was prime minister of Australia, 1975-83. **Paul Barratt** is a former secretary to the Department of Defence.

**JUST PEACE ACTIVITIES****December 2014**

Interesting to consider the message of our political leaders that we must not allow the terrorists to win by making us fearful and yet the actions of those same leaders appear to be direct us towards fear. Consider the reaction of Tony Abbott and Julie Bishop to the downing of MH 370 in Ukraine where they judged who was responsible before legitimate results of official enquires are even now not released. It is during times of community anxiety that leaders can get away with actions otherwise questioned or opposed. The slide in to a 3rd middle east war is underway and organisations like Just Peace have an important role to play opposing war, promoting deeper understanding of conflicts and proposing alternative resolution strategies. Just Peace continues to work in a range of those areas. The following reports on our activities over the past quarter of 2014

Australian Palestine Advocacy Network:

Vicki Henry attended the APAN AGM representing Just Peace in September. APAN has proven its worth as a respected body to lobby politicians' media and community leaders. Polls show there is significant condemnation of Israeli crimes committed during the occupation and suppression of Palestinians human rights. The Just Peace 4 Palestine sub-group continues to hold monthly stalls in the city with information and petitions for members of the public.

International Day of Peace September 21 2014

The Brisbane Peace Lecture delivered by Prof Larissa Behrendt was well received by over 150 people in St Johns Cathedral. Larissa addressed the path to justice and peace for Australian Indigenous peoples with Sam Watson responding and thanking Larissa. Poppies for Peace was officially launched on the day. The 2015 lecture will address the link between achieving peace and environmental sustainability.

Just Peace

We still meet each second Tuesday of the month and all are welcome. We have been invited to participate in a new grass

roots group at Sandgate 'Year for Peace' responding to the official glorification activities promoted by the government around the Gallipoli centenary. Just Peace has established a Facebook page which is gaining 'likes' Please promote to your family and friends.

Ross Gwyther is in the process of setting up a replacement web-site for Just Peace. Watch out for emails to let you know when it is up.

Independent and Peaceful Australia Network

This important effort to build national collaboration between peace groups is a work in progress. IPAN responded to the abuse of demonstrators at the Swan Island military training base in Victoria with letters of condemnation to the PM and Defence Minister. The letter was circulated through IPAN groups with over 60 supporters adding their names to the letter.

IPAN is in the process of organising a national meeting in Brisbane in July this year in the lead up to the 2015 Peace Convergence during the Shoalwater Bay Talisman Sabre military exercises.

The year ahead provides us with many opportunities to promote peace justice and human rights, including the right to live in a clean sustainable environment. In 2015 some important anniversaries occur:

- WILPF formed 100 years ago as a result of the Government of the days efforts to get young men to enlist or be conscripted for WW1
- Gallipoli battle 100 years
- WW2 ended 70 years ago in the Pacific with the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki
- The UN formed 70 years ago with a mandate to prevent the horror of war happening again
- Peace Convergence to oppose Talisman Sabre exercises in Shoalwater Bay started 10 years ago.

It is with these in mind that we have identified potential projects designed to promote the ideals of peace justice and human rights.

- Fund raising dinner to raise funds for the Australian Palestine Advocacy

Network and maintain awareness in relation to Palestinian rights.

- Palm Sunday Rally 29th March
- Global Day of Action on Military Spending 13th April
- Anzac Eve vigil and march- white poppy initiative
- End June/ early July Major public forum with hopefully Malcolm Fraser to address on the ANZUS Alliance
- July - Peace Convergence at Talisman Sabre exercises
- August - Hiroshima commemoration
- September- International Day of Peace-Brisbane Peace Lecture

Annette Brownlie**STRIVE FOR PEACE, NOT WAR**

What are we remembering?

In this centenary anniversary of World War I, we are urged to think deeply about that war.

My great uncle died from a combination of war injuries and the Spanish influenza pandemic, along with millions of others in war-ravaged Europe. Unfortunately, Remembrance Day has changed profoundly from its original public conception: from a time for mourning and reflection on loss of life, to a self-validating day out for the military and a powerful recruitment tool.

War – the struggle for control – has historically been a distant event.

Today that struggle for control is in our streets.

War has become the dominant metaphor to describe much of the world around us – war against drugs and crime, war against terror, was against insecurity.

These three-word slogans reflect a stealthy militarisation in a wide range of policy debates as well as in popular culture.

The inspiration for the White Poppy campaign lies in a widespread movement against war and militarism in the early years of the 20th century.

It still urges us to challenge militarisation and work together to build a culture of peace.

Dawn Joyce, St Lucia

Westside News, 29 October 2014



“ENOUGH” TIME FOR A BAN

Australian nuclear test survivor took her story to the Vienna Conference

December 8, 2014

By Sue Coleman-Haseldine

Indigenous Australian nuclear test survivor, Sue Coleman-Haseldine, spoke to over 150 governments at the Third Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in Vienna on 8–9 December 2014.

The Kokatha-Mula woman was about three years old when the British nuclear weapons tests took place at Maralinga in the remote West of South Australia.

Coleman-Haseldine told delegations from over 150 governments that the British and Australian governments chose to conduct the tests at Maralinga and Emu Fields because they didn’t believe that the land was valuable.

“There are lots of different Aboriginal groups in Australia. For all of us our land is the basis of our culture. It is our supermarket for our food, our pharmacy for our medicine, our school and our church

“These tests contaminated a huge area and everything in it but people hundreds of kilometers away were also impacted... I noticed people dying of cancer, something that was new to us,” Coleman-Haseldine told the conference.

While the British and Australian governments did not acknowledge Sue Coleman-Haseldine’s testimony at the conference, 44 states called for a prohibition of nuclear weapons due to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences.

The Pope also sent a statement that was delivered at the conference, which declared his position that a ban on nuclear weapons is both necessary and possible.

“I am convinced that the desire for peace and fraternity planted deep in the human heart will bear fruit in concrete ways to ensure that nuclear weapons are banned once and for all, to the benefit of our common home,” Pope Francis said.

The Australian Government continues to rely on the nuclear weapons of the United States in its security doctrine,

despite half-hearted statements mentioning the ultimate goal of a nuclear weapons-free world. Prior to the Vienna conference, ICAN Australia wrote an open letter to the Australian Foreign Minister, Julie Bishop on behalf of more than 30 peace, health, humanitarian, union, Aboriginal, student and environmental organisations in Australia. The letter urged the Australian Government to support the commencement of negotiations for a treaty banning nuclear weapons, to commission research into the impact of a nuclear winter on agriculture in Australia, and to establish a defence posture that does not rely on US extended nuclear deterrence.

At the conclusion of the Vienna conference, the Austrian government delivered the “Austrian pledge” in which it committed to work to “fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons” and pledged “to cooperate with all stakeholders to achieve this goal”.

Vienna carried forward the momentum for negotiations to begin on a binding international instrument to outlaw and eliminate nuclear weapons and South Africa has said that it is considering its role in future meetings.

As Sue Coleman-Haseldine told the Vienna conference, “If you love your own children and care for the children of the world, you will find the courage to stand up and say “enough”.

She is featured in the ICAN (International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons) publication *Black Mist: the impact of nuclear weapons on Australia*.



THE BANALITY OF TERRORISM

Sydney’s other Hostage Crisis, of 1984

Published on Monday, December 15, 2014 by [Informed Comment](#)

By Juan Cole

IC doesn’t usually cover hostage-taking, since it is an artificial and manipulative criminal act. Any two-bit thug can grab someone off the street and push them into a car, and subsequently kill them. It doesn’t take intelligence or any other admirable quality, just brutishness.

One’s heart goes out to the Sydney hostages. But it is distressing to see the hostage-taker made 10 feet tall by the media and to have Daesh (which is what most Arabs derisively call ISIL or ISIS) invoked. He is likely not mentally well, and he is not evidence of Daesh’s reach. Just that sadists are willing to franchise just like purveyors of hamburgers.

In fact, Sydney had another hostage crisis, in 1984, in a bank. A formerly wealthy (secular) Turkish-Australian became unhinged at losing his fortune. Today’s incident is not more important than that one, which few now remember. Both of these hostage-takers were common criminals. Neither is a “terrorist.” Today’s Sydney hostage-taker is not representative of a new activity. He isn’t important, and ordering a black flag won’t make him so. The only one who can bestow recognition on this criminal is the mass media and the press. They shouldn’t do it.

Nor are Australia’s Muslims responsible for this maniac. All white people aren’t responsible for motorcycle gangs or white supremacist groups. No one has ever asked a white person on television, “why don’t you condemn the Aryan Nation?” The mainstream or ‘unmarked’ ethnic identity in a society doesn’t suffer from guilt by association. It is only the minorities who do.

Criminals and gangsters should not be fetishized as “terrorists.” It is just a way for them to inflate their egos. People are violent and sadistic because they are violent and sadistic, not because they have any particular ideology. Sociologist Max Weber posited “elective affinity,” that two phenomena find one another.

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Maybe sadists and killers are attracted to groups with deviant ideologies that permit wanton violence.

Daesh is just a bunch of gangsters. They are smugglers and human traffickers and mass murderers. It is secondary that they deploy a language of political Islam. The Ku Klux Klan in the US thought of itself as Protestant White Knights. One reviewer of my book, *Engaging the Muslim World*, complained that I compared the Taliban to the KKK, on the grounds that the latter is a small group. But it wasn't in American history always a small group. It captured the governorship of Indiana in the 1920s.

Nor is Daesh popular, nor does it find ideological acceptance. Almost nobody in the Middle East likes it, and the tiny percentages who do tell pollsters they approve may not even agree with many of its actions. The Bangalore food company executive who did massive twitter propaganda for Daesh, when pressed, admitted he did not agree with all their policies, and allowed how he couldn't go join up because he had to take care of his parents (didn't the kids he encouraged to go die in Syria have parents?) A 2012 poll of Iraqi Sunnis found that 75% said religion and state should be separate. They are likely the most secular people in the Middle East. Just because Daesh has taken over Sunni Arab Iraq does not mean they have changed their mind on this issue. They just chose an assertive Sunni group like Daesh over being ruled by equally fundamentalist Shiites.

It is really unfortunate that the magnificent city of Sydney had its peace disturbed by this maniac. But he isn't important, least of all geopolitically, and shouldn't be built up otherwise.

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Juan Cole teaches Middle Eastern and South Asian history at the University of Michigan. His new book, *The New Arabs: How the Millennial Generation Is Changing the Middle East* (Simon and Schuster), will officially be published July 1st. He is also the author of *Engaging the Muslim World* and *Napoleon's Egypt: Invading the Middle East* (both Palgrave Macmillan). He has appeared widely on television, radio and on op-ed pages as a commentator on Middle East affairs, and has a regular column at Salon.com.

U.S. TERRORISM

How Many Muslim Countries Has the US Bombed Or Occupied Since 1980?

Published on November 06, 2014

by [The Intercept](#)

By **Glenn Greenwald**

Barack Obama, in his post-election press conference yesterday, announced that he would seek an Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) from the new Congress, one that would authorize Obama's bombing campaign in Iraq and Syria—the one he began three months ago. If one were being generous, one could say that seeking congressional authorization for a war that commenced months ago is at least better than fighting a war even after Congress explicitly *rejected* its authorization, as Obama lawlessly did in the now-collapsed country of Libya.

When Obama began bombing targets inside Syria in September, I noted that it was the seventh predominantly Muslim country that had been bombed by the U.S. during his presidency (that did not count Obama's bombing of the Muslim minority in the Philippines). I also previously noted that this new bombing campaign meant that Obama had become the *fourth consecutive U.S. President* to order bombs dropped on Iraq. Standing alone, those are both amazingly revealing facts. American violence is so ongoing and continuous that we barely notice it any more. Just this week, a U.S. drone launched a missile that killed 10 people in Yemen, and the dead were promptly labeled "suspected militants" (which actually just means they are "military-age males"); those killings received almost no discussion.

To get a full scope of American violence in the world, it is worth asking a broader question: how many countries in the Islamic world has the U.S. bombed or occupied since 1980? That answer was provided in a recent *Washington Post* op-ed by the military historian and former U.S. Army Col. Andrew Bacevich:

As America's efforts to "degrade and ultimately destroy" Islamic State militants extent into Syria, Iraq War III has seamlessly morphed into Greater Middle East Battlefield XIV. That is, **Syria has become at least the 14th country in the Islamic world that U.S. forces have**

invaded or occupied or bombed, and in which American soldiers have killed or been killed. And that's just since 1980.

Let's tick them off: Iran (1980, 1987-1988), Libya (1981, 1986, 1989, 2011), Lebanon (1983), Kuwait (1991), Iraq (1991-2011, 2014-), Somalia (1992-1993, 2007-), Bosnia (1995), Saudi Arabia (1991, 1996), Afghanistan (1998, 2001-), Sudan (1998), Kosovo (1999), Yemen (2000, 2002-), Pakistan (2004-) and now Syria. Whew.

Bacevich's count excludes the bombing and occupation of still other predominantly Muslim countries by key U.S. allies such as Israel and Saudi Arabia, carried out with crucial American support. It excludes coups against democratically elected governments, torture, and imprisonment of people with no charges. It also, of course, excludes all the other bombing and invading and occupying that the U.S. has carried out during this time period in other parts of the world, including in Central America and the Caribbean, as well as various proxy wars in Africa.

Read the full article at [The Intercept](#).

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Glenn Greenwald is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, constitutional lawyer, commentator, author of three New York Times best-selling books on politics and law, and a staff writer and editor at [First Look](#) media. His fifth and latest book is, [No Place to Hide: Edward Snowden, the NSA, and the U.S. Surveillance State](#), about the U.S. surveillance state and his experiences reporting on the Snowden documents around the world. Prior to his collaboration with Pierre Omidyar, Glenn's column was featured at *Guardian US* and *Salon*. He is the recipient of the first annual I.F. Stone Award for Independent Journalism, a George Polk Award, and was on The Guardian team that won the Pulitzer Prize for public interest journalism in 2014.

What is absurd and monstrous about war is that men who have no personal quarrel should be trained to murder one another in cold blood.

~Aldous Huxley

**AMERICA: AUSTRALIA'S DANGEROUS ALLY**

Australia should not embrace America, writes its former prime minister, but preserve itself from Washington's reckless overreach.

Malcolm Fraser

December 16, 2014

IT IS time for Australia to end its strategic dependence on the United States. The relationship with America, which has long been regarded as beneficial, has now become dangerous to Australia's future. We have effectively ceded to America the ability to decide when Australia goes to war. Even if America were the most perfect and benign power, this posture would still be incompatible with the integrity of Australia as a sovereign nation. It entails not simply deference but submission to Washington, an intolerable state of affairs for a country whose power and prosperity are increasing and whose national interests dictate that it enjoy amicable, not hostile, relations with its neighbors, including China.

As painful as a reassessment of relations may be for intellectual and policy elites, there are four principal reasons why one is long overdue. First, despite much blather about a supposed unanimity of national purpose, the truth is that the United States and Australia have substantially different values systems. The idea of American exceptionalism is contrary to Australia's sense of egalitarianism. Second, we have seen the United States act in an arbitrary, imprudent and capricious fashion. It has made a number of ill-advised and ill-informed decisions concerning Eastern Europe, Russia and the Middle East. Third, at the moment, because of U.S. military installations in Australia, if America goes to war in the Pacific, it will take us to war as well—without an independent decision by Australia. Finally, under current circumstances, in any major contest in the Pacific, our relationship with America would make us a strategic target for America's enemies. It is not in Australia's interest to be in that position.

American fecklessness has produced this state of affairs. As the recent twenty-fifth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall reminds us, the breakup of the Soviet Union created a different world. It was a world bursting with opportunity, as was

first described by President George H. W. Bush in a speech to Congress after the first Gulf War. Bush was then talking about a new world, one in which there would be much greater cooperation between nations large and small. It was the kind of speech that many people worldwide wanted to hear from an American president. However, the purposes and commitment expressed in that speech were to be cut short. The presidents that followed—Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama—may have differed in tone but not in substance. They have all adhered to the illusion of American omnipotence.

It was Morton Abramowitz of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a former U.S. ambassador and one of the prime movers in establishing the International Crisis Group, who wrote in 2012 that "American exceptionalism dooms U.S. foreign policy." Nothing has altered since then. Even President Obama has embraced the idea of exceptionalism, telling the UN General Assembly in 2013, "I believe America is exceptional." A nation better than any other, innately motivated to do good; what America does is right because America does it. The idea of American exceptionalism, which has always been present in the United States, has gone far beyond all comprehension in the years of America's absolute supremacy. It has created a different nation, a different society. Such ideas influence American foreign policy in ways that make it much more difficult to achieve a secure and safe path in the future. Our task is not to embrace America, but to preserve ourselves from its reckless overreach.

THIS IS not a message that the Australian government appears to endorse. The 2014 Australian Defence Issues Paper, for example, suggests we have shared values with the United States. This is nonsense. America's views of itself have no part in Australia's values system. They represent an important point of difference between the United States and Australia. They affect the United States' strategic thinking and policies and drive America in directions that at

times have not been in Australia's interest.

No doubt our alliance with the United States made sense in the Cold War years. The Soviet Union was regarded as a global Communist threat. The battlegrounds of the Cold War spanned the world, including in our own region. Australia, with limited resources, was quite correct in wanting a close association with a major power in these circumstances.

Ending the Communist threat was only one consequence of the breakup of the Soviet Union. A greater one, perhaps, was the absolute supremacy of the United States as a military and economic power. Before that time, each superpower acted as a restraint on the other. Neither wanted a nuclear war, and both took care to avoid the kind of provocations that would inevitably lead to war. After 1991, the United States was under no such restraint. Russia was down for the count, so far as global influence was concerned.

After the breakup of the Soviet Union, it was a time for generosity. Recalling the spirit of the Marshall Plan and the post-World War II enlightenment, it was a moment for magnanimity to prevail; it was not a time to revive the spirit of Versailles and exact vengeance on a fallen foe. Unfortunately, Europe and the United States chose the wrong path. Many ways could have been found at that time to secure the independence of states freed from Soviet domination. NATO and the United States chose what turned out to be the most dangerous and provocative mechanism, and worked to include much of Eastern Europe within the confines of NATO itself. This approach ignored history and past strategic relationships. The results speak for themselves.

There were many who opposed the movement of NATO eastward. Mikhail Gorbachev had been particularly concerned, and he believed he had a deal with Secretary of State James Baker for NATO not to move east. Today, Russia believes that "agreement" was broken. Russia's acceptance of the reunification of Germany was supposed to be the quid

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quo pro for NATO not marching eastward. But it did.

The point of all of this for Australia is that the United States—not for the first and surely not for the last time—exhibited a marked lack of historical understanding as well as an inability to exercise effective diplomacy and make choices that would provide for a lasting peace. There should have been more sustained attempts to make sure that Russia would be a collaborative and cooperative partner. As some commentators in the United States have argued, the West bears significant responsibility for more recent developments in Ukraine, based on that one major and tragically mistaken strategic decision to move NATO east. The United States must recognize the impact of its decisions in the difficulties that have ensued.

Throughout this past year we have seen turbulence in Ukraine, the annexation of Crimea and actions that have soured Western relations with Russia even further. There has been no understanding of the historical circumstances, no attempt to act in ways that might increase trust. This has been a continuation of a Cold War mentality, with dramatic and unfortunate results. President Vladimir Putin and Russia have been roundly condemned for the annexation of Crimea, but if Russia had not done so and if the United States had been successful in getting Ukraine to join NATO, the West would have faced a far larger problem. No Russian president would simply surrender the military facilities in Crimea. If Crimea, as part of Ukraine, became part of NATO, the alliance would have required those facilities to be removed. This is a demand that Russia could never accept. So Russian actions in relation to Crimea, as former West German chancellor Helmut Schmidt has said, should have been understandable and are not deserving of the intemperate obloquy that they have attracted from Western commentators.

Instead of trying to induce Ukraine (and, in earlier times, Georgia) to join NATO, the United States should have been asking itself what is necessary if Ukraine is to become one country, cohesively and sensibly governed.

Clearly, both the pro-Western and pro-Russian factions in Ukraine would need to learn the art of compromise, to know that neither can have it all. If they wanted their young country to become a cohesive, peaceful land, then the art of compromise would have had to be practiced by both sides. This could have been possible if the West and Russia had both taken the same view.

It is too early to predict how events in Ukraine may ultimately work out. Events in Eastern Europe centering on Ukraine represent a major strategic problem and have heightened present difficulties between the West and Russia, with potentially very serious consequences. The current situation, then, represents a failure of U.S. diplomacy—a failure to understand historical perspectives and to reach decisions that could have led to a more secure outcome.

SOMETHING SIMILAR can be said about the Middle East. The first Gulf War, designed to secure the freedom of Kuwait, was a major international success. More than thirty nations fought together for this common purpose. At the time, there were many who claimed that George H. W. Bush should have marched on to Baghdad to get rid of Saddam Hussein. He did not do so, because he had an understanding of wider international events. He knew the importance of history and culture. It would have been easy to get rid of Saddam, but Bush understood that he did not have the capacity to establish a cohesive government or to prevent malignant sectarian hatreds from arising. As a consequence of the 2003 Iraq War, we now know that he was totally correct in that judgment.

In retrospect, the 1991 Gulf War was the last American success in the Middle East. With turmoil in Libya and Yemen, difficulties in Turkey and Egypt, and continuing problems in Iraq and Syria, the whole region is more at risk than ever. Indeed, America, for all its fumbling attempts to withdraw from Iraq, has committed to a new air war in Iraq and Syria. President Obama must know that any kind of victory over the Islamic State cannot be achieved without effective ground forces. To commit to an air war without ground forces being in place, or in sight, is an

act of strategic folly. It again underlines the melancholy fact that we are far too close to the United States.

We know what is said about Iraq. We are told that the new government will overcome the divisions between Sunni and Shia and that training from the United States and Australia will strengthen the Iraqi army and help it stand up to the Islamic State. But there is no sign yet that the new Iraqi government is able to build a cohesive Iraq. If it cannot, all the airpower in the world will not be successful in the war against the Islamic State. In Syria, where the slaughter continues unabated, where the country is being denuded and where hundreds of thousands of refugees are seeking shelter in neighbouring countries, the situation is even more alarming.

The United States has been too ready to rush in and assume the people fighting a brutal dictator are necessarily going to have higher ideals as well as a better sense of values than the person they are fighting against. In relation to the rebels in Syria who have morphed into the Islamic State, that assumption was certainly wrong. The assumption that the so-called good rebels can be an effective force is also most likely to be proved false. How much moderation is there really among the “moderate” opposition?

So America, Australia, Britain and others have embarked on this new war. We have been told it will take many years, but without troops on the ground, which I agree should not be ours or American, the chances of a peaceful outcome or a defeat of the Islamic State are slight. We have pliantly followed America into a war where the United States has acted without marshaling the necessary forces, the necessary coalition and the necessary assets to achieve a military and strategic victory. The reality is, at this stage, that there is no achievable and defined “end point”—no real characterization of what success will look like. Radical groups have emerged, designed to end Western influence throughout the region. Does this mean that such groups represent an existential threat to people further afield? So often, as we have learned more, and tragically often in

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retrospect, we have found that our basic assumptions were wrong. What we do know is that the Middle East is now more dangerously poised than at any time in the postwar years for further conflagration.

In Afghanistan, while most NATO forces are withdrawing, about ten thousand American troops are going to remain. We are likely to see increased attacks by the Taliban, who do not appear to have been particularly weakened by the long years of warfare. The way in which war has been conducted through South Asia—especially the use of drones, which have killed significant numbers of civilians—provides the extremists with a welcome and potent recruiting tool. Nor is this all. Events in the Middle East between Israel and Palestine also represent a grotesque failure of U.S. diplomacy and a reduction in American influence worldwide. This has so often occurred because the United States (and, indeed, the West generally) interprets events through its own eyes without taking historical circumstances into account.

THERE HAVE also been significant strategic changes much closer to Australia, in the Pacific and throughout East and Southeast Asia. Here, too, we have increasing tension. Western commentators tend to say that the rise of China and its growing military power are at the center of that tension. Unfortunately, Chinese and Asian perceptions of what is happening often differ from American or Australian interpretations of events.

The United States has sought to counter China's military buildup and what it regards as growing Chinese assertiveness in the East and South China Seas. It is worth putting these matters into a broader context. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Chinese military expenditure in 2013 was 11 percent of the world's total. America's was 37 percent. There are vast differences in the circumstances of the two countries. America has no military problems on its borders, but claims to have worldwide responsibility and a need to exercise force anywhere in the globe. China has traditionally been, and continues to be, more concerned

with its own region. It does have a number of unstable situations on its borders, problems between India and Pakistan, and difficulties with Iran and Iraq, to say nothing of an unpredictable North Korea. These factors alone give China a reason for a significant military force, a reason that the United States does not have.

But, as with Ukraine, relationships with China are also a function of history. The "unequal treaties" forced upon China are distant in our memory, but are deeply relevant to the way China deals with issues at the present time. Because of Chinese withdrawal then and in the years after World War II, during which much of China was ravaged and brutalized by Japanese imperial forces, China has not participated as much to help solve major international problems as a country of its size and stature might be expected to do. What's more, from China's perspective, a number of events would be regarded as provocative. First, the United States' handing of the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands back to Japan in 1971 occurred at a time when Sino-American relations hardly existed. There was little thought of the fact that Japan had taken those islands from China in 1895, and it has turned out to have been a provocative decision. It was an event that was ignored at the time, though, as China had no means then of asserting itself.

More recently, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta's attempt to get Cam Ranh Bay reopened as a U.S. naval base would surely have been seen by the Chinese as provocative. This was something the Vietnamese had the good sense to reject, on the grounds that Cam Ranh Bay was open to the navies of many nations who might wish to use it. It should not become a base for the United States—or any other country, for that matter. China has welcomed U.S. diplomatic engagement, but at the same time wonders what policy America is actually pursuing—one of consultation and discussion and perhaps collaboration, or one of rearmament, encirclement and containment. Which America is going to win out? The one that wishes to talk, or the one that relies on military solutions?

Many have written about the possibility of war between China and

the United States. If left to the two great powers, war could probably be avoided, but with Japan in the equation, it is a different matter. Japan has become more assertive. Far more nationalistic, if you like, with a growing militarism. It already possesses very powerful military forces, with a capacity to develop, in short order, effective and long-range nuclear weapons. Japan claims there is no dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands. But this is unpersuasive. For one thing, the United States recently affirmed that its defense guarantee for Japan extends to those islands, thus effectively siding with Japan in that particular dispute. That act was a major strategic mistake by the United States, one that will encourage Japan to be increasingly assertive.

If shooting starts between China and Japan, then it is not possible to say with any certainty that calmer heads will prevail and that serious dangers will be averted. Such a dispute could easily lead to a long, drawn-out war, which the United States may well not win. If over many years the United States could not win in Vietnam, despite the resources poured into that particular war, how could it possibly win in a contest with China? If, moreover, Australia were to become involved in such a contest, we would become a defeated ally of a defeated superpower. Such an outcome would place Australia at great risk, leaving it without a friend in our entire region. And unlike America, we cannot retreat to the Western Hemisphere in this event.

Australia has been far too quiescent and passive. After 1990, Australia could have exhibited a greater degree of strategic independence, but did not. When the Soviet Union disintegrated, Australia still had the capacity to make its own decisions about peace and war. We did not have to follow America. We were not committed purely because America was committed. In other words, up to that point, we had maintained the integrity of Australia as a sovereign nation, despite our close relationship with the United States. Up to that time, facilities on the Australian mainland did not, and could not, commit Australia to follow America into a war. These developments have

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occurred in the years since the breakup of the Soviet Union.

Through a series of missteps since 1990, we have become progressively more enmeshed in American strategic and military affairs. This has been achieved by close collaboration between our armed services, and with the agreement of both major Australian political parties. It is a mistake. Major issues were never put to the Australian public. It was just assumed that these steps would be good for Australia. There was never a debate.

The idea of interoperability of our armed services is something that has, of course, been assiduously promoted by the United States. It has influenced many decisions relating to military operations, including the kind of equipment that we procure. It has in part influenced the appointment of the Australian Army's Major General Richard Burr as deputy commander of U.S. Army Pacific, in charge of sixty thousand American troops, and the part-time deployment of a frigate as part of the *USS George Washington's* escort. It is also relevant to our dependence on U.S. satellites for communications.

There are, however, two factors that tie us more closely than any of these events to America's military machine and strategic objectives. The first is the U.S. military base in Darwin. If U.S. leaders wish to use the air-ground task force from Darwin to attack some target—to use it in support of their defense commitment to Japan, for example—they will not ask an Australian prime minister first. They will do it, and Australia will be told about it later. There is nothing new or unique in that. It is the way a great power behaves. But the consequence of that is that we can hardly say we are not complicit in the actions of that task force when it has taken off from Australian soil.

More important still are the changed purposes and operations of Pine Gap. This used to be a largely defensive facility. It was, more than anything else, an information-gathering operation of significant importance. Changes in communications and weapons technology, and their application to a great variety of U.S. weapons systems, from drones to

longer-range missiles, have altered the character of Pine Gap. Information from Pine Gap is also used for missile defense (which China regards as vitiating its nuclear deterrent) and for targeting a range of modern offensive missiles. This would give Pine Gap a new and urgent relevance if a conflict between China and Japan involving the United States developed into a serious crisis. It is Pine Gap, above all, that makes it impossible for Australia to say that it is not involved.

THUS, STEP by step, discreetly, even secretly, successive Australian governments have allowed a situation to develop in which if America goes to war in the western Pacific, we will have no option but to go to war as a direct consequence. If Australia sought to stand aside, it would not be believed. We have never before been in such a situation. This situation is not compatible with Australian integrity or with Australian sovereignty. Australians do not realize that America's capacity to declare war and include us is far greater than the power Britain had over the Dominions.



No foreign power should have that control over Australia, and certainly not a United States whose values are different and whose strategic decisions have been shown to be ill balanced and dangerous. Australians are unaware that the wars in which we have followed America were outside the terms of the ANZUS Treaty. Our commitment to the United States ties us to its values system and denies us the opportunity to decide our own fate.

There are several steps that Australia should take to rectify its previous shortcomings. For a start, the task force in Darwin would need to be moved to some other location outside Australia. This should be possible to accomplish in a relatively short time

frame. The facility at Pine Gap would need to be closed, as we cannot control how America uses the intelligence it gathers from that site. Because it is a complex facility, we should give America time to do this—perhaps four or five years. However, Australians working at the base should be withdrawn at the end of six months. This would clearly result in implications for our shared intelligence arrangements, especially with Britain and America. When New Zealand left the ANZUS Treaty, it was not cut out of the “Five Eyes” intelligence operation. There is no gainsaying that Australia may well find access to American military equipment diminished. But this is not necessarily a bad thing. We have sometimes bought American equipment because it aided strategic cooperation even when it was not the best equipment. There are a number of countries that are providers of quality military hardware.

Another step that Australia should take is to ensure that its diplomatic facilities throughout East and Southeast Asia are reinforced to prepare for more active diplomacy in our own part of the world. Australia needs to reinforce its support for UN agencies and work more effectively both bilaterally and through the UN, with other middle-ranking and like-minded powers. Such approaches would add to stability throughout our region and over time greatly increase our capacity to help mediate difficulties between states.

Of course, all of this would involve greater cost, possibly requiring a boost in Australian defence spending to about 3 percent of GDP. Until now, we have had defence on the cheap, hiding behind the American war machine, at too great a cost to Australian nationality and respect. At the end of the day, we need to ask ourselves what Australia's independence—Australia's integrity—is worth to Australians. Australia must regain the ability to deny any other power the capacity to decide whether we stay at peace or go to war. Only by embarking upon a new course can Australia recapture its squandered sovereignty.

Malcolm Fraser is the former Prime Minister of Australia.

**RENAMING AFGHAN WAR,
RENAMING MURDER**

by David Swanson

December 29th, 2014

The U.S.-led NATO war on Afghanistan has lasted so long they've decided to rename it, declare the old war over, and announce a brand new war they're just sure you're going to love.

The war thus far has lasted as long as U.S. participation in World War II plus U.S. participation in World War I, plus the Korean War, plus the Spanish American War, plus the full length of the U.S. war on the Philippines, combined with the whole duration of the Mexican American War.

Now, some of those other wars accomplished things, I will admit — such as stealing half of Mexico. What has Operation Freedom's Sentinel, formerly known as Operation Enduring Freedom, accomplished, other than enduring and enduring and enduring to the point where we're numb enough to completely overlook a new name as Orwellian as Freedom's Sentinel (what — was "Liberty's Enslaver" already taken)?

Well, according to President Obama, over 13 years of bombing and occupying Afghanistan has made us safer. That seems like a claim someone should request some evidence for. The U.S. government has spent nearly a trillion dollars on this war, plus roughly 13 trillion dollars in standard military spending over 13 years, a rate of spending radically increased by using this war and related wars as the justification. Tens of billions of dollars could end starvation on earth, provide the globe with clean water, etc. We could have saved millions of lives and chose to kill thousands instead. The war has been a leading destroyer of the natural environment. We've tossed our civil liberties out the window in the name of "freedom." We've produced so many weapons they've had to be shuffled off to local police departments, with predictable results. A claim that something good has come and is coming and will continue to come for many future years from this war is worth looking into.

Don't look too closely. The CIA finds that a key component of the war (targeted drone murders — "murders" is their word) is counterproductive. Before the great opponent of war Fred Branfman died this year he collected a long list of statements by members of the U.S. government and military stating the same thing. That murdering people with drones tends to enrage their friends and families, producing more enemies than you eliminate, may become easier to understand after reading a study that recently found that when the U.S. targets a person for murder, it kills 27 additional people along the way. General Stanley McChrystal said that when you kill an innocent person you create 10 enemies. I'm not a mathematician, but I think that comes to about 270 enemies created each time someone is put on the kill list, or 280 if the person is or is widely believed to be innocent (of what it's not exactly clear).

This war is counterproductive on its own terms. But what are those terms? Usually they are a declaration of vicious revenge and a condemnation of the rule of law — albeit dressed up to sound like something more respectable. It's worth recalling here how this all began. The United States, for three years prior to September 11, 2001, had been asking the Taliban to turn over Osama bin Laden. The Taliban had asked for evidence of his guilt of any crimes and a commitment to try him in a neutral third country without the death penalty. This continued right into October, 2001. (See, for example "Bush Rejects Taliban Offer to Hand Bin Laden Over" in the *Guardian*, October 14, 2001.) The Taliban also warned the United States that bin Laden was planning an attack on U.S. soil (this according to the BBC). Former Pakistani Foreign Secretary Niaz Naik told the BBC that senior U.S. officials told him at a U.N.-sponsored summit in Berlin in July 2001 that the United States would take action against the Taliban in mid-October. He said it was doubtful that surrendering bin Laden would change those plans. When the United States attacked Afghanistan on October 7, 2001, the Taliban asked again to negotiate handing over bin Laden to a third country to be tried. The United States rejected the offer and continued a war on Afghanistan for

many years, not halting it when bin Laden was believed to have left that country, and not even halting it after announcing bin Laden's death.

So, in opposition to the rule of law, the United States and its accomplices have conducted a record-long killing spree that could have been avoided with a trial in 2001 or by never having armed and trained bin Laden and his associates in the 1980s or by never having provoked the Soviet Union into invading or by never having launched the Cold War, etc.

If this war has not accomplished safety — with polling around the globe finding the United States now viewed as the greatest threat to world peace — has it accomplished something else? Maybe. Or maybe it still can — especially if it is ended and prosecuted as a crime. What this war could still accomplish is the full removal of the distinction between war and what the CIA and the White House call what they're doing in their own reports and legal memos: *murder*.

A German newspaper has just published a NATO kill list — a list similar to President Obama's — of people targeted for murder. On the list are low-level fighters, and even non-fighting drug dealers. We really have replaced incarceration and the accompanying torture and law suits and moral crises and editorial hand-wringing with murder.

Why should murder be more acceptable than imprisonment and torture? Largely I think we're leaning on the vestiges of a long-dead tradition still alive as mythology. War — which we absurdly imagine has always been and will always be — didn't used to look like it does today. It did not used to be the case that 90 percent of the dead were non-combatants. We still talk about "battlefields," but they're used to actually be such things. Wars were arranged and planned for like sports matches. Ancient Greek armies could camp next to an enemy without fear of a surprise attack. Spaniards and Moors negotiated the dates for battles. California Indians used accurate arrows for hunting but arrows without feathers for ritual war. War's history is one of
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**GERMAN IMPERIALISM***The Rise of German Imperialism and the Phony "Russian Threat"*

by James Petras

December 6th, 2014

The principle Nazi ideological prop that secured massive financial and political support from Germany's leading industrialists was the Communist and Soviet threat. The main Nazi military drive, absorbing two-thirds of its best troops, was directed eastward at conquering and destroying Russia. The 'Russian Threat' justified Nazi Germany's conquest and occupation of the Ukraine, the Balkans, Eastern Europe and the Baltic states, with the aid of a substantial proportion of local Nazi collaborators.

After Germany's defeat, division, and disarmament, and with the extension of Soviet power, the US reinstated the Nazi industrial and banking giants, officials and intelligence operatives. At first they were engaged in rebuilding their domestic economy and consolidating political power, in collaboration with the US military occupation forces.

By the late 1960's Germany regained economic primacy in Europe and was at the forefront of European 'integration', in association with France and England. It soon came to dominate the principle decision-making institutions of the European Union (EU). The EU served as Germany's instrument for conquest by stealth. Year by year, through 'aid' and low interest loans, the EU facilitated German capitalist's market penetration and financial expansion, throughout south and central Europe. Germany set the agenda for Western Europe, gaining economic dominance while benefiting from US subversion and encirclement of Eastern Europe, Russia and the Baltic and Balkan states.

Germany's Great Leap Forward: The Annexation of East Germany and the Demise of the USSR

Germany's projection of power on a world scale would never have occurred if it had not annexed East Germany. Despite the West German claims of beneficence and 'aid' to the East, the Bonn regime secured several million skilled engineers, workers, and technicians, the takeover of factories,

productive farms and, most important, the Eastern European and Russian markets for industrial goods, worth billions of dollars. Germany was transformed from an emerging influential EU partner into the most dynamic expansionist power in Europe, especially in the former Warsaw Pact economies.

The annexation of East Germany and the overthrow of the Communist governments in the East allowed German capitalists to dominate markets in the former Eastern bloc. As the major trading partner, it seized control of major industrial enterprises via corrupt privatizations decreed by the newly installed pro-capitalist client regimes. As the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, the Baltic States "privatized" and "de-nationalized" strategic economic, trade, media and social service sectors, 'unified' Germany was able to resume a privileged place. As Russia fell into the hands of gangsters, emerging oligarchs and political proxies of western capitalists, its entire industrial infrastructure was decimated and Russia was converted into a giant raw-material export region.

Germany converted its trade relations with Russia from one between equals into a 'colonial' pattern: Germany exported high value industrial products and imported gas, oil, and raw materials from Russia.

German power expanded exponentially, with the annexation of the "other Germany", the restoration of capitalism in Eastern Europe and the ascendancy of client regimes eager and willing to submit to a German dominated European Union and a US directed NATO military command.

German political-economic expansion via 'popular uprisings', controlled by local political clients, was soon accompanied by a US-led military offensive – sparked by separatist movements. Germany intervened in Yugoslavia, aiding and abetting separatists in Slovenia and Croatia. It backed the US-NATO bombing of Serbia and supported the far-right, self-styled Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), and engaged in a terrorist war in Kosovo. Belgrade was defeated, and regime change led to a neo-liberal client

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ritual and of respect for the "worthy opponent." George Washington could sneak up on the British, or Hessians, and kill them on Christmas night not because nobody had ever thought of crossing the Delaware before, but because that just wasn't what one did.

Well, now it is. Wars are fought in people's towns and villages and cities. Wars are murder on a massive scale. And the particular approach developed in Afghanistan and Pakistan by the U.S. military and CIA has the potential advantage of looking like murder to most people. May that motivate us to end it. May we resolve not to let this go on another decade or another year or another month. May we not engage in the pretense of talking about a mass murder as having ended just because the mass murderer has given the crime a new name. Thus far it is only the dead who have seen an end to the war on Afghanistan.

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

state. The US built the largest military base in Europe in Kosovo. Montenegro and Macedonia became EU satellites.

While NATO expanded and enhanced the US military presence up to Russia's borders, Germany became the continent's pre-eminent economic power.

Germany and the New World Order

While Presidents Bush and Clinton were heralding a "new world order", based on unipolar military supremacy, Germany advanced its new imperial order by exercising its political and economic levers. Each of the two power centers, Germany and the US, shared the common quest of rapidly incorporating the new capitalist regimes into their regional organizations — the European Union (EU) and NATO — and extending their reach globally. Given the reactionary origins and trajectory into vassalage of the Eastern, Baltic, and Balkan regimes, and given their political fears of a popular reaction to the loss of employment, welfare, and independence resulting from their implementation of savage neoliberal "shock policies", the client rulers

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immediately “applied” for membership as subordinate members of the EU and NATO, trading sovereignty, markets, and national ownership of the means of production for economic handouts and the ‘free’ movement of labor, an escape valve for the millions of newly unemployed workers. German and English capital got millions of skilled immigrant workers at below labor market wages, and unimpeded access to markets and resources. The US secured NATO military bases, and recruited military forces for its Middle East and South Asian imperial wars.

US-German military and economic dominance in Europe was premised on retaining Russia as a weak quasi vassal state, and on the continued economic growth of their economies beyond the initial pillage of the ex-communist economies.

For the US, uncontested military supremacy throughout Europe was the springboard for near-time imperial expansion in the Middle East, South Asia, Africa and Latin America. NATO was ‘internationalized’ into an offensive global military alliance: first in Somalia, Afghanistan then Iraq, Libya, Syria and the Ukraine.

The Rise of Russia, The Islamic Resistance and the New Cold War

During the ‘decade of infamy’ (1991-2000) extreme privatization measures by the client rulers in Russia on behalf of EU and US investors and gangster oligarchs, added up to vast pillage of the entire economy, public treasury, and national patrimony. The image and reality of a giant prostrate vassal state unable to pursue an independent foreign policy, and incapable of providing the minimum semblance of a modern functioning economy and maintaining the rule of law, became the defining view of Russia by the EU and the USA. Post-communist Russia, a failed state by any measure, was dubbed a “liberal democracy” by every western capitalist politician and so it was repeated by all their mass media acolytes.

The fortuitous rise of Vladimir Putin and the gradual replacement of some of the most egregious ‘sell-out’ neo-liberal officials, and most important, the reconstruction of the Russian state with a

proper budget and functioning national institutions, was immediately perceived as a threat to US military supremacy and German economic expansion. Russia’s transition from Western vassalage to regaining its status as a sovereign independent state set in motion, an aggressive counter-offensive by the US-EU. They financed a neo-liberal-oligarchy backed political opposition in an attempt to restore Russia to vassalage via street demonstrations and elections. Their efforts to oust Putin and re-establish Western vassal state failed. What worked in 1991 with Yeltsin’s power grab against Gorbachev was ineffective against Putin. The vast majority of Russians did not want a return to the decade of infamy.

In the beginning of the new century, Putin and his team set new ground-rules, in which oligarchs could retain their illicit wealth and conglomerates providing they didn’t use their economic levers to seize state power. Secondly, Putin revived and restored the scientific technical, military, industrial and cultural institutions and centralized trade and investment decisions within a wide circle of public and private decision makers not beholden to Western policymakers. Thirdly, he began to assess and rectify the breakdown of Russian security agencies particularly with regard to the threats emanating from Western sponsored ‘separatist’ movements in the Caucasus, especially, in Chechnya, and the onset of US backed ‘color revolutions’ in the Ukraine and Georgia.

At first, Putin optimistically assumed that, Russia being a capitalist state, and without any competing ideology, the normalization and stabilization of the Russian state would be welcomed by the US and the EU. He even envisioned that they would accept Russia as an economic, political, and even NATO partner. Putin even made overtures to join and co-operate with NATO and the EU. The West did not try to dissuade Putin of his illusions. In fact, they encouraged him, even as they escalated their backing for Putin’s internal opposition and prepared a series of imperial wars and sanctions in the Middle East, targeting traditional Russian allies in Iraq, Syria, and Libya.

As the ‘internal’ subversive strategy failed to dislodge President Putin, and the Russian state prevailed over the neo-vassals, the demonization of Putin became constant and shrill. The West moved decisively to an ‘outsider strategy’, to isolate, encircle and undermine the Russian state by undermining allies, and trading partners

US and Germany Confront Russia: Manufacturing the “Russian Threat”

Russia was enticed to support US and NATO wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya in exchange for the promise of deeper integration into Western markets. The US and EU accepted Russian co-operation, including military supply routes and bases, for their invasion and occupation of Afghanistan. The NATO powers secured Russian support of sanctions against Iran. They exploited Russia’s naïve support of a “no fly zone” over Libya to launch a full scale aerial war. The US financed so-called “color revolutions” in Georgia and the Ukraine overt, a dress rehearsal for the putsch in 2014. Each violent seizure of power allowed NATO to impose anti-Russian rulers eager and willing to serve as vassal states to Germany and the US.

Germany spearheaded the European imperial advance in the Balkans and Moldavia, countries with strong economic ties to Russia. High German officials “visited” the Balkans to bolster their ties with vassal regimes in Slovenia, Bulgaria, Slovakia and Croatia. Under German direction, the European Union ordered the vassal Bulgarian regime of Boyko “the booby” Borisov to block the passage of Russian-owned South Stream pipeline to Serbia, Hungary, Slovenia, and beyond. The Bulgarian state lost \$400 million in annual revenue ... Germany and the US bankrolled pro-NATO and EU client politicians in Moldavia – securing the election of Iurie Leanca as Prime Minister. As a result of Leanca’s slavish pursuit of EU vassalage, Moldavia lost \$150 million in exports to Russia. Leanca’s pro-EU policies go counter to the views of most Moldavians – 57% see Russia as the country’s most important economic partner. Nearly 40% of the Moldavian

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working age population work in Russia and 25% of the Moldavians' \$8 billion GDP is accounted for by overseas remittances.

German and the US empire-builders steamroll over dissenting voices in Hungary, Serbia, and Slovenia, as well as Moldova and Bulgaria, whose economy and population suffer from the impositions of the blockade of the Russian gas and oil pipeline. But Germany's all out economic warfare against Russia takes precedence over the interests of its vassal states: it is theirs to sacrifice for the 'Greater Good' of the emerging German economic empire and the US-NATO military encirclement of Russia. The extremely crude dictates of German imperial interests articulated through the EU, and the willingness of Balkan and Baltic regimes to sacrifice fundamental economic interests, are the best indicators of the emerging German empire in Europe.

Parallel to Germany's rabid anti-Russian economic campaign, the US via NATO is engaged in a vast military build-up along the length and breadth of Russia's frontier. The US stooge, NATO Chief Jens Stoltenberg, boasts that over the current year, NATO has increased 5-fold the warplanes and bombers patrolling Russian maritime and land frontiers, has carried out military exercises every two days, and has vastly increased the number of war ships in the Baltic and Black Sea.

Conclusion

What is absolutely clear is that the US and Germany want to return Russia to the vassalage status of the 1990's. They do not want 'normal relations'. From the moment Putin moved to restore the Russian state and economy, the Western powers have engaged in a series of political and military interventions, eliminating Russian allies, trading partners and independent states.

The emergent of extremist, visceral anti-Russian regimes in Poland, Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania served as the forward shield for NATO advancement and German economic encroachment. Hitler's 'dream' of realizing the conquest of the East via unilateral military conquest has now under Prime Minister Merkel taken the form of

conquest by stealth in Northern and Central Europe, by economic blackmail in the Balkans, and by violent putsches in the Ukraine and Georgia.

The German economic ruling class is divided between the dominant pro-US sector that is willing to sacrifice lucrative trade with Russia today in hopes of dominating and pillaging the entire economy in a post-Putin Russia (dominated by 'reborn Yeltsin clones') and a minority industrial sector, which wants to end sanctions and return to normal economic relations with Russia.

Germany is fearful that its client rulers in the East, especially in the Balkans are vulnerable to a popular upheaval due to the economic sacrifices they impose on the population. Hence, Germany is wholly in favor of the new NATO rapid-deployment force, ostensibly designed to counter a non-existent "Russian threat" but in reality to prop up faltering vassal regimes.

The 'Russian Threat', the ideology driving the US and German offensive throughout Europe and the Caucasus, is a replay of the same doctrine which Hitler used to secure support from domestic industrial bankers, conservatives and right wing overseas collaborators among extremists in Ukraine, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria.

The US-EU seizure of power via vassal political clients backed by corrupt oligarchs and Nazi street fighters in Ukraine detonated the current crisis. Ukraine power grab posed a top security threat to the very existence of Russia as an independent state. After the Kiev take-over, NATO moved its stooge regime in Kiev forward to militarily eliminate the independent regions in the Southeast and seize the Crimea, thus totally eliminating Russia's strategic position in the Black Sea. Russia, the victim of the NATO power grab, was labelled the "aggressor". The entire officialdom and mass media echoed the Big Lie. Two decades of US-NATO military advances on Russia's borders and German-EU economic expansion into Russian markets were obfuscated. Ukraine is the most important strategic military platform from which the US-NATO can launch an attack on the Russian heartland and the single largest

market for Germany since the annexation of East Germany

The US and Germany see the Ukraine conquest as of extreme value in itself but also as the key to launching an all-out offensive to strangle Russia's economy via sanctions and dumping oil and to militarily threaten Russia. The strategic goal is to reduce the Russian population to poverty and to re-activate the quasi-moribund opposition to overthrow the Putin government and return Russia to permanent vassalage. The US and German imperial elite, looking beyond Russia, believe that if they control Russia, they can encircle, isolate, and attack China from the West as well as the East.

Wild-eyed fanatics they are not. But as rabid proponents of a permanent war to end Russia's presence in Europe and to undermine China's emergence as a world power, they are willing to go to the brink of a nuclear war.

The ideological centerpiece of US-German imperial expansion and conquest in Europe and the Caucasus is the "Russian Threat". It is the touchstone defining adversaries and allies. Countries that do not uphold sanctions are targeted. The mass media repeat the lie. The "Russian Threat" has become the war cry for cringing vassals – the phony justification for imposing frightful sacrifices to serve their imperial 'padrones' in Berlin and Washington – fearing the rebellion of the 'sacrificed' population. No doubt, under siege, Russia will be forced to make sacrifices. The oligarchs will flee westward; the liberals will crawl under their beds. But just as the Soviets turned the tide of war in Stalingrad, the Russian people, past the first two years of a bootstrap operation will survive, thrive, and become once again a beacon of hope to all people looking to get from under the tyranny of US-NATO militarism and German-EU economic dictates.

James Petras, a former Professor of Sociology at Binghamton University, New York, owns a 50-year membership in the class struggle, is an adviser to the landless and jobless in Brazil and Argentina. Petras' most recent books are *The Politics of Empire: The Us, Israel and the Middle East* (2014) and *The Arab Revolt and the Imperialist Counterattack*. He can be reached at: jpetras@binghamton.edu.

**A LEFTIST CAN DREAM**

July 30, 2014

*Wishful thinking on Israel / Palestine*by **Jason Hirthler**

Author and serial dissident William Blum once wrote that if he were president, he'd be assassinated in about four days into his term. He said that his policies would include ending wars, apologizing to victims, and dismantling military bases in absurd locations. And it was this—his humane and rational actions—that would get him shot.

I don't think many of us would fare much better in the Oval Office. For instance, I noticed that the United States, alone among nations, vetoed a U.N. resolution to investigate war crimes in Gaza. The halfwit representing the White House said it gave a thumbs down because the vote was "a political instrument." I would still be in hysterics if the situation weren't so grave. As if the U.S. didn't instantly use the downing of flight MH17 as a political football. Nothing like the flaming carcass of a commercial airliner to help you demonize your enemies. Especially now that Twitter and YouTube are acceptable forms of 'evidence.' Screw forensics. The hell with satellite imagery. Forget the crime scene. Social media is the new soul of veracity.

The fact is that the racist pogrom in Gaza would never happen if the U.S. didn't give Israel the green light. No, Barack Obama didn't call up Benjamin Netanyahu and say, "Let's bury some Arabs this week!" He didn't have to. The light is always green. In the Zionist White House—yes, Obama has repeatedly groveled before AIPAC—there are no yellow caution lights or red stop lights. The freeway to fascism is ever green lit. Full-speed ahead.

Technically, Israel is a free state able to conduct its business as it pleases short of international intervention. But that's exactly what we need.

So if I were elected president tomorrow, my first act in office would be to ring up Tel Aviv and get Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on the line. "Bibi, you world-historical thug," I would begin. "You need to call off the dogs before they butcher more innocent

children, blast more hospitals, crush more schools, and generally lay waste to the Gaza Strip."

Bibi might then sputter a few words of ingratitude and do some insolent posturing, which I would promptly ignore before continuing, "Bibi, you apartheid world champion. If you don't end the siege, attack, act of illegal aggression—call it what you will—this moment, I'll stop payment on the three billion dollar check I just sent you. And never write another.

"Furthermore, I am prepared to move the Fifth Fleet from the Strait of Hormuz into the Mediterranean Basin to provide the immiserated, stateless Palestinians with a bit of protection against your ethnic cleansing campaign."

"But what about Iran? What about the terror in Tehran?" Bibi would stammer with genuine alarm. "The mullahs can't be trusted. I see mushroom clouds in our future."

"Bibi, you knavish war criminal, in your monomaniacal racism you missed a few facts. Namely, that since we started tabulating such things, Iran's official defense policy has been purely defensive. They haven't attacked anyone unprovoked in centuries. They are, however, quite justifiably frightened by the fact that my country keeps attacking their neighbors, assassinating their scientists, slipping viruses into their computer networks, and doing some high-volume saber rattling anytime we get near a microphone."

"But the Iron Dome doesn't work against dirty nukes, Mr. President!"

"Don't fret, Benji. Congress, which is beyond my control, has just mailed you a check for another couple hundred million to fortify your dome."

"We must stop these Arab terrorists from threatening Israeli lives! They parade their telegenic dead and try to drum up international support. What gall, using civilian shields to win political support—an outrage against humanity!"

"Try not occupying and resettling their land. Unlikely they'd fire rockets your way in the absence of nonstop oppression. As we discovered much to our surprise in Iraq: people don't take kindly to having their country occupied, their homes razed, and their citizens tortured."

"If you think I'm bad, wait until you see what I've got behind me in the Knesset! Talk about radical! But we agree on one indisputable fact: Israel has a right to defend itself!"

"Not according to international law, Bibi. Not when you are an occupier. You forfeit that right. But the occupied party does have the right to an armed resistance. It's called 'the right to return fire', not to be confused with that other legitimate concept, 'the right of return.'"

"Then we reject international law!"

"Then we claim the right to use any method at our disposal to stop you. Right now I'm thinking of lending the considerable weight of the U.S. State Department to further globalizing the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement. I'm sure the Israeli Chamber of Commerce will be pleased with that development. Not only that, but I'm putting my Security Council veto in a safe and throwing away the code. I'm tired of my country being the major obstacle to progress in the world. You know how many times we've vetoed resolutions on your behalf?"

"Have you become an Arab sympathizer, Mr. President? How you joined the vile ranks of the anti-Semites?"

"No, Bibi, America just opened its eyes. And just as a point of clarification, aren't Palestinians Semites, too? How have you managed to appropriate an entire classification of linguistics and ethnology? And if I support peaceful co-existence for both Jews and Arabs, doesn't that make me pro-Semite?"

"Do us all a favor, Benjamin: just resign. I would suggest you retire to Elba in a self-imposed hermitude, but I have a better idea. Simply fly to The Hague, where my lawyers will be waiting for you. I'll send a rendition jet to pick you up. While you're being arraigned on war crimes, please signal to the Knesset that you are prepared to recognize Palestine in the U.N. Then ask them to objectively consider whether or not a 'democratic Jewish state' is a contradiction in terms, and possibly racist, undemocratic, or both.

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“I would nev—“

“Then instruct them, based on their findings, to prepare a plan for a one or two-state solution. If the latter, please note that if any roadmap, blueprint, or other such documents even resemble maps of South African Bantustans, your proposal will be met with extreme hostility this side of the Atlantic. And I’m sure my sycophant colleagues in the City of London will no doubt back me on this. Westminster will be pleased to quit having to parrot our asinine defenses of Israeli policy. Also, please write an op-ed for *The New York Times* explaining why you think ‘right of return’ is a perfectly reasonable position for an occupied, sequestered, immiserated, displaced, and frequently fired-upon people to take. They probably won’t publish it, but it’s worth a try.”

“Never! How could you turn your back on us?” (At this point Bibi might be rifling through his Gideon Bible or Torah or whatever super-sacred scripture he keeps in the drawer, looking for the passage that warns against turning your back on the tribe of Israel.)

“That’s a good question. Remind me exactly how exclusively supporting Israel benefits America? Sure, it satisfies the jackals at AIPAC and ideologues like Paul Wolfowitz and Richard Pearle. But what else? It saps our domestic budget. It forfeits the trust of nearly all the Middle East. It makes terrorists want to bomb us. And it morally degrades us.”

“Ah, here it is. And the Lord said—“

“Thanks for the chat, Bibi. I feel like we understand each other a lot better now. Shalom.”

After hanging up, I’d ring up former President Obama’s crack web-coding unit and get the password so I could modify the White House website. I would upload writings by Blum, Noam Chomsky, Ilan Pappé, and a few others. Then I’d write an apology to Palestinians; and post the following lines first glimpsed on a placard in Gaza in 2012:

You take my water
Burn my olive trees
Destroy my house
Take my job

Steal my land
Imprison my father
Kill my mother
Bomb my country
Starve us all
Humiliate us all
But ... I am to blame: I shot a rocket back.

That’s how I would begin my presidency. Naturally, I would probably end it not long afterward (Tony Blair mentioned something about “45 minutes”) with a hole in my head and being unceremoniously dumped at sea. But there are worse fates. Like living under eternal siege.

Jason Hirthler is a veteran of the communications industry. He lives and works in New York City and can be reached at jasonhirthler@gmail.com.

RUNNING ORDERS

‘Running Orders,’ a Powerful Poem by Palestinian-American Lena Khalaf Tuffaha on Gaza

There’s a poem circulating online, written from the voice of a Palestinian evacuee in Gaza, that is as gut wrenching as it is important. Although photographs and testimonies from the besieged region, spread mostly through social media, have gone a long way in humanizing a people who have often been dehumanized and vilified to serve political aims, Lena Khalaf Tuffaha’s poem puts the reader in a Gazan’s shoes as, minutes after watching the World Cup as many in the rest of the world were, she receives a phone call prompting her to immediately abandon her home.

It is poetry like Tuffaha’s that can remind us of the power of words at a time when reading just news stories about the situation in the Middle East fails to convey the deep human tragedy occurring for more than 20 days now (and years before that) in the world’s most populated strip of land.



They call us now.
Before they drop the bombs.
The phone rings
and someone who knows my first name
calls and says in perfect Arabic
“This is David.”
And in my stupor of sonic booms and
glass shattering symphonies
still smashing around in my head
I think “Do I know any Davids in
Gaza?”
They call us now to say
Run.
You have 58 seconds from the end of
this message.
Your house is next.
They think of it as some kind of
war time courtesy.
It doesn’t matter that
there is nowhere to run to.
It means nothing that the borders are
closed
and your papers are worthless
and mark you only for a life sentence
in this prison by the sea
and the alleyways are narrow
and there are more human lives
packed one against the other
more than any other place on earth
Just run.
We aren’t trying to kill you.
It doesn’t matter that
you can’t call us back to tell us
the people we claim to want aren’t in
your house
that there’s no one here
except you and your children
who were cheering for Argentina
sharing the last loaf of bread for this
week
counting candles left in case the power
goes out.
It doesn’t matter that you have children.
You live in the wrong place
and now is your chance to run
to nowhere.
It doesn’t matter
that 58 seconds isn’t long enough
to find your wedding album
or your son’s favorite blanket
or your daughter’s almost completed
college application
or your shoes
or to gather everyone in the house.
It doesn’t matter what you had planned.
It doesn’t matter who you are
Prove you’re human.
Prove you stand on two legs.
Run.



THE DISTURBING EXPANSION OF THE MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

Published on Tuesday, October 14, 2014 by [Inter Press Service](#)

By **Mairead Maguire**

BELFAST - How can we explain that in the 21st century we are still training millions of men and women in our armed forces and sending them to war?

There are more choices than war or peace, there are multi-optional choices and a civilian-based non-military diplomatic-political policy has more chance of succeeding in solving a violent conflict.

“Every day through our television and local culture, we are subjected to the glorification of militarism and bombarded with war propaganda by governments telling us we need nuclear weapons, arms manufacturers, and war to kill the killers who might kill us.”

In war, the cost in civilian lives is incalculable, not to mention the many military personnel whose lives are destroyed. Then there is the cost to the environment and the cost to human potential as our scientists waste their lives planning and researching even more horrific weapons which increasingly, in modern war, kill more civilians than combatants.

For example, the United States and the United Kingdom committed genocide against the Iraqi people when, between 1990 and 2012, they killed 3.3 million people – including 750,000 children – through sanctions and wars.

We all also watched our television screens in horror in July and August this year as the Israeli military bombarded civilians in Gaza for 50 days.

But, why are we surprised at this cruelty of military when they are doing what they are trained to do – kill, at the behest of their politicians and some people?

It is shocking to listen to politicians and military boast of their military prowess when in lay persons’ terms what it means is killing of human beings.

Every day through our television and local culture, we are subjected to the glorification of militarism and bombarded with war propaganda by

working for peace, justice and reconciliation.

Through unconditional, all-inclusive dialogue, we reached peace and

continue to work to build up trust and friendship and change in the post-conflict era. The civil community took a leading role in this journey from violence to peace.

I hope this will give an example to other countries such as Ukraine, where it is necessary for an end to the war, and a solution of the



‘It is shocking to listen to politicians and military boast of their military prowess when in lay persons’ terms what it means is killing of human beings.’ (Photo: US Navy / flickr)

governments telling us we need nuclear weapons, arms manufacturers, and war to kill the killers who might kill us.

However, too many people do not have peace or the basics to help them achieve peace.

They live their lives struggling with the roots of violence, some of which are poverty, war, militarism, occupation, racism and fascism. They have seen that they release uncontrollable forces of tribalism and nationalism. These are dangerous and murderous forms of identity which we need to transcend.

To do this, we need to acknowledge that our common humanity and human dignity are more important than our different traditions; to recognise that our lives and the lives of others are sacred and we can solve our problems without killing each other; to accept and celebrate diversity and otherness; to work to heal the ‘old’ divisions and misunderstandings; to give and accept forgiveness, and to choose listening, dialogue and diplomacy; to disarm and demilitarise as the pathway to peace.

In my own country, in Northern Ireland, when faced with a violent and prolonged ethnic/political conflict, the civil community organised to take a stand, rejected all violence and committed itself to

problem on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations and the Helsinki Accords.

We are also challenged to continue to build structures through which we can cooperate and which reflect our relations of interconnection and interdependence. The vision of the founders of the European Union to link countries together economically in order to lessen the likelihood of war among nations is a worthy endeavour.

Unfortunately instead of putting more energy into providing help for E.U. citizens and others, we are witnessing the growing militarisation of Europe, its role as a driving force for armament and its dangerous path, under the leadership of the United States/NATO, towards a new ‘cold’ war and military aggression.

The European Union and many of its countries, which used to take initiatives in the United Nations for peaceful settlements of conflict, are now one of the most important war assets of the U.S./NATO front. Many countries have also been drawn into complicity in breaking international law through U.S./U.K./NATO wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and so on.

It is for this reason that I believe NATO should be abolished and that steps be taken towards disarmament through non-violent action and civil resistance.

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The means of resistance are very important. Our message that armed groups, militarism and war do not solve our problems but aggravate them challenges us to use new ways and that is why we need to teach the science of peace at every level of society.

The whole of civilisation is now facing a challenge with the growth of what President Dwight Eisenhower (1953-1961) warned the U.S. people against – the military/industrial complex – saying that it would destroy U.S. democracy.

We know now that a small group made up of the military/industrial/media/corporate/academic elite, whose agenda is profit, arms, war and valuable resources, now holds power worldwide and has a stronghold on elected governments. We see this in the gun and Israeli lobbies, among others, which wield great power over U.S. politics.

We have witnessed this in ongoing wars, invasions, occupations and proxy wars, all allegedly in the name of “humanitarian intervention and democracy”. However, in reality, they are causing great suffering, especially to the poor, through their policies of arms, war, domination and control of other countries and their resources.

Unmaking this agenda of war and demanding the implementation of justice, human rights and international law is the work of the peace movement.

We can turn our current path of destruction around by spelling out a clear vision of what kind of a world we want to live in, demanding an end to the military-industrial complex, and insisting that our governments adopt policies of peace, just economics and cooperation with each other in this multi-polar world.

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Mairead Corrigan Maguire won the 1976 Nobel Peace Prize for her work for peace in Northern Ireland. Her book, *The Vision of Peace* (edited by John Dear, with a foreword by Desmond Tutu and a preface by the Dalai Lama) is available from www.wipfandstock.com. She lives in Belfast, Northern Ireland. See: www.peacepeople.com

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS

November 21-23, 2014

Strange Bedfellows: Hillary and Henry
by **Sheldon Richman**

Hillary and Henry sitting in a tree. K-I-S-S-I-N-G-E-R!

It says a lot about former secretary of state and presumed presidential aspirant Hillary Clinton that she’s a member of the Henry Kissinger Fan Club. Progressives who despised George W. Bush might want to examine any warm, fuzzy feelings they harbor for Clinton.

She has made no effort to hide her admiration for Kissinger and his geopolitical views. Now she lays it all out clearly in a *Washington Post* review of his latest book, *World Order*.

Clinton acknowledges differences with Kissinger, but apparently these do not keep her from saying that “his analysis . . . largely fits with the broad strategy behind the Obama administration’s effort over the past six years to build a global architecture of security and cooperation for the 21st century.”

Beware of politicians and courtiers who issue solemn declarations about building global architectures. To them the rest of us are mere “pieces upon a chess-board.” Security and cooperation are always the announced ends, yet the ostensible beneficiaries usually come to grief. Look where such poseurs have been most active: the Middle East, North Africa, Ukraine. As they say about lawyers, if we didn’t have so-called statesmen, we wouldn’t need them.

If I didn’t know better, I’d suspect some pseudonymous writer of having fun with irony in this review. Behold:

President Obama explained the overarching challenge we faced in his Nobel lecture in December 2009. After World War II, he said, “America led the world in constructing an architecture to keep the peace....”

Keep the peace — if you don’t count the mass atrocity that was the Vietnam War, the U.S.-sponsored Israeli oppression of Palestinians, and various massacres carried out by U.S.-backed “leaders” in such places as Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan), East Timor, Chile, and elsewhere.

One Henry Kissinger had a hand in all these crimes, by the way. Strangely, Clinton doesn’t mention them.

America, at its best, is a problem-solving nation.

Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, and Libya are only the latest examples of problems America solved during Madam Secretary’s tenure, building on the glorious successes of George W. Bush’s team. Henry the K is no doubt flattered by the homage.

Kissinger is a friend, and I relied on his counsel when I served as secretary of state. He checked in with me regularly, sharing astute observations about foreign leaders and sending me written reports on his travels.

Now things make sense. That Hillary Clinton thought Kissinger — *Henry* Kissinger — a worthy advisor is something we should all know as 2016 looms.

What comes through clearly in this new book is a conviction that we, and President Obama, share: a belief in the indispensability of continued American leadership in service of a just and liberal order.

There really is no viable alternative. No other nation can bring together the necessary coalitions and provide the necessary capabilities to meet today’s complex global threats. But this leadership is not a birthright; it is a responsibility that must be assumed with determination and humility by each generation.

It takes chutzpah to write *humility* even remotely in connection with Kissinger. And if the U.S. empire is indispensable to justice and liberalism — and where are these, exactly? — we are in trouble. The record is not encouraging. Kissingerian “realism” *creates* global threats.

The things that make us who we are as a nation — our diverse and open society, our devotion to human rights and democratic values — give us a singular advantage in building a future in which the forces of freedom and cooperation prevail over those of division, dictatorship and destruction.

Devotion to human rights and democratic values — as shown in

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**IMPERIALISM AND THE INTERVIEW***The Racist Dehumanization of North Korea*

by Jakob Pettersson

27 December 2014

The haze of political chaos in America surrounding the Ferguson protests, the Torture Report, and the "relaxing" of US-Cuba relations has been broken by a media spectacle almost too ridiculous to comprehend. A hacker group called the "Guardians of Peace" conducted a "cyber attack" on Sony Pictures Entertainment, leaking emails, documents, presentations, and information about the company. The US government, and the vast majority of media, all agree that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is behind the attack, as a direct retaliation to the production of the movie *The Interview*, a goofball comedy depicting Seth Rogen and James Franco attempting to assassinate Kim Jong Un. And given the general media narrative about the easily offended egos of the Kim family, such a story is perhaps not unbelievable to mainstream audiences. However, the evidence seems to be flimsy at best -- as a *Wired* article points out. Yet the media circus continues. The narrative is just too powerful: a ruthless, eccentric, and egomaniacal dictator out to silence any criticism of his good name, regardless of how silly and "innocent" that criticism is.

But *The Interview* is not an innocent movie. Originally, the movie didn't feature the DPRK, and was meant to portray a fake dictator and country, as in Sasha Baron Cohen's *The Dictator*. A leaked confidential email from the hack, however, revealed that Sony had been in contact with the US-funded RAND Corporation, a key think-tank of the US "national security" establishment.

The movie was also, according to the leaked conversations, discussed with a "very senior [official] in [the] State." Apparently, Bruce Bennett, a senior analyst at the RAND Corporation, reviewed the script as well. The Sony executives expressed anxiety over North Korea's reaction to the movie's depiction of the brutal assassination of Kim Jong Un, but Bennett insisted that the assassination scene be left in:

"I also thought a bunch more about the ending. I have to admit that the only resolution I can see to the North Korean nuclear and other threats is for the North Korean regime to eventually go away. . . . In fact, when I have briefed my book on

'preparing for the possibility of a North Korean collapse' [Sept 2013], I have been clear that *the assassination of Kim Jong-Un is the most likely path to a collapse of the North Korean government*. Thus while toning down the ending may reduce the North Korean response, *I believe that a story that talks about the removal of the Kim family regime and the creation of a new government by the North Korean people (well, at least the elites) will start some real thinking in South Korea and, I believe, in the North once the DVD leaks into the North (which it almost certainly will)*. So from a personal perspective, I would personally prefer to leave the ending alone." (emphasis added)

This looks less like an innocent, if offensive, stoner comedy, and more like a propaganda movie. Its purpose is to legitimize and normalize the idea of the illegal assassination of the leader of a sovereign state -- it's no surprise South Korean activist groups wanted to drop copies of it in North Korea with balloons. Imagine if Putin's buddies at the Kremlin sat down with the Russian film company Mosfilm to discuss the crucial plot details of a movie depicting staggering human rights abuses in America and the brutal killing of Obama to stop US imperialism.

Imagine, too, that the stated purpose of the movie should be to inspire such an action in the real world. We would be absolutely shocked!

US involvement with Hollywood is an old story -- as early as 1991, Michael Parenti's book *Make-believe Media* detailed the Pentagon's involvement in producing a positive image of US military practices. It's not something we'd like to think about, because to think of the (often not-so-well) hidden agendas of the entertainment we consume might compromise our enjoyment of it.

But history shows us that the effects of "innocent" entertainment can be deadly. The racist depictions of Japanese people during WWII undoubtedly made it easier for FDR to send up to 120,000 Japanese-Americans to internment camps.

Even today, some Americans defend the atrocious nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki through that (albeit now toned-down) racist lens.

US media and entertainment depictions of Saddam Hussein normalized and legitimized the brutal invasions and genocidal sanctions that were inflicted upon Iraqi civilians.

We are sometimes misled to believe that the media and entertainment depictions of North Korea are somehow about its human rights abuses. And to be sure, according to most international conceptions of liberal democratic human rights, North Korea doesn't exactly have a very impressive scorecard. But more often than not, what media and entertainment provide is not a serious discussion on the human rights situation in the DPRK and the possible ways of solving it. No one can be foolish enough to assume that *The Interview*, for example, will attempt anything remotely like that. The DPRK's status as a dictatorship that violates human rights is but a footnote in the media image surrounding the country. The DPRK we are exposed to through the media is an orientalist spectacle, in which its human rights record merely serves as a backdrop to a racist, dehumanizing ideological narrative.

There are many dictatorships and gross violations of human rights in countries all over the world -- to many of which the US leaders are giving plentiful aid and support. But North Korea is given a special status among these dictatorships. Unlike US-friendly dictatorships, the DPRK represents an "Other," whose crime is a combination of its indigenous culture and anti-imperialist, socialist political ideology.

The media portrayal of North Korea racializes it as "Oriental" or even "Confucian." It is almost as if Edward Said's work had been read as an instruction manual instead of a criticism. It's not, strictly speaking, the "Kim Dynasty" that is the problem for imperialist propagandists -- it's North Korea's civilian population. The "brainwashed" Asians with an "unquestioning" respect for authority are the real issue at stake. Thus, the images of North Korean citizens

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weeping over their deceased leader Kim Jong Il are weaponized against them.

This deliberate targeting of the civilian population's complicity in the DPRK's rule serves to dehumanize them -- it's easier to kill, subjugate, and exploit a population that you believe to be unreasonable, child-like cult members with an inability to accept the self-evident truths of human rights through imperial dominance. Perhaps that is why the revelation that the US had considered using nuclear weapons against North Korea in 2013 didn't receive the widespread attentions of millions, but a flimsy allegation of hacking a corporation does.

The entertainment media does its share to promote these notions -- Matt Stone and Trey Parker's *Team America: World Police*, with its unapologetic racism, is a prime example. One can only guess the level of racial and cultural sensitivity to which comedians like Seth Rogen would adhere in *The Interview*. The news media, for their part, abandon all journalistic integrity when reporting on the DPRK. On a regular basis, respected and widely read publications publish baseless, sensationalist, and racist stories about the country. Many of these stories are easily sourced to satirical sites -- others to right-wing Fox News-esque South Korean newspapers. Stories that hundreds of thousands of people read include Kim Jong-Un feeding his uncle to 120 starving dogs, forcing all North Korean men to get his haircut, and sending the DPRK soccer team to work in the coal mines after failing in the World Cup -- stories which were all fake. The things we are ready to believe about North Korea prove more about the brainwashing of us than of the North Koreans themselves. These stories are often corrected by the media sources themselves after they have already been published, but they are rarely as much of a fun read as the original stories. In the "free market of ideas," baseless and racist propaganda yields a higher rate of profit than principled journalistic inquiry.

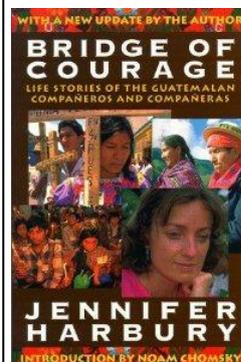
Let me be clear: *The Interview* looks like a horribly bad movie that is very unlikely to inspire the overthrow of any government anytime soon. With a cast-list featuring Guy Fieri and Eminem, and

an end product that seems to be universally despised by the Sony execs themselves, the hacking was hardly the only thing working against it. But the massive spectacle that has arisen around this movie serves a purpose -- the US government will use North Korea's alleged involvement in censoring "criticism of the regime" to rationalize continued US militarization of the South Korean borders, authorize illegal attempts at subversion, and rally support for sanctions that will keep the civilians of the DPRK poor, hungry, and isolated.

Jakob Pettersson is a Swedish activist affiliated with RKU (Revolutionary Communist Youth). He has contributed articles to Swedish India-solidarity organization *Indiensolidaritet's* monthly magazine. Read his blog interrogationofthegood.blogspot.com. Follow him on Twitter @YakovPettersson.

NON-VIOLENT RESISTENCE

In her excellent 1995 book, *Bridge of Courage*, Jennifer Harbury quotes a Guatemalan freedom fighter named Gabriel, on the topic of non-violent resistance:



"In my country, child malnutrition is close to 85 percent. Ten percent of all children will be dead before the age of five, and this is only the number actually reported to

government agencies. Close to 70 percent of our people are functionally illiterate. There is almost no industry in our country—you need land to survive. Less than 3 percent of our landowners own over 65 percent of our lands. In the last fifteen years or so, there have been over 150,000 political murders and disappearances... Don't talk to me about Gandhi; he wouldn't have survived a week here. There was a peaceful movement for progress here, once. They were crushed. We were crushed. For Gandhi's method to work, there must be a government capable of shame. We lack that here."

#shifthappens

From Mickey Z <http://mickeyzvegan.wordpress.com/page/2/>

DO NOT EVER DRIVE THEIR MACHINES

Posted on March 5, 2014

(To follow is an excerpt from *Occupy this Book: Mickey Z. on Activism.*)

When Henry David Thoreau tired of merely *talking* about principles and ideas and decided instead to *live* them, he was given an ideal opportunity to do so— thanks to his country's imperialism.

In 1846, the U.S. provoked a war of conquest against Mexico and this intervention, of course, required public funding. So, when Thoreau crossed paths with local tax collector, Sam Staples, he was asked to pony up for the poll tax.

Thoreau refused, on moral grounds. "What am I to do?" asked the flustered Staples. Thoreau's reply sums it all up in one word: "Quit."

Ralph Waldo Emerson later visited his friend Thoreau in jail and asked, "Henry, what are you doing in there?" Again, Thoreau's answer spoke volumes: "Waldo, the question is what are you doing out there?"

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General your tank is a powerful vehicle.

It smashes down forests and crushes a hundred men.

But it has one defect:

It needs a driver.

General, your bomber is powerful.

It flies faster than a storm and carries more than an elephant.

But it has one defect:

It needs a mechanic.

General, man is very useful.

He can fly and he can kill.

But he has one defect:

He can think.

(Bertolt Brecht)

My take-home message: Don't be their driver. Don't be their mechanic. No matter what they offer or promise; no matter what you believe you "need" to "survive," never drive their machines. Never maintain their machines. Instead, choose to embrace the subversive pleasure of critical, independent thinking.

From Mickey Z <http://mickeyzvegan.wordpress.com/page/7/>

**THE MOCKINGJAY OF PALESTINE***“If we burn, you burn with us”*by **Ramzy Baroud**

December 3rd, 2014

Raed Mu’anis was my best friend. The small scar on top of his left eyebrow was my doing at the age of five. I urged him to quit hanging on a rope where my mother was drying our laundry. He wouldn’t listen, so I threw a rock at him.

I didn’t mean for the rock hit him, but it did. My father dragged me to his house kicking and screaming, while carrying a colourful rubber ball and a doll for gifts. I was mostly embarrassed that I hurt my best friend.

Several years later, Raed, now 15, was shot by Israeli soldiers as he helped our neighbours dig a grave for a kindly man who was killed by Israeli troops earlier in the day, while performing Eid prayers.

On that day, my father had taken us to extend holiday greetings to relatives in a nearby refugee camp in Gaza when the “Eid Massacre” took place in my home camp of Nuseirat. Every holiday there seemed to be a massacre. Nuseirat, the rebellious camp of resilient refugees was chosen on that particular Muslim holiday to be taught a lesson. Raed was one of that day’s many victims.

A friend told me that Raed was bleeding profusely as he ramblingly walked soon after the Israeli army chopper shot him. He arrived to my house, which was adjacent to the graveyard, and desperately knocked at the door yelling my mother’s name: “Auntie Zarefah, please open the door!”

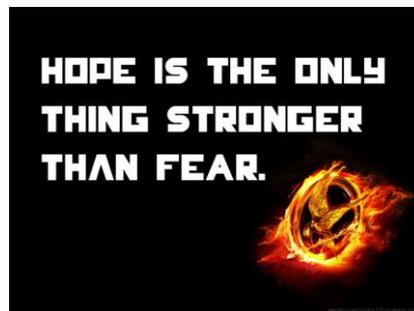
But my mother was already dead. She was buried in the “martyrs’ graveyard,” where my grandparents, both refugees from historic Palestine, were also laid to rest. The tiny grave of my oldest brother, Anwar was also there. He died at the age of two because my father had no money to treat him at a proper hospital. Raed is now buried only a few feet away.

I could have never imagined myself drawing parallels between Nuseirat, and its heroic people and a Hollywood movie; the struggle of my people is too sacred to make such comparisons. But I couldn’t help it as I watched the latest from the Hunger Games franchise, “Mockingjay.” A feeling of anger initially overwhelmed

me when I saw the districts destroyed by the heartless rulers of the Capitol. As I watched the movie, only Palestine, but particularly the Gaza resistance was on my mind.

The Capitol – with unmatched military technology and access to an enormous media apparatus – was unstoppable in its brutality. Its rulers, who claimed to have superiority over all the inhabitants of the dystopia of Panem, had no moral boundaries whatsoever.

The Hunger Games, the story’s version of a reality television show, was created as an annual event to celebrate the victory of Capitol over a previous revolt by the districts. It also served as a reminder of what the Capitol was capable of if anyone dared to rise up again in the future. The show’s participants – mostly children who were chosen or volunteered in a process called the “reaping” – came from every district. The contestants had to kill one another for the amusement of the Capitol, which drew its strength from the division and oppression of others.



But the districts rebelled. They ought to. They resisted because there can be no other response to systematic oppression but resistance. District 13 was annihilated early on so that the rest of the districts dare not entertain any ideas aside from the Capitol’s insistence that resistance is futile. Panem’s ruthless president was adamant at referring to those who defied the Capitol as “radicals,” and not “rebels.” At times, the Capitol tried to turn the districts against one another, inciting civil war.

The Gaza connection became too stark to miss when Katniss, one of the early “tributes,” and the symbolic “Mockingjay” of the resistance uttered these words soon after the Capitol

bombers destroyed a hospital full of unarmed men, women and children, killing everyone: “I want to tell the people that if you think for one second the Capitol will treat us fairly if there’s a cease-fire, you’re deluding yourself. Because you know who they are and what they do.” The similarities in this drama were eerily similar to the bombing and complete destruction of al-Wafa hospital in Gaza in late July of this year, the only rehabilitation centre in the strip for thousands of victims of Israeli atrocities.

Her message to the Capitol: “You can torture us and bomb us and burn our districts to the ground, but do you see that? Fire is catching! And if we burn, you burn with us!”

It is as if the author of the Hunger Games, Suzanne Collins knows so much about Gaza; as if she had fashioned her stories to tell of a real fight between a brutal Capitol, called Israel, and rebellious districts called Palestine; it is as if Gaza is district 13; and that despite attempts at repeated annihilation for the last 65 years, but particularly two genocidal wars in 2008-9 and 2014, the resistance is still alive.

Does Collins know that Katniss, who didn’t choose such a fate, but had to step up in defence of her people, is represented in thousands of men, women, and yes, children of Gaza? Does she know that her stories were already written and enacted by real people, who may never have heard of her franchise and may never live to watch her movies? Does she know that criminal leaders such as President Snow are not something of fantasy, but they actually exist, here today in the persons of Benjamin Netanyahu and countless other Israeli leaders who call for the absolute annihilation of Gazans at a whim?

As for Gaza’s Hunger Games, the similarities are uncanny.

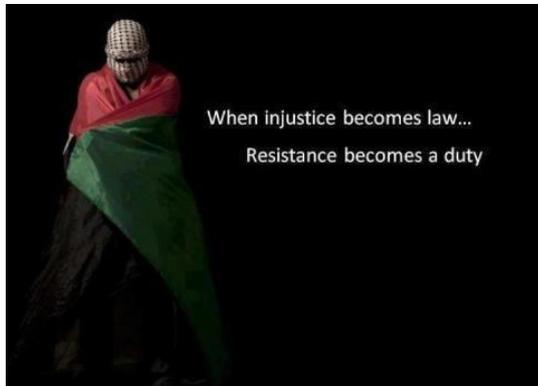
Just before Israel imposed severe economic sanctions on Gaza, to punish Palestinians for the result of their democratic elections, top Israeli government advisor, Dov Weisglass made a spine-chilling promise: “The idea is to put the Palestinians on a

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diet, but not to make them die of hunger.” (AFP, February 16, 2006). This was not a passing statement.



After much legal wrangling, an Israeli human rights group, Gisha, managed to obtain documents that showed that Israel’s official policy in Gaza since then was that of “deliberate policy of near-starvation,” and that “security” had nothing to do with the Gaza blockade.

In Israel’s Operation Cast Lead, over 1,400 Palestinians were killed and 5,500 wounded. But in Israel’s latest war the price tag for resistance was increased to 2137. More are still dying from their wounds.

Gaza stands in ruins. Entire neighbourhoods were destroyed, villages erased and whole families annihilated. Hundreds of schools, hospitals and mosques were blown up in an orgy of death and destruction unprecedented.

Yet the resistance is yet to be defeated in Gaza. Because resistance is not men and women with guns. Resistance is an idea, pure in its intentions, romantic, at times, maybe, but certainly the work of an entire collective, who had chosen to die fighting, if they must, but never live carrying the shackles of a slave.

Not even the chilling words of Moshe Feiglin, deputy speaker of the Israeli parliament (Knesset) were enough to intimidate Gaza. In his Facebook plan to destroy the resistance on 1 August, 2014, Feiglin called for the “conquest of the entire Gaza Strip, and annihilation of all fighting forces and their supporters,” in addition to pushing its remaining inhabitants into concentration camps near the Sinai desert. “In these areas, tent encampments will be established, until relevant emigration destinations are determined.”

Feiglin, and his prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, among many others in Israel’s political and military establishment, are real life leaders of the Capitol, which is allowed to operate with complete impunity against the oppressed districts of Palestine.

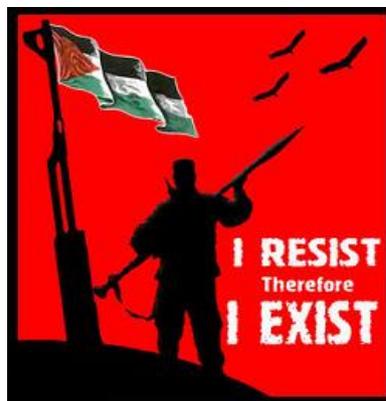
And like the Mockingjay which was resurrected against great odds, Gaza will remain the rebellious district. The blood of its “near-starved” children will someday unite all districts against the Capitol. Then, all the voices that doubted the wisdom of the resistance will be diminished

by the loud, but harmonious chanting of a united people. As the resistance continues, Palestinians everywhere will express their victory and defiance with by raising four fingers, Egypt’s “raba’a”, just as the rebels of the 13 districts expressed by raising three.

Till then, the Mockingjay of Palestine, the thousands of living martyrs will continue to circulate the skies singing the song of a rebellious nation.

Are you, Are you
Coming to the tree
Where I told you to run, so we’d
both be free
Strange things did happen here
No stranger would it be
If we met up at midnight in the
hanging tree.

If only the other districts would rise...



Ramzy Baroud is an author and a journalist. His latest volume is [The Second Palestinian Intifada: A Chronicle of a People’s Struggle](#) (Pluto Press, London). He can be reached at ramzybaroud@hotmail.com.

THE PALESTINIANS’ RIGHT TO SELF DEFENCE

By Chris Hedges

July 24, 2014 "ICH" - "Truthdig"

If Israel insists, as the Bosnian Serbs did in Sarajevo, on using the weapons of industrial warfare against a helpless civilian population then that population has an inherent right to self-defense under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. The international community will have to either act to immediately halt Israeli attacks and lift the blockade of Gaza or acknowledge the right of the Palestinians to use weapons to defend themselves.

No nation, including any in the Muslim world, appears willing to intervene to protect the Palestinians. No world body, including the United Nations, appears willing or able to pressure Israel through sanctions to conform to the norms of international law. And the longer we in the world community fail to act, the worse the spiral of violence will become.

Israel does not have the right to drop 1,000-pound iron fragmentation bombs on Gaza. It does not have the right to pound Gaza with heavy artillery and with shells lobbed from gunboats. It does not have the right to send in mechanized ground units or to target hospitals, schools and mosques, along with Gaza’s water and electrical systems. It does not have the right to displace over 100,000 people from their homes. The entire occupation, under which Israel has nearly complete control of the sea, the air and the borders of Gaza, is illegal.

Violence, even when employed in self-defense, is a curse. It empowers the ruthless and punishes the innocent. It leaves in its aftermath horrific emotional and physical scars. But, as I learned in Sarajevo during the 1990s Bosnian War, when forces bent on your annihilation attack you relentlessly, and when no one comes to your aid, you must aid yourself. When Sarajevo was being hit with 2,000 shells a day and under heavy sniper fire in the summer of 1995 no one among the suffering Bosnians spoke to me about wanting to

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mount nonviolent resistance. No one among them saw the U.N.-imposed arms embargo against the Bosnian government as rational, given the rain of sniper fire and the 90-millimeter tank rounds and 155-millimeter howitzer shells that were exploding day and night in the city. The Bosnians were reduced, like the Palestinians in Gaza, to smuggling in light weapons through clandestine tunnels. Their enemies, the Serbs—like the Israelis in the current conflict—were constantly trying to blow up tunnels. The Bosnian forces in Sarajevo, with their meager weapons, desperately attempted to hold the trench lines that circled the city. And it is much the same in Gaza. It was only repeated NATO airstrikes in the fall of 1995 that prevented the Bosnian-held areas from being overrun by advancing Serbian forces. The Palestinians cannot count on a similar intervention.

The number of dead in Gaza resulting from the Israeli assault has topped 650, and about 80 percent have been civilians. The number of wounded Palestinians is over 4,000 and a substantial fraction of these victims are children. At what point do the numbers of dead and wounded justify self-defense? 5,000? 10,000? 20,000? At what point do Palestinians have the elemental right to protect their families and their homes?

Article 51 does not answer these specific questions, but the International Court of Justice does in the case of *Nicaragua v. United States*. The court ruled in that case that a state must endure an armed attack before it can resort to self-defense. The definition of an armed attack, in addition to being “action by regular armed forces across an international border,” includes sending or sponsoring armed bands, mercenaries or irregulars that commit acts of force against another state. The court held that any state under attack must first request outside assistance before undertaking armed self-defense. According to U.N. Charter Article 51, a state’s right to self-defense ends when the Security Council meets the terms of the article by “tak[ing] the measures necessary to maintain international peace and security.”

The failure of the international community to respond has left the Palestinians with no choice. The United States, since Israel’s establishment in

1948, has vetoed in the U.N. Security Council more than 40 resolutions that sought to curb Israel’s lust for occupation and violence against the Palestinians. And it has ignored the few successful resolutions aimed at safeguarding Palestinian rights, such as Security Council Resolution 465, passed in 1980.

Resolution 465 stated that the “Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949 is applicable to the Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem.” The resolution went on to warn Israel that “all measures taken by Israel to change the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure or status of the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, or any part thereof, have no legal validity and that Israel’s policy and practices of settling parts of its population and new immigrants in those territories constitute a flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and also constitute a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.”

Israel, as an occupying power, is in direct violation of Article III of the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. This convention lays out the minimum standards for the protection of civilians in a conflict that is not international in scope. Article 3(1) states that those who take no active role in hostilities must be treated humanely, without discrimination, regardless of racial, social, religious or economic distinctions. The article prohibits certain acts commonly carried out against noncombatants in regions of armed conflict, including murder, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture. It prohibits the taking of hostages as well as sentences given without adequate due process of law. Article 3(2) mandates care for the sick and wounded.

Israel has not only violated the tenets of Article III but has amply fulfilled the conditions of an aggressor state as

defined by Article 51. But for Israel, as for the United States, international law holds little importance. The U.S. ignored the verdict of the international court in *Nicaragua v. United States* and, along with Israel, does not accept the jurisdiction of the tribunal. It does not matter how many Palestinians are killed or wounded, how many Palestinian homes are demolished, how dire the poverty becomes in Gaza or the West Bank, how many years Gaza is under a blockade or how many settlements go up on Palestinian territory. Israel, with our protection, can act with impunity.

The unanimous U.S. Senate vote in support of the Israeli attacks on Gaza, the media’s slavish parroting of Israeli propaganda and the Obama administration’s mindless repetition of pro-Israeli clichés have turned us into cheerleaders for Israeli war crimes. We fund and abet these crimes with \$3.1 billion a year in military aid to Israel. We are responsible for the slaughter. No one in the establishment, including our most liberal senator, Bernie Sanders, dares defy the Israel lobby. And since we refuse to act to make peace and justice possible we should not wonder why the Palestinians carry out armed resistance.

The Palestinians will reject, as long as possible, any cease-fire that does not include a lifting of the Israeli blockade of Gaza. They have lost hope that foreign governments will save them. They know their fate rests in their own hands. The revolt in Gaza is an act of solidarity with the world outside its walls. It is an attempt to assert in the face of overwhelming odds and barbaric conditions the humanity and agency of the Palestinian people. There is little in life that Palestinians can choose, but they can choose how to die. And many Palestinians, especially young men trapped in overcrowded hovels where they have no work and little dignity, will risk immediate death to defy the slow, humiliating death of occupation.

I cannot blame them.

Chris Hedges

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**1914: THE GREAT WAR STARTS***1914: the Great War has become a nightly pornography of violence*

The centenary has been seized as a military propaganda opportunity. So-called lessons learned have been ignored or forgotten

Simon Jenkins

The Guardian, Tuesday 5 August 2014

Britain's commemoration of the Great War has lost all sense of proportion. It has become a media theme park, an indigestible cross between Downton Abbey and a horror movie. I cannot walk down the street or turn on the television without being bombarded by Great War diaries, poems, scrapbooks and songs. The BBC has gone war mad. We have Great War plays, Great War proms, Great War bake-ins, Great War gardens, even Great War Countryfile. There is the Great War and the Commonwealth, the Great War and feminism, Great War fashion shows and souvenirs. There are reportedly 8,000 books on the war in print. The Royal Mail has issued "classic, prestige and presentation" packs on the war that "enable you to enjoy both the stories and the stamps". Enjoy?

Meanwhile our finest historians compete to find the most ghoulish tales from the trenches, the most ghastly cruelties, the goriest wounds. No programme appears on television without some footage of men running through mud. Is there no other way of remembering an event than with images of death, punctuated by men in top hats with silly walks?

This has been going on all year. When in January I apologised to German friends for the impending avalanche of anti-German memorabilia, I little realised how great that avalanche would be. A Martian might think Britain was a country of demented warmongers, not able to get through a day without a dose of appalling battle scenes from past national victories. On Monday the fact that Britain went to war with Germany in 1914 actually led the morning news. Was this on government instruction? Were this North Korea or Maoist China we would ridicule such craven chauvinism.

Clearly events of the magnitude of a war should be remembered. But when those who fought and suffered are almost all dead, "remembering" is a task for the intellect and imagination. It is essentially work for historians, but we have to pump up "human interest" in it, especially for children, with tales of personal distress and terrible cruelty. The repetition of virtually identical "stories from the trenches" becomes banal, a nightly pornography of violence.

The war was terrible, as are all wars. As the historian Max Hastings remarked on Radio 4's Today programme, the soldiers who experienced Napoleon's march on Moscow or the Russian front in the second world war would have regarded the trenches as easy going. Besides, the actual outbreak of a war is by no means its most significant moment, which surely attaches to its completion. No one in 1914 thought they were marching off to "the Great War", but rather to drive the Germans back over their border by Christmas.

Needless to say, the centenary has been seized as a military propaganda opportunity. Last week David Cameron crudely compared Vladimir Putin in Ukraine to Germany under the Kaiser in 1914 (and under Hitler). This was neither true nor helpful. The prime minister added that Britain was "not about to launch a European war". In which case why mention it at all, and why also send troops to train in Eastern Europe?

Eagerly jumping on the rolling bandwagon was the chief of the general staff, Sir Peter Wall. In the Telegraph on Monday he added that recent wars had bred a "warrior generation" of soldiers eager to take the fight to any available enemy – even back to Afghanistan, of all places.

The most sensible commemoration of any war is not to repeat it. Hence, presumably, the constant references by this week's celebrants to "drawing lessons" and "lest we forget". But this is mere cliché if no lessons are then drawn, or if drawn are then forgotten.

The Great War centenary should indeed have been a festival of lessons. Historians have had a field day arguing over its enduring puzzle – not its

conduct or its outcome, but its cause. I have come close to changing my mind with each book I have read, veering from Chris Clark's cobweb of treaties and tripwires to the majority view that firmly blames the Kaiser and Germany. But I have read precious few lessons.

The truth is that Britain is as bad as America at learning from old wars. The American defence secretary during Vietnam, Robert McNamara, remarked that every lesson of Vietnam was ignored by the invasion of Iraq. In the past decade Britain has waged three unprovoked wars – on Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya – at a vast cost in lives and destruction, and no obvious benefit to anyone. The invasion of Afghanistan ignored the lesson of all previous conflicts in the region and is duly being lost. The truth is that "drawing lessons" has become code for celebrating victory.

I doubt if any lessons will be drawn next year from the anniversaries of Agincourt (1415) or Waterloo (1815) – and certainly none from the Battle of New Orleans (1815). We will just ring bells, bake cakes and put on costumes.

Nor is the Great War celebration over. There are still four years of fighting to go, from the Marne to the Somme to Passchendaele to Amiens. We can have "Oh! What a Lovely War" each evening. Someone at the BBC will perhaps try to replay the Anglo-German football match in no man's land – and try not to win. And what of Armistice Day? We know where that will lead, to the classic British 20th century Boche-bashing.

The chief lesson of 1914 must be not recklessly to rattle sabres across the frontiers of Europe until all else is lost. The Germans have learned that. In Ukraine they are still counselling restraint. Britain is doing the opposite, as its leaders gently dust themselves in glory. When Cameron last year allotted £50m to "remembering the lessons" of 1914, he was also planning to go to war on Syria. I wonder what lesson taught him that.

Simon Jenkins is a journalist and author. He writes for the Guardian as well as broadcasting for the BBC. He has edited the Times and the London Evening Standard and chaired the National Trust. His latest book is *England's Hundred Best Views*.

**1918: THE GREAT WAR ENDS**

by Michael Parenti

Looking back at the years of fury and carnage, Colonel Angelo Gatti, staff officer of the Italian Army (Austrian front), wrote in his diary: "This whole war has been a pile of lies. We came into war because a few men in authority, the dreamers, flung us into it."

No, Gatti, *caro mio*, those few men are not dreamers; they are *schemers*. They perch above us. See how their armament contracts are turned into private fortunes -- while the young men are turned into dust: more blood, more money; good for business this war.

It is the rich old men, *pauci*, "the few," as Cicero called the Senate oligarchs whom he faithfully served in ancient Rome. It is the few, who together constitute a bloc of industrialists and landlords, who think war will bring bigger markets abroad and civic discipline at home. One of the *pauci* in 1914 saw war as a way of promoting compliance and obedience on the labor front -- and war "would permit the hierarchical reorganisation of class relations."

Just a while ago the heresies of Karl Marx were spreading among Europe's lower ranks. The proletariats of each country, growing in numbers and strength, are made to wage war against each other. What better way to confine and misdirect them than with the swirl of mutual destruction? Meanwhile, the nations blame each other for the war.

Then there are the generals and other militarists who started plotting this war as early as 1906, eight years before the first shots were fired. War for them means glory, medals, promotions, financial rewards, inside favors, and dining with ministers, bankers, and diplomats: the whole prosperity of death. When the war finally comes, it is greeted with quiet satisfaction by the generals.

But the young men are ripped by waves of machine-gun bullets or blown apart by exploding shells. War comes with gas attacks and sniper fire, grenades and artillery barrages, the roar of a great inferno and the sickening smell of rotting

corpses. Torn bodies hang sadly on the barbed wire, and trench rats try to eat away at us, even while we are still alive.

Farewell, my loving hearts at home, those who send us their precious tears wrapped in crumpled letters. And farewell my comrades. When the people's wisdom fails, moguls and monarchs prevail and there seems to be no way out.

Fools dance and the pit sinks deeper as if bottomless. No one can see the sky, or hear the music, or deflect the swarms of lies that cloud our minds like the countless lice that torture our flesh. Crusted with blood and filth, regiments of lost souls drag themselves to the devil's pit. "*Lasciate ogne speranza, voi ch'entrate.*" (Abandon all hope, ye who enter.)

Meanwhile from above the Vatican wall, the pope himself begs the world leaders to put an end to hostilities "lest there be no young men left alive in Europe." But the war industry pays him no heed.



NOVEMBER 11th

Finally the casualties are more than we can bear. There are mutinies in the French trenches! Agitators in the Czar's army cry out for "Peace, Land, and Bread"! At home, our families grow bitter. There comes a breaking point as the oligarchs seem to be losing their grip.

At last the guns are mute in the morning air. A strange almost pious silence takes over. The fog and rain seem to wash our wounds and cool our fever. "Still alive," the sergeant grins, "still alive." He cups a cigarette in his hand. "Stack those rifles, you lazy bastards." He grins again, two teeth missing. Never did his ugly face look so good as on this day in November 1918. Armistice comes like a quiet rapture.

A big piece of the encrusted aristocratic world breaks off. The Romanovs, Czar and family, are all

executed in 1918 in Revolutionary Russia. That same year, the House of Hohenzollern collapses as Kaiser Wilhelm II flees Germany. Also in 1918, the Ottoman empire is shattered. And on Armistice Day, November 11, 1918, at 11:00 a.m. -- the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month -- we mark the end of the war and with it the dissolution of the Habsburg dynasty.

Four indestructible monarchies, Russian, German, Turkish, and Austro-Hungarian, four great empires, each with millions of bayonets and cannon at the ready, now twisting in the dim shadows of history.

Will our children ever forgive us for our dismal confusion? Will they ever understand what we went through? Will *we*? By 1918, four aristocratic autocracies fade away, leaving so many victims mangled in their wake, and so many bereaved crying through the night.

Back in the trenches, the agitators among us prove right. The mutinous Reds standing before the firing squad last year were right. Their truths must not be buried with them. Why are impoverished workers and peasants killing other impoverished workers and peasants? Now we know that our real foe is not in the weave of trenches; not at Ypres, nor at the Somme, or Verdun or Caporetto. Closer to home, closer to the deceptive peace that follows a deceptive war.

Now comes a different conflict. We have enemies at home: the schemers who trade our blood for sacks of gold, who make the world safe for hypocrisy, safe for themselves, readying themselves for the next "humanitarian war." See how sleek and self-satisfied they look, riding our backs, distracting our minds, filling us with fright about wicked foes. Important things keep happening, but not enough to finish them off. Not yet enough.

Michael Parenti's most recent books are *The Face of Imperialism* (2011); *Waiting for Yesterday: Pages from a Street Kid's Life* (2013); and *Profit Pathology and Other Indecencies* (forthcoming early 2015).



CELEBRATING WAR OVER AND OVER AND PEACE ONCE

Thank You For Making War! (or Why No One Remembers the Peacemakers)

By Adam Hochschild

Go to war and every politician will thank you, and they'll continue to do so -- with monuments and statues, war museums and military cemeteries -- long after you're dead. But who thanks those who refused to fight, even in wars that most people later realized were tragic mistakes? Consider the 2003 invasion of Iraq, now widely recognized as igniting an ongoing disaster. America's politicians still praise Iraq War veterans to the skies, but what senator has a kind word to say about the hundreds of thousands of protesters who marched and demonstrated before the invasion was even launched to try to stop our soldiers from risking their lives in the first place?

What brings all this to mind is an apparently heartening exception to the rule of celebrating war-makers and ignoring peacemakers. A European rather than an American example, it turns out to be not quite as simple as it first appears. Let me explain.

December 25th will be the 100th anniversary of the famous Christmas Truce of the First World War. You probably know the story: after five months of unparalleled industrial-scale slaughter, fighting on the Western Front came to a spontaneous halt. British and German soldiers stopped shooting at each other and emerged into the no-man's-land between their muddy trenches in France and Belgium to exchange food and gifts.

That story -- burnished in recent years by books, songs, music videos, a feature film, and an opera -- is largely true. On Christmas Day, troops did indeed trade cigarettes, helmets, canned food, coat buttons, and souvenirs. They sang carols, barbecued a pig, posed for photographs together, and exchanged German beer for British rum. In several spots, men from the rival armies played soccer together. The ground was pocked with shell craters and proper balls were scarce, so



A U.S. war veteran pulls his medals off his uniform before throwing them towards the site of the NATO Summit during an anti-war protest in Chicago in 2012. (Photo: AP)

the teams made use of tin cans or sandbags stuffed with straw instead. Officers up to the rank of colonel emerged from the trenches to greet their counterparts on the other side, and they, too, were photographed together. (Refusing to join the party, however, was 25-year-old Adolf Hitler, at the front with his German army unit. He thought the truce shocking and dishonorable.)

Unlike most unexpected outbreaks of peace, the anniversary of this one is being celebrated with extraordinary officially sanctioned fanfare. The British Council, funded in part by the government and invariably headed by a peer or knight, has helped distribute an "education pack" about the Truce to every primary and secondary school in the United Kingdom. It includes photos, eyewitness accounts, lesson plans, test questions, student worksheets, and vocabulary phrases in various languages, including "Meet us halfway," "What are your trenches like?," and "Can I take your picture?" The British post office has even issued a set of stamps commemorating the Christmas Truce.

An exhibit of documents, maps, uniforms, and other Truce-related memorabilia has been on display at city hall in Armentières, France. A commemorative youth soccer tournament with teams from Britain, Belgium, France, Austria, and Germany is taking place in Belgium this month. The local mayor and the British and German ambassadors were recently on hand for a soccer game at a newly dedicated "Flanders Peace Field."

Volunteers from several countries will spend three days and two nights in freshly dug trenches reenacting the Truce. Professional actors, complete with period uniforms, carol-singing, and a soccer match, have already done the same in an elaborate video advertisement for a British supermarket chain. One of the judges for a children's competition to design a Truce

memorial is none other than Prince William, Duke of Cambridge.

What Won't Be Commemorated

Given the rarity of peace celebrations of any sort, what's made the Christmas Truce safe for royalty, mayors, and diplomats? Three things, I believe. First, this event --

remarkable, spontaneous, and genuinely moving as it was -- did not represent a challenge to the sovereignty of war. It was sanctioned by officers on the spot; it was short-lived (the full fury of shelling and machine gunning resumed within a day or two, and poison gas and flamethrowers soon added to the horror); and it was never repeated. It's safe to celebrate because it threatened nothing. That supermarket video, for instance, advertises a commemorative chocolate bar whose sales proceeds go to the national veterans organization, the Royal British Legion.

Second, commemorating anything, even peace instead of war, is good business. Belgium alone expects two million visitors to former battle sites during the war's four-and-a-half-year centenary period, and has now added one or two peace sites as visitor destinations. The country is putting \$41 million in public funds into museums, exhibits, publicity, and other tourism infrastructure, beyond private investment in new hotel rooms, restaurants, and the like.

Finally, the Christmas Truce is tailor-made to be celebrated by professional soccer, now a huge industry. Top pro players earn \$60 million or more a year. Two Spanish teams are each worth more than \$3 billion. The former manager of Britain's Manchester United team, Sir Alex Ferguson, even teaches at the Harvard Business School. Five of the world's 10 most valuable teams, however, are in Britain, which helps account for that country's special enthusiasm for these commemorations. The Duke of Cambridge is the official patron of the sport's British governing body, the Football Association, the equivalent

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of our NFL. It has joined with the continent-wide Union of European Football Associations in promoting the Christmas Truce soccer tournament and other anniversary hoopla. That packet of material going to more than 30,000 British schools is titled "Football Remembers."

While such sponsorship represents only a tiny percentage of the public relations budgets of these organizations, they have surely calculated that associating soccer with schoolchildren, Christmas, and a good-news historical event can't hurt business. All industries keep a close eye on their public image, and soccer especially so at the moment, since in many parts of Europe audiences for it are declining as a barrage of other activities competes for people's leisure time and spending.

For nearly four years, as we reach the centenary mark for one First World War milestone after another, there will be commemorations galore across Europe. But here's one thing you can bank on: the Duke of Cambridge and other high dignitaries won't be caught dead endorsing the anniversaries of far more subversive peace-related events to come.

For example, although soldiers from both sides on the Western Front mixed on that first Christmas of the war, the most extensive fraternization happened later in Russia. In early 1917, under the stress of catastrophic war losses, creaky, top-heavy imperial Russia finally collapsed and Tsar Nicholas II and his family were placed under house arrest. More than 300 years of rule by the Romanov dynasty was over.

The impact rippled through the Russian army. An American correspondent at the front watched through binoculars as Russian and German enlisted men met in no-man's-land. Lack of a common language was no barrier: the Germans thrust their bayonets into the earth; the Russians blew across their open palms to show that the Tsar had been swept away. After November of that year, when the Bolsheviks -- committed to ending the war -- seized power, fraternization only increased. You can find many photographs of Russian and German soldiers posing together or even, in one

case, dancing in couples in the snow. Generals on both sides were appalled.

And here are some people who won't be celebrated in "education packs" sent to schools, although they were crucial in helping bring the war to an end: deserters. An alarmed British military attaché in Russia estimated that at least a million Russian soldiers deserted their ill-fed, badly equipped army, most simply walking home to their villages. This lay behind the agreement that halted fighting on the Eastern Front long before it ended in the West.

In the final weeks of the war in the West, the German army began melting away, too. The desertions came not from the front lines but from the rear, where hundreds of thousands of soldiers either disappeared or evaded orders to go to the front. By early autumn 1918, the Berlin police chief estimated that more than 40,000 deserters were hiding in the German capital. No wonder the high command began peace negotiations.

Don't hold your breath either waiting for official celebrations of the war's mutinies. Nothing threatened the French army more than the most stunning of these, which broke out in the spring of 1917 following a massive attack hyped as the decisive blow that would win the war. Over several days, 30,000 French soldiers were killed and 100,000 wounded, all to gain a few meaningless miles of blood-soaked ground.

In the weeks that followed, hundreds of thousands of troops refused to advance further. One group even hijacked a train and tried to drive it to Paris, although most soldiers simply stayed in their camps or trenches and made clear that they would not take part in additional suicidal attacks. This "collective indiscipline," as the generals euphemistically called it, was hushed up, but it paralyzed the army. French commanders dared launch no more major assaults that year. To this day, the subject remains so touchy that some archival documents on the mutinies remain closed to researchers until the 100th anniversary in 2017.

Parades for Whom?

From Bavaria to New Zealand, town squares across the world are adorned with memorials to local men "fallen" in

1914-1918, and statues and plaques honoring the war's leading generals can be found from Edinburgh Castle to Pershing Square in Los Angeles. But virtually nothing similar celebrates those who served the cause of peace. The Polish-German revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg, who argued against the suppression of free speech both in the Kaiser's Germany and in Soviet Russia, spent more than two years in a German prison for her opposition to the war. The eloquent British philosopher Bertrand Russell did six months' time in a London jail for the same reason. The American labor leader Eugene V. Debs, imprisoned for urging resistance to the draft, was still in a federal penitentiary in Atlanta in 1920, two years after the war ended, when he received nearly a million votes as the Socialist Party candidate for president.

The French socialist Jean Jaurès spoke out passionately against the war he saw coming in 1914 and, due to this, was assassinated by a French militarist just four days before the fighting began. (The assassin was found innocent because his was labeled a "crime of passion.") Against the opposition of their own governments, the pioneer social worker Jane Addams and other women helped organize a women's peace conference in Holland in 1915 with delegates from both warring and neutral countries. And in every nation that took part in that terrible war, young men of military age -- thousands of them -- either went to jail or were shot for refusing to fight.

Jump half a century forward, and you'll see exactly the same pattern of remembrance. Next year marks the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the first official U.S. combat troops in Vietnam, and already a duel is shaping up between the thankers and those who want to honor the antiwar movement that helped end that senseless tragedy.

The Pentagon has already launched a \$15 million official commemorative program whose purpose (does this sound familiar?) is "to thank and honor veterans of the Vietnam War... for their service and sacrifice." Meanwhile, more than 1,000 people, many of us veterans of the U.S. military, the antiwar movement, or both, have signed a

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POETRY

I Come and Stand at Every Door

I come and stand at every door
 But no one hears my silent tread
 I knock and yet remain unseen
 For I am dead, for I am dead.

I'm only seven although I died
 In Hiroshima long ago
 I'm seven now as I was then
 When children die they do not grow.

My hair was scorched by swirling flame
 My eyes grew dim, my eyes grew blind
 Death came and turned my bones to dust
 And that was scattered by the wind.

I need no fruit, I need no rice I
 need no sweet, nor even bread
 I ask for nothing for myself
 For I am dead, for I am dead.

All that I ask is that for peace
 You fight today, you fight today
 So that the children of this world
 May live and grow and laugh and play.

by Nâzım Hikmet Ran

The War Prayer

One of the most powerful modern indictments of war was written by none other than the American humorist and satirist Mark Twain, whose short story "The War Prayer" puts into words the unspoken implications of praying for victory.

"O Lord our Father, our young patriots, idols of our hearts, go forth to battle -- be Thou near them! With them -- in spirit -- we also go forth from the sweet peace of our beloved firesides to smite the foe. O Lord our God, help us to tear their soldiers to bloody shreds with our shells; help us to cover their smiling fields with the pale forms of their patriot dead; help us to drown the thunder of the guns with the shrieks of their wounded, writhing in pain; help us to lay waste their humble homes with a hurricane of fire; help us to wring the hearts of their unoffending widows with unavailing grief; help us to turn them out roofless with little children to wander unfriended the wastes of their desolated land in rags and hunger and thirst, sports of the sun flames of summer and the icy winds of winter, broken in spirit, worn with travail, imploring Thee for the refuge of the grave and denied it -- for our sakes who adore Thee, Lord, blast their hopes, blight their lives, protract their bitter pilgrimage, make heavy their steps, water their way with their tears, stain the white snow with the blood of their wounded feet!"

i sing of Olaf glad and big

XXX

i sing of Olaf glad and big
 whose warmest heart recoiled at war:
 a conscientious object-or

his wellbeloved colonel (trig
 westpointer most succinctly bred)
 took erring Olaf soon in hand;
 but--though an host of overjoyed
 noncoms(first knocking on the head
 him) do through icy waters roll
 that helplessness which others stroke
 with brushes recently employed
 anent this muddy toiletbowl,
 while kindred intellects evoke
 allegiance per blunt instruments--
 Olaf (being to all intents
 a corpse and wanting any rag
 upon what God unto him gave)
 responds, without getting annoyed
 "I will not kiss your fucking flag"

straightway the silver bird looked grave
 (departing hurriedly to shave)

but--though all kinds of officers
 (a yearning nation's blueeyed pride)
 their passive prey did kick and curse
 until for wear their clarion
 voices and boots were much the worse,
 and egged the firstclassprivates on
 his rectum wickedly to tease
 by means of skilfully applied
 bayonets roasted hot with heat--
 Olaf (upon what were once knees)
 does almost ceaselessly repeat
 "there is some shit I will not eat"

our president, being of which
 assertions duly notified
 threw the yellowsonofabitch
 into a dungeon, where he died

Christ (of His mercy infinite)
 i pray to see; and Olaf, too

preponderatingly because
 unless statistics lie he was
 more brave than me: more blond than you.

-- e. e. cummings



SHRINKING THE EMPIRE

A Session on the Imperial Couch

Published on Tuesday, November 11, 2014 by [TomDispatch](#)

By **Tom Engelhardt**



"American Empire" has been wondering whether it might be an addict. (Photo: Ojo de Cineasta/flickr/cc)

[What follows is a transcript of a therapy session between the American Empire and a psychiatrist whose name we at [TomDispatch](#) have agreed not to disclose. Normally, even in an age in which privacy means ever less to anyone, we wouldn't consider publishing such a private encounter, but the probative news value of the exchange is so obvious that we decided to make an exception. The transcript has been edited only for obvious repetitions and the usual set of "ums" and "uhs." Tom]

Doctor: Would you like to tell me why you're here?

American Empire: Well, Doc, I'm feeling a little off. To tell you the truth, I'm kind of confused, even a little dizzy some of the time.

Doctor: When did you first experience symptoms of dizziness?

AE: I think it was all the pivoting that did it. First I was pivoting out of Iraq. Then I was pivoting out of Afghanistan. Then I was pivoting to Asia. Then I was secretly pivoting to Africa. Then all of a sudden I was pivoting into Iraq again, and Syria, and Afghanistan, and... well, you get the picture.

Doctor: And this left you...?

AE: Depressed. But Doc, there's a little background you need to know about the dizzying nature of my life. For almost 50 years -- this was in the last century -- I was in the marriage from hell. My

partner, the Soviet Union, was a nightmare. I mean, we had a brief sunny courtship when we were more or less in love, but that only lasted the length of World War II. The minute I got home from the front, it was hell, and I'm hardly exaggerating if I tell you that, when we got to fighting, it was scorched Earth all the way. We regularly threatened to annihilate each other. It was one of

those stormy relationships you could never predict in advance where this planet just isn't big enough for the two of you.

In our worst moments, I used to fantasize about the Soviet Union being obliterated, simply disappearing from the face of the Earth, but it was a fantasy, nothing more. Never in my wildest dreams did I expect to be free. Not in my lifetime. Then one day as 1990 ended, like some unexpected miracle, it happened. Poof! The Soviet Union was gone. I was alone and the Earth was my playground -- or so it seemed.

Doctor: Do you feel that it went to your head?

AE: It would have gone to anybody's head. I mean, people were saying the most complimentary things about me all the time. They were calling me the "sole superpower," or the planet's only "hyperpower," or its "global policeman," or... well, I don't want to go on about it, but sure, it went to my head. How would you feel if you overheard people saying that there had never been an empire like yours in all of history, that the Romans and the Brits were pikers by comparison?

And when I looked around the planet, it seemed true. There weren't any enemies worthy of me. I mean, North Korea, Iraq, and later scattered groups of jihadis? Can you blame me if it went to my head? I suppose I should have left well enough alone. After all, I was already a "superpower." You'd think I

might have been satisfied, but that isn't imperial nature, is it?

And to make matters worse, along came George W. ("bring 'em on") Bush, Dick ("the dark side") Cheney, Donald ("sweep it all up") Rumsfeld, Condi ("mushroom cloud") Rice, and the rest of that crew. It was like being in Rome and hearing the announcer call out, "Batting cleanup, number four, Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus." I should have felt a shiver of fear. But when they explained their plans to me, they seemed so damn convincing. Loosing the U.S. military to create a *Pax Americana* in the Greater Middle East, and then globally -- how could any of it have gone wrong?

If you don't think I feel bitter lying here on this couch, you're no shrink. You wouldn't wish what's happened to me on some two-bit rogue state.

Doctor: It might be worth exploring that feeling of bitterness.

AE: Explore it? That's a no-brainer. One day you're on top of the world. You've just created the sort of surveillance state that would have left Joe Stalin drooling in his grave. You can listen in on a bunch of jihadis in the backlands of Yemen or the German Chancellor (which, by the way, isn't as thrilling you might imagine) or any American you want. You can send your drones anywhere and there's no one to stop you. You can rewrite the laws to suit yourself. You're this town's only sheriff, numero uno, the Big Dog.

And ten minutes later, nothing you do -- I mean nothing, nada, zilch -- works, not an invasion, not an intervention, not an occupation, not even the simplest of helping hands, and suddenly you realize that you're down in the dumps and feeling kinda nostalgic for the old days when it was just you and the Soviet Union growling at each other.

Doctor: I'd like you to try to be more specific. Sometimes generalized complaints about one's state of mind aren't as useful as they should be. Give me an example and describe your feelings around it.

AE: You want an example? Gee, that's (continued on Page 29...)



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a tough one. I mean, let me think about that for minus one second. How about Iraq, for specifics? If I had told you, back in the two-superpower days, that I was going to fight three wars in less than a quarter of a century in one country or that four presidents in a row would bomb one land, not a single American would have picked Iraq. If it were 1980 and I made that prediction, you would have had me institutionalized. But here we are. And I just did it again. I sent in the bombers and drones and advisers and I'm about to train up another Iraqi army. At least the other two times, I thought victory was a given. This time...

In 1991, I crushed them. The greatest military power on the planet was up against a third-rate army and obliterated it in no time flat. You're of an age. You must remember the victory parades. They were spectacular. And there was George H.W. Bush exclaiming that we'd kicked the Vietnam Syndrome once and for all. Who could forget it? But when the dust cleared, Saddam Hussein was still there. In 2003, no more messing around, we took Baghdad in about three seconds and sent Saddam into that spider hole in hell. And then, it only got worse.

I mean, bitter? That's not the half of it. I know it's dangerous to self-diagnose, but I've been wondering whether I might be an addict. I just can't seem to stop. I know better now, but it never seems to matter.

I have to admit something, Doc. Before I came to you, I called Empires Anonymous. But their phone's been disconnected and emails bounce back.

Doctor: Yes, it's been a while since EA could muster the bodies for an imperial support group. But tell me more about what your addiction, as you call it, feels like.

AE: Here's the bottom line: it wasn't supposed to be this way. I've read the history books and Great Powers don't pussyfoot when it comes to pacifying the natives and winning wars. Not unless they're really on the skids. Look around this planet. I'm still the only unipolar power. So why is it that whenever I send in the special ops guys or the drones, it's like whacking a beehive with a stick? I mean, I've bombed seven Muslim countries -- just under Obama, mind you

-- and what's it got me? More jihadis by the tens of thousands and now a jihadi mini-state in the middle of the Middle East!

Doctor: I find it slightly strange that you should come see me after last week's election. Shouldn't you feel more upbeat?

AE: I take your point, Doc. And you can't imagine the phone messages and emails I've been getting since last Tuesday night. John McCain, Bob Corker, Lindsey Graham, John Boehner, William Kristol, Jodi Ernst, Buck McKeon, the well-known and the barely known of the incoming Republican Congress. I feel like the most popular guy on Earth again. And they're promising me the works.

So, sure, given what I've been through, I feel like I'm being offered the best years of my life back. A brand-new Cold War against Russia? After the last 13 years, the thought of Cold War 2.0 gives me an instant endorphin high. We're talking war hawks to the horizon in Washington for years to come, hot to arm the Ukrainians, take down ISIS, nuke Iran, and crank it up against China in the South China Sea!

I should be high as a kite. Instead, I'm an empire on the couch getting shrunk. I've got the shakes. I'm consumed with fear that I'm going to do it all over again. You've got to give me a hand, Doc.

Doctor: I want to point out that our time today is winding down. So let me just offer you a few initial suggestions for...

[The recording of the session suddenly ends here.]

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Tom Engelhardt, co-founder of the American Empire Project, runs the Nation Institute's TomDispatch.com. His latest book is, *Shadow Government: Surveillance, Secret Wars, and a Global Security State in a Single-Superpower World* (with an introduction by Glenn Greenwald).

Previous books include *Terminator Planet: The First History of Drone Warfare, 2001-2050* (co-authored with Nick Turse), *The United States of Fear, The American Way of War: How Bush's Wars Became Obama's*, *The End of Victory Culture: a History of the Cold War and Beyond*, as well as of a novel, *The Last Days of Publishing*.

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Egypt, where Clinton stuck by another friend, Hosni Mubarak, against a popular uprising. The woman has some friends!

"Any system of world order, to be sustainable, must be accepted as just — not only by leaders, but also by citizens," he writes.

The suggestion that Kissinger cares what ordinary citizens anywhere think is ridiculous. What he cares about is states, which he puts in one of two categories: those that buckle under to the Indispensable Empire and those that do not.

Henry, er, Hillary in 2016? You might want to rethink that.

Sheldon Richman is vice president editor at The Future of Freedom Foundation in Fairfax, Va. (www.fff.org).

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petition insisting that "no commemoration of the war in Vietnam can exclude the many thousands of veterans who opposed it, as well as the draft refusals of many thousands of young Americans, some at the cost of imprisonment or exile."

A recent *New York Times* article covered the controversy. It mentioned that the Pentagon had been forced to make changes at its commemoration website after Nick Turse, writing at TomDispatch.com, pointed out, among other things, how grossly that site understated civilian deaths in the notorious My Lai massacre.

Perhaps when the next anniversary of the Iraq War comes around, it's time to break with a tradition that makes ever less sense in our world. Next time, why not have parades to celebrate those who tried to prevent that grim, still ongoing conflict from starting? Of course, there's an even better way to honor and thank veterans of the struggle for peace: don't start more wars.

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Adam Hochschild is the San Francisco-based author of seven books, including *King Leopold's Ghost*. His new book *To End All Wars: A Story of Loyalty and Rebellion, 1914-1918* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt), has just been published.



“In 1914, Franz Ferdinand, the Austrian imperial heir, was shot and killed by a Serbian nationalist in Sarajevo. Do you know the motive behind the act?

It was in retaliation for the subjugation of the Serbs in Austria.

It was not. Franz Ferdinand had stated his intention to introduce reforms favorable to the Serbs in his empire. Had he survived to ascend the throne, he would have made a revolution unnecessary. In plain terms, he was killed because he was going to give the rebels what they were shouting for. They needed a despot in the palace in order to seize it.

What's good for reform is bad for the reformers” — Loren D. Estleman, Gas City

“And all this madness, all this rage, all this flaming death of our civilization and our hopes, has been brought about because a set of official gentlemen, living luxurious lives, mostly stupid, and all without imagination or heart, have chosen that it should occur rather than that any one of them should suffer some infinitesimal rebuff to his country's pride.”

British philosopher Bertrand Russell, 1914

In the newspapers you read: "Peacefully they rest on the spot where they have bled and suffered, while the guns roar over their graves, taking vengeance for their heroic death". And it doesn't occur to anybody that the enemy is also firing; that the shells plunge into the hero's grave; that his bones are mingled with the filth which they scatter to the four winds - and that, after a few weeks, the morass closes over the last resting-place of the soldier.

Kanonier Gerhard Gürtler, 111 Bavarian Corps, Artillerie

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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