



# The Peace Issue . . .

The Newsletter of Just Peace Queensland Inc

Issue No. 55

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

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

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

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

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I find capitalism repugnant. It is filthy, it is gross, it is alienating... because it causes war, hypocrisy and competition. Fidel Castro

**The Peace Issue . . .**

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# A sledgehammer for a walnut

by Ross Gwyther

07 December 2017

*Unbeknown to most Australians, a court case has been underway in Alice Springs over the past few months with implications far and wide. Employing a sixty year old law drafted during the height of the anti-communist 1950s in Australia, the Federal Government has called for seven years jail for each member of a small group of people known as the Pine Gap Peace Pilgrims, whose only offence was singing and praying in the grounds of Pine Gap in 2016.*

Many of us are today quite well aware of Pine Gap, the secretive United States spy base near Alice Springs. It plays a central role collecting all of the phone calls and internet traffic from everyday Australians, and relays essential targeting information to American forces using drones in illegal wars in the Middle East. For more than forty years Pine Gap has been the focus of protests by many thousands of Australians.

In October last year, hundreds of people from all walks of life gathered in Alice Springs to highlight the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of Pine Gap. Representatives from over sixty organisations around Australia – mostly church groups, peace movements, community organisations and trade unions – gathered in a conference calling for an independent and peaceful Australia, and an end to the decades long policy, employed by governments of both persuasions, of subservience to American militarism and fighting wars around the world. Some also gathered outside the gates of Pine Gap to protest the existence of a foreign military base on Australian soil that contributes to the “collateral” deaths of thousands in the

Middle East, as well as to the US illegal assassination program.

For six people at these protests, their conscience and religious convictions led them to climb the chain wire fence of Pine Gap, and sit quietly inside, praying and singing. They knew full well that this act was itself illegal. Yet they saw their action as continuing a long and important tradition of civil disobedience – breaking an unjust law in order to highlight even greater injustice. In this case the greater injustice is the deaths of hundreds of thousands of innocent people, and exodus of millions of refugees, directly as a result of US interventions in countries around the Middle East. This is with the direct compliance of Australian Governments, who dispatch young men and women in our armed forces – in the name of, and paid for by, we the Australian people.

That simple act of defiance by the Pine gap peace pilgrims led to their arrest. To highlight these gross injustices they were fully prepared to accept fines under the *Commonwealth Crimes Act*, as have protestors in past actions. In fact the judge in Alice Springs threw the case out of court on a technicality.

However, victory for our six peace pilgrims was not to be. The Federal Government stepped in to lay new charges against them, this time using the *Defence Special Undertakings Act* of 1952. This little known Act was put into place by the Menzies Government when it allowed secret British nuclear tests to be carried out on Australian soil, with conscious disregard for the terrible consequences for indigenous peoples living in the vicinity of those tests. The government at the time had mounted a

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concerted campaign against communism, first trying to pass a law and then holding a referendum to ban the Communist Party and by extension its leadership of protests against the nuclear madness of that time. Both measures were rejected by the Australian people.

During the past few decades, with ongoing protests against not only Pine Gap but also other foreign bases in Australia, Federal Governments from both sides of politics have modified this draconian law to include Pine Gap specifically.

Hence we have arrived at the absurd situation today where six people have been threatened with seven years jail for singing and praying in a joint Australian/United States facility – one that is arguably assisting illegal assassinations of people who the United States government deems undesirable and is in the process killing many hundreds of innocent men women and children.

The outcome of this case is that the six protestors have been given fines ranging from \$1250 to \$5000. Undoubtedly this struggle is far from over. At least one of them has already said he will not pay his fine. Everyday people from across Australia will call into question the actions of a government with such seriously warped – in fact, murderous – priorities acting in their name.

Yet we can learn two very important lessons from the experience to date in this case. Australian democracy is under serious threat from a creeping dictatorial regime of intimidation. Those fleeing death and persecution in foreign wars have felt it directly when they have travelled to what used to be known as the safety of Australian shores. Australian workers feel this intimidation every day they struggle to maintain safe and fair workplaces, and their employers use deep pockets and the common law to put their homes, their families and their union organisations under threat. Young and old people protesting the environmental destruction wrought by large corporations have felt the intimidation that these multinationals can bring to

bear on small groups of activists. Now we have seen peaceful and non-violent protestors facing many years in jail – a response purely to deter others from protesting.

The second lesson from this case is just as striking. It appears at first sight to be a case of using a large sledgehammer – a law with quite draconian penalties – to crush a tiny walnut – a relatively small and benign protest action. Yet the severity of the government reaction suggests this government sees these protests not as a tiny walnut, but rather as a small seed – one that can in time grow to add to a large and significant opposition movement. As Paul Kelly's iconic song puts it, "*From little things, big things grow*". There has been considerable debate among those with an interest in the role of the United States bases and troops in Australia, as to whether the purpose of these facilities is primarily for the defence of Australia, or primarily as a key part of US military conflicts around the globe. After all, the very presence of Pine Gap in Australia makes this nation a possible target for US opponents.

The protests against Pine Gap have focussed on its role in US war fighting strategies. So when we see these protestors being suppressed and so aggressively intimidated, the striking lesson we can draw is that the protests are "on target". There is no longer any doubt that Pine Gap is a base of considerable importance to US military operations worldwide.

It is time for the Australian people to have a real say in Pine Gap's future. In a very grave way, it may be intrinsic to the future of our national security.

**Ross Gwyther** is retired research geophysicist and trade union organiser, having been active for many years in community peace and environmental politics, and currently on the national committee of the Independent and Peaceful Australia Network.



## MEMBER's POEM

### Time and again

Time and again  
don't ask me when  
the long-lost story  
of yesterday's men.  
Patriots, heroes  
a long line of zeros  
the dead and the fallen  
all bloated and swollen  
lying forlorn, and then  
no body waiting  
and no longer hating  
the battles are over  
leaders have moved on  
to bigger and better  
now mature and go getter  
their eyes on prize  
without any disguise  
that we can surmise  
the truth and the lies  
the dust and the flies  
but nobody dies  
and that's a surprise.

**John Tomlinson**

Written 11.54pm 31/12/2017

### Can we get any more sycophantic?

Australia has abstained from the UN General Assembly vote on combating neo nazism- there were 3 countries voting against US Palau and Ukraine.

The resolution entitled "*Combating glorification of Nazism, Neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fueling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance,*" was approved by the U.N.'s human rights committee on Friday with 131 in favor, 3 against with 48 abstentions.

Again Australia stands outside the move for human rights even though it has a place on the human rights council.

**EDITORIAL: WHAT A YEAR!**

**T**he year just gone will certainly be remembered, in the world of international politics, as one of the strangest yet – unpredictable yet oddly consistent, frightening yet strangely comical, principled but pathetically slavish.

At the centre of this apparent chaos is the newly-elected President Trump, with the rest of the world either reacting to or on the receiving end of one ego-driven, self-centred diatribe after another.

The most immediately-concerning situation is that between the US and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

By any rational assessment of history and its lessons, the actions of the DPRK are easily understood as reactions to the belligerence and ongoing aggression by every US regime since the end of the Korean War. After seeing what happened to Iraq and Libya, the DPRK has legally and, from its viewpoint, rationally and sanely decided its security is best established by the development of its own nuclear weapons capability.

Instead of throwing childish invectives at the DPRK and its leadership, all those striving for peace in the world need to focus on the actions of the greatest destroyer-of-nations in the history of the modern world – the United States of America. This is a country that has been responsible for more deaths globally through war and war-related actions (sanctions, coups etc) than all other countries of the world combined.

The hypocrisy of the US regime knows no bounds. The effrontery of its self-assumed role as the world's policeman and the yardstick for how countries should conduct themselves with their own internal affairs and in their external relations is sickening and enraging.

But what's worse are the slavish responses of other countries to every action or statement that emanates from the US regime. In particular, Australia can only be described as a vassal state of the US. There is hardly a single foreign policy stance that Australia has taken in recent years that can be called the result of a principled assessment of what is in Australia's best interests as an

independent sovereign country looking after the best interests of its citizens.

We have cravenly followed the US into wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, and we have aligned ourselves with every utterance and resolution put forward by the US on such issues as Palestine, North Korea, China and Russia. We even have the pathetic display of anti-Russian invective and conspiracy theory dribble coming from our Foreign Minister and other government mouthpieces.

It's time we as a nation returned to the principled and quasi-independent stance we took in the 1940s and 1950s under Dr Evatt and others. The work of IPAN and other community-based organisations to try to bring a sense of moral and rational purpose to Australia's relationship to the world is to be encouraged and supported.

Finally, I feel we need to be careful about how we view the current US administration under Donald Trump. Yes, he's clearly got psychological issues, but we should not kid ourselves that his actions and statements are anything unusual in the broader expanse of US foreign policy. I suspect that, if Hillary Clinton had been elected, we would probably be at war already against Russia, China and North Korea. US policy is driven by the need to retain and expand US capitalist interests, especially the fundamental role of the military-industrial complex in the maintenance of the US economy.

There are signs of movement overseas in the right direction – Bernie Sanders (with all his contradictions) in the US, and Jeremy Corbyn in the UK – but in Australia we seem to have a long way to go in regard to the two major parties. Changing Labor Party policy will be a long hard road, but community actions seem to be the best avenue for creating the climate for any changes towards a more-independent foreign policy position by the Labor Party.

Just Peace will be at the forefront of this action for change.

**Adrian Pollock  
January 2018**

**JUST PEACE ACTIVITIES****UNAA Qld Branch monthly meetings**

Just Peace has two representatives on the committee, Vikki Henry and Annette Brownlie. A seminar was held early in the year looking at the UN's sustainability goals. Very interesting with town planners discussing the good and the bad in relation to environmental sustainability.

**UN Peacekeepers Day 27th May-** Just Peace marched with our banner along with UNAA Young Professionals, Members of communities who have direct experience of peacekeeping in their countries of origin.

**July-U3A Just Peace members Ross Gwyther and Annette Brownlie were invited to hold sessions during the U3A Winter School** on the need for Australia to adopt peaceful independent foreign policies and the history of opposition to the Vietnam War.

**U3A Peace Studies course** in July/August was directed by Just Peace committee member Anita Read, with input from a number of Just Peace members.

**13th July the UNAA Q, Just Peace, and the Griffith Asia Institute** co-organised a public forum at Griffith University at which Prof Ramesh Thakur spoke in his capacity as UNAA Ambassador for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, to celebrate the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the ICAN campaign, and to highlight the ongoing struggle for nuclear disarmament.

**September 9-10th the annual IPAN conference** was held in Melbourne. Around 200 people attended with speakers from Australia the US Korea Diego Garcia and NZ. The presentations are all available on the IPAN web site and video on IPAN Facebook page- Just Peace members are on the committee of IPAN playing a very active role in developing this alternative national voice for non violent resolution of conflict and for Australia to take a place on the world stage as an advocate for a just and sustainable future for all.

**The Brisbane International Day of Peace Lecture** Thursday September 21<sup>st</sup> was a great success. Historian Henry Reynolds delivered this year's lecture

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attracting around 200 people along. The lecture was shared on Big Ideas RN and Henry did radio interviews on 612 as well as Murri Radio 98 FM. This event established 6 years ago has taken hold as a key Brisbane event and has potential to develop along the lines of the Sydney Peace prize. Next year Thomas Kennealy will deliver the lecture.

On **October 7<sup>th</sup> Brisbane Rally for Peace** was held on the 16<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 'Operation Enduring Freedom' which became Operation enduring war. This was an international day to focus on the wars which followed the World trade centre attack but in fact was a continuation of the middle east wars waged by the US since WW2. Again some great speakers all available to view on the Just Peace Facebook page. This rally re-established the more than 35 year tradition of an annual rally for peace and nuclear disarmament in Brisbane. A big thank you to Taylor, Rebecca and Mike for the videoing and to Taylor for her MC-ing at the Rally for Peace.

**November-** Just Peace Fundraising dinner was held at the Vietnamese Gardens restaurant. Paul Guard and Liz Elliot each gave inspiring talks, funds were raised and the food was great!

**December-** Just Peace AGM was held with reports and new committee members welcomed. Co-convenors for the year ahead Ross Gwyther and Mike Henry.

**Annette Brownlie**

## UNNECESSARY WARS

By **Henry Reynolds**

26 October 2017

*In a letter written in August 1855 to his colleague John Bright, the great free trade liberal, Richard Cobden, expressed his hostility to Britain's involvement in the Crimean War. 'And yet I doubt', he observed, 'if there be a more reprehensible human act than to lead a nation into an unnecessary war'. Cobden clearly had in mind wars that could have been avoided and that were not the result of an immediate and direct threat to a nation's territory or interests.*

**M**any of Australia's wars have been unnecessary wars or wars of choice, as they are often called. The new federation was born in the midst of one. In 1899 the six colonies had each sent contingents to the conflict in South Africa, and they coalesced into the national army on 1 March 1902, towards the end of a war marked by massive loss of civilian life and compounded by war crimes. Four times more civilians, and mainly children, died in British concentration camps than the Australians who died in Japanese prison camps during the Second World War. And yet in all the many hours of debate about the war, no-one could seriously suggest the two small land-locked Boer republics were a threat to Australia.

But it was a portent that the Australian Army was born overseas fighting in an Imperial war which had no direct relevance to national security. Since the middle of the C20th, war for us has become more common than peace. In the 78 years since the outbreak of the Second World War, we have been at war somewhere in the world for 60 years. We have been at war continually since 2001 and there is no end in sight to our involvement in the Middle-East. Peter Leahy, the Director of the National Security Institute in Canberra and former chief of the Army between 2002 and 2008, has declared on a number of occasions that we are likely to be engaged in conflict with radical Islam for a hundred years in what surely should be termed the tenth crusade. Meanwhile brewing conflict with Iran and North Korea, with Islamists in the Philippines and tension with China over the South-China Sea all point to potential future involvement. Australia is more adept at getting into wars than staying out of them. And once engaged we have difficulty ending the commitment.

Is there any end in sight to our overseas adventures? Surely we have to concede that there is something aberrant about Australia's history of warfare. By any measure we are a particularly belligerent country. And we do it all with a clear conscience. It is almost as if we feel we have an international social license to involve ourselves in conflicts, many of them at least in part civil wars,

in countries which we know little about and which present no demonstrable threat to our territory.

Most of the world's small and medium sized countries do not behave like Australia. They may be involved in conflict close to home but few of them engage in wars that are far away. In fact if they did send their troops, their planes and ships off on overseas expeditions as often as we do, the world would be an even more chaotic place than it is at present.

Many things need to be taken into account to explain our propensity for wars fought far away. Our institutions present few obstacles to a government bent on war. We have inherited from Britain the tradition that the Crown retains the war-making powers. And in practice the fateful decision can be made by the Prime Minister and party discipline ensures that government members acquiesce. There is not even any obligation to allow a debate in the Parliament. In contemporary Australia oppositions are less likely to provide critical dissent when matters of security are involved than in relation to any other matter of public importance.

The same overall acquiescence is apparent when the war comes to an end. The second Gulf War is a case in point. The overall assessment now is that it was an illegal war but, more to the point, a strategic disaster, the ill consequences which are still unfolding. The criticism in Britain and the United States has been unrelenting. Bush, and especially Blair, have experienced a complete loss of credibility. John Howard on the other hand has been the subject to almost no criticism at all. And he has expressed neither remorse nor regret for his involvement in the great tragedy visited on the people of Iraq. And this points to a more general problem.

Australian governments can go to war with little to restrain them and then, in retrospect, there is little public assessment of whether the engagement was prudent or productive. There is rarely any introspection about the morality of the nation's behaviour.

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We don't even pursue with any vigour the most pragmatic questions of all—was it worth it? what was achieved? how did the nation benefit? Of all the activities of government war seems to be the one that is least scrutinized. Do we ever subject it to cost-benefit analysis? Do we count the cost in material and human terms?

Our attitude to war is bound up with the cult of the digger, the conviction that the nation was born at Gallipoli, that war has been the defining national experience. These ideas have been inescapable during the cavalcade of commemoration which we have experienced since 2014. They are promoted with variety and vigour and lavishly funded by the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the War Memorial. But the strange thing is that, with the intense concentration on war, the focus is entirely on how the Australians fought, not why they fought. There is much talk about tactics, far less about strategy. We like to remember our wars with the politics extracted. With the entire emphasis on individual sacrifice and heroism, questions about the point of the conflict or the morality of our entanglement appear to be disrespectful and in poor taste.

One of the most telling illustrations of our attitude to war came in a press release by Senator David Johnson in September 2013. He had just been installed as Minister for Defence in the new Abbott government. It was his first public statement and presumably reflected ideas which were current in both the government and his department. He declared that he wanted the military 'to be battle ready for future conflicts in the unstable Middle East and South Asia'. After 14 years of involvement in overseas conflicts from East Timor to Afghanistan, the ADF 'had a strong fighting momentum that should not be lost'. He explained that he planned 'to maintain and augment our readiness for future fights'. He outlined one of the reasons why, explaining that 'operationally we're starting to come

down in Afghanistan so we've got to maintain some interest for the troops.'

This was quite astonishing. The new minister wanted a new war to maintain the ADF's fighting momentum. Fourteen years of conflict overseas had not created a desire for peace but whetted the appetite for more war which would maintain some interest for the troops. It wasn't clear where the new war might be but most likely somewhere in the Middle-East or South Asia. Johnson's assumptions were breathtaking. Australia, he assumed, had an unquestionable moral right to find a convenient war wherever and whenever it chose. And he clearly believed he would have the government and the community at his back.

But it wasn't the statement alone which was so disturbing. As far as I could tell it passed without comment. There were no examination of what had been said, no anxious exegesis. No other political figure questioned the Minister's priorities or his hunger for further conflict.

In the C19th there were many Australians who assumed that Australia would be a peaceful nation removed from the troubles of the old world. In this century we seek out war and celebrate our history of belligerence. Are we fated in this century to be perpetually at war? At the time of the Vietnam War the American poet Robert Lowell wrote about his concern for the nation's children and grandchildren who he feared would,

Fall in small wars on the heel  
of small wars—until the end  
of time to police the earth.

**This is the transcript of the International Day of Peace Lecture, St. John's Cathedral, Brisbane, 21 September 2017**

**Henry Reynolds** is an eminent Australian historian who has focused on frontier conflict between indigenous people and European settlers, and has written many books on that subject. His latest book is 'Unnecessary Wars'.

## NUCLEAR BAN TREATY

*The nuclear ban treaty, Pine Gap and the Nobel Peace Prize.*

By **Richard Tranter**

16 November 2017

*The world is worrying about nuclear weapons more than at any time since the frightening days of Reagan and Brezhnev, and with good reason. We are all hoping that Kim Jong-un is rational with no ambition for suicide. And at the same time, we are reduced to hoping that the American military will constrain Donald Trump's impulses to reach for the nuclear launch button. Leading politicians in South Korea and Japan are talking up the need for their own nuclear weapons, and Donald Trump is not saying no. So, it's hardly surprising that 122 countries voted at the United Nations in July to pass the Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons. Rather more surprisingly, but gratifyingly, the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded to the Melbourne-born International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) for its work leading to the nuclear ban treaty.*

**A**t root, building more nuclear weapons and banning nuclear weapons are the two logical opposite responses to the fact that there are still thousands of nuclear weapons on hair-trigger alert. With sober-minded experts putting the chances of war in Korea at 50/50, any thought of war with 75 million Koreans living in an area the size of Victoria is horrific, even if, by sheer dumb luck, we avoid escalation to nuclear war.

Pine Gap will be central to US planning and operations for a Korean war, nuclear or 'conventional'. Pine Gap's longstanding primary nuclear role involves its 'big ears' in space and on the ground, providing the locations and characteristics of enemy radars and air defences, the better to evade, jam or destroy them as a prelude to airborne nuclear attack.

Pine Gap's secondary nuclear task involves its infrared satellites detecting enemy nuclear missile launches, giving the US a few minutes of warning of the country's descent into hell, and moments for a last presidential decision about firing its thousands of missiles in return.

Those same infrared satellites have two more nuclear war roles. Pine Gap detects which enemy missile silos have been fired and which have not, and are therefore to be targeted in a US second nuclear strike.

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And when Pine Gap detects the first seconds of missile launches and calculates the missiles' likely trajectories, it passes the information to the US missile defence systems, cueing their fire radars to search a tiny portion of the sky where the missiles are gathering enormous speed. Cued by Pine Gap, and if they work as the Pentagon and the arms manufacturers advertise, US missile defences might, just might, have a chance of firing their own missiles to hit and destroy the enemy missiles. Without Pine Gap's contribution, the chances are probably about zero.

In case the word 'defence' in missile defence provides some degree of comfort, consider the counter-intuitive effects of the US missile defence system for a country like China, without a comparable system. Missile defence on one side of a pair of countries with nuclear weapons pointing at each other is like one person coming to a duel in Kevlar armour, and the other being ordinarily clothed. Not surprisingly, China has moved to modernize its nuclear weapons systems and platforms to counter the threat of 'missile defence', even before the US spends a trillion dollars to modernize its nuclear arsenal over the next 30 years.

The nuclear ban treaty is a rebellion by the majority of the world's governments in the face of half a century of empty promises by the nuclear weapons states. The treaty strategy is clear and clear-headed. By passing a law to prohibit the use, using, testing, developing, producing, manufacturing or stationing nuclear weapons – or assisting any of these activities – these countries are saying to the nuclear weapons states that what they are doing in their 'self-defence' is utterly illegitimate and criminal.

It is hardly a surprise that all the nuclear weapons states boycotted the treaty negotiations. The US warned their nuclear-supporter allies like Australia, which had been playing an enthusiastic spoiler role in the run-up, to not take part.

Already the existence of a law, to which these nuclear states and nuclear-supporter states are not party, is having

its key planned effect – to set a global norm of international legitimacy which stigmatizes those who hold the threat of nuclear war over the rest of the world.

Critically, it forces the defenders of nuclear deterrence to justify themselves, to try to refute the scientific evidence that any use of nuclear weapons will be catastrophic, that a 'limited nuclear exchange' will cause abrupt climate change with decades-long global humanitarian consequences and famine, and that as the Red Cross says there is simply no conceivable effective medical response to even a single detonation of a nuclear weapon in a city.

Most importantly for Maralinga and the nuclear sacrifice zones of the Pacific, the treaty also provides for assistance to nuclear weapons survivors and for the remediation of nuclear test sites.

ICAN Australia was determined that nuclear survivors from Japan, Australia, the Marshall Islands and French Polynesia would get to the treaty negotiations, to bring a sense of the lived experience of nuclear weapons to the diplomats, skilled and determined though they were, coming from very different worlds. Karina and Rosemary Lester, Sue Coleman-Haseldine and other Pacific nuclear survivors brought indigenous voices and the experience of nuclear colonialism to the heart of the talks, with great effect.

And now, a Nobel Peace Prize to ICAN, which started in Melbourne, and grew into a global coalition. Pretty amazing, and so wonderful for so many people well beyond ICAN.

Here in Australia, the next task is to get the ALP to pledge to sign the ban treaty as soon as it takes office. And then, before we can ratify the treaty, the two struggles to bring Australia into compliance will begin. The first is to abandon the bipartisan commitment in our defence policy to reliance on US nuclear protection – the extended nuclear deterrence policy. The second, of course, is the reform of Pine Gap to require the removal of all nuclear-related activities from the base's operations.

Whether that demand would lead to genuine reform or a US decision to close the base will depend on whether

an Australian government can develop a spine and comply with new international law – whatever the US thinks.

New Zealand was the first nuclear-supporter American ally to break from the mould. For all the US and Australian shouting at New Zealand after the passage of its *New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone, Disarmament, and Arms Control Act*, the US and New Zealand have made up with non-nuclear business as usual.

A non-nuclear alliance is possible.

**Richard Tanter** is chair of the Australian board of ICAN, and with the late Des Ball and Bill Robinson has published eight research papers on Pine Gap with the Nautilus Institute.

*This article is reprinted courtesy of the Alice Springs News.*

## WEST PAPUA

*Indonesia's West Papua Headache Continues - Jakarta must tread carefully on the issue.*

By **Luke Hunt**

October 14, 2017

**T**he problems of Indonesian President Joko Widodo are many. A revival of the communist party and politically expedient alliances between Islamic militants and opposition parties are among the latest headaches he must deal with inside the corridors of power in Jakarta.

But much further away, in West Papua, old issues continue to simmer, perhaps threateningly so unless Widodo can negotiate deftly with people who have little in common with Indonesia's central authorities and those who run the conflict-prone country.

The latest escalation in tensions between locals and Widodo's administration erupted last week when it was revealed that a secret petition had been passed around, gathering 1.8 million signatures, demanding a free vote on independence for West Papua.

The demands were presented to the United Nations in New York by exiled pro-independence leader Benny Wenda. But the bid was rejected, with doubts cast over the veracity of the petition by

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Jakarta. In fact, *The Jakarta Post* reported that the chairman of Special Committee on Decolonization, Venezuela's Rafael Ramirez expressed "indignation with those individuals and parties who had manipulated his name for their own purposes."

"I have never received anything or anybody regarding the issue of West Papua," he apparently said in a doorstep interview at UN headquarters.

The United Nations, and the international community more generally, may not want to upset the Indonesian government. But the 1.8 million signatures figure, if correct, represents around a whopping 70 percent of the West Papuan population. Separatist agitation also has a long history there, amid sporadic crackdowns by the military that have obviously not worked.

And the petition did in fact exist. It asked the UN to appoint a special representative to investigate human rights abuses in the province and to put West Papua back on the decolonization committee agenda and ensure their right to self-determination.

It was that committee which refused to accept the petition.

"In the West Papuan people's petition we hand over the bones of the people of West Papua to the United Nations and the world," Wenda said, adding the petition was banned in the provinces of Papua and West Papua, and blocked online.

"After decades of suffering, decades of genocide, decades of occupation, we open up the voice of the West Papuan people which lives inside this petition. My people want to be free."

Indonesia can ill-afford another conflict, having dealt with similar issues with respect to East Timor and Aceh that threatened the country's political and social stability.

West Papua was lumped within Indonesia's sovereign borders through a forced and controversial annexation by Indonesia that has

been well-documented. Since then many reports have documented how indigenous people have been subjected to harassment, ranging from beatings to murder.

Peter Arndt of the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission compiled one report accusing the Indonesian government of staging violent incursions into the region and systematically expelling Papuans from their homes in what amounted to a "slow-motion genocide."

According to the report, the indigenous people of West Papua now account for just 40 percent of the population, compared with more than 95 percent three decades ago.

Released a year ago, the report also found that the situation in West Papua was "fast approaching a tipping point."

"In less than five years, the position of Papuans in their own land will be worse than precarious," it said.

"They are already experiencing a demographic tidal wave. Ruthless Indonesian political, economic, social and cultural domination threatens to engulf the proud people who have inhabited the land they call Tanah Papua for thousands of years."

Doubts surrounding the recent petition might be real. But the fact is there are fewer doubts surrounding human rights abuses committed by the military and the hostility felt among locals on West Papua.

This is a highly combustible mix. And it comes at a potentially troubling time for Widodo ahead of presidential elections in 2019. So far, although he has visited the area several times and focused his efforts on economic issues, resolving the harder political questions has proven elusive. Navigating them will demand a skillful and more sensitive approach, which is a far cry from the clumsy, violent and authoritarian hand of the military we have witnessed previously.

**Luke Hunt** can be followed on twitter [@lukeanthonyhunt](https://twitter.com/lukeanthonyhunt)

## AUSTRALIA'S WHITE PAPER

*Australia's Foreign Affairs White Paper looks to the past*

By **James O'Neill\***

**T**he latest Australian White Paper on foreign affairs published in November 2017 was the first such attempt to define Australia's place in the modern geopolitical world and how it might appropriately respond to regional and global challenges since 2003.

The world has changed significantly in that time and one might have expected to see more recognition of that in the White Paper. Certainly, there were phrases in the document, and particularly some diagrams, that revealed the extent to which fundamental changes are occurring. For example, figure 2.4 presents the Treasuries estimate of GDP growth in some key economies in period 2017 to 2030, a span of only 13 years.

That graph shows Australia's GDP going from one trillion US dollars to 1.7 trillion, but that is dwarfed by China's GDP which is predicted to grow from \$21.4 trillion to \$42.4 trillion in the same period. The US has an expected growth from 18.6 trillion to \$24 trillion. \$24 This has enormous implications for China's geopolitical role, but the White Paper fails to analyze what China's growth vis-à-vis that of the United States will translate to in terms of geopolitical power.

Instead, the White Paper is trapped in a conceptual framework of seeing the world as it used to be, rather than as it actually is and in particular how it is likely to be over the 10 year horizon of the White Paper. This conceptual imagery is more probably described as delusional.

This delusional thinking manifests itself in a number of ways. There are three in particular that I wish to note. This analysis will focus only on the Asia region, as that is the one of the most relevance to Australia. It should be noted however, that the White Paper makes a series of statements about NATO, Russia, Ukraine and Syria that merely reflect the Washington propaganda machine's view of those entities than it does reality.

The most egregious example is in Syria. The White Paper claims that Australia's approach to international relations is "*anchored in international law, universal standards of human rights, good governance, transparency and accountability*".

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Yet the government lied about seeking legal advice before entering that war; refused to disclose that legal advice; breached international law in entering that conflict without the consent of the sovereign government of Syria; is a party to war crimes carried out in Syria by its all the United States; refuses to disclose to Parliament what its troops are doing in Syria; and is silent on the recent announcement by the US Secretary of Defence that the US intends to stay in Syria despite its presence being both illegal and unwelcome.

The first point of note about the White Paper is that its view of post-World War II history bears little or no resemblance to reality. Both in the White Paper itself and in comments made at the time of its release by both the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister, the view is repeatedly expressed in one form or another that the United States has been a force for stability in progress in what the white paper insists on calling the Indo-Pacific region, and indeed elsewhere in the world.

That is a view unlikely to be shared by other countries in the Asian region who in the post-World War II period have seen United States foreign policy: -Intervene in the Korean civil war, taking advantage of the USSR's temporary absence from the UN Security Council to justify a United Nations military action that destroyed the North's agriculture, cities and infrastructure and killed at least 3 million North Koreans (**Cumings The Korean War: A History 2011**).

Such American interference in Korea goes back to at least the 1880s; created an artificial division of Korea in 1945 without reference to the population of either regions; lent their support to the brutal Rhee dictatorship; renounced a negotiated non-proliferation nuclear agreement with North Korea that is a direct antecedent of the current crisis; and continues to this day with bellicose statements and provocative military exercises. Russian and Chinese proposals aimed at defusing the situation and leading to a lasting peace treaty are simply ignored.

- In 1965 and Indonesian coup organized by the CIA replaced President Sukarno with the dictator Suharto who

ruled for the next 30 years. The US supplied the Indonesian military with a kill list of communist or suspected communist sympathizers. Between 500,000 and 1 million Indonesians were killed as a direct result.

- Indochina, we're American involvement began in 1954 by blocking the agreement reached at the Geneva accords to hold nation-wide elections because the "wrong man" i.e. Ho Chi Minh, would have won. That war gradually escalated until the Americans were unceremoniously dispatched in 1975. They left behind at least 3 million Vietnamese dead, a landscape devastated by defoliants, and a genetic time bomb from the same causes. The devastation extended to Cambodia and Laos, the consequences of watch plague those countries to this day.

Afghanistan was invaded in and 2001 on the pretext of their alleged responsibility for the attacks of 11 September 2001. The Americans are still there and showing no inclination to leave. Apart from hundreds of thousands of dead Afghani's, and millions forced into exile, the major "achievement" appears to be the restoration of Afghanistan is the opium capital of the world, producing some 93% of the world's supply.

Korea, Vietnam, and Afghanistan are singled out for mention because each of these wars involved in the enthusiastic support of the Australian governments of the time. A similar willingness to follow the US into its illegal wars of choice was manifest in the invasion of Iraq in 2003 (more than 1 million dead) and Syria in 2015 (more than 400,000 dead and millions displaced).

As has been well documented by **William Blum (America's Deadliest Export: Democracy 2015)** and others, these are but a tiny fraction all of countries invaded, bombed, plundered or who suffered regime change at the hands of the Americans over the past 70 years. The numbers of people killed as a result of these various interventions already exceeds 30 million.

To describe this record as an example of global leadership to be applauded and supported and as the White Paper clearly hopes, will continue, is to suffer

delusion of the highest order. The White Paper sees Australia's role is upholding international law, universal standards of human rights, good governance, transparency and accountability. Those are enviable goals and one wishes that they actually reflected Australian Government practice of recent decades.

The White Paper is also very ambivalent as to how Australia should approach its relationship with China, which as the figures quoted above suggest, is already the dominant economic power in the world on a parity purchasing power basis.

This is partly because of the impossible conundrum that Australia faces with China. On the one hand, China is Australia's largest trading partner by a very considerable margin, and the single most important reason for Australia's unprecedented run of wealth and prosperity over the past 30 years. On the other hand, the US sees China, correctly, as the great power most likely to replace the US's previous hegemonic position, backed as that power invariably has been by the brutal exercise of military force. That military force has been used to enforce commercial advantage, to control the production and distribution of raw materials, especially oil, and to ensure political subservience.

For the first time in modern history, the US is being outclassed in every sphere, including military technology. It cannot win a war with China (some delusional Washington thinking to the contrary) and especially so given that China is forging ever-closer economic, political and strategic links with Russia. The Russian-Chinese combination is for all practical intents and purposes unbeatable.

Instead, the US will continue to wage proxy warfare, using different militant groups as it has done since at least Operation Cyclone in the 1970s to sabotage and impede Chinese and Russian progress. The hundreds of military bases that currently encircle both Russia and China are clearly intended in part to serve as forward bases for that activity. The Australian spy base at Pine Gap fulfils a critical role in the American war machine,

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and as such Australia is a party to the daily commission of war crimes carried out by the Americans in their worldwide military operations.

Quite apart from Pine Gap, the Australian military is increasingly integrated with the US, and that puts Australia, certainly in Chinese eyes, on the wrong side of history. The conundrum that Australia faces manifests itself for example, in Australia's attitude to the South China Sea dispute.

The White Paper alleges that China's actions in the South China Sea are an illustration of its alleged disregard for international law and the rules based system Australia professes to uphold. The claims of China within the so-called Nine Dash Line however, were first espoused by the Nationalist government of Chiang Kai Shek in 1947, two years before the People's Republic of China came into existence. The present day government of Taiwan echoes those claims.

As to the alleged militarization of the South China Sea by China's island building activities, it is true that the PRC government has constructed eight such atolls. Vietnam has also constructed a similar number of militarily reinforced atolls, as have other littoral states including the Philippines and Taiwan, doing exactly the same. As China but minus the criticism leveled against China. Their activities do not merit a mention in the White Paper.

The White Paper ignores all of this other relevant activity in its anxiety to make a propaganda point against China. The White Paper seems similarly ignorant of the fact that China and the ten ASEAN nations have reached an agreed framework under which they will settle outstanding issues in the South China Sea. Significantly neither Australia nor the United States are parties to this agreement, but this has not stopped either nation from proffering opinions nor carrying out actions that do nothing to reduce tensions and achieve a settlement.

Australia's ambivalence to the rise of China is reflected in its attitude to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the

world's greatest infrastructure project to which more than 65 countries have already signed up. Australia was specifically invited by the Chinese Premier Li Keqiang earlier this year to join the project and declined. There has been no plausible explanation for this reluctance.

Although the White Paper makes a passing acknowledgement to the BRI it is silent as to the project's enormous potential. This is to say the least curious, particularly as there is considerable potential for Australia to benefit from the BRI. The BRI is, to use president Xi's term, a "win-win" situation we're all parties derive a benefit. They do so on the basis of infrastructure and related investment without a shot being fired. The contrast with the Anglo American model of colonial exploitation and gunboat diplomacy of the past 300 years could not be greater.

Australia's failure in this regard reflects a wider problem that permeates the White Paper. Australia seeks the restoration of a world that never really existed. That is, a world where the US was the international policeman bringing peace, democracy and the rule of law to less fortunate nations. As long as Australia clings to this delusional fantasy it will be forever doomed to being the colonial handmaiden of a western power. As the semi-official Global Times of China editorialized, "Australia is difficult to be reasoned with or comforted. Fortunately, the country is not that important, and China can move its ties to Australia to a back seat..... China should prepare a friendly face and a cold shoulder."

If China does indeed decide to cold shoulder Australia, the economic consequences will be devastating. This is insufficiently appreciated in Australia, and certainly not acknowledged in the White Paper. The facts are that Russia, the Central Asian and Southwest Asian nations linking to the BRI all produce the commodities that Australia has grown rich on in the past four decades supplying to China.

A White Paper truly concerned with defining Australia's national interest and proposing policies to benefit Australia would recognise these economic and geopolitical realities. Unfortunately it does neither. As Hugh White (**The Guardian 27.11.17**) succinctly puts it,

(the Australian) "government has once again failed to come to terms with the full implications of the profound shifts that are transforming our international setting. It is a triumph for wishful thinking over serious policy..... until we find leaders with the imagination to see what is happening and the courage to start talking frankly about it, Australia has no chance of adapting effectively to the new Asia into which we are being thrust."

I could not agree more. It is a message that will be read in Canberra but in all likelihood ignored. When the inevitable deleterious consequences flow from that blindness we will have only ourselves to blame.

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#### NORTHSHORE FORUM

11 November 2017

By **Hannah Middleton**

*On Remembrance Day what should we remember?*

**T**he eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month was the time of the Armistice between WWI Allies and Germany in 1918.

World War I was fought from July 28, 1914 to November 11, 1918 mobilizing 70 million military personnel.

16 million died in this war -- 9 million combatants and 7 million civilians.

After World War Two, Armistice Day was renamed Remembrance Day to commemorate those who were killed in both World Wars. Today the loss of Australian lives from all wars is commemorated on Remembrance Day.

Wars are still with us, fueled by a global arms industry and competing international interests seeking resources and hegemony.... So the number to remember is still growing.

So today, on November 11, we are invited to remember the dead in World War 1 and subsequent wars.

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As a lifelong peace activist – but not a pacifist -- I would like today to ask:

**What are we told to remember and what should we remember?**

Remembrance Day is not simply an historical commemoration. It deals with historical events but it contains a clear political agenda and there is a profound dishonesty in what is said and what is not said.

I am sure that many of you saw reports of the re-enactment of the October 1917 Light Horse charge at Beersheba.

The flags flew, stirring music played, horses whinnied (and don't we love animals!) descendants in replica uniforms spoke proudly of their ancestors, some wept...

Politicians spoke of the heroic fallen who changed the course of war ...

All of this was true .... But what was unspoken, what was not said?

For example, the land where the charge took place was home to 90% Arabs. Yet no Palestinians were invited to the re-enactment. Israeli flags were flown but the state of Israel did not exist at that time.

With the 1926 Balfour Declaration, the British colonial power promised Palestine, a land that was not theirs, to the Zionist movement, ignoring the rights of the indigenous Palestinian people. This declaration paved the road to Palestinian dispossession and the systematic denial to this day of their right to self-determination.

But we are not encouraged to remember things like this.

There is often a profound dishonesty in the language of what is said in so much of Remembrance Day ceremonies:

It is said the soldiers of the First World War and subsequent wars make 'the ultimate sacrifice'. But actually they don't sacrifice themselves, politicians and generals *sacrifice* them. There is a stark difference.

Australian soldiers are described as 'the fallen'.

Ken Inglis writes:

*... soldiers of the Queen did not stagger or sink or topple or have bits blown off, but fell, to become not quite simply the*

*dead but the fallen, who cleanly, heroically, sacrificially gave their lives in war.*

*And so, we came to speak not of precisely how they died (eviscerated, burnt, drowned in mud, of thirst and by bleeding out and screaming for their mothers in no man's land) but rather just that they "fell".*

We speak of those who fell. We do not speak of the fact that they were sent overseas to kill.

There is much talk of dying and of sacrifice, but we are almost never asked to remember the killing and the carnage inflicted on distant countries in our name.

In recent years war has become a dominant feature of Australian history. Rather than recognising our role in conflict – so often as pawns of powerful empires – we have ignored it and transformed our participation into something much more palatable through the creation of false historical memories.

Mark McKenna has written:

*"It seems impossible to deny the broader militarisation of our history and culture: the surfeit of jingoistic military histories, the increasing tendency for military displays before football grand finals, the extension of the term Anzac to encompass firefighters and sporting champions, the professionally stage-managed event of the dawn service at Anzac Cove, the burgeoning popularity of battlefield tourism (particularly Gallipoli and the Kokoda Track), the ubiquitous newspaper supplements extolling the virtues of soldiers past and present, and the tendency of the media and both main political parties to view the death of the last World War I veterans as significant national moments.*

The myth has become dominant in today's political culture because it has been heavily promoted by recent Australian governments, first by Hawke in the 1980s, continued by Keating and most heavily promoted by Howard.

A particularly worrying development has been the deliberate targeting of children. Schools across the country are bombarded with free material including

films, books, CDs and posters.

Subsidies are provided for trips to the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. Essay competitions award winners with fully funded tours of European and Middle Eastern battlefields.

This version of our history conveys the appalling and false ideas that nations are made in war not in peace, on battlefields not in parliaments; that soldiers not statesmen are the nation's founders; that the bayonet is mightier than the pen.

The Department of Veterans Affairs has provided material that teaches that our national values, national identity, and our development as a nation have been achieved through our military engagement in foreign wars.

In fact events which have contributed to the formation of the Australian nation have predominantly taken place in peacetime -- events including the ending of transportation in 1840, the Eureka Stockade in 1854, the first Australian Trade Union Congress in 1879, the publication of *The Man from Snowy River* in 1895, Federation on May 9 1901, the Harvester minimum wage decision in 1907, and the suffrage movement with [women's suffrage](#) for state elections in all states and territories in 1911.

The Australian Constitution was created by men who had never been to war, such as Alfred Deakin, Edmund Barton and Charles Kingston. Contrary to the popular idea that Australian values were forged in military service, the majority of Australian nation-builders, including John Curtin and Robert Menzies, never served in war.

However, we should never forget that this process also includes 40,000 years of indigenous history with the final 200 years plus years of the Frontier Wars, murder, dispossession, exclusion and impoverishment. This was clearly an event which was not peaceful and which had a profound impact on the Australian character.

Militarising our history helps create an environment conducive to war, making it easier for Australian governments to commit to conflict and harder for critics to engage in a serious national debate.

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The heroic image of the digger makes it easier to politically justify wars our powerful friend wants to wage and harder to question the costs of war both human lives and billions of dollars.

To challenge our involvement in wars is demonised as cowardly attacks on the men and women in the front line. The prestige of the armed forces shields the politicians from legitimate scrutiny.

The relentless focus on our military history reinforces war, violence and military solutions as key options to resolve international conflict.

The packaged version of the past is used to promote unquestioning respect for the military and acceptance of military action as an effective and legitimate way to solve problems. We are taught to see the military as a feasible and successful mode of conflict resolution.

Criticism is buried beneath the compulsion to be patriotic and stand by our troops. It provides a means by which Australian governments neutralize dissent about any commitment to war.

The majority of the Australian people did not support Australia's involvement in the 2003 Iraq war but once the commitment had been made, the Howard government made it difficult to critique the war on the grounds that the men and women deployed to fight in it must be supported.

There have been valiant peace movements in Europe and in Australia who campaigned for solutions that were better than war. They were arrested, demonised, swept aside by jingoism, simply ignored. Yet they were right.

But we are not invited to remember them — even when the same situation arose over Iraq, even when the same situation faces us today over the Korean Peninsula.

Criticising the myths is a serious thing for it is criticism of the evil and folly of war and of Australia's role as a pawn in international conflict. It is criticism of Australian defence policy and exorbitant defence spending — now \$87 million every single day — and

criticism of our relationship with the US.

In Australia to decision to send young men and women to kill and be killed in war can be made by the Prime Minister alone.

We pride ourselves on being a democratic country but as the events of 2014 and 2015 showed, a prime minister can still send Australian troops into action without democratic constraint, parliamentary debate, or public accountability.

The late former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser has written:

*The way we went to war in 2003, as one of three members of the Coalition of the willing, with the United States and the United Kingdom, represented a betrayal of democratic standards and a betrayal of Australian values.....*

*The closeness of our relationship with the United States ... means that we no longer have an independent capacity to stay out of America's wars... When those hard-hitting, three-service forces in Darwin are used to support a conflict in which America is involved, and when Pine Gap is used to target not only drones, but advanced American weapons systems, how can an Australian Prime Minister stand up in the Parliament and say Australia is going to pass this one by? The Prime Minister would not be believed. Australia could not stop America using those facilities...."*

Very many Australians believe that it is essential and urgent that the power to declare war or to stay at peace be transferred from the Executive to Parliament.

But none of all this will be mentioned in official Remembrance Day ceremonies.

All of what I have said means no disrespect to soldiers who fought and died. They were told they had to defeat the Hun on the western front or the gooks in Vietnam or the rag heads in Iraq and Afghanistan. They obeyed and did their best in indescribably appalling situations.

The guilty are the ones who sent them, lied to them about why they were there, who sacrificed them for economic and political advantage

On Armistice Day, the flags fly, the solemn music plays, the veterans, the widows and the grandchildren wear the medals and weep, the leaders speak of "fallen heroes". There are headstones and wreaths and memorials and speeches. They promise "We will remember them".

But we hear nothing about the wounded and maimed, the countless men stricken by shell shock, by post traumatic stress disorder, the disfigured men who were shunned; the rampant alcoholism and morphine addiction; the terrified kids and battered wives, and the suicides.

Perhaps it is easier to remember the fallen with a poppy and a parade than to confront the reality. Perhaps it is politically more expedient.

So we must ask on Remembrance Day... **what should we remember?**

#### ARMISTICE DAY

*Armistice Day – narrow nationalist naiveties and voodoo vindications of war*

By Douglas Newton

11 November 2017

*Every year, in the days leading up to Armistice Day, a little crop of opinion pieces appears urging Australians to do more than merely remember the dead of war. Various writers argue that we should also recognise the justice of the cause. These frankly nationalist opinion pieces are based on a naïve understanding of the Great War.*

**I**n essence, such opinion pieces seek to rehabilitate the First World War as a "good war". They argue that the war was righteous and necessary. It was worth it. Our men fought on the side of freedom against tyranny. Victory ultimately redeemed their sacrifice. Thus, the men did not die "in vain". Ours was essentially a defensive war, fought in a good cause. We should shout it out on Armistice Day.

The case put in such articles can be quickly summarised. First, the Germany enemy was singularly evil: Germany launched the war; Germany

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was a tyranny, bent on world domination; there was a moral gulf between Germany and her enemies.

Second, the war of 1914-1918 was Australia's war, fought in her own interest; a German victory would have harmed Australia; therefore, we definitely did not fight "other peoples' wars". Third, it was a war for high ideological goals: democracy, and civilisation itself.

Familiar rhetorical devices add spice. The name of a relative killed in the conflict is thrown in, adding emotional weight, so that critics of the war can be depicted as insensitive. Some writers accuse any critic of the war as insulting the soldiers. Name-calling is common: it is "the left" who refuse to see the justice of the cause. Supposedly, all critics are "left-wing", dewy-eyed, pacifists, ignorant of the peril posed by German militarism.

Let us test these arguments.

**First**, is there really a historical consensus that the German enemy represented a singular evil that explains the war? Certainly, historians of Germany reveal her leaders as reckless and rapacious. But historians of wartime Russia, France, Italy, Serbia, and Britain, also highlight the recklessness and rapaciousness of their leaders. There is no truth that ends all strife. Marc Trachtenberg, a very eminent American historian of the Great War, commented recently on a major conference on Sir Edward Grey in 1914, that he was "struck above all by the lack of consensus of all the key issues". (See Trachtenberg, introduction to *H-Diplo Article Review Forum 713*, and Trachtenberg, "New Light on 1914?" in *H-Diplo/ISSF Forum 16*, both published on-line, September 2017).

Indeed, the search for the one true cause of 1914 is fruitless. Crucial documents have vanished. For example the private papers of Sir Edward Grey, the British Foreign Secretary, and of Bethmann Hollweg, the German Chancellor, were lost in fires in 1917 and 1945. The private papers of key French figures, such as Paléologue and Poincaré, have been weeded. Document collections produced initially by Soviet Russia on

the Tsarist elite's machinations during 1914 remain incomplete.

Moreover, it is simply illogical to imagine that an incontrovertible case against a handful of German and Austrian decision-makers of 1914, showing duplicity and mendacity on their part, would exonerate the decision-makers of Belgrade, Petersburg, Paris and London. Proof – or not – of who launched the war scarcely explains its escalation and prolongation. Those who widened war aims and prolonged the war are just as responsible for its destructiveness as those who launched it. Perhaps more so.

Was Germany uniquely a tyranny during the Great War? Germany was a semi-parliamentary monarchy. In common with every combatant, the government became more and more authoritarian during the war. But the nation was deeply divided. The left denounced the "annexationism" of the right. Germany's powerful socialist parties opposed militarism and urged democratisation. If Germany's enemies had credibly maintained moderate war aims, the left would have been further emboldened. It made the revolution of 1918. The result of the first post-war election of January 1919 is instructive: Germany's liberals, democrats, and socialists of various stripes, gained an overwhelming victory at the expense of nationalists and conservatives. It had been coming for decades.

Was there a moral gulf between Germany and her enemies? Was Germany's war aggressive and ours defensive? Germany's wartime "tyranny" certainly aimed to grab territory and resources. But so too did the ultra-nationalists who increasingly dominated in wartime Petersburg, Paris, Rome, Tokyo, and London. Plans to carve up vast swathes of territory, and to exclude German commercial enterprise from those territories, produced the treaties that bound together the anti-German coalition. Annexations on a grand scale were contemplated in the Straits and Persia Agreement (March 1915), the Treaty of London (April 1915), the Sykes-Picot Agreement (May 1916), and in a dozen lesser colonial treaties.

**Second**, was the Great War really Australia's war? Or was it a case of our fighting "other people's wars"? If this last jibe is stretched to mean that Australia should never have fought in the war at all,

but rather should have remained neutral, then indeed it misfires. For Australia simply had no constitutional power to choose neutrality. It was politically and emotionally impossible. Our belligerency was decided by London. In addition, the Australian people felt themselves to be transplanted Britons. Given this reality, some participation in the war was inescapable.

But was it therefore "Australia's very own war"? This stretches the truth even further. Of course, a German victory would have hurt Australia's interests, because we were bound up in the Empire. But this scarcely means that Australians died solely in Australia's interests. We fought the war in places determined by others, and for sordid objectives decided upon by others. Australia was seldom consulted on high diplomacy and war aims. But our government's recklessness contributed to this. We offered men at the outset, for any campaign, for any objective, under British leadership, anywhere on the imperial globe. This meant that Australians were far more deeply immersed in the war than was necessary, and that our government threw away opportunities to carefully weigh objectives and costs.

**Third**, was it a war against tyranny and for democracy? This is very naïve stuff. Everywhere, as the war escalated, Liberal leaders and values were smothered. Tyrants were among our allies. Britain fought alongside Tsarist Russia for the first 32 months of the 51 months of war. Tsar Nicholas, Sazonov, his foreign minister, Goremykin, his first wartime prime minister, not to mention the next prime ministers, Stürmer and Trepov, fought for territory, orthodoxy, and the "Russification" of conquests? Massacres and deportations of Jews and minorities were common behind Russian lines. From March 1917, London, Paris, and Rome then treated Russia's new democratic government contemptibly.

There were few democrats among the "Allied" decision-makers. The nationalist leaders in Rome who took Italy into the war, Salandra, and

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Sonnino, his foreign minister, were reactionaries. Similarly, reactionary Tories swiftly eclipsed Britain's Liberal war-makers of 1914, Asquith, Grey, and Haldane. Bonar Law, Curzon, and Milner, eventually dominated Lloyd George's improvised coalition after December 1916. These men had been prominent in the struggle against democratisation in Britain before 1914. In America, Woodrow Wilson's government became remarkably despotic in 1917-1918, using the Espionage Act to silence critics. War overwhelmed Wilson's progressive internationalism.

But, in the end, some might ask, was the world not "made safe" for democracy? It was a severely dented democracy that hobbled on into the future. For example, the victorious powers showed no interest in consolidating Germany's new democracy in 1918-19. Germany had elected socialist leaders who talked about nationalising mines, the eight-hour day, and the recognition of trade unions by employers. The victors gave the Germans the message: their revolution and their new democracy were unwelcome. The new Weimar Republic was starved; the economic blockade was continued after the armistice. Democracy was scarcely safe in Germany.

Russia descended into dictatorship. Civil wars and ethnic conflicts raged across Eastern Europe and the Middle East for years after the armistice.

In the West, authoritarianism jostled with democracy. Ultra-nationalism, xenophobia, and protectionism had all been boosted. Small incidents point to the larger truth. For instance, in France in 1919, the assassin of Jean Jaurès, the great advocate of peace in 1914, was freed; Joseph Caillaux, a former prime minister, who had urged peace in 1917, was charged with treason and remained under arrest. In the USA in 1919, Eugene Debs, the socialist presidential candidate of 1912, still languished in prison, for having criticised the war. Many of the new eastern European states swiftly descended into despotisms. Even in Australia, democracy limped. The nationalist government of W. M. Hughes expelled a Labor member of the Federal Parliament, Hugh Mahon – for criticising British policy in Ireland. Italy

succumbed to Fascism within five years. Many of those who had preached war for democracy's sake, such as Winston Churchill, then lavished praise on Mussolini.

Such was the low quality of the democracy made safe by the long war.

Did the soldiers die "in vain" therefore? The "in vain" card must be one of the most contemptible cards played in politics. We are told that only victory can save the dead. It is a voodoo vindication. People die needlessly in war – "in vain" – in every conflict, every day. The idea that victory will redeem their deaths is preposterous. Wars must go on, the parents and survivors are told, lest the dead have died "in vain"; the truth is that wars must end, lest more men die for the vanity of politicians.

There is indeed much to remember on Armistice Day. But we can do without the narrow nationalist naiveties.

**Assoc. Prof. Douglas Newton** is a retired academic. He has taught history at Macquarie University, Victoria University of Wellington, NZ, and Western Sydney University. He is the author of a number of studies of war and peace, including most recently, *The Darkest Days: The Truth Behind Britain's Rush to War, 1914* (London, Verso: 2014) and *Hell-bent: Australia's Leap into the Great War* (Melbourne: Scribe, 2014). He is currently writing a book on the history of diplomatic efforts to end the Great War.

## U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY

### *The Rogue Cries Rogue: Trump's New National Security Policy*

by **Thomas Hon Wing Polin**

December 21, 2017

**O**n December 19, 2019, President Donald Trump delivered a sweeping speech on "national" security. It had a stark, simple message. Essentially, Trump said: We're Dictator-in-Perpetuity on planet Earth, and everyone else must adopt our rules and values. Those who don't — notably China and Russia — are revisionists working against us. We'll deal with them. Ultimately, might makes right.

With that, the chief representative of the United States basically declared war on all nations and peoples that are not card-carrying members of the American imperium. Since his proclamations are

the very antithesis of the values of democracy, America's official ideology, those nations and peoples surely have a human right to ask a few questions.

Questions such as: Who gave you the divine right to rule the world, and on a perpetual basis? Why can't you work with those with different ideas about political, economic and social organization, so as to create a better world for your people and theirs? Why should might make right — especially in the 21st century? And why zero-sum? Why not give win-win a chance?

Indeed, there is a popular Chinese saying: 惡人先告狀 — The Rogue is always the first to cry "Rogue!" In English, this well-known Chinese saying may be more idiomatically rendered as "The pot calls the kettle black." It is an apt description of the Trump address. All the offenses he accused China, Russia and other parties of — military expansion, seeking international dominance, undermining others' interests, bullying, etc. — are most flagrantly committed in today's world by none other than the USA. But that is par for the course from the blindly hypocritical Exceptionalists in Washington.

Even so, in the past, spokesmen for the Empire — notably the POTUS — at least bothered to dress it all up in loftier, more benign rhetoric. Now, the gloves are off. The Washington hardliners who wrote Trump's speech have signaled unequivocally their rejection of the best hope for sustained peace and prosperity in the 21st century: a sharing of power by the Empire with other rising nations and cooperation with them to build a better world.

On a more practical level, the boilerplate Neocon-militarist positions in the security address conspicuously reverse Trump's own earlier efforts to improve ties with Moscow and Beijing. If they are implemented even half seriously, global tensions will intensify notably.

Not surprisingly, the international push-back has begun — led by China. Spokesperson Hua Chunying of the

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**NORTH KOREA CHOKED**

*UN Security Council's – 15:0; –  
Choking a Country into Submission*

By **Peter Koenig**

December 26, 2017 "Information  
Clearing House" -

**T**he Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is being choked into submission if not starvation by the UN Security Council, by a vote of 15:0; i.e. unanimously. None of the 15 UNSC states, let alone the five permanent members, have had the guts to say no to a killer Resolution, drafted and proposed by the United States of America, a name that increasingly stands for international rogue and crime nation.

The New York Times reports on 22 December 2017 - "President Trump has used just about every lever you can use, short of starving the people of North Korea to death, to change their behavior," the White House homeland security adviser, Thomas P. Bossert, said Tuesday. "And so, we don't have a lot of room left here to apply pressure to change their behavior."

Two immediate questions come to mind – first, who is Trump to blackmail the UNSC into punishing nations which do not bend to the empire's wishes? Yes, blackmailing, because that's exactly what is categorically part of the chief rogue's international behavior. Case in point is the recent UN Resolution to nullify Trump's unilateral decision to declare Jerusalem as Israel's capital, when he, the Donald, threatening he would watch closely who would vote against the US, in view of punishing those nations monetarily or with other sanctions; and second, how come Russia and China went along with this literally genocidal program of sanctions contained in this UNSC Resolution?

Both Russia and China know that Washington's arguments against the DPRK are based on a web of lies. That everything coming out of Washington is a lie, or untruth, or omission of facts – is well known around the globe. But in this case, where two ascending super-powers, Russia and China have the veto right to say NO to these illegal sanctions, it begs the question, why' didn't they use their veto?

Even more so, since Russia and China are both also 'sanctioned' by Washington for not 'behaving', and because Russia and China are natural allies of North Korea. – Why were they going along with Washington's blackmail? – A veto could have sent a clear message to the sort of preposterous Nikki Hales and Donald Trumps of this world, that there is no more fear of the devil, but that the power plates are clearly shifting away from Washington.

Was it out of fear that the madman could possibly press the red bottom, if provoked? – Voting with the madman is certainly no reason to believe that the Mad Man will not press the nuclear bottom. – Then, what kind of diplomacy is it? – The fear of more sanctions directed at Russia and China? This would be outright ridiculous, as both countries, founders of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), are almost fully detached from the western dollar economy and are heading a new economy that already comprises about half of the world's population and one third of the globe's economic output. Hence, they can function fully independently from the west. There are no fears of sanctions either.

Then why?

Maybe because they, Russia and China, want to show the world that no matter how they vote, they will do what they deem correct, like in this case not adhering to the sanction, as they will not let North Korea's people, their friends and allies, suffocate to death. This would tell those nations who still do not dare contradicting the US of A – "Don't be afraid, we are on your side."

Already a month ago, Reuters reported that according to the North Korean representative at the UN Geneva, those who most suffer from the sanctions are women and children. This is a classic. It applies almost everywhere when sanctions are dished out. For example, in Iraq where under the Clinton sanctions program, following a 1995 UN report, "576,000 Iraqi children may have died since the end of the Persian Gulf war because of economic sanctions imposed by the Security Council, according to two scientists who surveyed the country for the Food and Agriculture Organization." In addition, the study found "steeply rising

malnutrition among the young, suggesting that more children will be at risk in the coming years." – Indeed, close to a million Iraqis have died as the result of a decade long US-imposed UN sanctions scheme.

Will the world allow similar numbers – or higher – of people to die in North Korea, just because the DPRK has opted to defend herself against the self-proclaimed exceptional nation that has for over 60 years refused to sign a peace agreement and instead constantly threatened North Korea with annual high-powered military war games along the Korean Peninsula?

North Korea has done no harm to any other nation. Indeed, North Korea does not intend to start a war with anyone. North Korea has had the courage and strength to rebuild as a socialist nation in almost full isolation from a 1953 US-devastated country with the loss from then one third of the population, about 3 million people. Does anyone wonder why North Korea has opted to defend herself – come what may?

And does anybody realize, including the 15 UNSC countries having condemned the DPRK to starve, that North Korea has declared numerous times that she wants nothing more than Peace, that she is willing to sign a nuclear weapons disarmament program along with all the other nuclear powers; and she is ready to negotiate, as long as Washington stops its high-handed and dangerous military maneuvers and jet fighter territorial overflights?

Why would North Korea, or any nation for that matter – not have the same right as the US, UK, Russia, China, France, Israel, India, Pakistan, and the NATO member nuclear weapons sharing states of Belgium, Germany, Italy, Netherlands and Turkey – all of which have acquired atomic weapons for alleged "defense purposes"?

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**NORTH KOREAN HISTORY***A Murderous History of Korea*By **Bruce Cumings**May 16, 2017 "[Information Clearing House](#)" -

**M**ore than four decades ago I went to lunch with a diplomatic historian who, like me, was going through Korea-related documents at the National Archives in Washington. He happened to remark that he sometimes wondered whether the Korean Demilitarised Zone might be ground zero for the end of the world. This April, Kim In-ryong, a North Korean diplomat at the UN, warned of 'a dangerous situation in which a thermonuclear war may break out at any moment'. A few days later, President Trump told Reuters that 'we could end up having a major, major conflict with North Korea.' American atmospheric scientists have shown that even a relatively contained nuclear war would throw up enough soot and debris to threaten the global population: 'A regional war between India and Pakistan, for instance, has the potential to dramatically damage Europe, the US and other regions through global ozone loss and climate change.' How is it possible that we have come to this? How does a puffed-up, vainglorious narcissist, whose every other word may well be a lie (that applies to both of them, Trump and Kim Jong-un), come not only to hold the peace of the world in his hands but perhaps the future of the planet? We have arrived at this point because of an inveterate unwillingness on the part of Americans to look history in the face and a laser-like focus on that same history by the leaders of North Korea.

North Korea celebrated the 85th anniversary of the foundation of the Korean People's Army on 25 April, amid round-the-clock television coverage of parades in Pyongyang and enormous global tension. No journalist seemed interested in asking why it was the 85th anniversary when the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was only founded in 1948. What was really being celebrated was the beginning of the Korean guerrilla struggle against the Japanese in north-east China, officially dated to 25 April 1932. After Japan annexed Korea in

1910, many Koreans fled across the border, among them the parents of Kim Il-sung, but it wasn't until Japan established its puppet state of Manchukuo in March 1932 that the independence movement turned to armed resistance. Kim and his comrades launched a campaign that lasted 13 difficult years, until Japan finally relinquished control of Korea as part of the 1945 terms of surrender. This is the source of the North Korean leadership's legitimacy in the eyes of its people: they are revolutionary nationalists who resisted their country's coloniser; they resisted again when a massive onslaught by the US air force during the Korean War razed all their cities, driving the population to live, work and study in subterranean shelters; they have continued to resist the US ever since; and they even resisted the collapse of Western communism – as of this September, the DPRK will have been in existence for as long as the Soviet Union. But it is less a communist country than a garrison state, unlike any the world has seen. Drawn from a population of just 25 million, the North Korean army is the fourth largest in the world, with 1.3 million soldiers – just behind the third largest army, with 1.4 million soldiers, which happens to be the American one. Most of the adult Korean population, men and women, have spent many years in this army: its reserves are limited only by the size of the population.

The story of Kim Il-sung's resistance against the Japanese is surrounded by legend and exaggeration in the North, and general denial in the South. But he was recognisably a hero: he fought for a decade in the harshest winter environment imaginable, with temperatures sometimes falling to 50° below zero. Recent scholarship has shown that Koreans made up the vast majority of guerrillas in Manchukuo, even though many of them were commanded by Chinese officers (Kim was a member of the Chinese Communist Party). Other Korean guerrillas led detachments too – among them Choe Yong-gon, Kim Chaek and Choe Hyon – and when they returned to Pyongyang in 1945 they formed the core of the new regime. Their offspring now constitute a multitudinous elite – the number two man in the government

today, Choe Ryong-hae, is Choe Hyon's son.

Kim's reputation was inadvertently enhanced by the Japanese, whose newspapers made a splash of the battle between him and the Korean quislings whom the Japanese employed to track down and kill him, all operating under the command of General Nozoe Shotoku, who ran the Imperial Army's 'Special Kim Division'. In April 1940 Nozoe's forces captured Kim Hye-sun, thought to be Kim's first wife; the Japanese tried in vain to use her to lure Kim out of hiding, and then murdered her. Maeda Takashi headed another Japanese Special Police unit, with many Koreans in it; in March 1940 his forces came under attack from Kim's guerrillas, with both sides suffering heavy casualties. Maeda pursued Kim for nearly two weeks, before stumbling into a trap. Kim threw 250 guerrillas at 150 soldiers in Maeda's unit, killing Maeda, 58 Japanese, 17 others attached to the force, and taking 13 prisoners and large quantities of weapons and ammunition.

In September 1939, when Hitler was invading Poland, the Japanese mobilised what the scholar Dae-Sook Suh has described as a 'massive punitive expedition' consisting of six battalions of the Japanese Kwantung Army and twenty thousand men of the Manchurian Army and police force in a six-month suppression campaign against the guerrillas led by Kim and Ch'oe Hyon. In September 1940 an even larger force embarked on a counterinsurgency campaign against Chinese and Korean guerrillas: 'The punitive operation was conducted for one year and eight months until the end of March 1941,' Suh writes, 'and the bandits, excluding those led by Kim Il-sung, were completely annihilated. The bandit leaders were shot to death or forced to submit.' A vital figure in the long Japanese counterinsurgency effort was Kishi Nobusuke, who made a name for himself running munitions factories. Labelled a Class A war criminal during the US occupation, Kishi avoided incarceration and became one of the founding fathers of postwar Japan and its longtime ruling organ, the Liberal Democratic Party; he was prime

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minister twice between 1957 and 1960. The current Japanese prime minister, Abe Shinzo, is Kishi's grandson and reveres him above all other Japanese leaders. Trump was having dinner at Mar-a-Lago with Abe on 11 February when a pointed message arrived mid-meal, courtesy of Pyongyang: it had just successfully tested a new, solid-fuel missile, fired from a mobile launcher. Kim Il-sung and Kishi are meeting again through their grandsons. Eight decades have passed, and the baleful, irreconcilable hostility between North Korea and Japan still hangs in the air.

In the West, treatment of North Korea is one-sided and ahistorical. No one even gets the names straight. During Abe's Florida visit, Trump referred to him as 'Prime Minister Shinzo'. On 29 April, Ana Navarro, a prominent commentator on CNN, said: 'Little boy Un is a maniac.' The demonisation of North Korea transcends party lines, drawing on a host of subliminal racist and Orientalist imagery; no one is willing to accept that North Koreans may have valid reasons for not accepting the American definition of reality. Their rejection of the American worldview – generally perceived as indifference, even insolence in the face of overwhelming US power – makes North Korea appear irrational, impossible to control, and therefore fundamentally dangerous.

But if American commentators and politicians are ignorant of Korea's history, they ought at least to be aware of their own. US involvement in Korea began towards the end of the Second World War, when State Department planners feared that Soviet soldiers, who were entering the northern part of the peninsula, would bring with them as many as thirty thousand Korean guerrillas who had

been fighting the Japanese in north-east China. They began to consider a full military occupation that would assure America had the strongest voice in postwar Korean affairs. It might be a short occupation or, as a briefing paper put it, it might be one of 'considerable duration'; the main point was that no other power should have a role in Korea such that 'the proportionate strength of the US' would be reduced to 'a point where its effectiveness would be weakened'. Congress and the American people knew nothing about this. Several of the planners were Japanophiles who had never challenged Japan's colonial claims in Korea and now hoped to reconstruct a peaceable and amenable postwar Japan. They worried that a Soviet occupation of Korea would thwart that goal and harm the postwar security of the Pacific. Following this logic, on the day after Nagasaki was obliterated, John J. McCloy of the War Department asked Dean Rusk and a colleague to go into a spare office and think about how to divide Korea. They chose the 38th parallel, and three weeks later 25,000 American combat troops entered southern Korea to establish a military government.

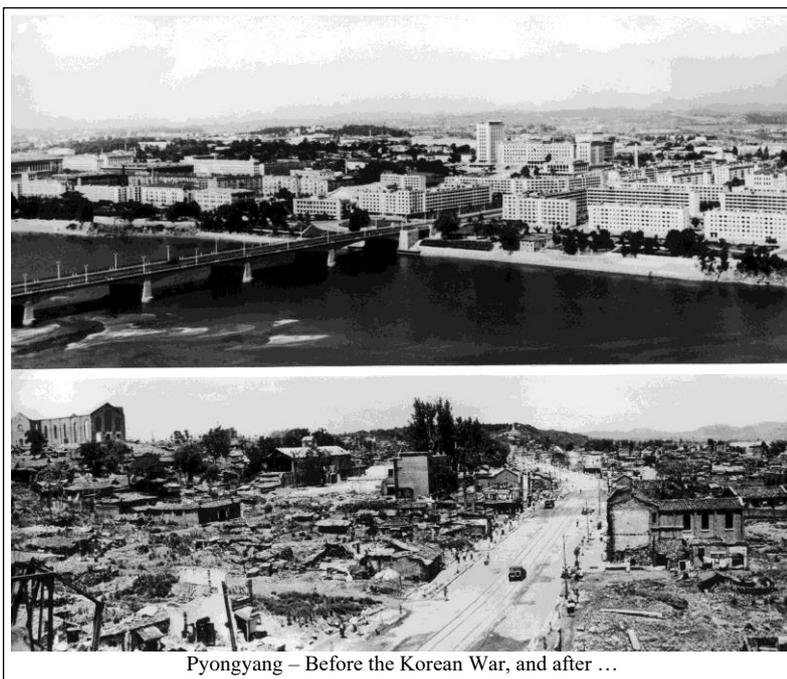
It lasted three years. To shore up their occupation, the Americans employed every last hireling of the Japanese they could find, including former officers in the Japanese military like Park Chung Hee and Kim Chae-gyu, both of whom graduated from the American military

academy in Seoul in 1946. (After a military takeover in 1961 Park became president of South Korea, lasting a decade and a half until his ex-classmate Kim, by then head of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency, shot him dead over dinner one night.) After the Americans left in 1948 the border area around the 38th parallel was under the command of Kim Sok-won, another ex-officer of the Imperial Army, and it was no surprise that after a series of South Korean incursions into the North, full-scale civil war broke out on 25 June 1950. Inside the South itself – whose leaders felt insecure and conscious of the threat from what they called 'the north wind' – there was an orgy of state violence against anyone who might somehow be associated with the left or with communism. The historian Hun Joon Kim found that at least 300,000 people were detained and executed or simply disappeared by the South Korean government in the first few months after conventional war began. My own work and that of John Merrill indicates that somewhere between 100,000 and 200,000 people died as a result of political violence *before* June 1950, at the hands either of the South Korean government or the US occupation forces. In her recent book *Korea's Grievous War*, which combines archival research, records of mass graves and interviews with relatives of

the dead and escapees who fled to Osaka, Su-kyoung Hwang documents the mass killings in villages around the southern coast. In short, the Republic of Korea was one of the bloodiest dictatorships of the early Cold War period; many of the perpetrators of the massacres had served the Japanese in their dirty work – and were then put back into power by the Americans.

Americans like to see themselves as mere bystanders in postwar Korean history. It's always described in the passive voice:

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Pyongyang – Before the Korean War, and after ...



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'Korea was divided in 1945,' with no mention of the fact that McCloy and Rusk, two of the most influential men in postwar foreign policy, drew their line without consulting anyone. There were two military coups in the South while the US had operational control of the Korean army, in 1961 and 1980; the Americans stood idly by lest they be accused of interfering in Korean politics. South Korea's stable democracy and vibrant economy from 1988 onwards seem to have overridden any need to acknowledge the previous forty years of history, during which the North could reasonably claim that its own autocracy was necessary to counter military rule in Seoul. It's only in the present context that the North looks at best like a walking anachronism, at worst like a vicious tyranny. For 25 years now the world has been treated to scaremongering about North Korean nuclear weapons, but hardly anyone points out that it was the US that introduced nuclear weapons into the Korean peninsula, in 1958; hundreds were kept there until a worldwide pullback of tactical nukes occurred under George H.W. Bush. But every US administration since 1991 has challenged North Korea with frequent flights of nuclear-capable bombers in South Korean airspace, and any day of the week an Ohio-class submarine could demolish the North in a few hours. Today there are 28,000 US troops stationed in Korea, perpetuating an unwinnable stand-off with the nuclear-capable North. The occupation did indeed turn out to be one of 'considerable duration', but it's also the result of a colossal strategic failure, now entering its eighth decade.

It's common for pundits to say that Washington just can't take North Korea seriously, but North Korea has taken its measure more than once. And it doesn't know how to respond.

To hear Trump and his national security team tell it, the current crisis has come about because North Korea is on the verge of developing an ICBM that can hit the American heartland. Most experts think that it will take four or five years to become operational – but really, what difference does it make? North Korea tested its first long-

range rocket in 1998, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the DPRK's founding. The first medium-range missile was tested in 1992: it flew several hundred miles down range and banged the target right on the nose. North Korea now has more sophisticated mobile medium-range missiles that use solid fuel, making them hard to locate and easy to fire. Some two hundred million people in Korea and Japan are within range of these missiles, not to mention hundreds of millions of Chinese, not to mention the only US Marine division permanently stationed abroad, in Okinawa. It isn't clear that North Korea can actually fit a nuclear warhead to any of its missiles – but if it happened, and if it was fired in anger, the country would immediately be turned into what Colin Powell memorably called 'a charcoal briquette'.

Americans may be strange, but I must say, having lived in the USA around the end of the Korean War, that nothing can equal the stupidity and sadism of the combat imagery that went into circulation at the time. "The Reds burn, roast and toast."

Since the very beginning, American policy has cycled through a menu of options to try and control the DPRK: sanctions, in place since 1950, with no evidence of positive results; non-recognition, in place since 1948, again with no positive results; regime change, attempted late in 1950 when US forces invaded the North, only to end up in a war with China; and direct talks, the only method that has ever worked, which produced an eight-year freeze – between 1994 and 2002 – on all the North's plutonium facilities, and nearly succeeded in retiring their



But then, as General Powell well knew, we had already turned North Korea into a charcoal briquette. The filmmaker Chris Marker visited the country in 1957, four years after US carpet-bombing ended, and wrote: 'Extermination passed over this land. Who could count what burned with the houses? ... When a country is split in two by an artificial border and irreconcilable propaganda is exercised on each side, it's naive to ask where the war comes from: the border is the war.' Having recognised the primary truth of that war, one still alien to the American telling of it (even though Americans drew the border), he remarked: 'The idea that North Koreans generally have of

missiles. On 1 May, Donald Trump told Bloomberg News: 'If it would be appropriate for me to meet with [Kim Jong-un], I would absolutely; I would be honoured to do it.' There's no telling whether this was serious, or just another Trump attempt to grab headlines. But whatever else he might be, he is unquestionably a maverick, the first president since 1945 not beholden to the Beltway. Maybe he can sit down with Mr Kim and save the planet.

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**PALESTINE'S NEW BEGINNING***Towards a New Palestinian Beginning*by **Ramzy Baroud**

December 15, 2017

**N**ow that the American mask has completely fallen, Palestinians require an urgent rethink in their own political priorities, alliances and national liberation strategy.

Business should not go on as usual after US President Donald Trump accepted Israel's definition of Jerusalem as its capital, thus violating the overwhelming international consensus on the matter.

The Fatah movement, which has controlled the Palestinian Authority (PA) since its inception in 1994 has preempted people's anger over the US move, by declaring a 'day of rage.' Several Palestinians were killed and many wounded in clashes throughout the Occupied Territories in what is understandably justified anger over the unwarranted American decision.

But the manipulation of Palestinian emotions by their leadership is contemptible to say the least. The 'politics of rage', which has been used by the Palestinian leadership in the past has often worked to deflect popular discontent and criticism.

Sure, Israel and the US deserve all the condemnation for their role in sustaining, funding and defending the military occupation and subjugation of the Palestinian people. But the Palestinian leadership is deserving of much condemnation as well. Those who have willingly participated in the futile game of the 'peace process', dangling the dim prospect of a 'two-state solution' before despairing Palestinians should not get off the hook so easily.

Palestinian leaders and an army of officials, politicians, pundits and contractors made billions of dollars from foreign funds to keep the 'peace process' charade going for over 25 years, while the general population grew poorer and more despondent than ever.

Those who resisted, outside the acceptable political framework as presented by the Palestinian leadership were harassed, imprisoned and severely punished. This was the case not just in

Gaza, but in the West Bank as well. Many journalists, academicians, artists and activists were treated harshly for questioning the PA's methods throughout the years.

Yet here we stand; the PA is calling on those very Palestinians to rage. Hamas too is calling for a new Intifada. Oddly, Palestinian factions never learned from history. Real, sustainable popular uprisings are never a response to a party's or a politician's call. It is a spontaneous, genuine cry for freedom that originates from the masses, not the political elites.

While some Palestinian factions are hoping that the people's anger directed at the Israeli occupation will create a protective buffer so that they may survive another day, other groups are riding the wave for their own political interests.

But this is not a strategy. Sending bare-chested people to fight armed soldiers only to communicate a media message will neither pressure Israel nor the US. In fact, most American media outlets are centering their debate on 'Palestinian violence', as if the violence of the Israeli occupation is a non-issue, and as if the safety of Israelis is the most compelling concern at the moment.

Nor will polite appeals to the US to reconsider its decision and pressure Trump to rescind his embassy move make a difference.

The final statement presented by the Arab League foreign ministers in Cairo on Saturday was an example of the lackluster language that will prove ineffective.

Calling on Trump to reverse his decision will not, on its own, make an iota of difference. The Palestinians need their Arab brethren to articulate a strong, unified position on the issue, without hesitating to explore new political routes and put real, tangible pressure on the US and Israel to relent.

The Palestinian leadership that has downgraded the Palestinian struggle, and wasted precious years chasing after an American mirage, must be held accountable.

Why are Palestinian leaders still holding so tightly to their chairs considering the amount of damage they have inflicted upon the Palestinian cause?

If the Palestinian leadership had a minimal degree of accountability and self-

respect it would issue a heart-felt apology to the people for all the squandered time, energy and blood. It would immediately issue a total overhaul within its ranks, activate all Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) institutions; bring all factions together, under the umbrella of the PLO, to declare a new strategy regarding the increasingly bleak-looking future.

None of this has happened yet. Angry statements and calls for Palestinian mobilization without a common strategy will only feed the interests of the factions, but will, eventually prove of no help to the Palestinian people and their national aspirations.

In truth, ordinary Palestinians need neither Fatah nor Hamas to call for a 'day of rage' or a new Intifada. Their hate for the occupation and love for their city of Jerusalem requires no official communications. It is their fight. It has always been their fight, one that they have fought every single day in the last 50 years.

What Trump has done will have terrible consequences on the region for years to come. But one of the early outcomes is that it exposed the peace process as a complete charade and the US role for what it is, neither honest nor fair. But it should also expose the Palestinian leadership, for all of its failings and corruption.

If Palestinians are to start anew, they have to commence their journey with a new political discourse, with new blood, and a new future outlook that is based on unity, credence and competence. None of this can ever take place with the same old faces, the same tired language and the same dead-end politics.

It is time for a new beginning.

**Dr. Ramzy Baroud** has been writing about the Middle East for over 20 years. He is an internationally-syndicated columnist, a media consultant, an author of several books and the founder of PalestineChronicle.com. His latest book is *My Father Was a Freedom Fighter: Gaza's Untold Story* (Pluto Press, London).

His website is:

<http://www.ramzybaroud.net/>

**THE “LAST MARTYR”***Who Killed Kamal Al-Assar?*by **Ramzy Baroud**, December 12, 2017

**W**hen I learned of the death of Kamal al-Assar, a few years ago, I was baffled. He was only in his 40s. I remember him in his prime, a young rebel, leading the neighborhood youth, armed with rocks and slingshots, in a hopeless battle against the Israeli army. Understandably, we lost, but we won something far more valuable than a military victory. We reclaimed our identity.

At every anniversary of the First Palestinian Intifada, a popular uprising that placed the Palestinian people firmly on the map of world consciousness, I think of all the friends and neighbors I have lost, and those I have left behind. The image of Ra’ed Mu’anis, in particular, haunts me. When an Israeli sniper’s bullet plunged into his throat, he ran across the neighborhood to find help before he collapsed at the graffiti-washed walls of my house.

“Freedom. Dignity. Revolution,” was written in large red letters on the wall, a pronouncement signed by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

Only later I learned that Kamal was the one who carried Ra’ed out of the firing zone. But it was too late. Ra’ed, a skinny and feeble teenager, with a distinct black mark on his forehead had bled alone at the steps of my home. When he was buried, hundreds of refugees descended on the Martyrs Graveyard. They carried Palestinian flags and chanted for the Intifada and the long-coveted freedom. Ra’ed’s mother was too weakened by her grief to join the procession. His father tried to stay strong, but wept uncontrollably instead.

Kamal was revitalized by the Intifada. When the uprising broke out, he emerged from his own solitude. Life made sense once again.

For him, as for me and many of our generation, the Intifada was not a political event. It was an act of personal – as much as collective – liberation: the ability to articulate who we were at a time when all seemed lost. The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) languished in Tunisia after being forced to leave Lebanon in 1982. Arab

governments seemed to have lost interest in Palestine altogether. Israel emerged triumphant and invincible.

And we – those living under protracted military occupation – felt completely abandoned.

When, on December 8, 1987, thousands took to the streets of Jabaliya Refugee Camp, the Gaza Strip’s largest and poorest camp, the timing and the location of their uprising was most fitting, rational and necessary. Earlier on that day, an Israeli truck had run over a row of cars carrying Palestinian laborers, killing four young men. For Jabaliya, as with the rest of Palestine, it was the last straw.

Responding to the chants and pleas of the Jabaliya mourners, the refugees in my refugee camp – Nuseirat – marched to the Israeli military barracks, known as the ‘tents’, where hundreds of soldiers had tormented my camp’s residents for years.

In the morning of December 9, thousands of Nuseirat youth took to the streets and vowed to avenge the innocent blood of the Jabaliya victims of the previous day. They swung large flags made of silky fabric that swayed beautifully in Gaza’s salty air and, as the momentum grew and they became intoxicated by their own collective chants, they marched to the ‘tents’ where the soldiers were uneasily perched on the tops of watchtowers, hiding behind their binoculars and automatic machine guns.

Within minutes, a war had started and a third generation of refugee-camp-born fellahin peasants stood fearlessly against a well-equipped army that was visibly gripped by fear and confusion. The soldiers wounded many that day and several children were killed.

Kamal was on the frontlines. He waved the largest flag, chanting the loudest, threw rocks the furthest and incessantly urged young men not to retreat.

Kamal hated school as well as his teachers. To him they seemed so docile, adhering to the rules of the occupier which decreed that Palestinians not teach their own history, so that the fellahin were denied even the right to remember who they were or where they came from. The Intifada was the paradigm shift that

offered an alternative – however temporary, however chaotic – to the methodical humiliation of life under occupation.

Within hours, Kamal felt liberated. He was no longer tucked away in a dark room reading the works of Marx and Gramsci. He was in the streets of Nuseirat fashioning his own utopia.

The Intifada was that transformational period that saved a generation from being entirely lost, and Palestine from being forgotten. It offered a new world, that of solidarity, camaraderie and wild youth who needed no one to speak on their behalf.

Within weeks of bloody clashes in which hundreds of youth fell dead or wounded, the nature of the Intifada became clearer. On one hand, it was a popular struggle of civil disobedience, mass protests, commercial and labor strikes, refusal to pay taxes and so on. On the other hand, militant cells of refugee youth were beginning to organize and leave their mark, as well.

The militancy of the Intifada did not become apparent until later, when the repression by the Israeli government grew more violent. Under the banner of the ‘Iron Fist’ campaign, a new Israeli stratagem was devised, that of the ‘broken bones’ policy. Once captured, youth had their hands and legs broken by soldiers in a systematic and heartless manner. In my neighborhood, children with casts and crutches seemed to outnumber those without.

Kamal was eventually detained from his home. He attempted to escape but the entire neighborhood was teeming with soldiers, who arrived at night as they always do. They commenced the torturous rite in his living room, as his mother – the resilient, Tamam – shoved her body between him and the ruthless men.

When Kamal regained consciousness, he found himself in a small cell, with thick, unwashed walls that felt cold and foreign. He spent most of his prison time in the torture chamber. His survival was itself nothing less than a miracle.

When the Oslo Accords were signed in 1993, officially ending the Intifada, Kamal’s generation felt betrayed.

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**FRENCH IMPERIALISM***Why Can't France Leave Africa Alone?*by **Aidan O'Brien**

December 19, 2017

"Without Africa, France will have no history in the 21st century."

— François Mitterrand, 1957

"Without Africa, France will slide down into the rank of a third [world] power."

— Jacques Chirac, 2008

"France, along with Europe, would like to be even more involved in the destiny of [Africa]..."

— François Hollande, 2013

"I am of a generation that doesn't tell Africans what to do."

— Emmanuel Macron, 2017

**F**rance's great white hope – Emmanuel Macron – was selling himself in Africa recently. He was full of jokes and smiles. However, while the package had "youthful innocence" written all over it – the product was "senile dementia". No matter the age of the man – the French attempt to lead Africa is a stale and stupid story. And the man – Macron – is yet another stale and stupid French mask.

The mask fell in a public forum in Burkina Faso when the French military and its presence in Africa was questioned by a girl. In response Macron hysterically told the local audience that they should applaud the French soldiers on African streets.

The problem was that the day before a local – instead of applauding – threw a hand grenade at French troops. And the following day a few more locals shouted for an end to neocolonialism. The militarization of French policy in Africa is beginning to smell like a rotten occupation.

But when has it been otherwise? Since it began occupying Africa in the 19th century France has expected nothing else but applause. The package at the beginning of this long war on Africa was "civilization". But that never did conceal the vile racism and base capitalism that drove the French army across the Sahara.

In a giant pincer movement beginning around 1830 and ending on the eve of the First World War, France slowly but surely conquered most of West and Central Africa. Moving east from Dakar and south

from Algiers the French military stole probably 40% of the continent.

However while "France" was away terrorizing Africa – Paris met its nemesis: Berlin. The Teutonic power woke up and ironically proceeded to do to France what France was doing to Africa. In a series of wars and occupations (1871, 1914 and 1940) Germany mercilessly crushed the place of France in the world. And by 1960, more or less, France was out of Africa. And was ripe for revolution. Or counterrevolution.

The Fifth Republic couldn't hide the failure of bourgeois France. 1968 exposed it for all to see. And forced it to choose one way or the other. It could either follow the example of Africa and attempt to liberate itself from the culture, economics, and politics of imperialism. Or it could attempt to restore imperialism. And reconquer Africa.

The Fifth Republic chose the latter. And it has been a race to the bottom ever since. France's significant Communist Party was rejected (the Socialist Party too – eventually). As was Jean Paul Sartre. Bourgeois mediocrity became the rule. And by the year 2000 politicians like Nicolas Sarkozy and philosophers like Bernard-Henri Lévy were ready to lead France back into the arms of NATO (De Gaulle had taken France out of NATO in 1966) and its naked imperialism.

France was no longer a European force but a European farce. German neoliberalism dominated the new European century. And France could do nothing but prostrate itself before Berlin and its demonic religion: austerity (cheap labor). However, there was one place where France could act like "France" – there was one place where France could escape the German "will to power": Africa.

The French "will to backward power" had one dirty trick left up its sleeve: it's army in Africa. When France retreated from the African continent in the 1950s and 1960s it left behind active military bases that continued to give it leverage in Africa. Indeed according to the website Stratfor:

"Following their independence, 12 [African] countries signed secret national defense agreements with France. The

agreements, which have never been made public, allow France to retain a physical presence in the countries in exchange for defending their national sovereignty [sic]..."

We can guess the countries that signed up to these nefarious French deals: Morocco, Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Tunisia, Chad, Cotes d'Ivoire, Central African Republic, Gabon and Djibouti. A few more – according to those in the know – were later added to the list: Rwanda, Burundi and Zaire (the Democratic Republic of Congo). In any case the picture was and is clear: before leaving (and even after leaving) Africa – France threw a web around Africa.

And what did these arrangements mean in reality? In 2007 the New York Times wrote that "France intervened militarily in Africa nineteen times between 1962 and 1995." And Stratfor in 2016 calculated 42 French interventions between 1968 and 2013.

The New York Times cut off point significantly is 1995 because in 1994 France lost out to the USA in the strategic battle for Rwanda (a million or more Hutus and Tutsis died in this battle – and millions were killed in the battles which followed in the Congo etc.). And in the years after this key turning point in African geopolitics – French power in Africa decisively decreased – not only because of the military power of the USA (AFRICOM) but also because of the new economic power of China.

The times were changing in the 1990s. France was losing "the battles" for Europe and Africa. It was becoming a second rate power. Nonetheless that trick remained up its sleeve: the overt and covert military arrangements it had arranged in Africa. France's finger was still on the trigger. The counterrevolution desperately needed a new lease of life. And the "Arab Spring" gave it one.

When Tunisia began to protest in 2010, France responded by offering its "military might" (it's "technical support and police know how") to its Tunisian agent: Ben Ali. And when that French attempt to repress African independence failed – France led the

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wars against independent Libya in 2011 (Opération Harmattan) and independent Azawad (Opération Serval in northern Mali, etc.) in 2013.

In 2014 the situation was such that Newsweek claimed that “France is slowly reclaiming its old African Empire”. And by 2015 the Business Insider was reporting that “France’s military is all over Africa”. Thousands of French soldiers were spread out across the Sahara and beyond (Opération Barkhane). But the fact is that they were fighting to save not Africa but “France”.

The pathetic attempt to restore bourgeois France (dare we say Bourbon France – because it’s that bad in Europe right now) has reached the stage where France’s military is not only all over Africa but is also all over France (Opération Sentinelle). In 2015 – after gun attacks in Paris – the French army began to occupy French streets. And then in 2017 along came Président Macron (le dauphin? – the prince?) riding on “a tank” to his inauguration.

In the uncompetitive (in bourgeois terms) French economy the only competitor seemed to be the French military. They were and are occupying both sides of the francophone Mediterranean. And Macron was and is applauding. As he gives lower taxes and cheaper labor to the decrepit bourgeoisie – he gives the military the freedom of the streets. And the freedom of Africa.

Macron claims not to be telling the Africans what to do. But the French State is another matter. It has institutionalized the relationship between France and Africa (Françafrique). And it refuses to let go of its delusions of grandeur. In the last few years it has told Africa in no uncertain terms what it must do with Libya and Azawad (northern Mali and its environs). And today it marshals African forces (G5 Sahel) as they pursue shadows in the Sahara.

For Macron “jihadis” and “human traffickers” are the story. But neocolonialism is the bottom line. Or the French attempt to recreate neocolonialism is the real story. The French military are the claws of the French state. And as bourgeois France fades away, or slides down the memory hole of history, it’s claws are going to dig deep into whatever material is near at hand – in a desperate effort to avoid the inevitable. Africa is that material – the material of the future. While France, despite its machinations, is just flotsam.

The people of Burkina Faso are right to question the presence of the French military in Africa. They know more than the infantile French President. And they’ve a better sense of reality than the senile French State. Hand grenades do make more sense than applause.

**Aidan O’Brien** is a hospital worker in Dublin, Ireland.

## AMERICAN IMPERIALISM

*Prepare! Pursue!! Prevail!!!*

by **Brian Cloughley**

December 15, 2017

**T**he waves, the artificial tides of anti-Russian propaganda continue to beat upon the ears and eyes of Western citizens, spurred by US politicians, bureaucrats and tycoons whose motives vary from duplicitous to blatantly commercial. It is no coincidence that there has been vastly increased expenditure on US weaponry by Eastern European countries.

Complementing the weapons’ build-up, which is so sustaining and lucrative for the US industrial-military complex, the naval, air and ground forces of the US-NATO military alliance continue operations ever closer to Russia’s borders.

Shares and dividends in US arms manufacturing companies have rocketed, in a most satisfactory spinoff from Washington’s policy of global confrontation, and the Congressional Research Service (CRS) records that “arms sales are recognized widely as an important instrument of state power. States have many incentives to export arms. These include enhancing the security of allies or partners; constraining the behavior of adversaries; using the prospect of arms transfers as leverage on governments’ internal or external behavior; and creating the economics of scale necessary to support a domestic arms industry.”

The CRS notes that arms deals “are often a key component in Congress’s approach to advancing US foreign policy objectives,” which is especially notable around the Baltic and throughout the Middle East, where US wars have created a bonanza for US weapons makers — and for the politicians whom the manufacturers reward so generously for their support. (Additionally, in 2017 arms manufacturers spent \$93,937,493 on lobbying Congress.)

Some countries, however, do not wish to purchase US weaponry, and they are automatically categorized as being influenced by Russia, which is blamed for all that has gone wrong in America over the past couple of years. This classification is especially notable in the Central Asian Republics.

The US military’s Central Command (Centcom) states that its “area of responsibility spans more than 4 million square miles and is populated by more than 550 million people from 22 ethnic groups, speaking 18 languages . . . and confessing [*sic*; probably ‘professing’] multiple religions which transect national borders. The demographics create opportunities for tension and rivalry.” Centcom is deeply engaged in the US wars in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan, while supporting Saudi Arabia in its war on Yemen, and the extent of its influence in the Pentagon’s self-allotted geographical Area of Responsibility is intriguing, to say the least. Some of its priorities were revealed in March 2017 by the Commander of this enormous military realm, General Joseph Votel, in testimony to the Armed Services Committee of the House of Representatives in Washington.

General Votel’s description of US “responsibilities” was astonishing in its imperialistic arrogance.

As Commander of Centcom, General Votel gave the Armed Services Committee a colorful tour of his territory, describing nations in terms ranging from condescendingly supportive to patently insolent, and he devoted much time to describing relations with countries abutting Russia, Iran and China, which nations, he declared, are trying “to limit US influence in the sub-region.” That “sub-region”

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includes many countries immediately on the borders of Russia, Iran and China, and averaging 7,000 miles (11,000 kilometers) from Washington.

First he dealt with Kazakhstan with which the US has its “most advanced military relationship in Central Asia” in furtherance of which Washington is “making notable progress . . . despite enduring Russian influence.” It is obviously unacceptable to the Pentagon that Russia wishes to maintain cordial relations with a country with which it has a border of 6,800 kilometers. Then General Votel went into fantasyland by claiming that “Kazakhstan remains the most significant regional contributor to Afghan stability . . .” which even the members of the Congressional Committee would have realized is spurious nonsense.

But more nonsense was to follow, with General Votel referring to Kyrgyzstan in patronizing terms usually associated with a Viceroy or other colonial master of a region that Votel describes as “widely characterized by pervasive instability and conflict,” which he failed to note were caused by the US wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

He told the Committee that Kyrgyzstan “sees political pressure from its larger, more powerful neighbors, including Russia, hosting a small Russian airbase outside the capital, Bishkek. Despite ongoing challenges in our bilateral and security cooperation, we continue to seek opportunities to improve our mil-to-mil relationship.” He did not explain why Kyrgyzstan should be expected to embrace a military alliance with United States Central Command, but Viceroys don’t have to provide explanations.

Votel then moved to describe Tajikistan with which “our mil-to-mil relationship is deepening despite Moscow’s enduring ties and the presence of the military base near Tajikistan’s capital of Dushanbe, Russia’s largest military base outside of its borders.” Not only this, says Votel, but China (having a 400 kilometer border with Tajikistan) has had the temerity to have “initiated a much stronger military cooperation partnership with Tajikistan, adding further complexity to Tajikistan’s multi-

faceted approach to security cooperation.”

No : China hasn’t added any complexity to Tajikistan’s circumstances. What has complicated their relations is the fact that Afghanistan is in a state of chaos, following the US invasion of 2001, and drugs and terrorists cross the border (1,300 kilometers long) from Afghanistan into Tajikistan, which is trying to protect itself. During its sixteen years of war in Afghanistan there has been no attempt by the United States to secure that border.

None of these countries wants to be forced into a military pact with the United States, and Turkmenistan (border with Afghanistan 750 kilometers) has made it clear it doesn’t want to be aligned with anyone. But General Votel states that its “UN-recognized policy of ‘positive neutrality’ presents a challenge with respect to US engagement.” No matter what is desired by Turkmenistan, it seems, there must always be a way for the United States Central Command to establish military relations and, as General Votel told the Defence Committee, “we are encouraged somewhat by Turkmenistan’s expressed interest in increased mil-to-mil engagement with the US within the limits of their ‘positive neutrality’ policy.”

In the minds (to use the word loosely) of General Votel and his kind, it doesn’t matter if a country wants nothing whatever to do with the United States’ military machine, and wants very much to be left alone to get on with its affairs without interference. Adoption of such a policy by any nation presents a “challenge” and the United States, which in this region is overseen by General Votel’s Central Command, is determined to seek military “engagement” irrespective of what is desired by governments. Arms sales would swiftly follow.

Votel’s tour of his area of responsibility covered Afghanistan, about which his most absurd assertion was “I believe what Russia is attempting to do is they are attempting to be an influential party in this part of the world. I think it is fair to assume they may be providing some sort of support to [the Taliban] in terms

of weapons or other things that may be there.”

There was not a shred of evidence provided, but the Committee accepted his pronouncement without question. If an allegation is made about Russia it doesn’t matter if it is false. It must be believed. But unfortunately for the imperial Votel and his deferential audience, a person with some sense of truth and balance came up two months later with a statement rubbishing Votel’s unfounded and provocative accusation. In May the Director of the US Defence Intelligence Agency told a Senate Committee that “We have seen indication that [Russia] offered some level of support [to the Taliban], but I have not seen real physical evidence of weapons or money being transferred.” The mainstream media gave no publicity to the truth, and continue to blame Russia for all the ills that befall the US Empire, at home and overseas.

The state of affairs was summed up admirably by Jacob Hornberger of the Future of Freedom Foundation on December 4 when he wrote that “Central to any national-security state is the need for official enemies, ones that are used to frighten and agitate the citizenry. If there are no official enemies, the American citizenry might begin asking some discomfiting questions: What do we need a national-security state for? Why not abolish the CIA and dismantle the military-industrial complex and the NSA. Why can’t we have our limited-government, constitutional republic back?”

The Motto of the Pentagon’s Central Command is “Prepare, Pursue, Prevail.” and the Central Asian Republics would be well-advised to bear in mind these threats and think hard about the underlying motif of the US military-industrial complex which is “Propagandize, Provoke, Profit.”

**Brian Cloughley** writes about foreign policy and military affairs. He lives in Voutenay sur Cure, France.

With what morality can the [US] leaders talk of human rights in a country where there are millionaires and beggars, where blacks face discrimination, women are prostituted, and great masses of Chicanos, Puerto Ricans and Latin Americans are deprecated, exploited and humiliated?

Fidel Castro

**OBITUARY: STANISLAV PETROV**

*Stanislav Petrov, the Soviet officer who saved the world from nuclear war, dies at age 77.*

The World Today

By **David Coady**

20 Sep 2017

**S**tanislav Petrov died in May, but the news only broke after a friend tried calling on this birthday. ([AP: Pavel Golovkin](#))

The man credited with saving the world from nuclear disaster during the Cold War has died in Moscow aged 77.



Stanislav Petrov was a Soviet officer on duty the night of September 26, 1983, when an early warning system flashed a warning that the US had launched missiles against the USSR.

Petrov, from a secret command centre outside Moscow, could have immediately instigated a retaliation with a phone call.

Instead, the then 44-year-old lieutenant colonel trusted his gut, which told him it was it was merely a system malfunction. And after five nerve-wracking minutes, he made a decision that may have prevented a nuclear war.

He turned out to be right. The false alarm was apparently triggered when the Soviet satellite mistook the sun's reflection off the tops of clouds for a missile launch.

Petrov died in May, but the news has only just come out after a German filmmaker tried to call him this month for his birthday.

"It was completely unexpected, as such things usually are. The siren sounded very loudly and I just sat there for a few seconds, staring at the screen with the word "launch" displayed in bold, red letters," Petrov told the BBC in 2013.

"I would not trust the computer. I picked up the telephone handset, spoke to my

superiors and reported that the alarm was false."

The Russian state-funded broadcaster RT also spoke with Petrov in 2010, when he acknowledged the gravity of the situation.

"We've never been as close to a nuclear war, neither before nor later on. It was the very climax," he said.

Paul Dibb an emeritus professor of strategic studies at the Australian National University, has been reflecting on Petrov's moment in the hot seat.

During the Cold War, Professor Dibb was the top Soviet analyst in Canberra and visited Moscow as a declared intelligence officer in 1976.

"The important thing is to acknowledge what he did, and secondly, to remember — as few people in Australia do — that 1983 was in fact the most dangerous year in the Cold War," he said.

"It was more dangerous than the Cuban missile crisis."

Professor Dibb said although there are parallels with North Korea today, the threat of nuclear war in the 1980s was far greater.

"It's not to underrate current threat North Korea but, frankly there's a lot of difference between North Korean nuclear capability and the Soviet Union with 12,000 strategic nuclear warheads — each side destroying a quarter of the population," he said.

"Although North Korea has nothing like the former Soviet capability, it looks as though it's developing sufficiently, if you like, to tear an arm off the United States.

"The difference, despite what said we have said about 1983, as the Cold War progressed, the fact is the Soviets and the Americans were talking to each other.

"The worry about the United States and particularly North Korea is North Korea is a hermit kingdom. They talk to nobody."

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**GET OUT OF SYRIA**

*Russia Tells U.S. Military to Get Out*

By **John Haltiwanger**

December 21, 2017 "[Information Clearing House](#)" - Russia ramped up its calls for the U.S. military to depart from Syria on Thursday, contending it has no substantial reasons to be in the country and its presence there "must end."

"Any reasons cited by the Americans to justify their further military presence... are just excuses and we think their presence must end," Alexander Lavrentiev, Russian President Vladimir Putin's envoy to Syria, told reporters. Lavrentiev was in Astana, Kazakhstan, on Thursday ahead of peace talks regarding the Syria conflict between Russia, Iran and Turkey, Reuters reports. Russia, a major ally of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, has played a significant role in the Syria conflict.

This is not the first time the Russian government has expressed such views in recent weeks. Russia seemingly feels the U.S. military has no purpose in Syria now that the the Islamic State militant group (ISIS) has largely lost its foothold in Syria and Iraq. The envoy's remarks also come after the U.S. and Russia have sparred over airspace in Syria. In mid-December, two U.S. warplanes in Syria were diverted from supporting ground operations against ISIS to intercept Russian fighter jets that allegedly crossed into U.S. coalition airspace.

But the Pentagon has signified it has no plans to withdraw U.S. troops from Syria any time in the near future. "We are going to maintain our commitment on the ground as long as we need to, to support our partners and prevent the return of terrorist groups," Pentagon spokesperson Eric Pahon told Agence France-Presse earlier this month. "To ensure an enduring defeat of ISIS, the coalition must ensure it cannot regenerate, reclaim lost ground or plot external attacks," he added. There are currently nearly 2,000 U.S. troops in Syria, according to numbers from the Pentagon.

*This article was originally published by [Newsweek](#) -*

**POETRY****Anti-war poems can counter hero worship**By **Christopher Bantick**

April 20, 2013

IN his measured assessment of William Nagle's *The Odd Angry Shot* in Review last month, historian Paul Ham referred to the graphic nature of Nagle's novel in these terms:

"Let this book again be a warning to all those newly minted warmongers, Anzac Day zealots, hero-hunting journalists and populist storytellers posing as historians, who seem to have forgotten what war is and does."

Ham is on to something. Anzac Day has morphed into Australia's one day of the year when war is a place fit for heroes and not much else. The fact is Anzac Day now is appropriated from supermarkets to the arming of Australian history. The past is now largely seen through the periscope of a Gallipoli Digger and the visor of Ned Kelly.

If you think that I am guilty of hyperbole, consider this: Woolworths is selling a Unibic limited edition tin of Anzac biscuits. The lid has an embossed image of shirtless labouring Australian soldiers at Balikpapan, Borneo, in 1945.

My father fought there and he would have been appalled by this crass attempt of commercial interests cashing in on the death and sacrifice of his mates. The irony is palpable. The only reference my father ever made to biscuits was the lumbering DC3 aircraft called Biscuit Bombers that dropped rations to the troops.

Anzac Day has become an excrescence of national identity. In their 2010 book *What's Wrong With Anzac? The Militarisation of Australian History*, professors Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds argue persuasively that children in Australia's classrooms are taught, even at preschool level, uncritically, the Anzac story. It is a message of sabre-rattling nationalism under the guise of heritage.

Their argument underscores the view that Australian history teaching at school level has become sycophantic and panders to populism. Or, as Lake's and Reynolds's book, quoting one former soldier, puts it pithily: "Australia needs to drop the sentimental garbage that Anzac Day has become. The soldiers of Gallipoli must be honoured; however, they are not apostles to be given religious reverence."

The contemporary reality is something else entirely. Australia glories in war and needs it as an assurance of who we are: patriotic and pugnacious. Anzac Day is now the country's annual nationalistic fix. It's an easy conduit for establishing national traits, from suspicion of authority and images of manhood to the mateship ethos. But surely it is time to rethink the heroic war message and disarm Anzac Day.

A way to achieve this is to expose children to anti-war poetry. This year, I will teach only anti-war poems. The reason is to provide some balance and deterrent to the commemoration of war on Anzac Day masquerading as some national rite of passage. Children need to know that writers and poets have put their heads above the trenches and seen not miasmatic herculean Diggers in slouch hats but the shattered, blood-soaked dismembered corpses of wasted youth. They need to read

Wilfred Owen's *Dulce et Decorum Est* and hear at "every jolt, the blood / Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs, / Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud".

A poem like this sits uncomfortably with the heroes of Anzac; so too does Wilfred Gibson's *The Bayonet*: "This bloody steel / Has killed a man. / I heard him squeal / As on I ran. / He watched me come / With wagging head. / I pressed it home, / And he was dead. / Though clean and clear / I've wiped the steel / I still can hear / That dying squeal."

Australia has shown unsettling reluctance to reflect on just what message it wants its young people to have regarding war. Presently, anti-war voices in classrooms are not welcome in history courses. Staying on message for Anzac Day is all about defining heroes. Such a position edges towards bellicosity and jingoism, cousins of xenophobia and prejudice.

In the national curriculum there should be clear prescription that poems such as Bruce Dawe's *Tall Poppies* are given as much time as the mawkish and clichéd *In Flanders Fields* by John McCrae. The poem, now the Anzac Day chant: "In Flanders fields the poppies blow / Between the crosses row on row" is intoned with hackneyed Gregorian-like solemnity.

Why not Dawe's salvo of anti-war reality: "Poppies bloom in Flanders / and many a moistened eye / reflects the emblem lovingly / just as in days gone by / Meanwhile in Helmand province, / Barkundi, Kandahar, / Farah, Badghis, Uruzgan / the poppy is by far / the flower on which a nation / (whose hardihood is famed) / survives, corrupted, bloodied / and who is to be blamed?"

To challenge Anzac Day's commemorative gesturing is for some akin to heresy. Yet, isn't that what schooling should be doing? Shaking old certainties and asking questions? It is history teachers' responsibility to do so. If they do not present an anti-war message together with toeing the national line on Anzac, they are culpable of selectivity and pedagogic bias. Some would say they lack the courage to break ranks against Anzac iconography.

If children are not taught anti-war poems, how else will they feel the falling bombs of the Blitz in Edith Sitwell's *Still Falls the Rain*, where "the world of man is dark", let alone see the horror of war in Frederic Manning's *The Face*, where out of "the red mist of anger, / A boy's face delicate and blonde, / the very mask of God, / Broken".

If we do not tell children the truth of war, are we not sending them marching on Anzac Day to an Anthem for Doomed Youth - not up the line to death, but dooming them to ignorance?

**Christopher Bantick** is a Melbourne writer, former head of history, and now a senior literature teacher at a Melbourne Anglican grammar school for boys.

From *The Australian*

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/opinion/anti-war-poems-can-counter-hero-worship/news-story/706acf796177bbcc66aa7b9bb616254e?sv=adf3c6baf640cb0ec8c7520422978aa2>

**NOBEL PEACE PRIZE***Peace on the Far Side of Nuclear Weapons*by **Robert Koehler**

December 15, 2017

“. . . real security can only be shared . . .”

**I** call it news in a cage: the fact that the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons has been awarded this year’s Nobel Peace Prize.

In other words, how nice, but it has nothing to do with the real stuff going on across Planet Earth, like North Korea’s recent test of an ICBM that puts the entire U.S. in the range of its nukes, or the provocative war games Trump’s America has been playing on the Korean peninsula, or the quietly endless development of the “next generation” of nuclear weapons.

Or the imminent possibility of . . . uh, nuclear war.

Winning the Nobel Peace Prize is not like, say, winning an Oscar — accepting a big, flashy honor for a piece of finished work. The award is about the future. Despite some disastrously bad choices over the years (Henry Kissinger, for God’s sake), the Peace Prize is, or should be, utterly relevant to what’s happening at the cutting edge of global conflict: a recognition of the expansion of human consciousness toward the creation of real peace. Geopolitics, on the other hand, is trapped in the certainties of same old, same old: Might makes right, ladies and gentlemen, so you gotta be ready to kill.

And the mainstream news about North Korea is always, solely about that country’s small nuclear arsenal and what should be done about it. What the news is never about is the slightly larger nuclear arsenal of its mortal enemy, the United States. That’s taken for granted. And — get real — it’s not going away.

What if the global anti-nuclear movement was actually respected by the media and its evolving principles continually worked into the context of its reporting? That would mean the reporting about North Korea wouldn’t simply be limited to us vs. them. A third global party would be hovering over the entire conflict: the global majority of nations that last July voted to declare all nuclear weapons illegal.

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons — ICAN — a coalition of non-government organizations in some 100 countries, led the campaign that resulted, last summer, in the United Nations treaty prohibiting the use, development and stockpiling of nuclear weapons. It passed 122-1, but the debate was boycotted by the nine nuclear-armed nations (Britain, China, France, India, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia and the United States), along with Australia, Japan, South Korea and every member of NATO except the Netherlands, which cast the single no vote.

What the remarkable Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons has accomplished is that it takes control of the nuclear disarmament process away from the nations that possess them. The 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty called on the nuclear powers to “pursue nuclear disarmament,” apparently at their own leisure. Half a century later, nukes are still the bedrock of their security. They’ve pursued nuclear modernization instead.

But with the 2017 treaty, “The nuclear powers are losing control of the nuclear disarmament agenda,” as Nina Tannenwald wrote in the Washington Post at the time. The rest of the world has grabbed hold of the agenda and — step one — declared nukes illegal.

“As one advocate put it, ‘You cannot wait for the smokers to institute a smoking ban,’” Tannenwald wrote.

She added: “The treaty promotes changes of attitude, ideas, principles and discourse — essential precursors to reducing numbers of nuclear weapons. This approach to disarmament starts by changing the meaning of nuclear weapons, forcing leaders and societies to think about and value them differently. . . . The treaty’s prohibition on threats of nuclear weapons use directly challenges deterrence policies. It is likely to complicate policy options for U.S. allies under the U.S. nuclear ‘umbrella,’ who are accountable to their parliaments and civil societies.”

What the treaty challenges is nuclear deterrence: the default justification for the maintenance and development of nuclear arsenals.

Thus I return to the quote at the beginning of this column. Tilman Ruff, an Australian physician and a co-founder of ICAN, wrote in The Guardian after the organization was awarded the Peace Prize: “One hundred twenty-two states have acted. Together with civil society, they have brought global democracy and humanity to nuclear disarmament. They have realised that since Hiroshima and Nagasaki, real security can only be shared, and cannot be achieved by threatening and risking use of these worst weapons of mass destruction.”

If this is true — if real security somehow must be created mutually, even with North Korea, and if walking the edge of nuclear war, as we have done since 1945, will never result in global peace but rather, at some point, nuclear catastrophe — the implications demand unending exploration, especially by the media of the world’s wealthiest and most privileged nations.

“For far too long reason has given way to the lie that we are safer spending billions every year to build weapons which, in order for us to have a future, must never be used,” Ruff wrote.

“Nuclear disarmament is the most urgent humanitarian necessity of our time.”

If this is true — and most of the world believes that it is — then Kim Jong-un and North Korea’s nuclear missile program are only a small piece of the threat faced by every human being on the planet. There’s another reckless, unstable leader with his finger on the nuclear button, delivered to the planet a year ago by the flawed U.S. democracy.

Donald Trump should be the poster boy of nuclear disarmament.

**Robert Koehler** is a Chicago award-winning journalist and editor.

The Syria article on Page 23 is from Information Clearing House <http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/48480.htm>



(continued from Page 13...)

Chinese Foreign Ministry advised the US to “abandon its Cold War mentality and zero-sum game concept,” otherwise Washington “would only harm itself as well as others.” She went on: “China will resolutely safeguard its sovereignty, security and right to develop. No one should have the fantasy of expecting China to swallow the bitter fruit of harming its own interests.”

More direct was Beijing’s Global Times, widely read among Chinese intelligentsia. “This report is a manifestation of the Trump administration’s tough posture, which counts on US power instead of international rules,” editorialized the paper. “It showcases Washington’s indisputable insistence on its global hegemony. Neither Beijing nor Moscow will buy it.”

Look like we are headed into a worldwide winter of discontent.

(continued from Page 19...)

Nothing good came out of that ‘peace’, except that a few rich Palestinians grew even richer.

Kamal died a few years ago. I learned that his revolution never ceased. He became a teacher, laboring to reconstruct the history of his people at a local Gaza university. His mother, now an old refugee in Nuseirat is still heartbroken over her son’s death. She told me that Kamal’s wounds and physical ailments from prison never healed.

Kamal was a martyr, she told me. Perhaps the last martyr in an uprising that was not meant to liberate land, but liberate people from the idea that they were meant to exist as perpetual victims; and it did.

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**MEMBERSHIP – JUST PEACE Qld Inc. PO Box 573, COORPAROO QLD 4151**

Title	First Name/s	Surname	
Address			
			PC
Ph (H)	(W)	Mob.	
Email #:			
I have enclosed a cheque/ money order/ cash to the value shown being payment for (please tick) membership for:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Family - \$30 <input type="checkbox"/> Single (waged) - \$20 <input type="checkbox"/> Concession - \$10			
<input type="checkbox"/> Donation \$ .....      Direct Debit: BSB 814 282 A/C No.303 85606 (Your NAME as reference)			
Office use only			
Membership valid from: ___/___/___ until ___/___/___			
Nominated by: _____ Seconded by: _____			
<b>NOTE:</b> The <i>Just Peace</i> Management Committee has decided that, given the types of activities <i>Just Peace</i> undertakes, public liability insurance cover will not be carried.			

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Please post to the following address:

**Membership Coordinator**  
**Just Peace Queensland Inc**  
**PO Box 573**  
**Coorparoo Qld 4151**

Or telephone **Beth** on **3398 6844** (H)

Or email **Beth** (see *Just Peace* web site for contact address)

**\*\* This newsletter is copied with the assistance of the office of Senator Claire Moore \*\***

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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