



The Peace Issue . . .

The Newsletter of Just Peace Queensland Inc

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June 2013

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

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All the way with the USA?

February 8, 2013

Malcolm Fraser

There is increasingly aggressive posturing between China and American-backed Japan. If war breaks out Australia must not slavishly follow its superpower friend.

The ownership of islands in the East China Sea now represents a highly sensitive and dangerous issue. There has been a significant escalation that could easily lead to conflict between China and Japan.

A senior American intelligence officer has strongly sided with Japan and called China a bully on the high seas with ambitions to sink American warships and seize control of waters from its neighbours. He described China as a principal threat. We have the US and Japan lined up in concert against China.



Illustration: Andrew Dyson.

I had believed that America's containment policy, if not changed, could lead to war between China and

the US within a 10-12 year time frame. Not so long ago, foreign policy expert Hugh White suggested there could be conflict between China and Japan within 12 months. White has also written a piece opposing a defence treaty between Japan and Australia. He pointed out that Japan has interests that are not ours and that such a relationship could be dangerous for Australia.

All of this makes for a most unpleasant mix. China, Japan and the US are not showing the calm reason that is necessary to avoid conflict. President Barack Obama's pivot greatly strengthening forces in the western Pacific, placing a marine fighting unit in Darwin, to which will be added air and naval elements, is not only provocative to China, but dangerous for Australia. Does anyone think that if America wants to use those forces from Darwin, it will ask our permission first? It will do what it wants and we would be complicit in whatever it does.

The New York Times is hardly a left-wing journal. Nicholas Kristof is a highly respected commentator and in the last part of last year, he gave his imprimatur to an article by a Taiwanese academic pointing out what was headed "The inconvenient truth behind the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands".

Kristof wrote: "I find the evidence for Chinese sovereignty quite compelling. The most interesting evidence is emerging from old Japanese government documents and suggests that Japan in effect stole the islands from China in 1895 as booty of war." He then prints the article by the Taiwanese professor documenting these matters in detail.

If the current standoff results in warfare, America is committed to Japan. If they wanted to use Australia's resources or support, the Americans

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**EDITORIAL:****The streaker's defence**OP-ED © 2013 *Alison Broinowski*

It takes a particular kind of courage for people in public life to admit that they got something wrong, even after their error is publicly obvious. All three leaders who planned and executed the 2003 invasion of Iraq said at the time that they would take ultimate responsibility for the war, but none of them did. For ten years, neither George W. Bush, Tony Blair, nor John Howard has said they were wrong, let alone admitted that life for many Iraqis is nastier and shorter than before the 2003 invasion.

Their claims about Saddam Hussein's weapons didn't stand up in 2003, and they don't now. What Howard and Alexander Downer said publicly didn't accurately reflect what they were told by the Defence Intelligence Organisation and the Office of National Assessments. This was reconfirmed in April by a former secretary of the Parliamentary Intelligence Committee, Margaret Swieringa.

Yet Howard believed Saddam Hussein had WMD, apparently because Bush and Blair did. Having unilaterally invoked ANZUS after 9/11, he was determined to support Bush's 'war on terror' even in defiance of the Security Council and international law. So Australians would fight, kill, and die, not for what the government knew, but for what three leaders believed, and for Howard's interpretation of ANZUS.

If they now accepted the evidence, Bush, Blair and Howard could deploy the streaker's defence and say it seemed like a good idea at the time. Instead, Bush is silent, Blair says it was right to eliminate Saddam Hussein, and Howard ducks responsibility, telling Sydney's Lowy Institute on 9 April that the intelligence agencies got key assessments wrong. Now, he even claims that the Arab Spring was connected to the fall of Saddam, and points to the growth of Iraq's economy and the 'freedom' he believes Iraqis are now tasting – except the many who continue to be killed or injured in sectarian violence, and who live in worse conditions than before.

Bush, Blair and Howard won't admit that just as the Soviet Union was bled to impotence by Afghanistan, America's superpower status has been diminished by the Iraq (and Afghanistan) disasters. Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard won't either: to do so would be to question the capacity of the United States to defend us, which no Australian prime minister will do. But President Obama admitted it at the Pentagon in 2012, saying that US forces would no longer undertake major, protracted wars without clear exit strategies: 'With reduced resources, thoughtful choices will need to be made regarding the location and frequency of these operations,' he said. 'U.S. forces will no longer be sized to conduct large-scale, prolonged stability operations'. Iraq, like Vietnam, was the wrong war, in the wrong country, for the wrong reasons, leading – predictably – to the wrong outcome. Obama said, and repeated in May, that America cannot and will not go there again.

Ten years on from the invasion, why does all this still matter? For three reasons: war crimes, war powers, and the next war.

First, war crimes. Australia and the UK are signatories to the International Criminal Court, as the US is not. Australia has agreed to extend the jurisdiction of the Court to crimes of aggression, which means that Australian ministers, service chiefs, and governors-general could be investigated over decisions to engage in future wars. Australia is obliged to set up credible and independent processes for such investigations by 2017, or the ICC may intervene to do so.

Next, war powers. Howard exercised them in 2003 with no authorization by the governor-general, no vote in parliament, and no real debate, even by the Coalition parties. The Australian Constitution allows him to do so more easily than his American and British counterparts could. At almost the last minute, both Blair and Howard advised parliament of their intentions, and Blair secured lower house approval of the invasion. Howard didn't have to, and only sought it retrospectively. According to Peter Hollingworth, governor-general at the time, Howard cited Australia's entry into peacekeeping operations and the undeclared war in Vietnam as precedents

for invading Iraq. This could happen again unless the war powers are redefined, something in which Gillard and Stephen Smith as Defence Minister have shown no interest.

Finally, another war. Howard made an ominous comment on 9 April: he anticipates Australia being involved in Iran. Why Australia would wish to invade Iran, he did not explain, but the record speaks for itself. In recent years Australia has become more dependent than ever on US defence, culminating in Gillard's offer to the US of bases on Australian soil for the first time since the Pacific war. Wherever the US is at war, Australia will be inextricably involved, for better or more likely for worse, unless we change our own rules.

A growing number of Australian groups, concerned at this prospect, are calling for the war powers to change. Some want an inquiry into how and why Australia went to war in Iraq, some want US bases out, others seek independence and 'just peace' for Australia, and others again advocate more transparency in government. More will be heard from them as the Federal election approaches.

Dr Alison Broinowski is a member of the Coalition for an Iraq War Inquiry and the author of *Howard's War* (2003) and *Allied and Addicted* (2007).

JUST PEACE ACTIVITIES

Following the announcement in November 2011, that Australia would allow the basing of United States military facilities and Marines in Darwin Just Peace called a meeting of Brisbane peace organisations to consider our response. Around the nation similar meetings have led to the formation of the Independent and Peaceful Australia Network or IPAN. Just Peace represents Brisbane IPAN at the monthly meetings held over the past 18 months.

IPAN aims to build community support for Australia to take an independent and peaceful approach in our foreign policy and to build relationships of trust and solidarity with the peoples of our region.

IPAN/Just Peace activity over the past months has included:

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Canvassing across the country for support of the IPAN statement expressing our objection to US permanent military presence in Australia and presenting our aims was very successful.

The statement attracted over 500 signatures and funds to publish it in our only national newspaper The Australian.

Events to mark the decade passed since Australia joined with the US and UK to wage a military attack and occupation of Iraq were held across the country coordinated by IPAN member organisations.

In Brisbane 2 events were held, the first to mark Brisbane's largest peace march in February 2003, with Andrew Bartlett, former leader of the Democrats now QLD Greens state organiser, and Norma Forrest President of WILFP. Both played a leading role in the Qld Peace Network which organised the march. Steve Austin from local ABC radio interviewed the Just Peace Co-convenor in the lead up to that forum.

Donna Mulhearn was the keynote speaker at a public meeting on March 21st. Donna had recently returned from Iraq where she and Academy Award winning filmmaker David Bradbury worked together on a documentary about the siege of Fallujah. Donna was also interviewed on 612 ABC. Donna's before and after photos told a terrible story, with the breakdown of infrastructure, ongoing bombings and violence, and most tragic of all the effects on children. The incidence of gross congenital abnormalities and miscarriages has increased dramatically.

IPAN Brisbane is working on a project with UQ students which aims to build relationships with similar organisations in the Asia Pacific who share our vision of peace, justice and independence. The opportunity to work with the students is invaluable. We hope the students will present their findings at our AGM in November.

Just Peace 4 Palestine sub-group has held stalls in the City Mall each month. Our current petition calls for the Federal Government to act on a UN report detailing the illegal detention of children by Israeli military, with their trials, mostly for throwing stones at army vehicles, in military courts. Our stalls in the Mall attract a growing number of people wanting to sign the petition. Thanks go to Fay for her role in making these happen.

The Australia Palestine Advocacy Network of which Just Peace is a member continues to play a leading role in awareness raising of the terrible injustices being experienced by the people of Palestine. Representatives of APAN lobby politicians and other influential groups to effect changes which will see an end to the occupation of Palestinian lands, and Peace for all in the region.

The third International Global Day of Action against Military Spending was marked in Brisbane with a tall in the Mall. We had a presence there with our red t-shirts on bearing messages calling for a reduction in military spending. A petition was designed calling for the government to cancel the contract for the F35 fighter jet. The petition is current and included in this newsletter-The gross corporate deal done between Lockheed Martin and successive federal governments is a glaring example of how tax payers funds are misused to fund the coffers of these corporations and to promote war. Please consider gathering signatures. Send back to PO Box 573 Coorparoo 4151.

The International Peace Bureau coordinates this campaign, and again IPAN played a role nationally to encourage events around the country.

United Nations Association of Australia (UNAA)

Just Peace is represented on the executive committee in Brisbane. We are currently organising the 2nd Brisbane Peace Lecture on the International Day of Peace Saturday September 21 at St Johns Cathedral 4- 6pm.

UNAA was invited to have a presence at the Rotary Peace Forum in June. See separate report.

Upcoming events

Friday July 12th *Preparing for Peace: Australian lessons from the Iraq War.*

QCU- 630pm for a 7pm start- see flyer included in this mail out.

Saturday July 13th Albion Bowls Club 230-5pm – see flyer.

Film Screening of *On the Bridge* featuring Vince Emanuele from the US Iraq Veterans against the War-

Monday July 22nd Dinner to hear visiting Peace advocate from Guam Ms Victoria Leon- Details to be confirmed.

For more information phone **Annette (0431) 597 256** or **3324 8459** or email annettebrownlie@optusnet.com.au

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would demand it. In any fight involving China and the US, we should stand out of it. If the giants in our region are going to war, we should not be part of it.

Robert Menzies, as prime minister, understood this clearly in 1956. The Chinese were shelling islands in the Taiwan Straits, testing American resolve over Taiwan. Eisenhower moved the 7th Fleet in, or close to, the Taiwan Straits.

At this time, not long after the signing of the ANZUS Treaty, which of course had no relevance to that particular dispute, Menzies let Eisenhower know in the clearest terms that if war eventuated between China and the US, Australia would not be part of it.

He clearly saw an Australian interest separate from that of the US, standing alone as an independent nation.

We have had a history of following America into war. Vietnam, with the knowledge of later years, proved to be a mistake. I must carry my responsibility for supporting it at the time. Then Iraq and Afghanistan, two wars ending in failure. There were massive objections to our involvement in Iraq. The original involvement in Afghanistan, which was to hunt al-Qaeda and nothing else, was correct. President George W. Bush, on his own initiative, turned that into a plan to reshape Afghanistan.

It is time Australia started to have a mind of its own. We should not follow a superpower into war, merely because it wants us to, or because of ANZUS. There has been no conflict to which ANZUS has had any relevance whatsoever.

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Do we believe that we must follow America into American wars, simply because that is the only way we can guarantee one day, that if we need help, it will help us. If that is our attitude, it is false.

Great powers follow their own interest and not that of any other country. We should have learnt that through our short history.

The result of a war between China, the US and Japan is problematic. China would have the capacity to sustain a level of casualties quite beyond anything that America could endure. In addition, China would be fighting for China, America would be fighting for foreign influence. The motivations on the two sides would be entirely different.

If war does occur, Australia should stand out of it, as Menzies did in 1956.

I believe Prime Minister Julia Gillard, or her alternative, Kevin Rudd, or the alternative to both, Tony Abbott, would do that which America wanted.

China has a sense of history that is foreign to America and to Australia. Through the 1800s and the 1900s, it suffered many indignities at the hands of Western powers, of Japan and of the US and indeed of Russia also. This was the time of Chinese weakness, but that has changed. China is no longer weak and will not endure humiliation again.

If anyone thinks containment against China and containment against the Soviet Union had any similarities, they should be disabused. The Soviet Union had minimal trade links, no financial and capital market links worth mentioning with the West.

China, on the contrary, is heavily entwined in the economies of nearly every Western country, certainly of

Australia. It is the largest buyer of US Treasury bills. A war between America and China would have catastrophic results, first for America's economy, then for the economies of the world.

If we had a government with a sense of history and of the future, we would seek to use our influence for peace and moderation. We should make it plain to America that we will not be going to war on that issue. We should oppose provocative action by any party.

Kristof, as an impartial observer, believes that China has made a decent case for ownership. Could the parties be persuaded to take it to the International Court, how else can a peaceful solution be found?

When is Australia going to have sufficient courage to act as an independent nation?

Malcolm Fraser was Liberal prime minister from 1975 to 1983.

MALCOLM FRASER WARNS OF US ATTACKS

Former PM says Australian foreign policy is 'complacent' and leaves country hostage to American decisions

Oliver Milman in Melbourne

guardian.co.uk, Monday 3 June 2013

The former prime minister Malcolm Fraser has launched a wide-ranging attack on Australia's "complacent" foreign policy, accusing the government of being harmfully dependent on the US.

In a speech delivered at Melbourne University, Fraser said he was "ashamed" that Australia was led into the Iraq war on "falsehoods" and criticised the current deployment of American troops in Darwin.

Around 2,500 American troops began rotating through Darwin for training last year, with US marines set to bring equipment such as amphibious assault craft, jets and helicopters to Australia, in a bid to enhance the US military position in the region.

Fraser, who was Liberal prime minister between 1975 and 1983, said this was an example of a damaging imbalance in the US-Australian relationship.

He said Australia was "hostage to the decisions of a country 10,000 miles away".

He added: "And they aren't going to say 'Canberra, we don't like what people are doing here and we want to attack them and we want to use those forces you've so conveniently housed in Darwin.'"

"They'll do it and we'll read about it in the newspapers. Our prime minister will be told about it after the attack is made. Because that's the way these things work. That, for me, is a total denial of Australian sovereignty and if we were ever independent, it's a denial of Australian independence."

Fraser said that Australia should be wary of "not very good" US foreign policy in the Middle East and northern Africa being replicated in the Asia-Pacific region, urging the government to forge an independent identity for Australia that focused more on engaging with neighbouring nations.

"We are a complacent nation when it comes to foreign affairs," he said. "Since the end of the cold war and the failure of the Soviet Union, our ties to the US have become closer and closer than ever before."

"Today, the United States has influence over our armed forces. Influence might be the wrong word – the right word may be control. Our armed forces could only operate if the United States approved, because otherwise we'd have no communications. I don't think that's very comfortable."

Fraser warned that Australia risked being marginalised, rather than strengthened, by being enmeshed in US foreign policy goals, with regional powers such as Indonesia becoming increasingly important to Washington.

"The largest Islamic country in the world would rate highly in the priorities of the United States," said Fraser. "20 million Australians? Not so highly."

"I know of three occasions where the United States has chosen Indonesia over Australia, which no Australian government will ever proclaim because they think we have a special relationship. Special relationships with great powers just don't exist. Great powers have their own interests."

"It's time Australia stood up and learned to be independent. To have no external entanglements that would stop it making up its own mind."

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In recent years Fraser has become an outspoken critic of both the government and the Liberal party, which he quit in 2009, on issues such as the treatment of asylum seekers and Australia's military involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan.

He reiterated this stance in his Melbourne University speech, saying: "In the second Iraq war there were three nations involved and I'm ashamed to say Australia was one of them. And they went to war on a falsehood.

"[Chief UN weapons inspector] Hans Blix wasn't allowed to finish his job, because if he had, he would've shown there were no weapons of mass destruction."

He also took aim at the Australian mainstream media for not highlighting the Australian army General Richard Burr's recent appointment as the second in command of US Pacific operations.

"The announcement was made by the [US] secretary for the army, John McHughand wasn't published in the Australian - but it was by the Guardian, in England," he said.

He said the appointment was "another way of tying us into decisions that they make and makes us complicit in whatever they do".

"The senior American military people, as the British before them, are very good at making people feel important. It flatters lesser powers and some people are not immune to the consequences of that," Fraser said.

Fraser was speaking at the launch of the Melbourne Globalist, a magazine focused on international affairs that is based jointly at the universities of Melbourne, Monash, RMIT and La Trobe.

ENGAGING NORTH KOREA

Time to rethink and retool

By Caitlin Byrne

Posted Thursday, 11 April 2013

Recent weeks of escalating tensions on the Korean peninsula have made it clear that we do not really know or understand North Korea at all. To be sure, North Korea's behavior has been deliberately provocative and unhelpful. Yet the initial response of the international community and in particular the United States, has only served to inflame the situation further and firm the resolve of the North Korean leadership and people to maintain their difficult stance. The potential for misunderstanding and miscalculation on the Korean Peninsula is at the core of any current security threat.

North Korea specialists, scholars and policy-makers alike are intently watching the latest round of provocations to emerge from the nation. But much of the analysis comes back to speculation. Lurching from threat to counter-threat to escalated-threat, this recent wave of daily speculation has not necessarily shed new light on the North Korean puzzle. It has though usefully highlighted persistent gaps in the diplomatic frameworks through which we try to manage and respond to this confounding nation.

It is time to rethink how we engage with North Korea.

The strategy of isolation has largely underpinned the international community's response to North Korea over time, and most recently since its first nuclear test in 2006. Spearheaded by internationally agreed sanctions, the intent has been to limit the extent to which North Korea can participate in a global transactional world, particularly to progress its nuclear ambitions. US Ambassador to the UN, Susan Rice sums it up neatly: the role of sanctions is to 'bite and bite hard', to 'increase North Korea's isolation and raise the cost to North Korea's leaders of defying the international community'.

There is a place for international sanctions in regulating the behaviours of states, particularly when it comes to targeting and restricting the flow of nuclear or other illicit materials or building global pressure on human rights

issues. Both of these concerns apply to North Korea. Reaching international agreement on the nature and scope of sanctions is no easy task. So when it occurs in the United Nations Security Council such agreement provides both a symbolic and substantive demonstration of international solidarity. This has also been important in responding to North Korea.

But sanctions alone - usually designed and implemented in times of crisis - are insufficient, and should not take the place of effective long-term diplomacy. In the case of North Korea, as with other sanctions targets, it is the ordinary people, already enduring significant hardship, that are hardest hit by their ongoing impacts. Indeed, North Korea's most recent nuclear test and proposed re-commencement of operations at the Yongbyon nuclear reactor indicate that the impact of sanctions as the primary international response mechanism is questionable.

Long-term strategies of isolation are incompatible with effective diplomacy. Rather than excluding and punishing, diplomacy uses engagement and dialogue to work through differences and overcome alienation. By its very nature diplomacy is two-way; that is, it requires listening as well as talking. The absence of effective diplomacy towards North Korea is startling. As a result, lines of communication with North Korea are quite literally blocked and we remain more in the dark about North Korea and its leadership than ever before. That is, of course with the exception of basketball superstar, Dennis Rodman. Not to suggest Rodman's visit was effective diplomacy. His ill-informed position both before and after visiting North Korea has added little to our understanding and any opportunities it might have opened up to build on so-called basketball diplomacy have been missed. Nonetheless, it is striking and worrying that Rodman is our best contact for North Korea's perplexing new leader Kim Jong Un.

North Korea maintains formal diplomatic relations with some 164 states, including Australia. But only twenty-five of those have a permanent diplomatic mission based in

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Pyongyang. These include China, Russia, Mongolia, Malaysia, Singapore and the United Kingdom, to name a few. Without access to robust diplomatic networks in Pyongyang the ability of strategists and policy-makers to decipher the signals embedded in North Korea's behaviour is seriously inhibited. At the same time, the opportunity for miscalculation is inflated.

Australia's diplomatic approach to North Korea has in recent years been framed by the international sanctions regime and further bilateral sanctions enacted under the *Autonomous Sanctions Act 2011*. While the Australian Government operated a diplomatic mission in Pyongyang briefly in 1975, the conduct of diplomatic relations in more recent times has fallen to the Embassy in Seoul; a problematic arrangement given current tensions and restrictions between the two Koreas.

For Australia, a nation now seeking to constructively engage within the Asian Century, the DPRK is of vital importance. The *Australia in the Asian Century White Paper* delivered last December neatly side-stepped the difficult issues posed by the North Korean puzzle. But as the events of the past week demonstrate North Korea will not be ignored. It is time to rethink our own diplomatic engagement beyond sanctions and to more effectively utilize both traditional and more innovative measures.

Building people-to-people linkages through public diplomacy initiatives such as academic or vocational exchanges is an important starting point. The experience of established organisations such as Choson Exchange and East West Coalition already operating exchange programs in and out of North Korea show that programs addressing specific areas of skill development, including business management, policy development, environmental management, organic farming or animal husbandry add significant and practical value to the people of North Korea.

Two-way exchange initiatives are made somewhat difficult by Australia's bilateral sanctions regime. Of particular significance, the legislation specifically

prevents North Koreans from entering Australia. However there may be some room for flexibility where humanitarian grounds exist. Two-way exchange opportunities might then be usefully promoted to provide North Koreans with an Australian experience, without compromising the overarching intent of the legislation. Such initiatives if managed effectively offer a framework for building understanding, confidence and trust at a people-to-people level, and can pave the way towards improved understanding, trust and political dialogue.

Consideration should also be given to establishing a permanent Australian diplomatic presence in Pyongyang. Given the political situation on the Korean Peninsula, conducting diplomatic relations with Pyongyang from Seoul is both cumbersome and impractical. Establishing a diplomatic mission in Pyongyang would provide a measure of reassurance to the increasing (though small) number of Australians engaged in humanitarian relief activities, tourism and ad hoc exchanges within North Korea. Importantly, it would also send an important signal that Australia is ready and prepared to constructively engage with North Korea.

To the outside world North Korea is notoriously confounding. Yet that is no reason to opt-out of effective diplomacy. Building understanding and creating an environment for dialogue takes time and significant effort. In the case of North Korea it also requires some creativity. Australia is well placed to rethink its diplomatic strategies, and to develop a more constructive and engaged approach to make sense of the North Korean puzzle. The time has come to rethink our diplomatic engagement with this confounding nation; and retool accordingly.

Caitlin Byrne is Assistant Professor of International Relations at Bond University where she teaches courses in East-West diplomacy, global statecraft and global institutions and conflict resolution. A former diplomat, Caitlin's research interests include Australian diplomacy and public diplomacy with a particular focus on China and Korea. She is book review editor for the *Australian Journal on International Affairs*, and an elected council member of the Australian Institute for International Affairs (Qld branch).

LETTER TO EDITOR

To: **Byron Echo**
28 June 2013 10:26

Dear Hans,

The Australian government should be congratulated for referring Japan's "whaling research" to the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Australia's decision is courageous in light of how close and important our relationship with Japan is. For example, Japan is our second largest trading partner with merchandise exports in 2010 - 2011 of \$47 billion and the importance of our defence relationship underscored in 2007 by the Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation.

When Australia turns to Israel however, its courage wavers even though our trade is about 74 times smaller than that with Japan and we have no defence relationship to speak of. In 2004 the ICJ declared Israel's security barrier (Apartheid Wall to the Palestinians) illegal and the UN General Assembly voted unanimously to accept Resolution ES-10/15 condemning the barrier. Israel, the US, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, Palau and Australia voted against the resolution.

There can be no doubt that Australia was fully aware of the dreadful impact of the wall on every aspect of the daily lives of Palestinians and there can be no doubt about Australia's commitment to international law. Unlike the US and Israel we signed up to the ICJ in 2002. No doubt, Australia probably reneged on its commitment to principles of justice and humanitarian concern because of US pressure in support of Israel. In regard to whaling, the US does not appear to have influenced Australia's decision to go after Japan. Perhaps the US and Australia think whales are more important than Palestinians.

Gareth W R Smith
14 Cumbebin Park
Byron Bay

"Those who can make you believe in absurdities can make you commit atrocities." Voltaire

"The sleep of reason produces monsters." Goya



HUMANITARIAN DIMENSIONS OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

By **Tilman Ruff**

Posted Monday, 4 March 2013

Global treaties ban chemical and biological weapons, landmines and cluster munitions.

For each of these inhumane, indiscriminate weapons, the unacceptable harm they cause eventually enabled arguments about military utility to be swept aside.

Nuclear weapons, the worst of all, make these others look like child's play. Yet we have no treaty to eradicate them.

That is why this week's "Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons" international conference in Oslo is so welcome. Because sixty-eight years after the nuclear devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki changed our world, nine governments continue to threaten all our futures with radioactive incineration.

All the world's governments bar four agreed at the 2010 Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty Review Conference that any use of nuclear weapons would cause catastrophic humanitarian consequences. Yet policies on nuclear weapons continue to be driven by myth. Myths that nuclear weapons can be kept but never used, that their use could be justified, that governments can be prevented from acquiring weapons others claim as essential to their security, that there can be right hands for the wrong weapons.

These myths remind me of the pre-Fukushima myths in Japan that nuclear power is essential and severe accidents cannot happen.

Evidence, not myth, needs to drive policy, especially on the most critical existential challenges. Through the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, hundreds of experts worldwide rigorously review emerging evidence and present their findings to the public and policy-makers. Yet despite the World Health Organization identifying nuclear weapons as the greatest immediate threat to human health and welfare, we have no such process for nuclear weapons.

In fact the most acute climate threat we face is nuclear. Atmospheric scientists confirm that just one hundred

Hiroshima-size nuclear weapons (small by today's standards) detonated on cities would ignite coalescing fires, injecting more than five million tons of smoke into the stratosphere. Abrupt global cooling, darkening, and reduced rainfall, persisting for over ten years, would deplete food production. One billion people already chronically malnourished would starve. Loss of food imports, conflict and infectious disease epidemics would jeopardise hundreds of millions more.

Nuclear famine could be triggered by less than 0.5 per cent of the world's current stockpile of nuclear weapons and less than 0.1 per cent of their total explosive power. Thus, the arsenals of China, France, India, Israel, Pakistan and UK, not only of Russia and the US, pose existential global threats. Nuclear weapons anywhere are our common enemy.

The first five states to acquire nuclear weapons (the "P5" – China, France, Russia, UK and USA) are jointly boycotting the Oslo conference. According to Rose Gottemoeller, US Acting Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security, the US decision was taken in consultation with the other P5 states. The US administration views the Oslo conference as a distraction; diverting attention, discussion and energy away from the practical step-by-step approach which they feel is most effective to stabilise and reduce nuclear dangers. Although the P5 regard others of their club as potential nuclear adversaries, when nuclear weapons are challenged, it seems a united front is possible.

For the states which between them own more than 98 per cent of the world's nuclear weapons to collectively boycott the conference is reprehensible. It indicates an unwillingness to face the facts about the horrifying catastrophe any use of nuclear weapons would unleash, the impossibility of any effective humanitarian response, and the resultant urgent need to eradicate the scourge of nuclear weapons. It suggests dysfunctional denial in being unwilling to review updated evidence about the greatest immediate threat to human health and welfare. It ignores the need for evidence to drive policy, especially on such critical matters. Unfortunately,

ignoring the threat will not make it go away, it only increases it.

The P5 boycott is doubly misguided as the outcome document of the 2010 Review Conference of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) for the first time recognised the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons. This document was supported by all 189 states signed up to the NPT, including the P5. The P5 repeatedly emphasise the importance of the NPT.

This Oslo conference is the first meeting of states ever to specifically address the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons. Despite not being signatories to the NPT, nuclear-armed India and Pakistan have notified their intention to participate.

The P5 boycott makes the Oslo conference even more important. Such vital matters cannot be left to a few states. Sixty-eight years after nuclear weapons were first used on cities, we should not continue to allow ourselves to be held hostage by a few states, waiting for crumbs that may fall from their table. These states that created the problem and continue to invest more than \$100 billion annually in modernising their nuclear arsenals are unlikely to lead us out of this mess.

Although more than 140 nations support the goal of a treaty banning nuclear weapons, Australia is not among them. This is despite high-level advocacy for such a step from many Australians. Nearly eight hundred recipients of the Order of Australia – including former prime ministers, governors-general, foreign affairs and defence ministers, premiers, governors, High Court justices and chiefs of the armed forces – have called on the government to adopt a nuclear-weapon-free defence posture and work for a nuclear weapons convention. An opinion poll has shown that more than 90 per cent of Australians support a ban.

Back in September 2009, the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties, reporting on Australia's nuclear treaties and how parliament could strengthen non-proliferation and disarmament, recommended that the government
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make clear in international forums its support for a nuclear weapons convention, and that the parliament adopt a resolution on its commitment to the abolition of nuclear weapons.

A weak parliamentary resolution was finally adopted in 2012, but Australia continues to vote against a nuclear weapons ban at the UN, and undermines nuclear disarmament by continuing to put the nuclear weapons of the US at the centre of its military security. Australia's uranium exports add to the fissile materials stockpile and potential fuel for weapons.

Humanity's survival depends on people and their governments refusing to be held hostage any longer by inertia and the vested interests in a few states.

It depends on breaking the logjam in disarmament, on a group of leading states seizing the initiative to begin negotiations on banning nuclear weapons, the logical next step towards their elimination. It is time for the shared interest of humanity to prevail. Understanding the catastrophe of any use of nuclear weapons, and the imperative to prevent the untreatable, will drive such a process, which should follow from the conference in Oslo.

Tilman Ruff is Associate Professor in the Nossal Institute for Global Health, University of Melbourne and Australian chair of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons.



HURT AND HOMELESS, child, masked in dressings, and dazed girl are carted to suburbs by home guardsman.

HIROSHIMA

CRITICISM OF ISRAEL

Criticism of Israel is not anti-semitic per se

By **George Browning**
Posted Friday, 24 May 2013

Parliamentarians of both State and Federal Parliaments have been enthusiastically signing the London Declaration which condemns ant-Semitism. Any fair minded Australian citizen will applaud this commitment. Anti-Semitism has historically been the cause of enormous pain and human degradation over centuries. It is to be hoped that this signing sends an unequivocal signal that anti-Semitism at any level of society is totally unacceptable.

However, the statement moves away from its worthy support of Judaism and Jewishness into the world of politics by including in clauses 1 and 6 criticism of Israel as possible anti-Semitism. Israel is one of the world's Nation States. It has developed policies that are very controversial in its nuclear arsenal and in its occupation of Palestine. It is not acceptable to label criticism of these policies as anti-Semitic.

Like many others who are concerned for international justice I have frequently been a strong critic of Israel's occupation of the West Bank and its aggressive programme of Settlement building on Palestinian land. These policies have repressed, alienated and humiliated the Palestinian people.

In particular I have been very critical of the military occupation which has meant total control of Palestinian lives, from the volume of water they are allowed to drink, the freedoms they are allowed to enjoy and the health facilities they are permitted to access. I am also strongly critical of the settlement programme that continues to illegally confiscate Palestinian land and rob Palestinians of their olive groves, homes and livelihoods. This programme has resulted in a form of apartheid on the West bank where those who have resided in the country for countless generations are reduced to non-citizens in their own land.

For expressing these criticisms of Israeli policy I have been labelled anti-Semitic in 'Opinion Pieces' and in

various pieces of correspondence. I strongly object to such name calling and consider it a sign of weakness that those who use this tactic obviously have no legitimate way of defending the indefensible.

It is to be hoped that our politicians will be heard to be supportive of those voices in our community that speak for justice and will come to their defence. It is also to be hoped that all politicians will be equally ready to sign a document that condemns racial and religious bigotry of any kind, not least that experienced by Christian and Muslim communities in many parts of the world.

To return to the statement: anti-Semitism, the belittling of, or discrimination against, Jews and the religion of Judaism is utterly deplorable and has historically been the cause of enormous suffering. In light of this, it is doubly tragic that the Palestinian people have been the hapless victims of suffering on the edge of such historically horrendous suffering.

Bishop George Browning, is President of the Australia Palestine Advocacy Network. He served for many decades as an Anglican Priest in Australia, most recently as the Bishop of Canberra and Goulburn. George has been a frequent visitor to Palestine and host of Palestinian leaders in Australia.



Although September 11 was horrible, it didn't threaten the survival of the human race, like nuclear weapons do.

Stephen Hawking



SYRIA: OBAMA'S IRAQ

by **Shamus Cooke**

Published on Wednesday, June 19, 2013
by [Common Dreams](#)

In perfect Bush-like fashion, President Obama has invented a bogus pretense for military intervention in yet another Middle East country. The president's claim that the Syrian government has used chemical weapons — and thus crossed Obama's imaginary "red line" — will likely fool very few Americans, who already distrust their president after the massive NSA spying scandal.

Obama has officially started down a path that inevitably leads to full-scale war. At this point the Obama administration thinks it has already invested too much military, financial, and diplomatic capital into the Syrian conflict to turn back, and each step forward brings the U.S. closer to a direct military intervention.

Much like Obama's spying program, few Americans knew that the United States was already involved, neck deep, with the mass killings occurring in Syria. For example, Obama has been directly arming the Syrian rebels for well over a year. The New York Times broke the story that the Obama administration has — through the CIA — been illegally trafficking thousands of tons of guns to the rebels from the dictatorships of Saudi Arabia and Qatar. If not for these Obama-trafficked guns, thousands of deaths would have been prevented and the Syrian conflict over.

But even after the gun trafficking story broke, the mainstream media largely ignored it, and continued "reporting" that the U.S. has only been supplying the Syrian rebels with "non-lethal aid," a meaningless term in a war setting, since all military aid directly assists in the business of killing.

The U.S. media also buried the truth behind the ridiculous chemical weapons claims by the Obama administration, which, like Bush's WMDs, are based on absolutely no evidence. Having learned nothing from Iraq, the U.S. media again

shamelessly regurgitates the "facts" as spoon-fed to them by the government, no questions asked. In reality, however, a number of independent chemical weapons experts have publicly spoken out against Obama's accusations.

The U.S. media also refuses to ask: on what authority does the United States have to determine the usage of chemical weapons in other countries? This is the job of the UN. What has the UN said on the matter?

Top UN rights investigator Carla del Ponte said:

"According to the testimonies we have gathered, the [Syrian] rebels have used chemical weapons, making use of sarin gas."

Again, the "rebels" have used chemical weapons, not the Syrian government, according to the UN

madness. Obama has invested too much of his foreign policy credibility in Syria. His administration has been the backbone of the Syrian rebels from the beginning, having handpicked a group of rich Syrian exiles and molded them into Obama's "officially recognized" government of Syria, while pressuring other nations to also recognize these nobodies as the "legitimate Syrian government." Assad's iron grip on power is a humiliation to these diplomatic efforts of Obama, and has thus weakened the prestige and power of U.S. foreign policy abroad.

More importantly, Obama's anti-Syria diplomacy required that diplomatic relations between Syria and its neighbors — like Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey — be destroyed. These nations have peacefully co-existed for decades with Syria, but have now agreed — under immense U.S. pressure — to sever diplomatic relations while helping destroy the Syrian government by funneling guns and foreign fighters into the country, further destabilizing a region not yet recovered from the Iraq war. Obama's Syria policy has turned an already-fragile region into a smoldering tinderbox.

If Obama were to suddenly tell his anti-Syria coalition that he's realized his efforts at regime change have failed and that he would instead pursue a peaceful solution, his allies and Middle East lackeys would be less willing in the future to prostitute themselves for the foreign policy of the United States; and the U.S. would thus find it more difficult in the future to pursue "regime change" politics abroad. If Obama doesn't back up his "Assad must go" demand, the U.S. will be unable to make such threats in the future; and U.S. foreign policy is heavily dependent on this type of political bullying.

Furthermore, Obama's anti-Syria puppet coalition is taking tremendous political risks when it shamelessly follows in Obama's footsteps, since the U.S. is terribly unpopular throughout

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representative. Many analysts have pointed out the obvious fact that the Syrian government would have zero military or political motive to use chemical weapons, especially when they have access to much more effective conventional weapons. Obama's Bush-like lies are too familiar to the American public, who overwhelmingly do not support military intervention in Syria, or giving direct military aid to the Syrian rebels.

What has the UN said on giving military aid to the rebels?

UN chief Ban Ki-moon has called the Obama's decision "a bad idea" and "not helpful." This is because pouring arms into any country where there is a conflict only increases the bloodshed and risks turning the conflict into a broader catastrophe.

But like Bush, Obama is ignoring the UN, and there's a logic to his



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the Arab world. This unpopularity is further proof that the "official" Syrian opposition that is asking for U.S. intervention has zero credibility in Syria, since very few Syrians would like to invite the U.S. military to "liberate" their country, especially after the "successful" liberations of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya.

Obama, too, is worried about domestic politics in his own country over Syria. He knows that Americans are sick of Middle East wars, while the American public is also worried that arming the Syrian rebels would mean giving guns to the very same people that America is supposedly fighting a "war on terror" against.

In response to this concern Obama has said that the U.S. will only give arms to "moderate" rebels. A European Union diplomat mockingly responded:

"It would be the first conflict where we pretend we could create peace by delivering arms... If you pretend to know where the weapons will end up, then it would be the first war in history where this is possible. We have seen it in Bosnia, Afghanistan and Iraq. Weapons don't disappear; they pop up where they are needed."

In Syria U.S. weapons will thus end up in the hands of the extremists doing the majority of the fighting. These are the people who will be in power if Syria's government falls, unless a full U.S. invasion and Iraq-style occupation occurs. It's difficult to decide which outcome would be worse for the Syrian people.

It's now obvious that President Obama is escalating the Syrian conflict because his prized rebels have been beaten on the battlefield. Obama has thus chosen the military tactic of brinkmanship, a risky strategy that involves intentionally escalating a conflict in the hopes that either your opponent gives in to your demands (regime change), or your opponent gives you an excuse to invade.

Here's how former U.S. General Wesley Clark explains Obama's brinkmanship tactic in a New York Times op-ed, which is worth quoting at length:

"President Obama's decision to supply small arms and ammunition to the rebels is a step, possibly just the first, *toward direct American intervention*. It raises risks for all parties, and especially for Mr. Assad, who knows that he cannot prevail, even with Russian and Iranian military aid, *if the United States becomes fully engaged*. We used a similar strategy against the Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic in Kosovo in 1999, where I commanded American forces, and showed that NATO had the resolve to escalate.

"The risk of going beyond lethal aid to establishing a no-fly zone to keep Mr. Assad's planes grounded or safe zones to protect refugees — options under consideration in Washington — *is that we would find it hard to pull back if our side began losing*. Given the rebels' major recent setbacks, can we rule out using air power or sending in ground troops?"

"Yet the sum total of risks — *higher oil prices, a widening war* — also provide Syria (and its patrons, Iran and Russia) a motive to negotiate." [emphasis added]

Clark's innocent sounding "no-fly zone" is in fact a clever euphemism for all-out war, since no-fly zones require you destroy the enemy's air force, surface to air missiles, and other infrastructure.

In Libya Obama swiftly turned a no-fly zone into a full-scale invasion and regime change, in violation of international law. A no-fly zone in Syria would also immediately turn into an invasion and "regime change," with the possibility that the U.S. or Israel would exploit the "fog of war" to attack Iran.

All of this madness could be stopped immediately if Obama publicly announced that the Syrian rebels have lost the war — since they have — and will be cut off politically, financially, and militarily by the U.S. if they do not immediately proceed to negotiations with the Syrian government. But this peaceful approach will instead be ignored in favor of untold thousands more dead, millions more made refugees, and a broader regional fracturing of Middle East civilization.

Shamus Cooke is a social service worker, trade unionist, and writer for Workers Action (www.workerscompass.org). He can be reached at shamuscook@gmail.com

SYRIA AND THE SHAM OF "HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION"

by **Ajamu Baraka**
June 4, 2013

I continue to be amazed with the ease with which the dividing line is blurred between what is real and what is fiction in the reporting on Syria by the Western media. The press in the U.S. continues to dutifully report on the "objective diplomacy" by the Obama administration to broker a "peaceful" resolution to the conflict in Syria. However, those stories of noble and innocent efforts to avert the catastrophic human suffering that has eventually engulfed Syria has sanitized the bloody complicity of U.S. policy. Diplomacy, for the U.S., has meant calling for regime change from the outset and then encouraging Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Israel, their client states in the region, to arm, train and provide political support for a military campaign with the objective of effectively dismembering the Syria State.

Two years later, with tens of thousands killed, millions uprooted and the delicate social fabric of the country shredded by sectarian brutality, the next phase in the propaganda war leading to more direct intervention by the West to finish off the regime is being organized in the form of a peace conference scheduled to take place in June.

"Humanitarian intervention has proven to be an even more valuable propaganda tool than the "war on terror," because as the situation in Libya and now Syria has demonstrated, it provides a moral justification for imperialist intervention."

Co-sponsored by Russia with a stake in maintaining the integrity of the Syria State, the U.S. approach to the conference, however, gives the impression that the gathering is a charade meant to mollify those elements in the U.S. Congress and public still hesitant to support another expensive military adventure.

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The U.S. demand that a peaceful solution to the conflict is predicated on a “transitional government” being established in which Assad should play no role, means effectively that there will be no serious attempt to resolve the conflict short of regime change and the surrendering of Syrian sovereignty. The U.S. position also confirms the real objective of the conference which is to justify more direct military intervention by the U.S. once the conference “fails” to bring peace.

While this is absolutely clear for many people around the world, the U.S. public, along with much of what used to be called the progressive and/or radical sectors, continue to be hoodwinked by some of the most-crude and obvious manipulation I have ever witnessed. It was precisely the smooth efficiency with which the public was being manipulated that motivated me to write an earlier article on Syria that attempted to offer an explanation for the reasons why U.S. State propagandists, and I include the mainstream media in this category, have been so successful in confusing the general public and dividing the anti-war, anti-imperialist movement.

I believe part of their success has been due to the fact that they have used the concept of humanitarian intervention as one of their main tools. In my article, I made the argument that humanitarian intervention, along with the concept of the “right to protect” (R2P) has developed into the most effective ideological weapon the liberal human rights community provided Western imperialism since the fall of the Soviet State. Humanitarian intervention has proven to be an even more valuable propaganda tool than the “war on terror,” because as the situation in Libya and now Syria has demonstrated, it provides a moral justification for imperialist intervention that can also accommodate the presence of the same “terrorist” forces the U.S. pretends to be opposed to. And of course, in the eyes of the U.S. government, tyrannical and dictatorial governments that need to be deposed are only those that present an obstacle to the realization of U.S. geo/political interests—never those paragons of freedom and morality like Saudi Arabia and Israel.

As I said in my earlier article:

Humanitarian intervention provided the U.S. State the perfect ideological cover and internal rationalization to continue as the global “gendarme” of the capitalist order. By providing the human rights rationale for the assertion that the “international community” had a moral and legal responsibility to protect a threatened people, mainstream human rights activists effectuated a shift in the discourse on international human rights that moved the R2P assertion from a contested legal and moral argument to a common-sense assumption. And because of their limited perspective, it did not occur to any of these theoreticians that what they propagated was a thinly updated version of the “white man’s burden.” The NATO intervention in Bosnia and Kosovo, the assault on Iraq to “save” the Iraqi people from Saddam Hussein, and most recently the NATO attack on Libya that brought to power a rag-tag assortment of anti-African racists, have solidified the idea among many in the U.S. that humanitarian intervention to protect human rights through aggressive war is justifiable. The consequence of this for U.S. policy makers and for the likely targets of U.S. aggression in the global South is that if properly framed, war could be moved back to the center of strategic options without much fear of a backlash from the American people—a development especially important for a declining power that appears to have concluded that it will use military means to attempt to maintain its global empire.

The propagandists of the U.S. war strategy have been spectacularly successful in inculcating this shift in consciousness in the general population and the self-muting of the anti-war and anti-imperialist movements in the West, with the exception of a few organizations. The assertion of the right to unilaterally attack any State that it deems unfit for sovereignty is not a new articulation of White supremacist, imperialist ideology but in this current period where there are few constraints on the global exercise of “White power,” the internalization of this position by the European and U.S. publics, irrespective of ethnicity or race, has made the world a much more

dangerous place for Black and Brown people: 50,000 killed in Libya, 80,000 in Syria, 1,000,000 in Iraq, and 30,000 in Afghanistan.

The normalization of war as a contemporary expression of the West’s responsibility to bring liberal democracy and capitalist freedom to the non-White hordes, and the fact that most of the people being killed in the process of “being saved” by the West are non-European, is a graphic confirmation of the White supremacist assumptions of humanitarian intervention. The people being “saved” by the West are framed as people who would embrace the Western way of life if given a choice. That is why Madeline Albright could say with a straight face that the “price was worth it” in response to the 500,000 children that died in Iraq as a result of U.S. sanctions.

So as the U.S. government prepares to wage war in Syria, the imperative for all of us who believe in peace and fundamental human rights is to attempt to persuade as many people as possible to choose peace instead of the war objectives of the 1%. The Syrian government has a significant social base that is made up of Alawites, Druze, Christians and significant numbers of Sunnis who fear the takeover of the country by Islamic fundamentalists. This is a fact that is being hidden from the public in the U.S. Those in the U.S. who would like to see an end to the bloodshed in Syria, and I believe that is the majority of people, should call on their representatives to support real initiatives for peace that respect the sovereignty of Syria and the desires of all of the people in that country.

But really what the people of Syria and the world want and many have demanded, is for the U.S. and its Western allies – the minority who make up 10% of the world but pretend to be the world - to intervene into their own societies who are experiencing their own humanitarian crisis brought on by a moribund capitalism and leave the rest of the world alone.

Ajamu Baraka is a veteran activist and organizer. Ajamu was the director of the US Human Rights Network until June 2011.



WESTERN STATES POURING FUEL ON THE SYRIAN CRISIS

By Finian Cunningham

May 31, 2013 "[Information Clearing House](#)" -

How to describe the actions of Britain and France towards Syria and by extension, the wider Middle East and Africa regions?

This week, the insane British and French mis-rulers gave notice that they intend pouring fuel on the Syrian crisis - a crisis that they largely instigated - by openly sending more heavy weapons to the Western-backed mercenaries tearing that country apart.

It should be patently obvious that the murderous rampage against Syrian civilians that is entering its third year could not be sustained if it were not for the relentless Western government and media support. Now this Western remote-control killing machine is to be fitted with a higher murderous gear, thanks to the diplomatic engineering of Britain and France in removing the European arms embargo on Syria.

This is the conduct of arsonists who rush to a fire that they have started, and while claiming to be firefighters, these same protagonists are laden with more inflammable material undeterred by the sound of screaming voices.

The truly insane thing about these criminal European regimes is that the evil fruit of their nefarious work is rampant not just in Syria, but contemporaneously across the Middle East and Africa.

London and Paris finally got their way in goading the European Union to officially lift the arms embargo on Syria, paving the way for Britain and France to

begin funneling weapons to the Al Qaeda-linked militants doing the West's bidding to sabotage the government of President Bashar al Assad and effect the long-held objective of regime change in Syria.

Britain and France are cynically maintaining the ridiculous fiction that this increased weapons supply will bring peace to Syria - in the face of overwhelming evidence that such a move will do the exact opposite.

Moreover, the increased British and French firepower to myriad self-styled jihadist brigades in Syria threatens to escalate sectarian bloodshed across the entire Middle East, pulling Lebanon, Iraq and other countries into an all-out internecine conflagration.

This is not a prediction. It is a description of what is already happening as a result of the criminal foreign policies of London, Paris, Washington and their regional allies.

On Tuesday, the day after Brussels lifted its arms embargo on Syria, French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius was in the West African country of Niger warning about the perils of "international terrorism" and how the North and West African states must "pull together to defeat this threat." Fabius (and Britain's Hague) should be renamed "minister for foreign arson.

Last week, Niger was the scene of a deadly twin suicide attack in which 35 people, including 10 militants, were killed. The attacks on a Niger army barracks in the city of Agadez and a French-owned uranium mine in Arlit are believed to be the first such terrorist incidents in that country since its independence from the former colonial ruler, France, in 1960.

Fabius claimed that the militants behind the twin assaults launched their attacks from southern Libya. This was also the view of Niger's President Mahamadou Issoufou. Despite a denial by the Libyan government of any such link, it is plausible that the militant groups behind the attacks in Niger

have at least been materially galvanized by the various NATO-backed jihadist brigades that overthrew the Libyan government of Muammar Gaddafi at the end of 2011.

The double bombings last week in Niger were claimed to be a joint operation by the Movement for Oneness and Justice in West Africa (MUJWA) and the Signed in Blood group led by Moktar Belmoktar. Both organizations are self-declared affiliates of Al Qaeda in the Maghreb and the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG).

The latter led the NATO regime-change operation, starting in early 2011, against Libya's Gaddafi with weapons and money supplied by NATO powers and their Persian Gulf Wahhabi allies of Saudi Arabia and Qatar. NATO also provided the seven-month aerial bombardment campaign that was crucial for the Libyan jihadists' defeat of Gaddafi. This is the same nefarious nexus that is ripping Syria asunder.

NATO's regime-change operation in Libya has since created a lawless country overrun by fractious militia, where even the former Western sponsors of the militia are no longer safe. The killing of US Ambassador Christopher Stevens in Benghazi in September 2012 is perhaps the most graphic indicator of the mayhem that the NATO powers have unleashed on Libya, formerly one of Africa's most developed states. Since then, British and French consular sites and personnel have also come under attack and their staff have had to be withdrawn from that North African country.

This is a foretaste of the kind of chaos that will escalate in Syria and the wider region now that Britain and France have opened the floodgates for arming the like-minded Wahhabi mercenaries in Syria. President Assad predicted this very outcome several months ago, and he was derided for it by the Western regimes and their propaganda media.

It is credibly reported that the Libyan jihadists have been major suppliers of NATO and Wahhabi Arab weaponry into Syria. They have also sent fighters to join the estimated 10,000-20,000 foreign mercenaries marauding in Syria.

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The NATO-Arab weapons supplied to Libya to oust Gaddafi have also found their way to the ideologically similar groups that span the vast Maghreb, Sahel and Sahara terrains. It was these arms and fighters that energized the Islamist MUJWA and Ansar Dine that took over northern Mali early last year.

France mounted a full-scale troop invasion and aerial bombing campaign in Mali on 11 January this year allegedly to defeat "Islamist extremists" threatening the sovereignty of its former Malian colony. Securing the rich uranium and other mineral resources of Mali, as in Niger, are of course the real Western agenda.

The same groups, along with Belmoktar's Signed in Blood, were involved in the deadly siege of the Amenas gas plant in Algeria in January earlier this year, in which 37 workers were killed. That siege was said to be in retribution for France's military intervention in Mali "to liberate the northern territory."

Now these same groups are behind the twin bombings in Niger, which destroyed a central part of the uranium mine owned by French company, Areva. The attackers said it was also revenge for the ongoing French military operations in neighboring Mali.

How clear does it have to get before the European public start to connect the criminal reality of their political rulers? These so-called governments in London and Paris are nothing but a gang of arsonists, setting whole countries on fire with explosive repercussions - all fuelled by reckless imperialist self-interest.

Like the fire-bombing tactics of cities during the Second World War by Western criminal regimes, these present-day terrorist fires in the Middle East and Africa, once unleashed, are becoming self-reinforcing and out of control. What's more, through unremitting economic austerity, these mis-rulers are, in effect, extorting public welfare money from workers, unemployed, the elderly and sick to pay for their criminal conflagration abroad.

Finian Cunningham is a prominent expert in international affairs. The author and media commentator was expelled from Bahrain in June 2011 for his critical journalism in which he highlighted human rights violations by the Western-backed regime. He is a Master's graduate in Agricultural Chemistry and worked as a scientific editor for the Royal Society of Chemistry, Cambridge, England, before pursuing a career in journalism. He is based in East Africa where he is writing a book on Bahrain and the Arab Spring. He co-hosts a weekly current affairs programme, Sunday at 3pm GMT on [Bandung Radio](#)

This article was originally published at [Press TV](#)

SYRIA IS A GAME-CHANGER

May 23, 2013

US Political Impotence in the Middle East

by **Ramzy Baroud**

In an article published May 15, 2013, American historical social scientist Immanuel Wallerstein wrote, "Nothing illustrates more the limitations of Western power than the internal controversy its elites are having in public about what the United States in particular and western European states should be doing about the civil war in Syria."

Those limitations are palpable in both language and action. A political and military vacuum created by past US failures and forced retreats after the Iraq war made it possible for countries like Russia to reemerge on the scene as an effective player.

It is most telling that over two years after the Syrian uprising-turned bloody civil war, the US continues to curb its involvement by indirectly assisting anti-Bashar al-Assad regime opposition forces, through its Arab allies and Turkey. Even its political discourse is indecisive and often times inconsistent.

Concurrently, Russia's position remains unswerving and constantly advancing while the US is pushed into a corner, demonstrating incapacity to react except for condemnations and mere statements. This is to the displeasure of its Arab allies. Russia's recent delivery of sophisticated anti-ship missiles and its own buildup of warships in the eastern Mediterranean is a case in point. The move was condemned by the Obama administration as one that is "ill-timed and very unfortunate," according to a statement by Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as reported in the LA Times on May 17.

But this American attitude in the region is fairly new. Behind it stands a history so bloody and filled with imprudent foreign policy. Regardless of how the US decides to move on Syria, the chances are that a return to its old dominant approach is no longer an option.

Indeed, the current American political impotence in the Middle East is unprecedented, at least since the rapid disintegration of the Soviet bloc in the early 1990's. The dissolution of the Soviet Union had ushered in the rise of a unipolar world, wholly managed by the United States. The rise of the uncontested American hegemony represented a shift in historical dialectics, where great powers found their match and the rest of the world, more or less, accommodated the ensuing competition.

Then, the US acted quickly to assert its dominance starting with hasty military adventures such as the invasion of Panama in 1989. A much more calculated move followed with a devastating war against Iraq in 1990-91. In Panama the objective was to remind the US's southern neighbors that the region's cop was still on duty and was capable of intervening at a moment's notice to rearrange the entire political paradigm in any way that Washington deemed necessary - As this has been the case since the CIA-orchestrated coup and war in Guatemala in 1954 and even earlier.

The US's massive military involvement in Iraq, however, was that of a conqueror who arrived with an entourage of many countries - regional and western allies - to claim the spoils resulting from the end of the protracted Cold War. It was an arrogant show of force since the target was a single Arab country with humble military and economic means vs. major military powers from near and far. The war devastated Iraq, as its initial aerial bombing campaign alone involved the dropping of 88,500 tons of bombs. Many new weapons were used and tested, while the US media and public celebrated the prowess of their military.

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Hundreds of thousands of Iraqis died or were wounded as a result of one of the most asymmetrical wars in history.

Trying to capitalize on its military triumph, Washington quickly pushed for a political settlement between its closest ally, Israel, and Arab countries. The logic behind the Madrid Conference in 1991 was achieving pseudo peace that catered to Israel's interests, while opening up the gate of normalization between Israel and its neighbors. Moreover, the US hoped to achieve some sort of 'stability' that would allow it to manage the Middle East region and its ample resources in a less hostile environment. Eventually, Israel managed to negotiate its own political deal with the Palestinians, thus dividing Arab ranks and ensuring that the 'peace talks' outcome was entirely consistent with Israel's colonial ambitions.

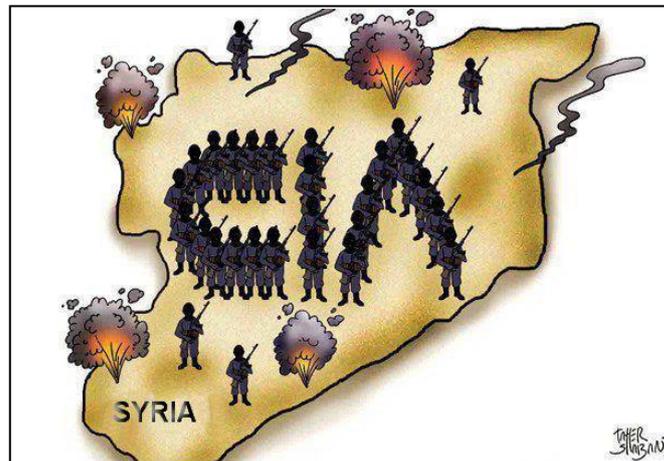
As years passed, the US and Israeli political visions moved even closer, but with Washington eventually becoming a mere conduit to Israeli colonial

objectives. This fact was underscored repeatedly under the George W. Bush administration, which compounded US failure in the region with even more disastrous and dangerous wars.

A major fault in US foreign policy is that it is almost entirely reliant on military power – as in the ability to blow things up. The US war on Iraq which, in various forms, extended from 1990 to 2011, included a devastating blockade and ended with a brutal invasion. This long war was as unscrupulous as it was very violent. Aside from its overwhelming human toll, it was placed within a horrid political strategy aimed at exploiting the country's existing sectarian and other fault lines, therefore triggering a civil war and sectarian hatred from which Iraq is unlikely to cover for many years.

But limitations of US military power became quite obvious in later years. The empire was no longer able to bridge the

divide between translating its dominance on the ground – itself increasingly challenged by local resistance groups – into a level of political progress required to achieve the minimum amount of 'stability'. Moreover, an economic recession, coupled with the Iraqi retreat and an equally costly debacle in Afghanistan – forced the new administration in Washington, under the leadership of President Barack Obama to rethink Bush's earlier quest for global hegemony. Massive military cuts were soon to follow. Concurrently, the imbalance of global power was slowly, quietly but surely being equalized with the rise of China as a new possible contender.



In the midst of the US transition and policy rethink, an upheaval struck the Middle East. Its manifestations – revolutions, civil wars, regional mayhem and conflicts of all sorts – reverberated beyond the Middle East. Shrinking and rising empires alike took notice. Fault lines were quickly determined and exploited. Players changed positions or jockeyed for advanced ones, as a new Great Game was about to begin. The so-called 'Arab Spring' was rapidly becoming a game-changer in a region that seemed resistant to transformations of any kind.

The transformation of the Middle East – promising at times, very gory and bloody at others – arrived at a time when the US was making forced adjustments in its military priorities. Putting greater focus on the Pacific region and the South China Sea are such examples. Without much notice, it was forced to reengage with the Middle East, as a whole – not a country at a time.

Only then, its weaknesses were seriously exposed and its lack of influence became palpable.

Bankrupt is maybe an appropriate term to use in describing the current US policy in the Middle East. Imprudent military adventures devastated the region but achieved no long term objectives. Reckless policies that are predicated on trying to exploit, as opposed to understand the Middle East and its complex political and historical formation and the insistence on keeping Israel a main priority in its approach to the vastly shifting political lines, will unlikely to bode well for US interests.

However, unlike the early 1990's, when the US moved to reshape the entire region and established permanent military presence, new dynamics are forcing US hands to change tactics. In this new reality, the US is incapable of reshaping reality but merely trying to offset or control its unfavorable outcomes.

"What the United States (and western Europe) want to do is 'control' the situation," Immanuel Wallerstein argued. "They will not be able to do it. Hence the screams of the 'interventionists' and the foot-dragging of the 'prudent.' It is a lose-lose for the west, while not being at the same time a 'win' for people in the Middle East."

This 'lose-lose' scenario might not necessarily translate to a complete American foreign policy meltdown in the near future, but will certainly open the possibility for new/old players to make serious gains, Russia being a lead example. This will likely compel the US to change tactics, despite the incessant objections of neoconservative forces and the Israeli lobby.

Ramzy Baroud is editor of PalestineChronicle.com. He is the author of *The Second Palestinian Intifada: A Chronicle of a People's Struggle* and "My Father Was a Freedom Fighter: Gaza's Untold Story" (Pluto Press, London).

"There is no flag large enough to cover the shame of killing innocent people."

-- Howard Zinn

**SECTARIANISM AND THE IRRATIONAL NEW DISCOURSE**

June 13, 2013

*Why Arabs Must Worry*by **Ramzy Baroud**

My friend Hanna is Syrian and also happens to be Christian. The latter fact was rarely of consequence, except whenever he wished to boast about the contributions of Arab Christians to Middle Eastern cultures. Of course, he is right. The modern Arab identity has been formulated through a fascinating mix of religions, sects and races. Christianity, as well as Islam, is deeply-rooted in many aspects of Arab life. Needless to say, the bond between Islam and Christianity is simply unbreakable.

"I am Christian, but, in terms of culture, I am equally a Muslim," he told me by way of introduction to a daunting realization. "But now, I am very worried."

Hanna's list of worries is long. Lead amongst them is the fact that Christian Arabs in some Arab societies are increasingly viewed as 'foreigners' or 'guests' in their own countries. At times, as was the case in Iraq, they are punished by one extremist group or another for embracing the same religion that US-western zealots claim to represent. Churches were blown up in brutal retribution for a savage war that President George W. Bush and many of his ilk maintained to be between good and evil, using the most brazen religious references as they savaged Iraq, sparing neither Muslims nor Christians.

During the early years of the war, many Arab intellectuals seemed wary of the sinister divide that the US was erecting between religions, sects and communities. Many in Arab media referenced past historical experiences when other imperial powers – namely Britain and France – resorted to the 'divide and conquer' stratagem. Those attempts in the first half of the 20th century resulted in much bloodshed and lasting scars in many communities. Lebanon is the obvious example with Iraq prevailing.

In response to the colonial attempts at busying the Arabs with internal conflicts, Arab nationalists had then wrangled with

a discourse that proved of immense value to modern Arab identity. To escape the pitfalls of religious and sectarian divides, and to unleash the untapped energies of Arab societies, there was an urgent need to articulate a new language expressing a unifying pan-Arab political discourse. In post-World War II, the rise of Arab nationalism was the force to be contended with, from Egypt, to Iraq and to Syria. It was a battle of wills involving imperialist powers, later joined by the United States. It was also local, tribal elites fighting for their own survival. The nationalists' discourse was meant to inspire, from Gamal Abdel Nasser's thundering speeches in Egypt, to Michel Aflaq's eloquent thoughts in Syria, Iraq and elsewhere. At least then, it seemed to matter little that Nasser was an Egyptian Sunni Muslim, and that Aflaq was a Greek Orthodox Christian.

Aflaq was profound, and his insistence on the vitality of the Muslim character to Arabs was a testament to a generation of nationalists that since then, has all but completely faded. He spoke of Arab unity, not as a distant dream, but a practical mechanism to snatch liberty from many sinister hands. "What liberty could be wider and greater than binding oneself to the renaissance of one's nation and its revolution?" he said during a speech. "It is a new and strict liberty which stands against pressure and confusion. Dictatorship is a precarious, unsuitable and self-contradictory system which does not allow the consciousness of the people to grow."

Many voices echoed that sentiment in Arab nations near and far. Poets recited the will of freedom fighters and artists rendered the language of philosophers. While Arab nationalist movements eventually fragmented, were weakened or defeated, an Arab identity survived. Long after Nasser died, and even Anwar Saddat signed the Camp David accords, thus breaking with Arab consensus, school children continued to sing "Arab homelands are my home, from the Levant to Baghdad, from Najd to Yemen and from Egypt to Morocco."

The war over Arab identity however never ceased, as it continued to manifest itself in actual and figurative ways. Israel and western powers, vying for

military dominance, regional influence and ultimately resources, did the best they could to shatter the few semblances that sustained a sense of unity among Arab nations that survived despite numerous and perhaps insurmountable odds.

The Lebanese civil war (1975-1990) left deep wounds that continue to fester. The Iraq war was particularly painful. While Lebanon civil strife involved well-demarcated sects, the alliances were in constant influx. But Iraq's civil war, encouraged and sustained with direct American involvement to weaken Iraqi resistance to US-British occupation, was well-defined and brutal. Muslim Shia and Sunni engaged in a bitter struggle as US troops wreaked havoc in Baghdad. Members of all sects paid a heavy price for the fighting, which also damaged the national identity of Iraq and made a mockery of its flag and national anthem. The sociopolitical impact of that war was so severe, it resuscitated a reactionary discourse that forced many communities to see themselves as members of one group or another, each fighting for its own being.

Soon after the Egyptian revolution, I walked the streets of Cairo, reminiscing, with much giddiness – about the past and the encouraging future. A 'new Egypt' was being born, one with ample room for all of its children. An Egypt where the poor are giving their fair share, and where Muslims and Christians and the rest would march forward, hand in hand, as equals, compelled by the vision of a new generation and the hopes and dreams of many more. It was not a romantic idea, but thoughts inspired by millions of Egyptians, by bearded Muslim men protecting churches in Cairo against government plots to stir religious tensions, by Christian youth guarding the Tahrir square as Muslim youth prayed, before they all resumed their fight for freedom.

Despite my insistence on optimism, I find the current political discourse hateful, polarizing and unprecedentedly defeatist. While Muslim political elites are sharply divided between Shia and Sunni, assigning layers of meaning to the fact that one is born this way or that, (continued on Page 16...)



CHURCH OF SCOTLAND AND HAWKING

Challenging Israel

Wednesday 22 May 2013

By **Ramzy Baroud**

The global Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement has scored two major victories in May starting with a groundbreaking report issued by the Church of Scotland. It was followed by an equally courageous decision by internationally renowned cosmologist and physicist Stephen Hawking to boycott an Israeli conference. These two important developments have riled Israel and galvanized its friends and allies, to no avail.



On May 3, the Church and Society Council, which advocates on behalf of the Church of Scotland at national and international levels, issued a 5,000-word report entitled: "The Inheritance of Abraham? A report on the 'promised land'."

The report challenged what was until recently considered conventional wisdom, according to which various mainstream churches around the world viewed Israel and justified its 'right to exist' based on biblical promises and theological manipulation by crafty politicians. Not any more.

"The 'promised land' in the Bible is not a place," the report stated, "so much as a metaphor of how things ought to be among the people of God. This 'promised land' can be found -- or built -- anywhere."

According to its wording, the report was clearly issued based on political urgency summoned by the continued injustice which Palestinians are subjected to by Israel. Few major institutions in mainstream

Christianity had ever spoken with such clarity as the council's report has.

"The desire of many in the state of Israel to acquire the land of Palestine for the Jewish people is wrong. The fact that the land is currently being taken by settlement expansion, the separation barrier, house clearance, theft and force makes it doubly wrong to seek biblical sanction for this."

While some mainstream churches remain silent, the Church of Scotland tackled the issue with unprecedented audacity as it sought "to respond to the question: 'What does the Lord require of you...?'"

Stephen Hawking is not a religious man, however the English theoretical physicist is a principled scholar with an honorable track record. In an event "of cosmic proportions", as described by one Palestinian academic, Hawking boycotted an Israeli academic conference slated for next June. It was also a decisive moral call which was communicated by Cambridge University on May 8, where Hawking is a professor.

Hawking's scientific work had the kind of impact that redefined or challenged entire areas of research from the theory of relativity, to quantum mechanics and other fields of study. This towering figure is also wheelchair-bound – suffering from complete physical paralysis caused by amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) disease. For Hawking, however, such a painful fact seems like a mere side note in the face of his incredible contributions to science, ones that are comparable to only few men and women throughout history.

What is considered a prestigious scientific conference in Israel is hosted by President Shimon Peres, most remembered by Lebanese and Palestinians for ordering the shelling of a United Nations compound near the village of Qana in South Lebanon in 1996. The compound was a safe heaven, where civilians often sought shelter during Israeli strikes. 106 innocent people that were mostly children and women were killed and 116 wounded, including UN forces. That harrowing event alone would have sent Peres, then Israel's prime minister, to serve his remaining years in jail.

Hawking's response to the boycott call was immensely important. His legendary status aside, the BDS movement has proved more durable and successful than its detractors – mostly Israel's apologists – want to believe.

(continued from Page 15...)

this wrangling has been weaved into a power play that has destroyed Syria, awakened past animosities in Lebanon and revitalized existing conflict in Iraq, further devastating the very Arab identity.

Iraq's historical dilemma, exploited by the US for immediate gains, has now become a pan-Arab dilemma. Arab and Middle Eastern media is fomenting that conflict using terminology loaded with sectarianism and obsessed with erecting the kind of divides that will bring nothing but mistrust, misery and war.

Resurrecting Nasser's and Aflaq's Arab nationalism might no longer be possible, but there is a compelling need for an alternative discourse to the type of intellectual extremism that justifies with disturbing lucidity the butchering of the inhabitants of an entire village in Syria because of their sect or religion. My friend Hanna has every reason to worry, as all Arabs should.

Hawking's decision was also a testament that reason and morality should and must go hand in hand. Israel's boasting of its scientific accomplishments should mean zilch if such technology is put to work to advance state violence, tighten military occupation and make killer drones available to other countries, thus exporting violence and mayhem. That very 'science' was used in abundance in Israel's latest two wars on Gaza (2008-09 and 2012) which claimed thousands of lives between the dead and wounded.

Cambridge University, perhaps wary of a possible backlash, tried to mask Hawking's decision as one that is compelled by health reasons, which, of course, was not the case at all. The university eventually retracted the statement, for the British scientist wished to make his decision crystal clear: Initially "I accepted the invitation to the Presidential Conference with the intention that this would not only allow me to express my opinion on the prospects for a peace settlement but also because it would allow me to lecture on the West Bank."

"However, I have received a number of emails from Palestinian academics.

(continued on Page 17...)



(continued from Page 16...)

They are unanimous that I should respect the boycott. In view of this, I must withdraw from the conference. Had I attended, I would have stated my opinion that the policy of the present Israeli government is likely to lead to disaster."

Unlike other acts of boycott, sometimes dismissed by Israeli officials as insignificant, this one was manifestly shocking for Israel. Yigal Palmor, spokesman for Israel's Foreign Ministry was quoted by the New York Times saying "never has a scientist of this stature boycotted Israel."

And since it was unexpected, Hawking's respect of the boycott generated disorganized Israeli and pro-Israeli responses, ranging from demeaning jokes and insults pertaining to his illness, unwarranted accusations and even shaming him for using technology supposedly developed in Israel to combat his deteriorating ALS condition. "Indeed," wrote Rabbi Abraham Cooper of Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles in Fox News website, "some of the technologies that have served as Hawking's lifeline to the world were developed by INTEL, a company with deep roots in Israel."

Never before has Israel lost control over its carefully tailored narrative of its military occupation and violations of human rights in Palestine as is the case these days.

Although the dialectics that lead to both decisions by Hawking and the Church of Scotland are based on two different sets of moral references, two facts are clearly highlighted: first, the BDS movement is progressively joined by powerful and influential friends, faster than initially expected, and second, Israel is increasingly on the defensive as the official version of its occupation of Palestine is falling apart before probing and impatient civil society the world over.

As for those who still spare time and efforts, and further jeopardize their own credibility to defend Israel in the face of growing international condemnation, it behooves them to advocate a just peace in Palestine and Israel than to defend Israel's war crimes and military occupation.

A CRY FROM PALESTINE

I, Samer al-Issawi, Son of Jerusalem, Send You My Last Will: Carry My Soul as a Cry for All the Prisoners

by **Samer al-Issawi**

*Message from Samer al-Issawi, day 209 of his hunger strike, via **Rona Merrill and Neta Golan***

I turn with admiration to the masses of our heroic Palestinian people, to our Palestinian leadership, to all forces, parties, and national institutions. I salute them for standing by our fight to defend our right to freedom and dignity.

I draw my strength from my people, from all the free people in the world, from friends and the families of the prisoners who continue day and night chanting for freedom and an end to the occupation.

My health has deteriorated dramatically and I'm hung between life and death. My weak body is collapsing but still able to be patient and continue the confrontation. My message is that I will continue until the end, until the last drop of water in my body, until martyrdom. Martyrdom is an honor for me in this battle. My martyrdom is my remaining bomb in the confrontation with the tyrants and the jailers, in the face of the racist policy of the occupation that humiliates our people and exercises against us all means of oppression and repression.

I say to my people: I'm stronger than the occupation army and its racist laws. I, Samer al-Issawi, son of Jerusalem, send you my last will that, in case I fell as a martyr, you will carry my soul as a cry for all the prisoners, man and women, cry for freedom, emancipation and salvation from the nightmare of prisons and their harsh darkness.

My battle is not only for individual freedom. The battle waged by me and by my heroic colleagues, Tariq, Ayman, and Ja'afar, is everyone's battle, the battle of the Palestinian people against the occupation and its prisons. Our goal is to be free and sovereign in our liberated state and in our blessed Jerusalem.

The weak and strained beats of my heart derive their steadfastness from you, the great people. My eyes, which

started to lose their sight, draw light from your solidarity and your support of me. My weak voice takes its strength from your voice that is louder than the warden's voice and higher than the walls.

I'm one of your sons, among thousands of your sons who are prisoners, still languishing in the prisons, steadfast, waiting for an end to be brought to their plight, their pains, and the suffering of their families.

The doctors told me I became exposed to stroke because of the disorder of my heartbeats, the shortage of sugar, and the drop in blood pressure. My body is full of cold and I can't sleep because of the continued pain. But despite the extreme fatigue and chronic headaches, as I move on my chair, I'm trying to summon all my resources to continue on the road till its end. There is no going back, only in my victory, because I'm the owner of Right and my detention is invalid and illegal.

Do not be afraid for my heart if it will stop, don't be afraid for my hands if they will be paralyzed. I am still alive now and tomorrow and after death, because Jerusalem is moving in my blood, in my devotion and my faith.

Palestine
16/02/2013

Samer Issawi, born on 16 December 1979, is a member of the [Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine](#). About the circumstances of his unjust arrest and detention, see Maath Musleh, "[Jerusalemite Faces Decades in Prison After Visiting Nearby Village](#)" (*Electronic Intifada*, 20 August 2012). For more information about Samer Issawi and other Palestinian political prisoners, follow [@samerissawi1](#) and [@Addameer ps](#). Cf. "The ICRC [International Committee of the Red Cross] is concerned about the health of Palestinian detainees currently on long-term hunger strike. The organization urges the Israeli authorities to find a prompt solution in order to save the lives of Samer Issawi, Tareq Qadan, Jaffar Ezzedin and Ayman Sharawneh. The ICRC has also reminded the detaining authorities of their obligation to allow the detainees' families to visit them" ("Israel and the Occupied Territories: Condition of Palestinian Hunger Strikers Deteriorates," 1 February 2013, youtu.be/XqRzM6jgEQU).



THE ISRAELI LAB AND THE PALESTINIAN GUINEA PIGS

by Gilad Atzmon / June 15th, 2013

The Lab is a new groundbreaking Israeli documentary film that redefines our entire understanding of the Jewish State, its aims, its identity and its global destructive role. I honestly believe that this film is the deepest and most important commentary on Israel.

In *The Lab*, Director Yotam Feldman exposes the Israeli military industry and its operation, he interviews some major protagonists within Israel's 'security' trade. He elaborates on the role of the industry within the Israeli society and economy; in the last few years Israeli security exports reached an unprecedented level of \$7 billion a year. A full 20% of Israeli exports are military or military related. Approximately 150,000 families in Israel are dependent on that industry. Israel is now the fourth biggest military exporter.

In the last decade, every Israeli military operation led to an immediate sharp increase in sales of Israeli military export around the world: weaponry, systems, intelligence, strategies, doctrines, knowledge, and experience.

Feldman provides us with a glimpse into a very organized universe. We visit Israeli weapon fairs around the world but we also see arenas filled to capacity with foreign generals, public officials and diplomats. They are all shopping for Israeli military products. The message is clear, the 7 billion dollars is just part of the story. Israeli military elite is now deeply interwoven with the political and military elite of every country around the globe. This emerging Israeli business buys the Jewish state influence and support.¹

The Lab makes it evidently clear that the Palestinian civilian population in the West Bank and Gaza have become test subjects for Israeli tactics, weaponry and fighting philosophy ('Fighting Torah', *Torat Lechima* — as the Israelis call it). The destruction of the Palestinians has now been transformed into a very profitable industry. We are dealing here with nothing short of highly calculated murder.

Through a set of fascinating interviews, Feldman conveys a very

genuine picture of the Israeli death merchants. Feldman lets them talk, he hardly interferes. They are sharp, they are genuine, they are even funny at times, occasionally witty, and a few of them, might even be charming if you did not know who they are. But make no mistake, they are sinister, some of them are clearly psychotic, they are mass murderers and they are free. They sell destruction and havoc and do it very successfully.²

Being myself an Israeli-born and raised successful musician and writer, I think I can recognize Israeli dedication, perseverance and creativity when I see it, no matter into what service it is pressed. (Perhaps I was lucky to be rescued by bebop.) Those Israeli death angels' talent is driven into the amplification of human misery. The consequences are tragic.

Game Changer

It is far from being a secret that a century of Palestinian struggle led to practically nothing. The state of the Palestinian solidarity movement is even more embarrassing. *The Lab* is a game changer, for it can explain decades of impotence.

We are immersed in flawed terminology — 'colonialism', 'apartheid', 'conflict', 'solution', 'Zionism' are just few examples. Gaza is now a vast Laboratory — the Israelis are the 'scientists' and the 'technicians', the Palestinians are the 'guinea pigs'. Watching *The Lab* must lead all of us to fundamentally question our notions. We are dealing with a premeditated war crime. The notion of resolution (as in 'two-state solution'), for instance, is not applicable. It is clear beyond doubt that in the real world the 'scientist' does not negotiate with the 'guinea pig'. The 'scientist' also doesn't consider sharing reality with his 'guinea pig' in a 'one democratic state.' "The Lab" is a glimpse into the Israeli mind: you clearly do not find much compassion there.

For decades we were foolish to examine the success and failure of Israeli military operations in reference to Israeli military and political 'objectives,' as we surmised them. We were clearly wrong.

As we learn from Feldman's film, the real objective of Israeli operations may as well be examining new doctrines and operational systems in order to distribute them around the world soon after. Ehud Barak, for instance, wasn't exactly the most sophisticated Israeli minister of defense, he clearly failed to defend his people or even make them feel secure. However, he was very successful in selling Israeli weapons and doctrines.

Tel Aviv being subject to a barrage of Qassam rockets may be seen by Israelis as devastating news, but from a military industrial point of view, it was a golden opportunity to examine and promote the Israeli anti-missile system Iron Dome. If I am correct here, it becomes clear that like the Palestinians, more and more Israelis are also becoming 'guinea pigs' in this ever growing military laboratory.

One may wonder how and when "the Zionist dream" transformed itself into a military business. Only a few of us, writers and scholars, have attempted to answer this question. The transformation of the Jewish State into an oppression factory is apparently a direct outcome of Israel's supremacist ideology. If we want to understand what is happening in the Jewish State, we must first grasp the notions of chosenness, Jewishness and Jewish identity politics.

I guess that enough Palestinians in Gaza do realise by now that they have been part of an Israeli experiment. Every too often we learn from Palestinian doctors that while treating casualties of Israeli aggression they encounter new types of wounds. The Lab explains it but it isn't Palestine alone. We also witness a growing similarity between the operational mode of police forces around the world and the IDF treatment of the Palestinians.

Watching Yotam Feldman's *The Lab* explains it all. We are all Palestinians. We are either occupied by Israel or by its proxy forces around the world — those who are trained in Israel and implement Israeli weaponry and tactics.

Gilad Atzmon, now living in London, was born in Israel and served in the Israeli military. He is the author of [The Wandering Who](#). He can be reached at: atz@onetel.net.uk.

**ARE WE ALL REALLY BRADLEY MANNING?**

June 12, 2013

*Bradley Manning and Adolf Eichmann*by **Elliot Sperber**

The year 2013 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of Hannah Arendt's controversial critique of the trial of the Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann, and her work remains unambiguously pertinent. Indeed, not only do the ghosts of the past continue to haunt Eichmann in Jerusalem; another ghost – a ghost from the future – is also detectable among her words. As one reads her text, Eichmann's polar opposite, Bradley Manning, arises from Arendt's pages like a photographic negative. Presently on trial for charges that include "communicating national defense information to an unauthorized source," and "aiding the enemy," Manning succeeded in accomplishing what Eichmann was tried and executed for failing to do; Manning refused to participate in the commission of crimes against humanity.

The reader must refrain from inferring that an equivalence is being drawn between the atrocities committed by the Nazi regime and those committed by the US. However shocking the genocide perpetrated by the Nazis may be, one must recognize that those crimes are not at all inconsistent with the genocidal aims that that regime repeatedly and explicitly espoused. To be sure, the US – which is also guilty of launching a war of aggression – never professed any genocidal intentions; However much it fell short, and however disingenuous it may have been, the rhetoric invoked by the US was that of the enlightenment ideal of human freedom. In this light, it should not be too contentious to maintain that the US ought to be held to a standard higher than that reserved for Nazis. No war crimes are acceptable, and the systematic denial of procedural justice, as well as outright torture, and crimes against humanity perpetrated by the US in Iraq, Afghanistan, Guantanamo, Yemen, Pakistan, and other places over the past decade are beyond reasonable dispute.

Acts such as those recorded in the video *Collateral Murder* (titled and

released to the public via Wikileaks), for example, which depict US soldiers killing innocent civilians in clear violation of International Law, not to mention such war crimes as the unabating drone attacks on civilian targets, are among those that Manning intended to stop. That Manning is facing life in prison for his actions – as perverse as the fact that had Manning meticulously followed the rules, like Eichmann had, Manning would have been more likely to be awarded a medal than a court martial. It is this injustice – the injustice that arises from the collective adherence to unjust laws, acceding to the inertia of injustice – that Arendt referred to as the banality of evil.

Arguably Arendt's most familiar argument – and that which provides the subtitle for her piece on Eichmann – the banality of evil arose from her observation that Eichmann, rather than being some demonic, terrifying creature, one so instrumental in perpetrating monumental acts of horror, was just, as she put it, a "nobody." Describing Eichmann as a habitual "follower," in distinguishing his character from that of the stereotypical evildoer, Arendt wrote that Eichmann "not only obeyed orders, he also obeyed the law." This was, in fact, Eichmann's main defense – the same discredited defense invoked by the Nazi war criminals in 1945 at Nuremberg. Among Arendt's observations regarding Eichmann's "banal evil" was that, rather than scheming and plotting and intending to commit evil, Eichmann didn't really think at all. "His inability to speak" she writes, "was closely connected with an inability to think."

The proverbial cog in the machine, a tool more than a human being, Eichmann did not resist the inertial flow of the Nazi war effort. To the extent that this applies to Eichmann, though, the opposite may be said of Manning. In spite of the claims of the prosecution, Manning consistently demonstrated an ability to act according to clearly articulated reasons. Rather than thoughtlessly obeying unjust laws, as Eichmann did, as Manning put it in his testimony before a military court earlier this year, "I believed that if the general public, especially the American public, had access to the information ... this could spark a domestic debate on the role of the military and our foreign policy in

general." Manning may have violated unjust laws. However, as Martin Luther King Jr., citing Augustine of Hippo, put it in his Letter from Birmingham Jail, "an unjust law is no law at all." To be sure, should a conflict arise between justice and law, justice ought to prevail.

This is not simply rhetoric. The Law itself recognizes that to the degree that it furthers injustice, a law is invalid. The precedents established by the Nuremberg Trials – now firmly entrenched in such pillars of International Law as Article 85 and Article 17 of the Geneva Convention, not to mention the US Army's very own Field Manual – include the very principle that merely following orders does not exculpate someone from responsibility for war crimes. As Nuremberg Principle VII states, "Complicity in the commission of a crime against peace, a war crime, or a crime against humanity as set forth in Principle VI [which includes the murder of civilians, something which Manning repeatedly witnessed and attempted to obstruct] is a crime under international law." That is, in addition to his conscientious resistance, Manning had a positive legal duty to resist collaborating with war crimes. That the enemy was not at all aided by Manning's disclosure (unlike Bob Woodward's repeated and uncensored disclosures of sensitive national security information) and that no harm came to anyone because of Manning's acts is, though completely relevant, dismissed from consideration by the prosecution.

Of course, like history, "justice" is often determined by those in power. If Nazi-Germany had prevailed over the Allies in the second world war, for example, Adolf Eichmann would have most likely lived out the rest of his life in relative peace and obscurity. Likewise, had Bradley Manning followed the rules, as Eichmann meticulously followed those of the Third Reich, he would probably not be facing life in prison. In other words, had he not resisted, Manning would be guilty in fact – and in his heart, if not in a court of law –

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of some of the very crimes that Eichmann was found guilty of committing – and this is just how the US would have wanted it.

It is no hyperbole to remark that the precedent established in Nuremberg in 1945 is one of the most important and enduring lessons of the Holocaust. And though this lesson seems to have been lost on Barack Obama, and on many others, this lesson was not lost on Bradley Manning. Learning of the regular perpetration of war crimes, and finding himself in a position that demanded that he either do his job, like Eichmann, and become an accessory to these crimes, or resist, Manning made the decision to break this causal chain of injustice, to resist unjust laws and practices, and to act in accordance with justice.

While some of his supporters proclaim their solidarity with Manning by announcing that “we are all Bradley Manning,” insofar as his supporters are not in prison – and may be unwilling to go to prison for their beliefs – it is not entirely clear what such a proclamation entails. What is patently clear, however, is that, to the degree that we accede and conform to the dominating power of capital and the state (as opposed to the liberating power of resistance), we are all, every one of us, Adolf Eichmann.

Elliot Sperber is a writer, attorney, and contributor to hygiecracy.blogspot.com He lives in New York City and can be reached at elliotsperber@gmail.com.

“It would be my greatest sadness to see Zionists (Jews) do to Palestinian Arabs much of what Nazis did to Jews.”
— [Albert Einstein](#)

FACTS ARE FACTS

by Abby Zimet



Pro-Israel groups have reacted with outrage - and their own plans for an ad campaign - in response to billboards in New York train stations showing the implacable loss of Palestinian land, and creation of millions of refugees, over the last 64 years. But Henry Clifford, 83,

says he's puzzled by the charge the ads are "inflammatory."

"They're accusing me of wrongdoing - of trying to inflame something when the fact is their response is more inflammatory than my ads. I don't see

how maps that present historical and geographical facts can be called inflammatory or anti-Semitic...They are the facts, and if you notice we don't editorialize. We present the facts, and we let people decide for themselves what the conclusion is."



IRAN: A DEATHBLOW TO U.S. GLOBAL HEGEMONY

By Finian Cunningham

April 12, 2013 "[Information Clearing House](#)" - "PTV"

The United States of America has become a byword for war. No other nation state has started as many wars or conflicts in modern times than the USA - the United States of Armageddon.

Beneath the Western media façade of “unpredictable” and “aggressive” North Korea, the real source of conflict in the present round of war tensions on the Korean Peninsula is the US. Washington is presented as a restraining, defensive force. But, in reality, the dangerous nuclear stand-off has to be seen in the context of Washington’s historical drive for war and hegemony in every corner of the world.

North Korea may present an immediate challenge to Washington’s hegemonic ambitions. However, as we shall see, Iran presents a much greater and potentially fatal challenge to the American global empire.

It is documented record, thanks to writers and thinkers like William Blum and Noam Chomsky, that the US has been involved in more than 60 wars and many more proxy conflicts, subterfuges and coups over the nearly seven decades since the Second World War. No other nation on earth comes close to this American track record of belligerence and threat to world security. No other nation has so much blood on its hands.

Americans like to think of their country as first in the world for freedom, humanitarian principles, technology and economic prowess. The truth is more brutal and prosaic. The US is first in the world for war-mongering and raining death and destruction down on others.

If the US is not perpetrating war directly, as in the genocide of Vietnam, then it is waging violence through surrogates, such as past South American dictatorships and death squads or its Middle Eastern proxy military machine, Israel.

That bellicose tendency seems to have accelerated since the demise of the Soviet Union more than two decades ago. No sooner had the Soviet Union

imploded than the US led the First Persian Gulf War on Iraq in 1991. That was then swiftly followed by a bloody intervention in Somalia under the deceptively charming title Operation Restore Hope.

Since then we have seen the US become embroiled in more and more wars - sometimes under the guise of “coalitions of the willing”, the United Nations or NATO. A variety of pretexts have also been invoked: war on drugs, war on terror, Axis of Evil, responsibility to protect, the world’s policeman, upholding global peace and security, preventing weapons of mass destruction. But always, these wars are Washington-led affairs. And always the pretexts are mere pretty window-dressing for Washington’s brutish strategic interests.

Now it seems we have reached a phase of history where the world is witnessing a state of permanent war prosecuted by the US and its underlings: Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq (again), Libya, Pakistan, Somalia (again), Mali and Syria, to mention a few. These theaters of criminal US military operations join a list of ongoing covert wars against Palestine, Cuba, Iran and North Korea.

Fortunately, a twist of fate brought about by the Bolivarian Revolution of the late Venezuelan leader Hugo Chavez has ensured that much of South America - the primary US so-called sphere of influence - remains off-limits to Washington’s depredations, at least for now.

The question is: why has the US such an inordinate propensity for war? The answer is: power. The global capitalist economy mandates a fatal power struggle for the control of natural resources. To maintain its unique historic position of commanding capitalist profits and privilege, the US corporate elite - the executive of the world capitalist system - must have hegemony over the world’s natural resources.

The cold logic of this propensity was articulated clearly by US state planner George F Kennan in 1948: “We should cease to talk about vague and unreal objectives such as human rights, the raising of the living standards, and democratization. The day is not far off

when we are going to have to deal in straight power concepts. The less we are then hampered by idealistic slogans, the better.”

In other words, Kennan was candidly admitting what US political leaders often dissimulate with fake rhetoric; that the US ruling elite has no interest in defending democracy, human rights or international law. The purpose is control of economic power, in accord with capitalist laws of motion.

Kennan, who was one of the main architects of US foreign policy in the post-Second World War era, also noted with candidness and prescience:

“Were the Soviet Union to sink tomorrow under the waters of the ocean, the American military-industrial establishment would have to go on, substantially unchanged, until some other adversary could be invented. Anything else would be an unacceptable shock to the American economy.”

Thus we see how after the “evil empire” of the Soviet Union collapsed the US has been flailing to contrive a replacement “enemy” and pretext for its essential militarism. The 9/11 terrorist attacks and the subsequent “war on terror” has fulfilled this purpose to a degree, even though it is replete with contradictions that belie its fraudulence, such as the support given to Al Qaeda terrorist elements currently to overthrow the government of Syria.

The present threat of nuclear war on the Korean Peninsula is not really about North Korea or the US-backed South Korean state. As in 1945, Korea was the site of the US flexing its military muscle towards its perceived main global rivals - Russia and China. As the Second World War drew to a close, the advances made by Communist Russia and China in the Pacific against imperialist Japan were a cause for deep concern in Washington with its eyes on the post-war global carve-up.

That is why the US took the unprecedented step of dropping atomic bombs on Japan. It was the most far-reaching demonstration of raw power by the US to its rivals. Russian and Chinese advances on the Korean Peninsula against the Japanese, which

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were welcomed by the Korean population, were halted dead in their tracks by the twin nuclear holocausts in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.



The partition of Korea in 1945 at the behest of Washington was also part of the post-war demarcation for global influence and staking out control of resources. The American-instigated Korean War (1950-53) and the subsequent decades of tensions between the North and South states afforded Washington a permanent military presence in the Pacific.

Rhetoric about "defending our allies" reiterated again this week by US defense secretary Chuck Hagel is but a cynical chimera for the real purpose and rationale for Washington's presence in Korea - strategic control of Russia and China for hegemony over natural resources, markets, transport, logistics, and ultimately capitalist profit.

Tragically, North and South Korea are still caught in the cross-hairs of Washington's geopolitical war with Russia and China. That is what makes the present tensions on the Peninsula so dangerous. The US could gamble that a devastating strike on North Korea is the best way at this historical juncture for it to send another brutal message to its global rivals. Unfortunately, North Korea's nuclear capability and truculent attitude - amplified by the Western mainstream media - could serve as a superficial political cover for Washington to again take the military option.

Iran, however, presents a greater and more problematic challenge to US global hegemony. The US in 2013 is a very different animal from what it was in 1945. Now it resembles

more a lumbering giant. Gone is its former economic prowess and its arteries are sclerotic with its internal social decay and malaise. Crucially, too, the lumbering American giant has squandered any moral strength it may have had in the eyes of the world. Its veil of morality and democratic principle may have appeared credible in 1945, but that cover has been torn asunder by the countless wars and nefarious intrigues over the ensuing decades to reveal a pathological warmonger.

The American military power is still, of course, a highly dangerous force. But it is now more like a bulging muscle hanging on an otherwise emaciated corpse. Iran presents this lumbering, dying power with a fatal challenge. For a start, Iran does not have nuclear weapons or ambitions and it has repeatedly stated this, thereby gaining much-reciprocated good will from the international community, including the public of North America and Europe. The US or its surrogates cannot therefore credibly justify a military strike on Iran, as it might do against North Korea, without risking a tsunami of political backlash.

Secondly, Iran exerts a controlling influence over the vital drug that keeps the American economic system alive - the world's supply of oil and gas. Any war with Iran, if the US were so foolish to embark on it, would result in a deathblow to the waning American and global economy.

A third reason why Iran presents a mortal challenge to US global hegemony is that the Islamic Republic is a formidable military power. Its 80 million-strong people are committed to anti-imperialism and any strike from the US or its allies would result in a region-wide war that would pull down the very pillars of Western geopolitical architecture, including the collapse of the Israeli state and the overthrow of the House of Saud and the other the Persian Gulf oil dictatorships.

US planners know this and that is why they will not dare to confront Iran head-on. But that leaves the US empire with a fatal dilemma. Its congenital belligerence arising from in its capitalist DNA, puts the US ruling elite on a locked-in stalemate with Iran. The longer that stalemate persists, the more the US global power will drain from its corpse. The American empire, as many others have before, could therefore founder on the rocks of the ancient Persian empire.

However, the story will not end there. The attainment of world peace, justice and sustainability does not only necessitate the collapse of American hegemony. We need to overthrow the underlying capitalist economic system that gives rise to such destructive hegemonic powers. Iran represents a deathblow to the American empire, but the people of the world will need to build on the ruins.

Finian Cunningham (born 1963) has written extensively on international affairs, with articles published in several languages. He is a Master's graduate in Agricultural

Chemistry and worked as a scientific editor for the Royal Society of Chemistry, Cambridge, England, before pursuing a career in journalism. The author and media commentator was expelled from Bahrain in June 2011 for his critical journalism in which he highlighted human rights violations by the Western-backed regime.





“TERRORISM” AND THE PERPETUAL EMOTION WAR MACHINE

Published on Wednesday, April 24, 2013 by [Common Dreams](#)

by **Norman Solomon**

As a perpetual emotion machine -- producing and guzzling its own political fuel -- the “war on terror” continues to normalize itself as a thoroughly American way of life and death. Ongoing warfare has become a matter of default routine, pushed along by mainline media and the leadership of both parties in Washington. Without a clear and effective upsurge of opposition from the grassroots, Americans can expect to remain citizens of a war-driven country for the rest of their lives.

Across the United States, many thousands of peeling bumper stickers on the road say: “End this Endless War.” They got mass distribution from MoveOn.org back in 2007, when a Republican was in the White House. Now, a thorough search of the MoveOn website might leave the impression that endless war ended with the end of the George W. Bush presidency.



MoveOn is very big as online groups go, but it is symptomatic of a widespread problem among an array of left-leaning organizations that have made their peace with the warfare state. Such silence assists the Obama administration as it makes the “war on terror” even more resolutely bipartisan and further embedded in the nation’s political structures -- while doing immense damage to our economy, siphoning off resources that should go to meet human needs, further militarizing society and undermining civil liberties.

Now, on Capitol Hill, the most overt attempt to call a halt to the “war on terror” is coming from Rep. Barbara Lee, whose bill H.R. 198 would revoke the

Authorization for Use of Military Force that Congress approved three days after 9/11. Several months since it was introduced, H.R. 198 only has a dozen co-sponsors.

Evidently, in Congress, there is sparse support for repealing the September 2001 blanket authorization for war. Instead, there are growing calls for a larger blanket. Bipartisan Washington is warming to the idea that a new congressional resolution may be needed to give War on Terror 2.0 an expansive framework. Even for the law benders and breakers who manage the executive branch’s war machinery, the language of the September 2001 resolution doesn’t seem stretchable enough to cover the U.S. warfare of impunity that’s underway across the globe . . . with more on the drawing boards.

On Tuesday afternoon, when a Senate Judiciary subcommittee held a hearing on “targeted killing,” the proceedings underscored the great extent of bipartisan overlap for common killing ground. Republican super-hawk Sen. Lindsey Graham lauded President Obama for “targeting people in a very commander-in-chief-like way.” And what passed for senatorial criticism took as a given the need for continuing drone strikes. In the words of the subcommittee’s chairman, Sen. Dick Durbin, “More transparency is needed to maintain the support of the American people and the international community” for those attacks.

This is classic tinkering with war machinery. During the first several years of the Vietnam War, very few senators went beyond mild kibitzing about how the war could be better waged. In recent years, during President Obama’s escalation of the war in Afghanistan that tripled the U.S. troop levels in that country, senators like John Kerry (now secretary of state) kept offering their helpful hints for how to fine tune the war effort.

The “war on terror” is now engaged in various forms of military intervention in an estimated two-dozen countries, killing and maiming uncounted civilians while creating new enemies. It infuses foreign policy with unhinged messages hidden in plain sight, like a purloined letter proclaiming “*What goes around*

won’t come around” and telling the world “*Do as we say, not as we do.*”

Political ripple effects from the Boston Marathon bombings have only begun. While public opinion hasn’t gotten carried away with fear, much of the news media -- television in particular -- is stoking the fires of fear but scarcely raising a single question that might challenge the basic assumptions of a forever “war on terror.”

After a city has been traumatized and a country has empathized, a constructive takeaway would be that it’s terribly wrong to set off bombs that kill and maim. But that outlook is a nonstarter the moment it might be applied to victims of U.S. drones and cruise missiles in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen and elsewhere. The message seems to be that Americans should never be bombed but must keep bombing.

The death of Richie Havens days ago is a loss and reminder. Each of us has only so many days ahead. We may as well live them with deeper meaning, for peace and social justice. To hear Havens performing the song “Lives in the Balance” written by another great musician, Jackson Browne, is to be awakened anew:

*I want to know who the men in the shadows are
I want to hear somebody asking them why
They can be counted on to tell us who our enemies are
But they’re never the ones to fight or to die*

*And there are lives in the balance
There are people under fire
There are children at the cannons
And there is blood on the wire*

Norman Solomon is co-founder of [RootsAction.org](#) and founding director of the Institute for Public Accuracy. His books include “*War Made Easy: How Presidents and Pundits Keep Spinning Us to Death*” and “*Made Love, Got War: Close Encounters with America’s Warfare State*”.

“A brick represents all the evil in the world. We should start a War on Bricks. And why not? It’s more tangible, yet just as nonsensical, as the War on Terror. ” — [Jarod Kintz, A brick and a blanket walk into a bar](#)

**"WAR ON TERROR" IS PERMANENT**

Published on Friday, May 17, 2013 by [The Guardian](#)

Senior Obama officials tell the US Senate: the 'war', in limitless form, will continue for 'at least' another decade - or two

by **Glenn Greenwald**

Last October, senior Obama officials anonymously unveiled to the Washington Post their newly minted "disposition matrix", a complex computer system that will be used to determine how a terrorist suspect will be "disposed of": indefinite detention, prosecution in a real court, assassination-by-CIA-drones, etc. Their rationale for why this was needed now, a full 12 years after the 9/11 attack:

Among senior Obama administration officials, there is a broad consensus that such operations are likely *to be extended at least another decade*. Given the way al-Qaida continues to metastasize, some officials said *no clear end is in sight*. . . . That timeline suggests that the United States *has reached only the midpoint of what was once known as the global war on terrorism*."

On Thursday, the Senate Armed Services Committee held a hearing on whether the statutory basis for this "war" - the 2001 Authorization to Use Military Force (AUMF) - should be revised (meaning: expanded). This is how *Wired's* Spencer Ackerman (soon to be the Guardian US's national security editor) described the most significant exchange:

"Asked at a Senate hearing today how long the war on terrorism will last, Michael Sheehan, the assistant secretary of defense for special operations and low-intensity conflict, answered, '*At least 10 to 20 years*.' . . . A spokeswoman, Army Col. Anne Edgecomb, clarified that Sheehan meant the conflict is likely to last 10 to 20 more years from today - atop the 12 years that the conflict has already lasted. Welcome to America's Thirty Years War."

That the Obama administration is now repeatedly declaring that the "war on terror" will last *at least* another decade (or two) is vastly more significant than all three of this week's big media

controversies (Benghazi, IRS, and AP/DOJ) *combined*. The military historian Andrew Bacevich has spent years warning that US policy planners have adopted an explicit doctrine of "endless war". Obama officials, despite repeatedly boasting that they have delivered permanently crippling blows to al-Qaida, are now, as clearly as the English language permits, openly declaring this to be so.

It is hard to resist the conclusion that this war has no purpose other than its own eternal perpetuation. This war is not a means to any end but rather is the end in itself. Not only is it the end itself, but it is also its own fuel: it is precisely this endless war - justified in the name of stopping the threat of terrorism - that is the single greatest cause of that threat.

In January, former Pentagon general counsel Jeh Johnson delivered a highly-touted speech suggesting that the war on terror will eventually end; he advocated that outcome, arguing:

'War' must be regarded as a finite, extraordinary and unnatural state of affairs. We must not accept the current conflict, and all that it entails, as the 'new normal.'"

In response, I wrote that the "war on terror" cannot and will not end on its own for two reasons: (1) it is *designed by its very terms* to be permanent, incapable of ending, since the war itself ironically ensures that there will never come a time when people stop wanting to bring violence back to the US (the operational definition of "terrorism"), and (2) the nation's most powerful political and economic factions reap a bonanza of benefits from its continuation. Whatever else is true, it is now beyond doubt that ending this war is the last thing on the mind of the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize winner and those who work at the highest levels of his administration. Is there any way they can make that clearer beyond declaring that it will continue for "at least" another 10-20 years?

The genius of America's endless war machine is that, learning from the unpleasantness of the Vietnam war protests, it has rendered the costs of war largely invisible. That is accomplished by heaping all of the

fighting burden on a tiny and mostly economically marginalized faction of the population, by using sterile, mechanized instruments to deliver the violence, and by suppressing any real discussion in establishment media circles of America's innocent victims and the worldwide anti-American rage that generates.

Though rarely visible, the costs are nonetheless gargantuan. Just in financial terms, as Americans are told they must sacrifice Social Security and Medicare benefits and place their children in a crumbling educational system, the Pentagon remains the world's largest employer and continues to militarily outspend the rest of the world by a significant margin. The mythology of the Reagan presidency is that he induced the collapse of the Soviet Union by luring it into unsustainable military spending and wars: should there come a point when we think about applying that lesson to ourselves?

Then there are the threats to Americans' security. Having their government spend decades proudly touting itself as "A Nation at War" and bringing horrific violence to the world is certain to prompt more and more people to want to attack Americans, as the US government itself claims took place just recently in Boston (and as clearly took place multiple other times over the last several years).

And then there's the most intangible yet most significant cost: each year of endless war that passes further normalizes the endless rights erosions justified in its name. The second term of the Bush administration and first five years of the Obama presidency have been devoted to codifying and institutionalizing the vast and unchecked powers that are typically vested in leaders in the name of war. Those powers of secrecy, indefinite detention, mass surveillance, and due-process-free assassination are not going anywhere. They are now permanent fixtures not only in the US political system but, worse, in American political culture.

Each year that passes, millions of young Americans come of age having spent their entire lives, literally, with these
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powers and this climate fixed in place: to them, there is nothing radical or aberrational about any of it. The post-9/11 era is all they have been trained to know. That is how a state of permanent war not only devastates its foreign targets but also degrades the population of the nation that prosecutes it.

This war will end only once Americans realize the vast and multi-faceted costs they are bearing so that the nation's political elites can be empowered and its oligarchs can further prosper. But Washington clearly has no fear that such realizations are imminent. They are moving in the other direction: aggressively planning how to further entrench and expand this war.

One might think that if there is to be a debate over the 12-year-old AUMF, it would be about repealing it. Democratic Congresswoman Barbara Lee, who heroically cast the only vote against it when it was originally enacted by presciently warning of how abused it would be, has been advocating its repeal for some time now in favor of using reasonable security measures to defend against such threats and standard law enforcement measures to punish them (which have proven far more effective than military solutions). But just as happened in 2001, neither she nor her warnings are deemed sufficiently Serious even to consider, let alone embrace.

Instead, the Washington AUMF "debate" recognizes only two positions: (1) Congress should codify expanded powers for the administration to fight a wider war beyond what the 2001 AUMF provides (that's the argument recently made by the supreme war-cheerleaders-from-a-safe-distance at the Washington Post editorial page and their favorite war-justifying think tank theorists, and the one being made by many Senators from both parties), or (2) the administration does not need any expanded authority because it is already free to wage a global war with very few limits under the warped "interpretation" of the AUMF which both the Bush and Obama DOJ's have successfully persuaded courts to accept (that's the Obama administration's position). In other words, the shared premise is that the US government must continue to wage unlimited, permanent war, and the

only debate is whether that should happen under a new law or the old one.

Just to convey a sense for how degraded is this Washington "debate": Obama officials at yesterday's Senate hearing repeatedly insisted that this "war" is *already* one without geographical limits and without any real conceptual constraints. The AUMF's war power, they said, "stretches from Boston to the [tribal areas of Pakistan]" and can be used "anywhere around the world, including inside Syria, where the rebel Nusra Front recently allied itself with al-Qaida's Iraq affiliate, or even what Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC) called 'boots on the ground in Congo'". The acting general counsel of the Pentagon said it even "authorized war against al-Qaida's associated forces in Mali, Libya and Syria". Newly elected independent Sen. Angus King of Maine said after listening to how the Obama administration interprets its war powers under the AUMF:



This is the most astounding and most astoundingly disturbing hearing that I've been to since I've been here. You guys have essentially rewritten the Constitution today."

Former Bush DOJ official Jack Goldsmith, who testified at the hearing, summarized what was said after it was over: Obama officials argued that "they had domestic authority to use force in Mali, Syria, Libya, and Congo, against Islamist terrorist threats there"; that "they were actively considering

emerging threats and stated that it was possible they would need to return to Congress for new authorities against those threats but did not at present need new authorities"; that "the conflict authorized by the AUMF was not nearly over"; and that "several members of the Committee were surprised by the breadth of DOD's interpretation of the AUMF." Conveying the dark irony of America's war machine, seemingly lifted right out of the Cold War era film Dr. Strangelove, Goldsmith added:

Amazingly, there is a very large question even in the Armed Services Committee about who the United States is at war against and where, and how those determinations are made."

Nobody really even knows with whom the US is at war, or where. Everyone just knows that it is vital that it continue in unlimited form indefinitely.

In response to that, the only real movement in Congress is to think about how to enact a new law to *expand* the authorization even further. But it's a worthless and illusory debate, affecting nothing other than the pretexts and symbols used to justify what will, in all cases, be a permanent and limitless war. The Washington AUMF debate is about nothing other than whether more fig leaves are needed to make it all pretty and legal.

The Obama administration already claims the power to wage endless and boundless war, in virtually total secrecy, and without a single meaningful check or constraint. No institution with any power disputes this. To the contrary, the only ones which exert real influence - Congress, the courts, the establishment media, the plutocratic class - clearly favor its continuation and only think about how further to enable it. That will continue unless and until Americans begin to realize just what a mammoth price they're paying for this ongoing splurge of war spending and endless aggression.

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Glenn Greenwald is a columnist on civil liberties and US national security issues for the Guardian. A former constitutional lawyer, he was until 2012 a contributing writer at Salon. He is the recipient of the first annual I.F. Stone Award for Independent Journalism.



CHINESE WARSHIPS OFF LONG ISLAND

Weekend Edition June 14-16, 2013

Mirror Image of Obama's Geopolitical Strategy

by Norman Pollack

Flash! President Li of China, writing in *Foreign Affairs* has announced his long-awaited Atlantic-first strategy, in which a battle group of super carriers will ply the waters from Portsmouth to Charleston, set to commence upon the signing of a mutual security treaty with Bermuda, where the carriers are presently docked, along with long-range bombers having nuclear capabilities. This “pivot,” in which important military assets and diplomatic initiatives (including the offer of joint-maneuvers) presents a new framework of regional penetration and geopolitical thinking, has resulted from top-secret meetings of Li’s national-security advisers and the highly placed intelligence experts drawn from China’s own NSA and CIA, the agencies which have been given carte blanche by the president to act on his doctrine of permanent war. Some Chinese defense experts are skeptical in that they desire a more direct confrontation than is afforded by the broadly construed containment policy, a view with which the president finds himself in agreement. But all sides of the civilian-military establishment are in agreement that a war posture is good, and perhaps necessary, both to ensure domestic conformity and provide an economic stimulus to prevent stagnation and ward off recession. Li is particularly fortunate in having a compliant parliamentary body to work with, patriotic and reactionary to the core, wholly submissive to the policies of intervention, targeted assassination, domestic spying, a lax-to-nonexistent regulatory protocol to foster monopolism, above all, perhaps, a somewhat inchoate yet at the constant-ready-to-be-acted-on vision of universal counterrevolution, starting here with bringing the US into line, that is, accepting China’s leadership and guidance in world affairs.

Sound familiar? I have merely taken Obama’s Pacific-first strategy and inverted the imagery to suggest, rather, what the US has done with respect to China, in which a confrontational military, diplomatic, economic, and ideological

posture, all rolled into one, has been advanced by the United States to contain, isolate, and, to the extent that it is viewed as a statist formation, liberate China, so that it will be free to enjoy the fruits of American-style capitalism—what, in grandiose form, is meant by the phrase, “liberal humanitarian interventionism.” Obama’s specialization, which combines the “just war” policies of Brennan, the rhetoric of Rhodes, the new window dressing on intervention with the appointments of Rice and Power, the widening in the CIA’s mission and jurisdiction, is unashamedly global dominance, as though by Divine right, or at the least, the self-evidence of Exceptionalism, coupled with a dollop of modernized nuclear weaponry and the use of paramilitary forces (JSOC) in support of the framework.



Global dominance need not be Hitlerian, hardly proper to the recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize—although stranger things have happened. Despite critics’ efforts at psychological understanding of Obama, he thus far, and expertly, eludes analysis. But we do have a record, not, as his supporters would hope, a bundle of contradictions that allows for escape hatches (e.g., Republican obstructionism), but a unitary direction: pro-intervention, pro-corporate wealth, anti-environment, anti-regulation, and, if his record on mortgage relief, job creation, and, at large, the social safety net is any indication, *anti-poor*, anti-working people, all taken together, a quite despicable elitism saturated with military-authoritarian values of social and economic hierarchy and a puristic market fundamentalism reflecting the unimpeded accumulation of wealth. This noble set of virtues has to be defended at all costs—not only from China, but from America’s citizens at

home, and for Obama, the best defense, next to military power, is the secrecy of government. Hence, not Hitlerian, but domestic self-pacification. How? One technique is to create the conditions for the body politic to be suspicious of all things radical (here, not necessarily Marxian collectivism, but simply, the questioning of Authority, whether on war policy or the free pass to oil companies, and the list stretches long into the night).

Increasingly, the Obama government is conflating radicalism and terrorism, the ace it plays to infuse Americans with a war psychology that permits not only the “war on terror,” but also the Pacific-first strategy and greater military presence in the region. China is terribly significant to America’s purposes. In Dulles-like splendor, Obama is playing rollback, China being the Supreme Challenge to Freedom-Loving America, an oblique reference to terrorism generically conceived and perhaps one step removed. It cannot be otherwise, for how else prepare Americans for a get-tough policy that might eventuate in conflict? With this consideration in mind, one has reason to link US China policy with the widespread use of surveillance, and relatedly, an equally widespread practice of overclassification of government documents, in both cases, an imperial flexing of political muscle serving notice on all and sundry that the US has a permanent place at the top of the global-power pyramid. In a sense, this is, for within the US, psychological-ideological overkill, because few Americans remain critical of government-business hegemony in the world. But why take chances? And so, surveillance is very much in order, less to prevent a resumption of radical movements, than to foster the *internalization* of conformity (aka, social discipline).

The recent Li-Obama meetings at Sunnylands was a piece of social theater, a pro forma gathering which, especially on the issue of cyberwarfare, could not possibly lead to agreements when, on that very day, Obama’s cyberwar against his own people was becoming revealed. We now know, if we didn’t before, that he does not

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shame easily. Targeted assassination? Nothing. Mammoth defense budgets. Ditto. Guantanamo? Nope. Extreme disparities of wealth and power in America? Not a word. But to question China's assertiveness in international matters, when the US sits on a world system of military bases, remains engaged in military intervention, has "assets" off the China coast or in its vicinity, requires cynicism fully transparent to the Chinese, who can only admire his chutzpah. The US will persist in its demand for global preeminence, but the world structure is metamorphosing into a multi-polar system, a decentralization of power, in which China is a threat to American hegemony, but one that can be lived with, and which appears to be to China's liking, because, absent America's unilateral supremacy governing international trade and investment, it is able, as presently in Africa and Latin America, to seek its own welfare—as can also Russia, Japan, the European Union, Brazil, and Third World countries undertaking their own modernization and industrialization. America is saying "NO!" to an irresistible historical flow, and, notwithstanding militarism, or perhaps because of it, is in danger of being left behind. More interventions, more surveillance, ultimately, more "blowback," in which the voices of the dispossessed and the victims will be heard.

Norman Pollack is the author of "*The Populist Response to Industrial America*" (Harvard) and "*The Just Polity*" (Illinois), Guggenheim Fellow, and professor of history emeritus, Michigan State University.

"The connection between imperial politics and culture is astonishingly direct. American attitudes to American "greatness", to hierarchies of race, to the perils of "other" revolutions (the American revolution being considered unique and somehow unrepeatable anywhere else in the world) have remained constant, have dictated, have obscured, the realities of empire, while apologists for overseas American interests have insisted on American innocence, doing good, fighting for freedom." -- **Edward Said**

US MILITARY "PIVOT"

Published on Thursday, May 16, 2013 by [Common Dreams](#)

Will US Military's 'Pivot' Bring Vieques Redux to Pacific?

Proposals to use entire island of Pagan for air, land and water weapons trainings could bring 'irreparable harm' - **Andrea Germanos**, staff writer



Pagan island (Photo: CDR Eric Johnson, NOAA Corps)

As the U.S. military continues "forging a broad-based military presence" in the Pacific, proposals to use an entire island and surrounding waters to practice mine warfare, dropping bombs and amphibious strikes have set off fierce opposition.

Located in the Northern Marianas Islands a few hundred miles from Guam, where military activities are "already being used to capacity," the Pacific island of Pagan may be taken over by live training exercises that could cause "irreparable harm" to the environment.

Marianas Variety reports:

OVER what they consider potential irreparable harm to the environment and the people, the indigenous people of the islands through the Northern Marianas Descent Corporation passed a resolution opposing the U.S. military proposal to develop live-fire ranges and training areas on Pagan island.

The resolution, signed by NMD Corp. officers — Ana S. Teregeyo, president; Karl T. Reyes, vice president; Daniel O. Quitugua, secretary; and Rose Taman Ada-Hocog, treasurer — on May 10, "unequivocally oppose[s] and unanimously disapprove[s] the proposed U.S. military development and tactical

exercise activities on our culturally, historically, and environmentally rich, serene and irreplaceable homeland island of Pagan unlike any other on earth."

NMD Corp. says the most alarming statement regarding Pagan is the US military's intention to use the entire island for joint training activities, using a broad spectrum of weaponry.

What it would entail:

The proposed military training on the volcanic island would include air warfare, amphibious warfare, surface warfare, anti-submarine warfare, mine warfare, strike warfare, electronic combat and naval special warfare.

The opposing voices are also concerned over secrecy the military has

shown with the weapons it tests. The *Saipan Tribune* reported that the NMD Corporation said that historically, the U.S. military is best known for covert operations, keeping secret anything they used or plan to use that may be harmful to the area, affecting and displacing people, animals, plants, wildlife, marine life, water, air and sea, permanently damaging and/or destroying the overall human habitat, landscape, flora, fauna, land and marine environment.

Just look to the Puerto Rico's Vieques or training areas in Hawaii to see the toxic, dangerous legacy U.S. military training can leave, the opponents say.

The *Associated Press* adds that while the island is sparsely populated, previous residents who were evacuated due to an earthquake in 1981 worry the U.S. military takeover could prevent their resettlement.

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**THE PAST IS NEVER DEAD**

June 06, 2013

How the Pentagon Removes Entire Peoples

by David Swanson

If we think at all about our government's military depopulating territory that it desires, we usually think of the long-ago replacement of native Americans with new settlements during the continental expansion of the United States westward.

Here in Virginia some of us are vaguely aware that back during the Great Depression poor people were evicted from their homes and their land where national parks were desired. But we distract and comfort ourselves with the notion that such matters are deep in the past.

Occasionally we notice that environmental disasters are displacing people, often poor people or marginalized people, from their homes. But these incidents seem like collateral damage rather than intentional ethnic cleansing.

If we're aware of the 1,000 or so U.S. military bases standing today in some 175 foreign countries, we must realize that the land they occupy could serve some other purpose in the lives of those countries' peoples. But surely those countries' peoples are still there, still living — if perhaps slightly inconvenienced — in their countries.

Yet the fact is that the U.S. military has displaced and continues to displace for the construction of its bases the entire populations of villages and islands, in blatant violation of international law, basic human decency, and principles we like to tell each other we stand for. The United States also continues to deny displaced populations the right to return to their homelands.

At issue here are not the bombings or burnings of entire villages, which of course the United States engages in during its wars and its non-wars. Nor are we dealing here with the millions of refugees created by wars like those in Iraq and Afghanistan or by drone wars like the one in Pakistan. Rather, the following are cases of the intentional displacement of particular populations moved out of the way of base

construction and left alive to struggle as refugees in exile.

In the Philippines, the United States built bases on land belonging to the indigenous Aetas people, who "ended up combing military trash to survive."

During World War II the U.S. Navy seized the small Hawaiian island of Koho'alawe for a weapons testing range and ordered its inhabitants to leave. The island has been devastated.

In 1942, the Navy displaced Aleutian Islanders.

President Harry Truman made up his mind that the 170 native inhabitants of Bikini Atoll had no right to their island. He had them evicted in February and March of 1946, and dumped as refugees on other islands without means of support or a social structure in place. In the coming years, the United States would remove 147 people from Enewetak Atoll and all the people on Lib Island. U.S. atomic and hydrogen bomb testing rendered various depopulated and still-populated islands uninhabitable, leading to further displacements. Up through the 1960s, the U.S. military displaced hundreds of people from Kwajalein Atoll. A superdensely populated ghetto was created on Ebeye.

On Vieques, off Puerto Rico, the Navy displaced thousands of inhabitants between 1941 and 1947, announced plans to evict the remaining 8,000 in 1961, but was forced to back off and — in 2003 — to stop bombing the island.

On nearby Culebra, the Navy displaced thousands between 1948 and 1950 and attempted to remove those remaining up through the 1970s.

The Navy is right now looking at the island of Pagan as a possible replacement for Vieques, the population already having been removed by a volcanic eruption. Of course, any possibility of return would be greatly diminished.

Beginning during World War II and continuing through the 1950s, the U.S. military displaced a quarter million Okinawans, or half the population, from their land, forcing people into refugee camps and shipping thousands of them off to Bolivia — where land and money were promised but not delivered.

In 1953, the United States made a deal with Denmark to remove 150 Inughuit people from Thule, Greenland, giving them four days to get out or face bulldozers. They are being denied the right to return.

Diego Garcia

The story of Diego Garcia is superbly told in David Vine's book, *Island of Shame*. Between 1968 and 1973, the United States and Great Britain exiled all 1,500 to 2,000 inhabitants from this island in the Indian Ocean. On orders from, and with funding from, the United States, the British forced the people onto overcrowded ships and dumped them on docks in Mauritius and the Seychelles — foreign and distant and unwelcoming lands for this indigenous population that had been part of Diego Garcia for centuries. U.S. documents described this as "sweeping" and "sanitizing" the island.

Those responsible for the displacement of the people of Diego Garcia knew that what they were doing was widely considered barbaric and illegal. They devised ways of creating "logical cover" for the process. They persuaded the ever-compliant *Washington Post* to bury the story. The Queen of England and her Privy Council bypassed Parliament. The Pentagon lied to Congress and hid its payments to the British from Congress. The planners even lied to themselves. Having originally envisioned a communications station, they concluded that advances in technology had rendered that unhelpful. So, Navy schemers decided that a fueling station for ships might offer a "suitable justification" for building a base that was actually a purposeless end in itself. But the Pentagon ended up telling a reluctant Congress that the base would be a communications station, because that was something Congress would approve.

Those plotting the eviction of the island's people created the fiction that the inhabitants were migrant workers not actually native to Diego Garcia. Sir Paul Gore-Booth, Permanent Under Secretary in the Foreign Office of the U.K., dismissed the island's people as "some few Tarzans or Men Fridays

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whose origins are obscure.” This stood in contrast to the respect and protection given to some other islands not chosen for bases because of the rare plants, birds, and animals resident there.

On January 24, 1971, remaining inhabitants of Diego Garcia were told they’d need to leave or be shot. They were allowed to take a small box of possessions, but had to leave their homes, their gardens, their animals, their land, and their society. Their dogs were rounded up and killed in a gas chamber as they watched, waiting to themselves be loaded on ships for departure. Arriving in Mauritius, they were housed in a prison. Their fate has not much improved in the decades since. David Vine describes them as very forgiving, wishing nothing but to be permitted to return.

Diego Garcia is purely a military base and in some ways more of a lawless zone than Guantanamo. The United States has kept and may be keeping prisoners there, on the island or on ships in the harbor. The Red Cross and journalists do not visit. The United States has *de facto* control of Diego Garcia, while the U.K. has technical ownership. The Pentagon is not interested in allowing the island’s people to return.

Jeju Island

The South Korean government, at the behest of the U.S. Navy, is in the process of devastating a village, its coast, and 130 acres of farmland on Jeju Island with a massive military base. This story is best told in Regis Tremblay’s new film *The Ghosts of Jeju*. This is not a tragedy from the past to be remedied but a tragedy of this moment to be halted in its tracks. You can help. Tremblay’s film examines the history of decades of abuse of the people of Jeju, and the resistance movement that is currently inspiring other anti-base efforts around the globe. The film begins somber and ends joyful. I highly recommend creating an event around a screening of it.

Palestine

We should not neglect to note here that the United States funds and arms and protects the Israeli government’s ongoing displacement of Palestinians and denial of the right to return.

“The past is never dead. It’s not even past,” wrote William Faulkner.

David Swanson is author of *War is a Lie*. He lives in Virginia.

WASHINGTON’S NUCLEAR HYPOCRISY

Published on Monday, April 29, 2013
by Foreign Policy In Focus

by **Michael Walker**

In April 2009, President Barack Obama gave hope to nuclear disarmament activists around the globe. Speaking in the Czech Republic, he affirmed “America’s commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons.” It was, and remains, the most laudable of objectives. Unfortunately, it is becoming increasingly difficult to believe that the president is truly committed to eliminating these terrifying weapons of mass destruction.

This might come as a surprise to those whose knowledge of the issue is limited to Washington’s dealings with North Korea and Iran, for the U.S. government has made it plain that these nations’ purported nuclear activities will not be tolerated. As Secretary of State John Kerry declared during a visit to Seoul earlier this month, “North Korea will not be accepted as a nuclear power.” Regarding Iran, President Obama emphasized in an interview aired on Israeli television in March that “I have been crystal clear about my position on Iran possessing a nuclear weapon. That is a red line for us.”

These words have been matched by deeds. The Obama administration has been dogged in its efforts to punish these states for their alleged nuclear ambitions. A case in point occurred in March, when U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice led the way in pushing for the imposition of new sanctions on the reclusive North Korean regime following its third nuclear test. Tehran has likewise been targeted with crippling U.S. and international economic sanctions.

However, if we look beyond these two cases, the non-proliferation edifice begins to crumble. It was reported over the weekend, for example, that the United States intends to spend around \$10 billion enhancing its Europe-based nuclear weapons. This plan, which would involve turning the bombs into guided

weapons that could be fired by F-35 warplanes, would represent “a significant upgrade of the U.S. nuclear capability in Europe,” according to one expert.

Then there is the matter of Washington’s cozy relations with nuclear weapons states India and Israel. The courting of India, a nation that conducted a so-called “peaceful nuclear explosion” as far back as 1974 and has never signed the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), is not a new phenomenon. The embrace of this South Asian giant began during George W. Bush’s presidency, when his administration signed a 10-year defense agreement with New Delhi and blew a giant hole in the global non-proliferation regime by agreeing to a civil nuclear cooperation deal.

President Obama’s team has been hypnotized by New Delhi’s potential as a buyer of U.S. arms and military hardware. In 2010 the president paid a visit to India where he lobbied on behalf of U.S. defense contractors Lockheed and Boeing, which were at the time bidding for a multi-billion dollar contract to provide the country’s military with 126 new warplanes. Although Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh torpedoed the U.S. bids, preferring to negotiate with the French company Dassault, the Obama administration has continued its efforts to pry open the lucrative Indian market.

Indeed, Andrew Shapiro, a high-ranking State Department official, recently boasted that “we have made tremendous progress in the [U.S.-India] defense trade relationship,” with U.S. military sales to New Delhi hitting roughly \$8 billion, up from zero in 2008. He held out the appealing prospect of “billions of dollars more in the next couple of years.” In short, this logic holds that while India may have atomic weapons, what’s more important is that the country is an ally and buys large quantities of U.S. military equipment.

Unsurprisingly, Israel also gets special treatment on the nuclear front.

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An undeclared nuclear weapons state that has declined to sign the NPT, Israel is presumed to possess an arsenal of several hundred nuclear warheads. Notwithstanding this, the Israelis are showered with U.S. military aid, averaging around \$3 billion annually. The administration's unstinting support for Israel was recently underlined when Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel flew to the Middle East to discuss a multi-billion dollar arms deal for Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. As reported in the *New York Times*, this

package is "intended to further increase Israel's military edge over other powers in the region." The secretary noted that the deal would send a "very clear signal to Iran." One signal is certain to have been received loud and clear: While Washington permits its friends to have the ultimate weapon, a different set of rules applies to its enemies.

If President Obama wishes to be taken seriously as an advocate of nuclear non-proliferation, he should be consistent. The U.S. loses credibility when it vilifies North Korea and Iran while at

the same time remaining silent about the atomic weapons of its friends.

Here, then, is a policy suggestion for the president: Impose sanctions against India and Israel, and end the arms deals with those nuclear states. Alas, such a course of action is unlikely, to say the least. Therefore, the outlook for nuclear non-proliferation and eventual disarmament remains bleak.

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Foreign Policy in Focus contributor Michael Walker has a PhD in international relations from the University of St. Andrews.

Partial Listing of Incidents of Nuclear Blackmail

- 1946 Truman threatens Soviets regarding Northern Iran.
- 1946 Truman sends SAC bombers sent to intimidate Yugoslavia following downing of U.S. aircraft over Yugoslavia.
- 1948 Truman threatens Soviets in response to Berlin blockade.
- 1950 Truman threatens Chinese when U.S. marines were surrounded at Chosin Reservoir in Korea.
- 1951 Truman approves military request to attack Manchuria with nuclear weapons if significant numbers of new Chinese Forces join the war.
- 1953 "Operation Big Stick" Eisenhower threatens China to force end to Korean war on terms acceptable to U.S.
- 1954 Eisenhower Secretary of State Dulles offers French three tactical nuclear weapons to break the siege at Dien Bien Phu.
- 1954 Eisenhower used nuclear armed SAC bombers to reinforce CIA-backed coup in Guatemala.
- 1956 Bulganin threatens London and Paris with nuclear attacks, demanding withdrawal following their invasion of Egypt.
- 1956 Eisenhower counter threatens the Soviet Union while also demanding British and French retreat from Egypt.
- 1958 Eisenhower orders Joint Chiefs of Staff to prepare to use nuclear weapons against Iraq, if necessary to prevent extension of revolution into Kuwait.
- 1958 Eisenhower orders Joint Chiefs of Staff to prepare to use nuclear weapons against China if they invade the island of Quemoy.
- 1961 Kennedy threatens Soviets during Berlin Crisis.
- 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis.
- 1967 Johnson threatens Soviets during Middle East War.
- 1967 Johnson's public threats against Vietnam are linked to possible use of nuclear weapons to break siege at Khe Sanh.
- 1968 Johnson threatens nuclear attack against North Korea in response to Seizure of USS Pueblo.
- 1969 Brezhnev threatens China during border war.
- 1969 Nixon's "November Ultimatum" against Vietnam.
- 1970 Nixon signals preparations to fight nuclear war to the Soviets during Black September War in Jordan.
- 1973 Israeli Government threatens use of nuclear weapons October 9.
- 1973 Kissinger threatens Soviet Union during the last hours of the "October War" in the Middle East.
- 1973 Nixon pledges to South Vietnamese President Thieu that he will respond with nuclear attacks or the bombing of North Vietnam's dikes if it violates the provisions of the Paris Peace Accords.
- 1975 Sec. of Defense Schlesinger threatens North Korea with nuclear retaliation should it attack south Korea in the wake of the U.S. defeat in Vietnam.
- 1976 Pres. Ford dispatches nuclear armed B-52 from Guam toward North Korea in response to "Ax Incident" in DMZ.
- 1980 Carter Doctrine announced.
- 1981 Reagan reaffirms the Carter Doctrine.
- 1990 Pakistan threatens India during confrontation over Kashmir.
- 1990-91 Bush threatens Iraq during the "Gulf War."
- 1993 Clinton threatens North Korea.
- 1994 Clinton's confrontation with North Korea
- 1996 China threatens "Los Angeles" during confrontation over Taiwan.
- 1996 Clinton threatens Libya with nuclear attack to prevent completion of underground chemical weapons production complex.
- 1998 Clinton, Operation Desert Fox, refuses to rule out use of nuclear weapons against Iraq.
- 2002 Bush communicates an implied threat to counter any Iraqi use of chemical.
- 2003 Bush dispatches 24 nuclear capable bombers to Guam during crisis with North Korea.
- 2008-12 Obama "all options are on the table" with Iran.



US POLICY AND NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR ASPIRATIONS

May 23, 2013

How US Policy is Driving North Korea's Nuclear Aspirations

The Consequences of Gun-at-the-Head Diplomacy

by Mike Whitney

“The US kill rate in the 1950-53 Korean War equaled more than one 9-11 every day... for the whole 1,100 day war...The US may have killed 20% of the population of Korea, said General Curtis Lemay, who was involved in the US air war on Korea. If so, that is a higher rate of genocidal slaughter than what the Nazis inflicted on Poland or the Soviet Union.”

– Stansfield Smith, “North Korea’s Justifiable Anger“, CounterPunch

North Korea’s military remains on hair-trigger alert following joint-military exercises that were conducted by the United States and South Korea in April. Barack Obama, who promised to negotiate directly with the DPRK during his 2008 presidential campaign, has reneged on his promise and taken a more belligerent approach to the crisis than his predecessor, George W Bush. Obama’s war games, which were the largest of their kind, were deliberately provocative and designed to test the North’s new leader Kim Jong Un. Pyongyang responded to Obama’s incitement by cutting off all ties with the South, closing Kaesong Industrial Complex, and by launching six missiles into the sea off its East coast. The North Korean Committee for Peaceful Reunification also released this statement:

“The joint naval drill involving the latest weaponry including the nuclear aircraft carrier is a wanton blackmail against us and demonstrates that the (US and South Korea) attempt to invade us has reached an extremely reckless level. The risk of a nuclear war in the peninsula has risen further due to the madcap nuclear war practice by the US and the South’s enemy forces.”

It’s clear that Obama’s “rollback strategy” has merely escalated tensions and increased the likelihood of a conflagration. It has also given Pyongyang the excuse it needs to divert

more of its dwindling resources into nuclear weapons. How does this advance US geopolitical interests or improve regional security? It doesn’t. The policy is a complete disaster. By antagonizing the North with these pointless military maneuvers, Obama is forcing them to build nukes. Why is that so hard to grasp?

The Korean people know their history even if their counterparts in the United States of Amnesia do not. More than 2 million people were killed in the Korean War, the vast majority of them Chinese and North Koreans. In contrast, the number of US combat troops that were killed is quite small, just 36,000. While every death is deeply felt by friends and family, it’s hard to imagine the impact of seeing 20 percent of your countrymen wiped out by a foreign army. Pyongyang understands the costs of war which is why their why official communiques are always so blustery and hyperbolic. It’s because they don’t want to look weak, because weakness encourages adventurism. The DPRK’s incendiary rhetoric is a contrivance that’s crafted with one purpose in mind, to avoid another war with the United States.

Here’s a short blurb from an article at Global Research that provides a glimpse of the how the war was prosecuted by the US military:

”US General MacArthur instructed his bombers “to destroy every means of communication and every installation, factory, city and village” in North Korea except for hydroelectric plants and the city of Rashin, which bordered China and the Soviet Union, respectively....

“The blanket fire bombing of North Korean cities, the destruction of dams and the resulting devastation of the food supply and an unremitting aerial bombardment were more intensive than anything experienced during the Second World War.

At one point the Americans gave up bombing targets in the North when their intelligence reported that there were no more buildings over one story high left standing in the entire country ... the overall death toll was staggering: possibly as many as four million people. About three million were civilians... Even to a world that had just begun to recover from the vast devastation of the Second World War, Korea was a man-made hell

with a place among the most violent excesses of the 20th century.”

US forces killed millions, leveled the North, and left the country in ruins. Why? Because policymakers in Washington decided that US interests were at stake.

In a recent article at Consortium News, UC Santa Cruz professor Christine Hong explained the whimsical way that Korea was divided by US post WW2. Here’s an excerpt from the article:

“If you go back to 1945, you see that scarcely three days after the bombing of Nagasaki, two junior U.S. army officers, Dean Rusk and Charles Bonesteel retired to a small room armed with nothing more than a National Geographic map of the Korean peninsula, through which, in a 30-minute session, with absolutely no consultation of any Korean, divided the Korean peninsula. This division of the Korean peninsula at the 38th parallel into north and south, and the creation of a southern government, had no popular legitimacy.”

How do you like that; 30 minutes with felt-tip pen, and Pentagon warplanners created the rationale for killing over two million people and laying the peninsula to waste. It’s astonishing. And what’s more astonishing is the fact that our Nobel Peace prize-winning president, Barack Obama, has been ratcheting up the pressure on the North by leading the charge for tighter sanctions (on banking and trade), increasing the range of missiles in the South (to hit targets in the North), and staging massive war-games aimed at further isolating the North and exacerbating regional tensions. The joint-maneuvers anticipated a scenario in which the present regime in the Pyongyang collapses. Here’s a bit of background from the same article:

“In a recent Pentagon press conference, [Defense Secretary] Chuck Hagel was asked whether or not the U.S. sending D2 stealth bombers from Missouri to fly and conduct a sortie over South Korea (continued on Page 32...)



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and drop what the DOD calls inert munitions in a simulated run against North Korea could be understood as provocative. He said no, they can't be understood as provocative."

So simulated nuclear attacks on a foreign capital are "not provocative"? Obviously, Hagel doesn't worry too much about his credibility. Here's more from the same article:

"It's almost impossible for us in the United States to imagine Mexico and the historic foe of the U.S., Russia, conducting joint exercises that simulate an invasion of the United States and a foreign occupation of the United States. That is precisely what North Korea has been enduring for several decades."

While it is factually true that the DPRK faces incitements that the US would never tolerate on its own borders; it's also true that the rules do not apply to the United States. Everyone knows this.

According to an op-ed in the *Washington Post* by ex-president Jimmy Carter, the North seeks a "denuclearized Korean Peninsula and a permanent cease-fire", but insist that it be "based on the 1994 agreements". (The US never fulfilled its end of the bargain in the so called 1994 Agreed Framework. Obama refuses to do so today.) The DPRK leaders have promised that their nuclear facilities and their "array of centrifuges would be 'on the table' for discussions with the United States." In other words, the North is ready for bi-lateral talks with United States provided there are no conditions. Unfortunately, the Obama administration has rejected such talks unless there is concrete evidence of "denuclearization". Pyongyang must agree to concessions (tantamount to nuclear disarmament) before the administration will even negotiate. If the North agreed to Obama's terms, then the same incriminating farce that took place in Iraq prior to the war would be repeated on the Korean Peninsula.

It makes no sense for the DPRK to comply with rules which undermine its bargaining position and pose a threat to its national sovereignty. Nor does it make sense for the US to create conditions which lead to nuclear proliferation. Sanctions, isolation and belligerence have backfired and

increased the prospect of a miscalculation that could precipitate a nuclear war. It's time for Obama to lower the temperature, tone down the saber rattling, and abandon the failed policy of regime change. As journalist Stansfield Smith said, If we want North Korea to change "then we should stop pointing a gun at their head."

Mike Whitney is a contributor to *Hopeless: Barack Obama and the Politics of Illusion*. He can be reached at fergiewhitney@msn.com.

AN UNEXAMINED ASSUMPTION

Weekend Edition June 21-23, 2013

Surviving in a Nuclear Armed World

by **Robert F. Dodge, MD** and **Ira Helfand**

President Obama speaking in Berlin on Wednesday took the first step in his 2nd term to address the world's nuclear arsenals. He proposed negotiating the reduction of strategic nuclear weapons by up to one-third of its current levels of 1722 as of September 2012 and reducing nuclear weapons in Europe. While any reductions in nuclear arsenals must be applauded and supported, they must be viewed as only the next step in the mandatory elimination of all nuclear weapons. The devastating potential of these reduced arsenals has the ability to inflict catastrophic damage to our world. There is no "acceptable" level of nuclear weapons that is consistent with the ultimate survival of civilization.

A study by Physicians for Social Responsibility showed that if only 300 warheads in the Russian arsenal got through to targets in American cities, 75 to 100 million people would be killed in the first 30 minutes by the explosions and firestorms that would destroy all of our major metropolitan areas, and vast areas would be blanketed with radioactive fallout.

In addition, the entire economic infrastructure on which we depend to sustain our population would be destroyed. The transportation system, the communications network, the public health and banking systems, the food distribution network — all would be gone. In the months after this war, it is probable that the vast majority of the American population who were not

killed in the initial attack would die of starvation, exposure, epidemic disease and radiation poisoning.

The global impact of a nuclear war with the reduced number of weapons proposed by the President was defined in a 2007 study published in the *Journal of Geophysical Research* demonstrating catastrophic climate change due to the release of an estimated 50-100 million tons of soot into the upper atmosphere blocking the sun. This would cause severe drops in global temperatures in a matter of days of up to 36 degrees Fahrenheit, devastating agriculture production throughout the world. The ensuing global famine could result in the death of a majority of the human population.

Thus any reduction in nuclear weapons is an important step to securing our future and we must move to realize these reductions now, but zero is the only acceptable number. Each day that we fail to work toward this goal is one day closer to realizing Albert Einstein's prophecy from a 1946 telegram: "*The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything save our modes of thinking and we thus drift toward unparalleled catastrophe.*"

But we can't stop there. This effort must lead to multilateral negotiations involving all nuclear weapons states, negotiations that will produce a nuclear weapons convention banning these weapons once and for all. These negotiations will not be easy, and the treaty they produce will have to be a hard-nosed agreement that establishes mechanisms to verify and enforce compliance. We don't have an alternative.

Some say it is unrealistic to think we can eliminate nuclear weapons. But in truth, it is unrealistic to think we can maintain nuclear arsenals indefinitely and still avoid a nuclear conflict. These are critical unexamined assumptions that demand re-evaluation.

As long as nuclear weapons exist we face a real and imminent danger of catastrophe either by design or accident. It is a matter of sheer luck that we survive. Luck is not a long-term viable security policy. We owe it to our

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**OBITUARIES: BRYAN LAW**

Tuesday, 2 April 2013

Australian Anti-war and social justice advocate, veteran activist Bryan Law, has died in Rockhampton. He was 58.

Bryan Law, who had recently moved from Cairns to Rockhampton awaiting trial for damage to a military helicopter, passed away after a long illness. He was born in 1954. He was a determined activist to the very end.

In the Cairns political landscape, the name Bryan Law is synonymous with speaking out and stirring the pot. Almost every Cairns resident is familiar with his actions and activism. The Cairns Post infamously called him a serial pest, from a cub journo who had run out of adjectives. Serial he may be, but I prefer to label Bryan a veteran activist.

His partner, Margaret Pestorius, conveyed the news to *CairnsBlog* this morning.

"Bryan passed away in Rocky. They found him at home. We heard this evening [Monday night]. We'll bring him home to Cairns. We will hold vigil over the next few days in some way or another," Margaret said.

"He has been very sick for several years but wanted very much to stand trial for his ploughshares action - even though the trial really was a trial."

"Don't forget to stand up courageously for what is right like Bryan did," Margaret Pestorius said.

In November 2008 the veteran campaigner, political activist, and *CairnsBlog* columnist, underwent emergency open-heart surgery. At that time, he had three Coronary Arterial bypass grafts, in a process that took over four hours.

"I'm still here," he told *CairnsBlog* at the time. "They've given me a 90% chance of surviving 10 years, so that's good I suppose."

Bryan Law was a mighty man and a beautiful passionate soul with an amazing zest for social justice.

After he attacked an Australian Army Tiger attack helicopter with a blow from a garden mattock he told the judge at the initial mention of he elation.



'War without end, not in our name'

"I'm glad I did it, your Honour," he told Magistrate Cameron Press.

"I'm glad that for however brief a moment that infernal helicopter death machine couldn't fly. Couldn't be used as a weapon. In a time of depraved warfare in Afghanistan and of military slavery to the US empire, I'm glad I made this witness to the prophecy of Isaiah and the promise of our saviour Jesus Christ. We must disarm."

Bryan was been arrested countless times, at least on 50 occasions. He lost count. He got under the skin of politicians who have taken him to court. Love or loath Bryan Law, he is one who draws a strong following from all sides. One thing is for sure - he is no armchair critic. He stands up, speaks out and acts with passion, vigor and compelling non-violent action.

He knew that after more than 30 years of activism, he was nearing the end of his battles, as his health deteriorated.

Under the banner of his organisation, *Cairns Peace by Peace*, he was there with his unique brand of civil disobedience and direct action.

Bryan Law was there when the sealed road was being pushed through north of the Daintree River; when the Federal Government wouldn't disclose the purpose of the top secret Pine Gap spy base; when Skyrail wanted to tear down the rainforest above Smithfield; when the USA bought warships into Cairns' harbour; when the Queensland Labor government destroyed the historic Cairns Yacht Club building; when Cairns Community Radio blocked out locals. He defaced hundreds of Cairns MP Desley Boyle's election signage, when she refused to stand up for locals of demolishing the Yacht Club building; when Cairns Council wanted to destroy City Place. He participated in numerous protests and actions against US / Australia defence exercises, breaking into restricted zones and stopping events. He caused a security scare when he

swam in Trinity Inlet as the USS Blue Ridge was docking in Cairns.

He took on *The Cairns Post* and won in court.

"It [*Cairns Post*] prints the most disgusting attacks on Aboriginal and Indigenous people, attacks which have no foundation in reality and which stir up the worst prejudices in our society and we're here today to say stop it," Bryan Law said in 2002.

"Call me bitter and twisted, but the Yacht Club issue convinced me that the Labor Party has once again forgotten that it's job is to represent the community and engage with its values and desires," Bryan said in 2009.

Law was media-savvy, articulate and political astute, he always defended himself in court, standing up for his principles.

'War without end, not in our name' a slogan on his t-shirt he would stand by to the end.

"I will miss him for a multitude of reasons but most of all because of his beliefs, his integrity and his tenacity to right where he saw wrong," former Mulgrave Councillor Ross Parisi said today. "Ridicule and derision, by his political adversaries did not penetrate his shield of honor, it made him stronger and more determined to strive for what he believed in. It made him resilient."

Ross Parisi said Law's ability to articulate and persuade were some of his most endearing virtues.

He detested the abuse of power, particularly by those in authority. He saw through the shallowness of impostors and pretenders.

"Surrounded by all that, inside was a gentle man and a sensitive man, a caring man that loved his family, like only he could," Ross Parisi said.

Cairns teacher and Greens political supporter, Steve Brech, said Bryan Law was his inspiration.

"After years of trying to 'fight the system', there I was presented with a real life Ghandi figure, full of peace, justice, democracy and a confidence I'd never encountered before," Steve

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Breach said. "Bryan will stay with me forever."

Janine Aitken who stood for Council in 2008 and supported many of Law's non-violent civil disobedience campaigns, remembers his passion for change.

"While he may not have ever achieved the change he wanted, Bryan changed everyone he met," Janine Aitken says. "He challenged the way we looked at the world and was a great man with a brilliant sense of humour, guaranteed to make you laugh out loud. I will miss him. The thing with Bryan, there are plenty who knew him, but few that would stand up and claim him as a friend or even defend his right to say his piece when it differed from their own," Aitken told *CairnsBlog*.

"He was often banned from public discussions and in the last few years I've found myself arguing with others on why he shouldn't be blocked, an argument I would enviably lose. But I am proud that I had the chance to call him a friend and I always did, despite our often opposing views."

Former Cairns Councillor Diane Forsyth, who together orchestrated protests against the demolition of the Cairns Yacht Club in 2010, was saddened by the news of his passing.

"RIP Bryan Law my thoughts are with you Margaret, and Joseph," Dianne Forsyth said.

Political commentator and blogger Leigh Dall'Osto says Bryan was a rare individual.

"He was one of those rare people who had passion and purpose and wasn't afraid to express either. He brought perspective, laughter and honesty to every conversation. We are all richer for having known him," Leigh Dall'Osto said. "He was the very definition of humanity and justice and fought along with his partner Margaret. He will be sorely missed by many."

In February 2011, Bryan Law wrote on *CairnsBlog* of his frustration over many years trying to make a change.

"I've spent 30 years proving to myself that an ordinary citizen is able to deploy the power of non-violence effectively to

move towards peace and social justice. I've learned that getting a 'Yes' from government isn't enough. Government needs continual scrutiny and correction.

"I follow Jesus, Gandhi, Dorothy Day and Dr King. I've been given limited opportunities to organise collectively with others, and amplify that non-violence power to compel better behaviour from governments. The power that democratised Parliament still exists but is diffuse and uncoordinated." Bryan Law wrote.

"On the whole I'd say that 'our' biggest weakness is a lack of experience in cooperation and mutual aid in our political life. Gossip, jealousy, fear, and 'better than' feelings disable us and make us smaller than we need to be."

He said in February 2011 that he would not return to Cairns, in order to undertake his most brazen act against Australia's involvement in the Afghanistan war, cemented his name in the history books for attacking a Defence helicopter.

He carried out the protest in July 2011 that saw charges of \$200,000 of damage levelled against him by the Federal Police and Department of Defence.

"The final public event I'll attend in Cairns will be the ANZAC Eve vigil at the Esplanade Cenotaph on Easter Sunday," Bryan said. "After this, I'm going to Rockhampton to prepare for and carry out a ploughshares action against a US warplane during Exercise Talisman Sabre."

Law justified his actions saying that it was repugnant that the Australian government was spending \$6 Billion in the budget for acquiring new defence weapons.

"That's for tanks, fighter/bombers, air warfare destroyers, drones, cruise missiles, satellites, networked electronic C3 systems - and \$5 Billion to maintain existing weapons systems," Bryan said. "Expect the same each year for at least for the next 20 years. There is already \$57 billion committed by the Rudd-Labor government over the next 20 years to the large weapons acquisitions, and the current Defence Capability plan Plan calls for \$159 Billion worth of acquisition commitment by 2018. There's a call in a recent issue of The

Australian for 12 nuclear powered attack submarines, at \$2 Billion each, so we can 'defend ourselves against China' - our bestest buddies and trading partners."

In 2005, Bryan Law, along with three other peace activists, broke into the highly-sensitive US Defense communications facility in the Northern Territory desert at Pine Gap. They were eventually acquitted of all charges under the Special Defence Undertakings Act 1952. Al Jazeera TV interviewed Bryan Law after the action, when, at the time, he had 30 arrests and 4 jail terms to his credit.

In October last year, he went swimming in the ocean, for the first time in 15 months.

"I went for a swim in the sea yesterday at beautiful Yeppoon, Bryan said afterwards. "Last time I swam was just around the corner at Rosslyn Bay, just before the Rocky Tiger ploughshares action. It's taken four surgeries and a lot of treatment to recover from complications of diabetes. Yesterdays' swim, while preparing for Talisman Saber 2013 was a real hoot."

"After the Talisman Saber exercise, I expect to spend the rest of my life either in prison, or carrying out further acts of disarmament. I feel like I've reached a place of calm clarity - OK there's a bit of fear too, and I'll be sad to be separated from my family. Persistence is king."

Bryan lived by his own mantra. He said if you want peace, work for justice.

A year ago, I asked Bryan if it was all worth it.

"If more citizens of good conscience in Cairns took up nonviolence and civil disobedience as a tool for political and social formation in Cairns we might achieve a better class of politician, and a better class of democracy than the standard we presently," Bryan said. "Meanwhile my family will do what it can. So I'll end where I began. Is it worth it? Yup!"

Bryan is survived by his partner Margaret Pestorius and their son Joseph.

"Now, I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds."
— [J. Robert Oppenheimer](#)

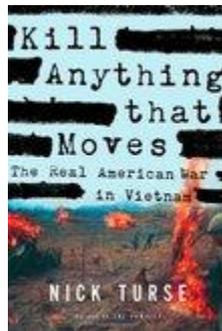
**BOOK REVIEW: KILL ANYTHING THAT MOVES**

Fatal Vision

A new book lays bare the grisly logic of mass killing in Vietnam

By Jeff Stein

Feb/Mar 2013

One dark night in South

Vietnam in mid-1969, I stopped for a beer at the rickety shack that served as an officers' club for the First Marine Division, based a few miles outside of Da Nang, on the central coast. I had just delivered an intelligence report warning of an enemy rocket attack on the city.

I found myself sitting next to a guy with a war-weary, thousand-yard stare. He turned out to be a navy doctor assigned to one of those medical teams that (along with other "hearts and minds" civic projects) were supposed to bring the locals over to our side. He started telling me about days spent taking peasants' blood pressures, cleaning sores, listening to tubercular chests, giving shots, and so forth. And then I noticed his cheeks were moist with tears. He took a drag on his cigarette.

"We fix 'em up," he said softly, wiping the tears away, "and then they"—he nodded at the distant sound of outgoing artillery—"then they blow 'em away."

It was called "H & I fire," short for "harassment and interdiction": willy-nilly artillery barrages into the dark night to terrorize Communist units in the area. The problem was that people—civilian people—lived in those "free fire zones," too. By night, the doctor told me, the marine gunners vaporized the very people he'd spent the day "helping."

In truth, you only needed a few weeks in Vietnam to know the place was seriously fucked up. A few more weeks in, you just wanted to survive the madness. "Mistakes were made," it was always said—and it still is, in many quarters—about the conduct of the war: The civilian slaughter wasn't deliberate, it was just horribly careless or crazed, people said. A tragedy. Even events as macabre as My Lai—where perhaps five hundred unarmed people, almost all of them old men, women, and children,

were gunned down by US Army troops over several hours—were "understandable," the apologia went, given the nature of a war that pushed GIs beyond the breaking point.

Nick Turse is here to tell you—to show you—that's wrong. My Lai was not a mistake or an aberration or even an exaggerated case of aggravated assault, he persuasively demonstrates in this grim but astounding book: It was born of a deliberate body-count strategy that came down from on high and was pursued energetically by colonels down to sergeants. It was a strategy that logically led to an approved practice on the ground that's summed up in the book's title: "Kill anything that moves."



A US Marine torches a Vietnamese home with a flamethrower.

Of course, this is hardly the first time allegations of mass murder in Vietnam have been raised. Following Seymour Hersh's groundbreaking My Lai exposé in 1969, a flood of influential long-form magazine pieces and books appeared that "ate away at the notion," Turse writes, "that each atrocity brought to the attention of the American public was a singular incident."

And then, suddenly, the flood turned into a trickle, and the trickle to dust. War crimes had become "so commonplace as to be barely worth mentioning or looking into," Turse writes, adding that "it was almost as if America's leading media outlets had gone straight from ignoring atrocities to treating them as old news." An atrocity now had to be something bigger than My Lai to write up; otherwise, editors told reporters, it would seem like piling on.

There was something bigger, actually, Turse recounts: a six-month-long spree of mass murder, rape, and pillaging in the Mekong Delta, carried out by soldiers of the Ninth Infantry Division,

under the command of General Julian Ewell, that was swept under the rug.

Thoroughly reported out and documented by *Newsweek's* Saigon bureau chief, Kevin Buckley, and his Vietnamese-speaking reporter Alex Shimkin, the five-thousand-word blockbuster was buried by the magazine's editors for several months, at which point Buckley asked permission to sell the piece elsewhere but was turned down. Only in June 1972 did a gutted, 1,800-word version of Buckley's account of the 1969 rampage see print, stripped of eyewitness interviews and even Ewell's name. "In its eviscerated state," Turse writes, "the article attracted only a slight ripple of interest."

Years later, *Newsweek* editor Kermit Lansner, a former *Art News* editor who "socialized with the Long Island painters of the Abstract Expressionist movement," according to his 2000 *New York Times* obituary, explained to Buckley why he had buried the piece. "He told me," Buckley says in Turse's book, "that it would be a gratuitous attack on the [Nixon] administration at this point to do another story on civilian deaths after the press had given the army and Washington such a hard time over My Lai."

Yes, Nixon was treated so unfairly. The president did his part in keeping the lid screwed on, naturally. In 1969, when the prosecution of top Green Beret officers for the unauthorized execution of a suspected North Vietnamese double agent threatened to unmask the CIA's Phoenix assassination program, Nixon intervened to have the case quashed. (The men, whose plight was highly publicized, came home as heroes.)

Following the black eye it got over My Lai, the military, too, was making it harder to get allegations of war crimes to surface or stick. In Turse's detailed accounting, witnesses were ignored or told to shut up, files went missing, prosecutors declined to prosecute, and cases were dropped. Even more troubling, those who reported instances of murder, rape, arson, and pillaging by their erstwhile brothers-in-arms did so at the risk of their lives. Nobody was

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going to jail, least of all high-ranking officers who had abetted the killing.

By 1973, a cloak of silence had settled over what really happened in Vietnam. Forty years later, Turse aims to set the record straight.

But what is it a record of? Were the atrocities peculiarly American, as some on the left have posited, or the predictable by-product of any war, especially a counterinsurgency campaign in which the guerrillas, their civilian supporters, and the truly innocent are virtually inseparable?

After reading Turse's meticulous, extraordinary, and oddly moving account, it's hard to avoid concluding that the US record in Vietnam has more in common with the Wehrmacht and the Imperial Japanese Army than "the greatest generation" that fought those enemies in World War II.

Of course, we Americans recoil from such comparisons. But here's the rub: Substitute Vietnam's "gooks," "dinks," and "slopes" for World War II's Jews, Gypsies, and gays, add in more than a million civilian casualties from air strikes, napalm, Agent Orange, and mass murder beyond My Lai, and what have you got? Industrial-style killing on a massive scale.

It didn't start out that way, of course; it never does. First came a more benign-sounding idea, the "body count," the theory that you could measure progress in Vietnam principally by the number of "enemy" killed, not territory gained and held. The numbers crunching was enthusiastically grasped by Defense Secretary Robert F. McNamara, a former Harvard Business School and Ford Motor Company whiz who, Turse writes, "had designed statistical methods of analysis for the War Department during World War II, most famously systemizing the flight patterns and improving the efficiency of the bombers that decimated German and Japanese cities."

In South Vietnam, this vision of "technowar," as the sociologist James William Gibson dubbed it, was quickly adopted by General William Westmoreland, the US commander, under the tactical rubric "Search-and-Destroy."

"The pressure to produce high body counts flowed from the Pentagon to Westmoreland's Saigon villa, down the chain of command, and out to the American patrols in the Vietnamese countryside," Turse writes.

The problem was that the enemy was hard to find. The Viet Cong doctrine was to shoot and run, and then blend into the civilian population. The GIs' frustration, along with casualties from booby traps and a demand for higher body counts, seeded cyclones of murder in hamlets all over South Vietnam.

Far from discouraging such mayhem, senior officials encouraged it, Turse found, based on his extensive interviews with former soldiers, court testimony, and after-action reports. High body counts led to promotions and time off.

Entire units were sometimes pitted against each other in body count competitions with prizes at stake. This helped make the body count mind-set even more pervasive, lending death totals the air of sports statistics. "Box scores" came to be displayed all over Vietnam—on charts and chalkboards (also known as "kill boards") at military bases, printed up in military publications, and painted as crosshatched "kills" on the sides of helicopters, to name just a few of the most conspicuous examples.

The huge kill count, though, rarely matched the paltry number of weapons found. Something was terribly wrong.

Turse, managing editor of the Nation Institute's TomDispatch.com, has traveled to some of Vietnam's remotest hamlets (most with modest little memorials to their lost loved ones), as well as to many settlements along America's back roads, to find people with sorrowful new stories to tell.

Among the veterans and peasants, there is one constant. As one former marine put it, "We was going to kill anything that we see and anything that moved."

Someone should have been held accountable. It was never to be. But willful forgetting, burying the facts and reinventing the Vietnam experience in a more heroic light, has exacted a heavy cost on us—not to mention on Iraq and Afghanistan—Turse argues.

"Never having come to grips with what our country actually did during the war, we see its ghost arise anew with every successive military intervention," he says. "Was Iraq the new Vietnam? Or was that Afghanistan? Do we see 'light at the end of the tunnel'? Are we winning 'hearts and minds'? Is 'counterinsurgency' working? Are we applying the lessons of Vietnam?"

And finally: "What are those lessons, anyway?"

Jeff Stein, a former military-intelligence case officer in Vietnam, is the author of *A Murder in Wartime: The Untold Spy Story That Changed the Course of the Vietnam War* (St. Martin's Press, 1992).

A DRONE SCANS THE WRECKAGE

[by Margaret Atwood
The New Yorker
August 13 & 20, 2012]

Smoke gets in my eyes,
my fifteen eyes.
Glass insulation smolders.
Pink tongues get stuck on it.
Charred cotton candy.

...
Did I do that?

Palm tree shorn of its head.
Cathedral ceilings, opened up
to the stars, to the stark.
What did they worship in there?
The overhead fans?
The bolsters? The naked bedspread?

I spy.

They cried O God to the pillows.
Now ripped and fluttering,
angel feathers.
These hover, slower than me.
See raw finger paint. Red.
Wet still crawling.

Must have missed something.

Better home in again.
Do some stuttering.
Attapat. Attatat. Attasis. Attaboom.
Accurate this time. Rah.
Anything saved equals failure.

Was I bad?

Teardrops fall and fall.
The rain shower's broken.



AN OPEN LETTER TO THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF GUATEMALA

by MADRE

The international human rights community has been watching for months as former dictator Efraín Ríos Montt was brought to trial, thirty years after he led a genocide against Guatemala’s Indigenous Ixil Peoples.

We at MADRE were watching when the courtroom erupted into a three-ring circus, over and over, as lawyers walked out, as judges insisted that the trial was illegal, as the man who inflicted mass killings and rapes upon the people of Guatemala insisted that he was innocent.

We were watching closely just days ago as Efraín Ríos Montt was found guilty of genocide and crimes against humanity.

While we watched, we remembered all the times we have visited our sister organizations in their communities, sitting with them in their homes and hearing the horrors that they faced. This trial finally confirmed for the whole world Ríos Montt’s role in orchestrating months of terror and attempting to destroy the Ixil People.

This measure of justice, more than thirty years after those dark days, is long overdue.

We know that this verdict cannot heal the wounds that you have suffered. It will not bring back the loved ones you have lost. It will not rebuild the communities that were torn apart and the homes that were destroyed.

You stood tall and demanded to be heard, through years when it seemed that the world would not listen.

But every day, by surviving and supporting each other, you are restoring your lives and your communities, your histories and your culture.

Your commitment to justice made this victory possible. You refused to be silenced, even when powerful forces tried to intimidate and threaten you. You refused to be ridiculed or dismissed. You stood tall and demanded to be heard, through years when it seemed that the world would not listen.

This verdict is thanks to your determination to prevent these atrocities from ever happening again,

to protect your children and grandchildren, and to give them a future.

To every person among the hundreds who bravely testified before the court, telling of the brutality they witnessed and endured, and to the thousands more whose stories we have not yet heard, we offer our deepest honor and respect.

Efraín Ríos Montt did not act alone. He had an accomplice in the Reagan Administration. The US considered him an ally, not only refusing to acknowledge the massacres occurring under his regime, but offering him moral and military support. We are committed to speak out against this injustice and to demand full accountability.

We celebrate this victory, and we offer you our solidarity in the days to come. We will stand beside you and join our voices to yours in the ongoing call for justice, even across the distances that separate us.

MADRE is a human rights organization advance women’s human rights by meeting urgent needs in communities and building lasting solutions to the crises women face.

POETRY: REMEMBRANCE

By David Krieger

March 18, 2013

It has been ten years since the illegal invasion and occupation of Iraq spearheaded by the George W. Bush administration. It is an occasion for remembrance, reflection and deep regret. It was a war built on lies that harmed everything it touched. Most of all, it has harmed the children of Iraq and their families, and it continues to harm them even though the United States and its allies have officially left Iraq.

The war has also done deep and possibly irreparable damage to the credibility and decency of the United States, the country that led in choosing war over peace. It is an ongoing disgrace to America that we do not hold those who initiated aggressive warfare to account for their individual crimes, as the Allies did at Nuremberg following World War II. Short of public international criminal trials, the best we can do now is commit ourselves to never

again allowing an aggressive war to be committed in our names, build a world at peace, and be a force for peace in our personal and communal lives.

The five poems that follow were written over an eight-year period, nearly the length of the nine-year war. The first poem, “The Children of Iraq Have Names,” was written in the lead-up to the war and was read at many hopeful peace marches in late 2002 and early 2003, when many people throughout the world took to the streets seeking to prevent the war from occurring. The second poem, “Worse Than the War,” was written in June 2004, a little over a year into the war. In it, I give my thoughts on what could be worse than the war.

The third poem, “To an Iraqi Child,” was written nearly a year later, in April 2005. It is about a 12-year-old boy, Ali Ismail Abbas, who lost his mother, father, brother and 11 other relatives when a US missile struck his home. The boy lost both of his arms

in the attack. He had wanted to be a doctor.

The fourth poem, “Greeting Bush in Baghdad,” was written in December 2008, near the end of the war and is based upon an incident that occurred when George W. Bush visited Iraq and spoke to the press there. The fifth and final poem, “Zaid’s Misfortune,” was written in July 2010, and is a poem about another Iraqi child.

The children of Iraq paid the price for a war that should not have happened. So did the people of Iraq. So did the young Americans that the government sent to fight and die there. So did those Americans who fought in Iraq and came home injured and traumatized. So did America itself and its allies pay the price of military failure, the loss of credibility and the trillions of dollars wasted on the war. So did we all pay the price of being implicated in an unnecessary and immeasurably futile war. When will we ever learn?

(see poems on next page)



POETRY

The Children of Iraq Have Names

The children of Iraq have names.
 They are not the nameless ones.

The children of Iraq have faces.
 They are not the faceless ones.

The children of Iraq do not wear Saddam's face.
 They each have their own face.

The children of Iraq have names.
 They are not all called Saddam Hussein.

The children of Iraq have hearts.
 They are not the heartless ones.

The children of Iraq have dreams.
 They are not the dreamless ones.

The children of Iraq have hearts that pound.
 They are not meant to be statistics of war.

The children of Iraq have smiles.
 They are not the sullen ones.

The children of Iraq have twinkling eyes.
 They are quick and lively with their laughter.

The children of Iraq have hopes.
 They are not the hopeless ones.

The children of Iraq have fears.
 They are not the fearless ones.

The children of Iraq have names.
 Their names are not collateral damage.

What do you call the children of Iraq?
 Call them Omar, Mohamed, Fahad.

Call them Marwa and Tiba.
 Call them by their names.

Worse Than the War

Worse than the war, the endless, senseless war,
 Worse than the lies leading to the war,

Worse than the countless deaths and injuries,
 Worse than hiding the coffins and not attending funerals,

Worse than the flouting of international law,
 Worse than the torture at Abu Ghraib prison,

Worse than the corruption of young soldiers,
 Worse than undermining our collective sense of decency,

Worse than the arrogance, smugness and swagger,
 Worse than our loss of credibility in the world,
 Worse than the loss of our liberties,

Worse than learning nothing from the past,
 Worse than destroying the future,
 Worse than the incredible stupidity of it all,

Worse than all of these,
 As if they were not enough for one war or country or lifetime,
 Is the silence, the resounding silence of good Americans.

To an Iraqi Child

for Ali Ismail Abbas

So you wanted to be a doctor?
 It was not likely that your dreams
 would have come true anyway.

We didn't intend for our bombs to find you.
 They are smart bombs, but they didn't know
 that you wanted to be a doctor.

They didn't know anything about you
 and they know nothing of love.

They cannot be trusted with dreams.
 They only know how to find their targets
 and explode in fulfillment.

They are gray metal casings with violent hearts,
 doing only what they were created to do.

It isn't their fault that they found you.
 Perhaps you were not meant to be a doctor.

Zaid's Misfortune

Zaid had the misfortune of being born in Iraq, a country rich with oil.	Zaid's misfortune multiplied when his parents were shot down in front of their medical clinic.
Iraq had the misfortune of being invaded by a country greedy for oil.	Being eleven and haunted by the deaths of one's parents is a great misfortune.
The country greedy for oil had the misfortune of being led by a man too eager for war.	In Zaid's misfortune a distant silence engulfs

Greeting Bush in Baghdad

"This is a farewell kiss, you dog."

-- Muntader al-Zaidi

You are a guest in my country, unwanted
surely, but still a guest.

You stand before us waiting for praise,
but how can we praise you?

You come after your planes have rained
death on our cities.

Your soldiers broke down our doors,
humiliated our men, disgraced our women.

We are not a frontier town and you are not
our marshal.

You are a torturer. We know you force water
down the throats of our prisoners.

We have seen the pictures of our naked prisoners
threatened by your snarling dogs.

You are a maker of widows and orphans,
a most unwelcome guest.

I have only this for you, my left shoe that I hurl
at your lost and smirking face,
and my right shoe that I throw at your face
of no remorse.

**EDWARD SNOWDEN***The Asymmetry of Courage*by **Robert Shetterly**

One of the ironies of warfare is that an apparently vastly superior force can be defeated by an apparently much weaker one when the weaker force refuses to meet the more powerful on its own terms, play by its rules, square off army to army, submit to punch and counterpunch. A combination of strategy and tactics designed by the weaker force to enervate the morale, confidence and finances of the powerful may prove decisive --- as it did for the American revolutionaries against the British, North Vietnamese & Viet Cong against the U.S., or the Afghans against the Soviets. In 1975 Andrew Mack first used the term "asymmetric warfare" to describe this phenomenon in an article called *Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars*. A materially weaker force with higher motivation --- they may be fighting for their own land --- and greater perseverance may prevail. The weaker force may be beleaguered by the horrible and high tech weaponry of exorbitant power --- stealth bombers, napalm, cluster bombs, cruise missiles and drones, depleted uranium, helicopter gun ships and satellite surveillance --- but it manages to dodge and absorb, go underground, patiently wait to strike an exposed weakness.

I was thinking about asymmetry this week as the story of Edward Snowden unfolded. This story, one young man pitted against our national security state, is an extreme asymmetry, but the disparity is not between lesser and greater violent forces. And, for that reason, it could not properly be called a David versus Goliath confrontation. David was small but armed with sling & stone. Edward's only "weapons" are courage and truth.

In asymmetric warfare, the powerful say, "Come out and fight on our terms! We'll show you who's stronger!" The weaker say, "Not on your life! We plan to win, not commit suicide."

Conversely, in a contest of asymmetric courage, the lone whistleblower says to the powerful institutions, "Come out and fight on my terms --- ethics, courage, truth, law!" And there is deafening

silence from the powerful institutions because with all their secret knowledge and secret money, their special forces and spies, their torture and secret prisons, they have not courage. They have not ethics, truth or law. They are muscled up with conformity, with arrogance, with self-congratulatory winks and nods. They have the power to easily crush the person of courage, to discredit him in the media, to arrest and convict him in a kangaroo court, to torture him, disappear him, force feed him. They have secret protocol and secret policy, the power to change the law to legalize atrocity. But they have no courage. They have the pathetic vanity of a steroid-pumped-up robots flexing in front of a mirror. With satisfied smirks they ask rhetorically, "Who's the strongest in the world?" But they have no courage.

Thomas Jefferson said, "When the people fear their government, there is tyranny; when the government fears the people, there is liberty." He could have been commenting on the situation of Edward Snowden or any one of so many recent whistleblowers. People fear the government when it secretly and lawlessly insinuates itself into the fabric of their lives with the ever present threat that each person could be plucked out of that fabric with no recourse. This is done in the name of security. But a government that spies on its own people actually prefers fear to security. Or, simply, the security of fear. There should be no trade off or balancing act, no compromise, between our freedoms and our security. Our freedoms are our security. Sacrificing our privacy, which is our autonomy as individuals, for the sake of security is like willingly agreeing to be half a slave.

The false dichotomy between security and freedom obscures a more important fact. When we wring our hands and listen to a president pontificate about how to balance this either/or, we are encouraged not to notice that it is our foreign, military and economic policies that are designed to create injustice and insecurity. Imperialism, both soft and hard, fosters anger and insecurity. The obsession with secrecy is absurd. There is no secrecy about this. The only secret worth divining is where the next moral hero will come from to expose the

extent of tyranny and inspire more people to act with asymmetric courage. In that action is the hope of democracy. In that "illegal" action is the hope of the rule of law.

Edward Snowden reminds me of Rachel Corrie, who was run over and killed by an armored Israeli bulldozer on March 16, 2003 as she placed herself --- asymmetrically --- between the bulldozer and a Palestinian home she hoped to protect from destruction. The similarity between Rachel and Edward is in the nature of the stand-off --- isolated courage versus brute power. The difference is that no one knew about Rachel's courage until it was too late. We all know about Edward, and, perhaps, if we can summon a fraction of his courage, we can protect him and thus change the policy.

In early 2003 shortly after arriving in Palestine, in her first email home, Rachel said, "I don't know if many of the children here have ever existed without tank-shell holes in their walls and the towers of an occupying army surveying them constantly from the near horizons." She assumed that all Americans would recognize constant surveillance as a prime indicator of tyranny. Like Rachel, Edward attempts to protect an increasingly fragile structure, our Constitution and the democracy it is meant to house. Edward said, "...they [the NSA] are intent on making every conversation and every form of behavior in the world known to them." While our national security state has all the ideological arrogance and democratic sensitivity of a bulldozer operated by a storm trooper, it is susceptible to and befuddled by courage. It blusters, it growls, it threatens and backfires. It uses its x-ray vision to spy out the color of our underwear and the temerity of our intention to resist. But, ultimately, it's a coward.

Edward Snowden's courage is like a lever the end of which he shoved under the NSA's enormous dead weight. Whether the weight moves depends on how many of us grab on. Asymmetry can move mountains.

Robert Shetterly is a writer and artist who lives in Brooksville, Maine. He is the author of *Americans Who Tell the Truth*.



(continued from Page 32...)

children and future generations to abolish all nuclear weapons. The time to act is now.

Robert F. Dodge, M.D., serves on the boards of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, Beyond War, Physicians for Social Responsibility Los Angeles, and Citizens for Peaceful Resolutions, and writes for PeaceVoice.

Ira Helfand is a past president of Physicians for Social Responsibility and co-president of the [International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War](#).

“I heard you in the other room asking your mother, 'Mama, am I a Palestinian?' When she answered 'Yes' a heavy silence fell on the whole house. It was as if something hanging over our heads had fallen, its noise exploding, then - silence. Afterwards...I heard you crying. I could not move. There was something bigger than my awareness being born in the other room through your bewildered sobbing. It was as if a blessed scalpel was cutting up your chest and putting there the heart that belongs to you...I was unable to move to see what was happening in the other room. I knew, however, that a distant homeland was being born again: hills, olive groves, dead people, torn banners and folded ones, all cutting their way into a future of flesh and blood and being born in the heart of another child...Do you believe that man grows? No, he is born suddenly - a word, a moment, penetrates his heart to a new throb. One scene can hurl him down from the ceiling of childhood onto the ruggedness of the road.”

— Ghassan Kanafani

“If war boosts the economy of the industrial nations that own the war supplies, it smashes the economy of the nations that consume them.” **Fereshten Gol-Mohammadi, Iran, 1983.**

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MEMBERSHIP – JUST PEACE Qld Inc. PO Box 573, COORPAROO QLD 4151			
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Please post to the following address:

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Coorparoo Qld 4151

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

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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