



The Peace Issue . . .

The Newsletter of Just Peace Queensland Inc

Issue No. 51

March 2016

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

Contents of this issue include:

Just Peace Editorial	2
Just Peace Activities	3
Talking Point	4
Letter to the Editor	4
Troubled Waters	5
Break the Silence	8
America's Aircraft Carrier	10
Brussels Terror Attack	11
Another Mass Killing	13
C.I.A. Motto	14
Syria: Holding the Line	16
Intifada for Dummies	17
Palestine Overwhelmed	18
Shades of the Nazis	18
Syria and Korea	19
Murder is Policy	20
A Military Leviathan	21
The End of WWI	23
Book Review: Humanitarian War	25
Film Review: Eye in the Sky	26
Brinkmanship	27
Poetry	28
Recovery from Militarism	29

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Funding Fictions: Australia China & the Defence White Paper

by **Binoy Kampmark**

March 1, 2016

Political establishments are constantly in search of excuses for their existence. Since the taxpayer is constantly asked to provide funding for them, one of the most pertinent questions tends to be what use a military-security establishment tends to have, apart from creating rivals of the same ilk. More weapons, more armaments, and a bloated defence security complex suggests an escapade rather than a sober assessment on self-interest and security.

The Cold War was one such example, a vicious confrontation masquerading as a morally clear conflict. The ones to profit enormously from it were, as ever, those working in defence and beavering away on the next murderous device for the next lethal, preferably bogged down conflict. It produced false enemies in search of a fiction, leading to bloody proxy wars, long-ended engagements with lasting consequences, and trillions of dollars in waste. That there are still individuals who maintain that a victor could be found by this episode of orgiastic violence is not merely contestable but laughable.

Australia's equivalent of an illusory search for enemies it does not have but desperately wants comes in the form of white papers, or more specifically, the Defence White Paper. It heralds Australia's intention, as the ABC described it, to join "Asia's arms race".

What such Defence Papers do is stimulate the fiction of a threat, but do so in such a way that it becomes real. Self-prophesising doom is an enduring habit in such documents – a terror that is inflated in order to render it credible.

The document resorts to such statements that have a familiar ring to them: if other countries are choking themselves in search of more weapons, Australia must do the same thing. "Asia's defence spending," the white paper declares solemnly, "is now larger than Europe's."

There are fears about the relocating of influence, with half the world's submarines finding their areas of operation in the Indo-Pacific region, along with a similar percentage of combat aircraft, over the next 20 years.

This is the ingredient for the perfect storm and Australia is ever willing to wade into it. The military market bazaar is something Canberra cannot avoid, because it is being frequented by other countries. How the Guns of August, as Barbara Tuchman so eloquently described the catalysing moments of World War I, seem so pertinent in such times.

This leads to such tarot card readers as Peter Jennings of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute to insist that "mentalities" had to be updated to confront new threats. Jennings, being an advisor in the authoring of the paper, was enthusiastically alarmist to focus on various moves from China, which had embraced the "might is right approach". "When we started working on this white paper two years ago, there was no island construction. There were no missile deployments or air craft developments."

This "updated" approach would need to place Australia's neck further out, not from Perth, Sydney or Darwin, but at the forefront of south-east Asia and the Pacific. This recipe for aggression,

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according to Jennings, would see the Australian navy move “much, much further forward into the region than we had a generation ago”.

Given that the worth of the Royal Australian Navy these days centre on towing back boats filled with asylum seekers to Indonesia, this hardly looks promising, let alone credible. What the white paper instead resembles is a proxy neo-colonial binge, directed from Washington.

Australia’s generally useless defence force, which tends to only double as a mercenary outfit to deploy for the next US president, persists in this document. This is a hope in search of a purpose, and it comes to \$195 billion over the next 10 years. But more to the point, it is one that commences with the illusion that Australia’s defence force is a technical miracle that is losing its lustre.

The various new acquisitions range from an additional 2,500 defence personnel, 12 new E/A-18G Growler electronic attack aircraft, 12 supposedly “regionally superior” submarines costing \$50 billion to be built between 2018-2057, 9 anti-war submarine warfare frigates, 72 F-35A Lightning II Joint Strike Fighters, and two fleets of drones.

This is when defence-speak sounds much like the promise of a real estate agent. Things are going to “turn”; the market is bullish now for sellers, so, well, sell. Alternatively, if good for buyers, then throw in your lot with the others and purchase.

Former Australian Prime Minister, the very aggrieved Tony Abbott, has a tendency to simplify, but such simplicity does throw up the odd insight that sears through strategic obfuscation. Australia’s China policy, which finds awkward voice in the defence paper, tends to be characterised by one of “fear and greed”. These views, expressed to Germany’s Angela Merkel, are not without truth. As Abbott noted to President Xi Jinping in his welcoming speech to Parliament House on November 17, 2014, “It is a joy to have friends from afar.”

All of this sets the scene for the next bit of theatre, this time from the Chinese side. Chinese military strategists worth their salt will have a far better sense of Australian capabilities than the

Australians themselves. They know that the packed punch is only ever going into thin air, unless it has Washington’s reassuring hand.

Nonetheless, Beijing got stropopy at the suggestions inherent in the document, expressing “serious concern” about the white paper’s approach to the South China Sea maritime dispute. “We urge the Australian side to cherish the hard-won good momentum of development in bilateral relations,” warned a Chinese Ministry of National Defence spokesman, “and don’t take part in or conduct any activities that may compromise the stability of the region.”

The problem with a country with no external threats is that something needs to be invented. This not a case of necessity so much as envy, the sense of cascading irrelevance. The Asia-Pacific, ever the source of so much historical angst for Australia, continues to supply the perfect alibi for the next, unnecessarily dangerous arms race.

Binoy Kampmark was a Commonwealth Scholar at Selwyn College, Cambridge. He lectures at RMIT University, Melbourne. Email: bkampmark@gmail.com

EDITORIAL: ELECTIONS

In an editorial written in January 2014, I wrote about the exercise of “absolute powers” by Governments and the erosion, and reduction of the basic human rights and civil liberties of ordinary people as a consequence.

I made the following observations at the time:

“The human rights, civil liberties, working conditions, welfare necessities, and public services for ordinary Australians were abolished or reduced under conservative Governments led by Howard, Bjelke-Petersen, and Newman.

All caring Australians should be seriously concerned about their basic rights, and future prospects under the Newman and Abbott Governments, for the evidence is clear that they will be targeted”.

So what has changed since then at both State and Federal levels?

In early 2015 the people of Queensland created history when they proved that the collective power of ordinary people can overthrow even the most powerful undemocratic

dictatorships at the “ballot box”.

The causes of the Newman Governments downfall are many. One example is the un-acceptability of the draconian anti-democratic Bokie/VLAD laws.

In Canberra, we have witnessed the overthrow of a first term ultra-conservative, and very unpopular coalition Prime Minister Abbott, by a smooth talking multi-millionaire, driven by ego and self-interest, and masquerading as a libertarian whose objective is to save all Australians.

The fact is he voted for all of the draconian anti people measures contained in the 2014 Abbott/Hockey Budget, which has failed to pass because Labor, The Greens, and Cross Bench Senators will not support it.

To get the numbers to achieve his life-long ambition, Turnbull sold out to the Abbott arch-conservatives and adopted many of their out dated anti-people policies now being seriously questioned by ordinary Australians.

All Australians should be aware, and alarmed, by what has/is taking place in Canberra since Malcolm Turnbull became Prime Minister.

He has put good governance aside for the purpose of creating an environment and a platform rooted in deceit and deception in order to con the Australian electorate into believing that:

- The Abbott initiative of establishing a Royal Commission into the CFMEU/Trade Unions, is not a base get square political act;
- The Heydon Royal Commission costing \$70 million was not biased against the CFMEU, for the purpose of damaging the union movement, and Labor;
- By failing to pass the ABCC Act the Australian economy will be put in jeopardy, and that thousands of jobs will be destroyed;
- The changes to the law in relation to electing Senators was not a considered longer term strategy to improve LNP chances of achieving “absolute” power by winning both the House of Representatives and the Senate;

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- The unprecedented recall of both houses of parliament, at great tax payer expense, to pass/not pass the ABCC Bill is justified;
- An early election in the form of a Double Dissolution is necessary and in the best interests of stable government, and Australians;

What can we do to maintain and improve Parliamentary democracy?

What can we do to convince the Federal and Queensland State Governments to introduce a Human Rights Act/Charter?

As the upcoming Double Dissolution election will have a bearing on the outcome of both questions, we all should exercise great judgement and extreme care when casting our votes for both houses of the Federal Parliament.

The result of the last Queensland election should be the inspiration for all, to realise that our vote can make a difference.

Members and friends should write to Bill Shorten, Shadow Ministers, and Backbenchers, asking that Labor give an undertaking that when elected it will enact a Human Right's Act.

A Queensland Government Committee is currently considering submissions made on whether there should be a Charter for Human Rights and Responsibilities.

Whilst submissions to the Committee closed on Monday, 18th April 2015, it does not report to Parliament until sometime in June 2015.

Members and friends should write to the Premier, Ministers, and Backbenchers, urging them to enact a Human Rights Act/Charter during this parliamentary term.

In closing I remind Members, and readers of the Peace Issue, of Anthropologist Margaret Meade's quote;

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has".

Norm Bullen

April 2015

JUST PEACE ACTIVITIES

Just Peace AGM December 8th was held at Magda Community Artz- great venue with the Combined Unions Choir singing and Senator Claire Moore as our speaker. A big thanks to both for the ongoing support for peace activity.

January 17th **Brisbane IPAN groups meeting at the Quakers Meeting House** was well attended planning for the year ahead and very enjoyable in the beautiful setting at Kelvin Grove.

February 8th Barrister James O'Neil addressed a **Just Peace public forum on Australia and Syria: Continuing Obfuscation**

March 20th **Palm Sunday** this year was very well supported with the emphasis on the push factors forcing people to seek refuge from wars and persecution in their own countries. Dr Alison Broinowski delivered a great address and Dr Daniele Villiunas acting as MC was able to weave together the harsh humanitarian consequences for refugees. Other speakers included Ros McLennan General Secretary of the Qld Council of Unions and Dr Paul Sanggaran one of the brave medico's who have risked criminal charges to blow the whistle on the human rights abuses on Nauru and Manus Island.

April 7th the **Global Day of Action on Military Spending** was marked by holding a speak out in front of Anzac Square. We distributed 500 informative brochures to passing city workers and entertained with great songs from Dermot Dorgan and poetry from Anita Reed. The photos and report have been sent to the International Peace Bureau who organised events around the world. See photos at

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/intlpeacebureau/sets/72157666843010506/with/25704587893/>

April 24th **Anzac Eve Candle light Peace Vigil.**

On a windy rain threatening night 60-70 people came together to shine a light on the need for an end to wars. Father Terry Fitzpatrick conveyed the story of wars waged on the first people which have yet to be acknowledged on Anzac Day. We enjoyed some great music and poetry contributions from Dermot Dorgan Anita Reed and Dawn Joyce

and songs from the Combined Unions Choir . A candle light procession to the Shrine of Remembrance followed the gathering at Emma Miller Place.

Independent and Peaceful Australia Network.

Planning is underway for the 2016 IPAN AGM and National Conference in Alice Springs in October. The Brisbane IPAN Conference in 2015 decided to highlight the role Pine Gap plays in supporting US led wars including the use of Drones. The agreement between the Australian government and the United States was signed 50 years ago.

For more information check out the IPAN Facebook page and to book go to <http://www.trybooking.com/KTNF> or ring Annette on 0431597256

United Nations Assn Australia Qld

Just Peace is a member organisation and participates in activities. Vikki, Clem and Annette organise the International Day of Peace Lecture on September 21st each year. This year's lecture will be delivered by Lawyer Dr Debbie Kilroy on the theme of human rights and domestic violence.

A number of media releases have gone out on a range of Peace Justice and Independence issues over the past 6 months.

Annette Brownlie

"The man who can face vilification and disgrace, who can stand up against the popular current, even against his friends and his country when he know he is right, who can defy those in authority over him, who can take punishment and prison and remain steadfast—that is a man of courage. The fellow whom you taunt as a 'slacker' because he refuses to turn murderer—he needs courage. But do you need much courage just to obey orders, to do as you are told and to fall in line with thousands of others to the tune of general approval and the *Star Spangled Banner*?"
—Alexander Berkman, *What Is Communist Anarchism?*

**TALKING POINT***Time to review military policy with America*

January 25, 2016

Linley Grant

HAVE you been dismayed at the number of chief executives of established Australian companies who come from other countries, particularly America, with a result that these once-thriving firms have done poorly thereafter, yet the CEOs leave with big payouts?

Have you been irritated to find good Australian firms taken over by US concerns have had their Australian recipes changed, numerous unnecessary ingredients added, and doubled in cost?

Are you concerned that Aussies have forgotten the fight for the eight-hour day in copying the US business style?

Those in my networks have been saying for years that Australian soil should be leased to foreigners, not sold, and infrastructure such as ports should remain under Australian Government control.

Over the past two years an increasing number of us, including members of groups affiliated with the Independent and Peaceful Australia Network, have raised concern at Australia's continuing subservience to US military objectives. Agreements with the US have drawn us into disastrous conflicts like Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Currently, the involvement of Pine Gap in America's rising use of drones is leading Australia into being complicit in violating United Nations conventions and committing war crimes.

America's confrontational stance to China is of great concern to many. The increase in US bases around China shows it is under military pressure from the US, not the reverse.

Japan's government claims it is the victim because China has transgressed in relation to the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands. However, Japan invaded China, not vice versa.

Former Australian prime minister Malcolm Fraser stated that "documents from the Japanese National Archives ... clearly show that the Menji Government acknowledged Chinese ownership of the islands in 1885. The islands were annexed by Japan in 1895..." (*Dangerous Allies*, p. 262). America needs to reconsider.

Many in my networks think that if Australia acted independently, it could play a more

vital, positive role in the Pacific and internationally. It could assist in increasing peaceful relations between Pacific nations.

Australia cannot play that positive role while it is viewed internationally as America's lapdog in relation to foreign policy. Evidence of Australia's unhealthy relationship with the US is obvious. It includes the US marines based in Darwin, the Pine Gap communications base and 80 other American bases around Australia, the integration of HMAS Sydney as part of the US 7th Fleet, and the purchase of overpriced aircraft.

If Australia was independent, it could urge compromise and negotiation between the US, China and Japan and diplomatic solutions in the Middle East.

In becoming independent, Australia should work to maintain good relations with the US, like those established by Canada and New Zealand. It should confirm that its arrangement within the ANZUS alliance is a consultative arrangement, not an open-ended agreement to join in military actions.

Independence might involve increased Defence spending, but there would be other savings, particularly if contracts for overpriced and wasteful military equipment are foregone and Australia concentrates on good relations with its neighbours.

To become independent of Chinese and US influence would require Australia takes several important steps:

LEGISLATION to allow the lease, but not sale of Australian land and assets to foreigners.

REVOCATION of the lease of the port of Darwin to a Chinese company and payment of compensation, if necessary.

CLOSURE of the US marine base in Darwin and other US bases around Australia.

REMOVAL of HMAS Sydney from the US 7th Fleet.

PHASING out the US role in Pine Gap.

Australia is not a British colony, nor a state of America. In 2016 it should be independent.

Linley Grant is state president of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

LETTER TO EDITORFrom: **Gareth Smith**<maxigar@gmail.com>

Date: 21 January 2016 at 18:04

Subject: Aiding and Abetting Terrorism

To: letters@smh.com.au

Dear Editor,

Australian politicians visiting Israel may find themselves in breach of the Counter-Terrorism Legislation Amendment (Foreign Fighters) Bill given that Israel openly admits assisting al Nusra front terrorists. Former IDF colonel Miri Eisen, stated that Israel had treated about 1,000 injured terrorists and had rebuilt the shattered jaw of their deputy commander, returning him to his base in Quneitra. Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Ya'alon corroborates this, "We've assisted them under two conditions, that they don't get too close to the border, and that they don't touch the Druze." (Times of Israel. July 31, 2015). Israel's doctors obey the Hippocratic oath and treat any injured person, even terrorists, but why doesn't Israel arrest them? Australia and its allies bomb these terrorists but Israel fixes them up to fight again.

Gareth W R Smith

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**TROUBLED WATERS**

Locals fear mysterious Tiwi Islands port is being eyed off by the United States Military

By **Thom Mitchell** on October 24, 2015
[Aboriginal Affairs](#)

Tensions continue to grow in the South China Sea between the United States and China. But there's tensions closer to home as well. On the Aboriginal-owned Tiwi Islands, Traditional Owners are increasingly concerned plans are afoot to bring the full might of the United States military into their pristine backyard. A massive port recently constructed on the island – without any environmental approval – is at the centre of the angst.

Scandal has lapped the shores of the Tiwi Islands since it was discovered earlier this year that a major port had been built without environmental assessment or approval, but the controversy will turn a deeper shade of blue if suggestions the Aboriginal-owned islands are being eyed as a potential military base by the United States turn out to be true.

The Tiwi Islands hit the headlines in May, when the ABC revealed that construction of a \$130 million development known as Port Melville had flown under the radar, and was about to begin servicing the Top End's offshore oil and gas industry without any conditions in place to protect the internationally significant local ecosystem.

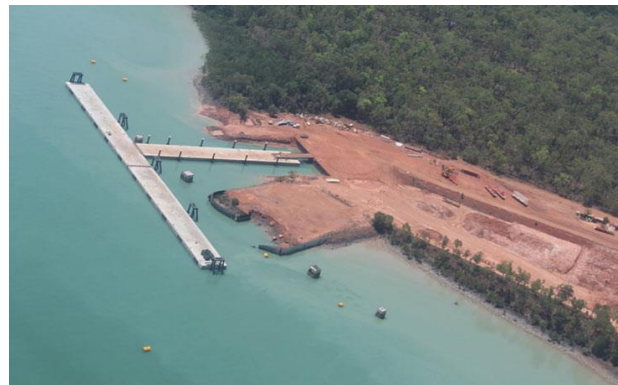
This extraordinary lack of oversight, and the Federal government's repeated failures to act on tip offs from the Northern Territory Environmental Protection Agency, have invited scrutiny and turned up traces of America's strategic interests in the region.

A senior union official has told New Matilda the company behind the port had anticipated a base for up to 80,000 US Marines as early as 2012, and the politician who represents the islands in the Northern Territory parliament expects a base to be built to "protect Australia from war in the future".

By the time media began scrutinising Port Melville, though, it was virtually built.

The expansion of an existing wharf used to service the islands' small forestry industry had occurred under the Federal Department of Environment's nose, and by May the development included a 30 million litre 'fuel farm' and accommodation for 150 offshore oil and gas workers.

As New Matilda reported last month, a series of documents obtained under freedom of information legislation reveal that as they scrambled to explain their blunders, Federal bureaucrats became suspicious they may have been provided 'false and misleading' information about the expansion of the port by the Tiwi Land Council, and the port's new Singaporean owners.



Port Melville, on Melville Island in the Tiwi Islands group north of Darwin.

As that story gathered pace, Port Melville became the subject of intense speculation about its financiers, its purpose, and how and why the port expansion escaped normal development and environmental processes.

Many of these questions remain unresolved, but more are emerging, and the phrase 'United States military' keeps coming up.

Earlier this year, the Tiwi Land Council (TLC) conceded it has been "briefed in part" about the potential for the US Department of Defence to use Port Melville. Now, New Matilda can reveal that a major military base has been on the port developers' minds for at least three years.

In 2012 Captain Larry Johnson, a former senior officer in the US Coast Guard, met with an Australian union official and told him a US military base was part of the logic of establishing Port Melville in the first place.

At the time, Capt Johnson was a board member of Ezion Holdings Limited, the company developing the port, and was spearheading the Singaporean firm's expansion into Australia.

On 31 May, he met with the Maritime Union of Australia's Northern Territory Branch Secretary, Thomas Mayor, to discuss a looming marine skills shortage in the region.

"We were there to discuss... [an] enterprise agreement covering offshore oil and gas, and Larry Johnson came in via video link to talk to [the union] about potential ways to tackle skills shortages in the industry at the time," Mayor told New Matilda.

"He said there was potential for 80,000 US Marines to be stationed... [at a] base to be built on the Tiwis, and that Ezion were a top-tier company with contracts in moving cargo for the US.

"He spoke from a point of view of, 'This is something that might happen and we might position ourselves to be in the right place at the right time'.

"It was shocking, you know, to think of 80,000 US marines [in the Tiwi Islands]. It was a bit wild.

"I'd only just met the guy so I didn't really give it a whole lot of credibility, but then things started to fall into place, you know, [Ezion] started setting up on the island and they got the lease, did the deal.

"And so it all started to fall into place."

Mayor made brief hand-written notes of the meeting with Johnson, copies of which have been seen by New Matilda, and his recount what Capt Johnson said at the meeting is strengthened by another conversation which took place more recently.

Last month, Francis Xavier Kurrupuwu – the Country Liberal Party member representing Tiwi Islanders in

(continued on Page 6...)



(continued from Page 5...)

the Northern Territory parliament – told at least one Traditional Owner that meetings about a US military base were ongoing.

Kurrapuwu denies the conversation took place, or that he's aware of plans for any military build up, but the Tiwi Islander interviewed by New Matilda is adamant the politician told them rumours of a military base were well-founded, and left them with the impression it was "a done deal".

New Matilda has agreed not to name the Tiwi Islander, who was travelling for a work trip which Kurrapuwu was also involved in when the subject was broached.

"I just said to him, 'I heard there was going to be a US base built near Pickertaramoor, on south Melville Island', and I'm like, 'Is that true, or is it gammon?'" the Tiwi Islander said.

"He just paused for a little bit and he was like, 'Yeah, there's going to be one built near there now'.

"It had something to do with the Tiwi council talking about it, because we were talking about the meeting minutes. Then he was like, 'Yes they've already been having meetings about it'".

"I [said], 'But what for?' You know, 'how come?'. And then he said, 'It's to protect Australia from war in the future'.

"He said something along the lines like [The Tiwi Land Council] met up with some people to talk about it. That's all I remember, that they had been talking about it.

"[It seemed] like it's definitely a done deal sort of thing."

It's also apparent that Captain Johnson has told more than just union officials about a military future for the Tiwi Islands.

In March 2014, Capt Johnson told The Australian newspaper that he had met "with the US Marine Corps at the Pentagon" to discuss their interest in Port Melville, as America canvassed what services it might require in the region.

"Now there are some US Navy guys in town talking to the Australian Defence Force," Capt Johnson said at the time.

The Captain goes quiet

Capt Johnson, however, no longer appears to be talking. Through his office, he ignored repeated requests for an interview with New Matilda, or to provide comment for this story.

The Captain cut his teeth with the US Coast Guard, one of the five armed forces of the United States and the only military organisation within the Department of Homeland Security. Today, he maintains close contact with his port development partners at the Tiwi Land Council, who were called to appear before federal parliament in late May this year shortly after news broke that Port Melville was nearing completion.

During a Senate Estimates hearing, federal Labor Senator for the Northern Territory, Nova Peris asked whether the land council was aware of any planned military uses for Port Melville.

In a fleeting exchange, Executive Member of the TLC, Andrew Tipungwuti said the land council had been "briefed in part", but not before Nigel Scullion – the Country Liberal Senator for the Northern Territory – intervened, and tried to block the question.

PERIS: Has the Tiwi Land Council been briefed on all potential for the facilities to be used by US Marines or any other US military organisation?

SCULLION: Mr Chairman, I wonder if you could rule on the question. They are asking the Land Council whether or not they have been briefed about the use of land that has already been leased out and subleased in some cases. I am quite happy for them to provide the information, but, again, we are talking about whether or not a particular piece of land may be used by the US Marines and whether you have been briefed by that. I am not sure why it would be the case that they have been or have not been briefed. Again, the questions are coming from a position as if the Land Council would still be in some sort of control of the land or there would be some sort of obligation—

CHAIR (Senator Cory Bernardi): Minister, I take your point. It is one you have made repeatedly. I do have to agree that, ultimately, if a piece of land is under a lease or a sublease, questions

about usage and things should be directed to the leaseholder. I would remind you of that, Senator Peris.

Greens Senator Rachel Siewert jumped in to back Peris.

SIEWERT: All Senator Peris asked — I would have thought it was a fair question to ask — was: have you been briefed? It is a pretty important issue and the council has a pretty central role in the life of the Tiwi Islands. I would have thought it is a fair question to ask: have you been briefed?

CHAIR: The question has been asked and, indeed, it may be a fair question. I have just reminded Senator Peris that questions should be directed to the Tiwi Land Council about their business rather than the business of third-party entities, on what they are doing on land or what they are doing with lease agreements and things of that nature. It may be that Mr Clancy is in a position to answer that question. It may be that he is not and he wants to take it on notice. It is entirely up to him.

Andrew Tinpunwuti decided to answer the question, with a fairly explosive revelation.

Mr Tipungwuti: Senator, we might take that on notice because we have been briefed on that in part, not to the full extent. We want to be sure exactly.

CHAIR: You have answered the question: you have had a partial briefing on it. That is sufficient, thank you.

The question was, in the end, taken on notice. The written response from the Tiwi Land Council distanced itself from the verbal advice provided by the TLC official.

"The TLC has not been briefed on the potential for the facilities to be used by the US Marines or any other US military organisation," the land council said.

But, it added, an Aboriginal company set up by the Tiwi Land Council had met with the port developers, who "mentioned a broad range of opportunities that could possibly be explored for Port Melville, including use by US Marines".

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In a written statement to New Matilda, the Australian Defence Force ignored questions over whether the United States was planning to capitalise on the Tiwi Islands' new port, but noted that the Australian military "does not have any plans for a base on the Tiwi Islands".

New Matilda also asked the NT Government whether it knew of any plans by the US military to use the new port, or establish a base on the island.

"It is the Northern Territory government's understanding that the Department of Defence — in conjunction with the US Force Posture initiative — has no current plans for a military base to be established on the Tiwi Islands, nor for the deployment of US Marines to the islands".

Northern Territory Chief Minister Adam Giles did not respond to subsequent inquiries over whether or not he'd met with US officials, the Tiwi Land Council, or Port Melville's developers, to discuss military uses for the facility.

The US 'Pivot To Asia'

Of course, there is already one US military base in Australia's north — at Darwin. It's scaling up towards a permanent presence of 2,500 Marines by 2017, and recent reports suggest Darwin could also soon be hosting a contingent of American warships.

The arrangement is part of the broader US 'pivot to Asia' strategy, a reaction to growing Chinese assertiveness in the South China Sea.

In an interesting exploration of the growing tensions between the US and China, *The Monthly's* Hugh White recently observed that "startling aerial photos of new military bases being created out of dredge sand convey more concretely than anything else, the image of China's power on the march".

The standoff came into focus earlier this month, when Foreign Minister Julie Bishop and Defence Minister Marise Payne held talks with US Secretary of State John Kerry.

Although not expected to join a reported US operation geared at directly challenging China's growing dominance in the Asia Pacific, Payne said Australia will undertake "additional combined



One of the Chinese bases in the South China Sea, currently under construction.

training exercises" with the American navy.

It won't be the first. Earlier this year a joint training exercise saw 30,000 military personnel play war games in the Top End — a bit of muscle flexing which, whatever the intended strategic signal, will not have escaped China's attention.

The question closer to home, though, is whether or not the chatter about militarising the Tiwi Islands has any connection to the serial bumbles that riddled Port Melville's development, and excused it from environmental assessment.

Documents obtained by New Matilda under freedom of information reveal the Department of Environment had been receiving warnings about the port development underway on Melville Island for a number of years, and repeatedly failed to act.

The Assistant Secretary of the department's Compliance and Enforcement Branch, Shane Gaddes blamed the botched process on overworked staff.

Meanwhile, other areas of the federal government had been more proactive in their approval of the development. In April 2014, the Commonwealth Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development issued a notice that declared Port Melville a "security regulated port".

"The Federal government has signed off on giving it security classification so it can be used for defence purposes," NT Labor's infrastructure spokeswoman Natasha Fynks observed in May.

The Aboriginal perspective

There are serious questions around whether a military use of the port has the approval of Traditional Owners,

though. Under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act from which it derives its authority, the Tiwi Land Council is required to ensure Traditional Owners give their informed consent for development activities on their land.

It's a legal safeguard that could throw up difficulties if the United States does decide to

militarise the island in some way. As the Tiwi Island who spoke to New Matilda on the condition of anonymity put it, "Tiwi people haven't been asked if they want to be in the firing line to be possibly bombed".

But the probity of the land council's governance has been consistently questioned, most notably over a 2007 land deal driven by the then Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Mal Brough. Ironically, it was Brough who was behind the Northern Territory Intervention, which required the suspension of usual legal protections afforded by the Racial Discrimination Act, and ironically enough involved a military intervention of its own.

After a controversial 99-year lease was approved for an individual over communally-owned land, Traditional Owner Adam Kerinaia sought an injunction amidst allegations that signatures had been forged, and meeting minutes doctored in order to fabricate the illusion of consent.

The injunction was not granted, but a petition the year before carrying almost 500 signatures — out of a few thousand Tiwi Traditional Owners — revealed deep dissatisfaction with the Tiwi Land Council, which had been working with Brough to open up Tiwi lands to private ownership.

The petition, which Brough refused to accept, called for an investigation into the practices of the TLC, and the resignation of the land council's then Executive Secretary, John Hicks.

The current Chair of the Tiwi Land Council, Gibson Farmer Illortaminni, has admitted in correspondence with Environment Minister Greg Hunt that the Traditional Owners' own modest use of the port — as an export facility

(continued on Page 8...)



(continued from Page 7...)

for the island's small woodchip industry — would not be financially viable without finance from a third party.

Illortamini and The Tiwi Land Council declined to be interviewed or provide comment for this story, but the anonymous Traditional Owner insists that dissatisfaction with the TLC remains rife.

"They've been really sly about this stuff. I don't even know if they'll include it in any minutes, you know, it's just real hush hush," the Traditional Owner said.

"There's only certain people that work in the [Tiwi Island] offices that have picked up what is happening.

"The locals who just live their day to day lives, they just don't have any idea, you know, because they're not told anything by the council.

"So they just go on living their lives and whatever happens, they just have to take it on when it happens, because they didn't get a say or decision in it."

While he stressed he does not know how any plan for a military base has proceeded since his 2012 conversation with Captain Johnson, union official Thomas Mayor said he holds similar reservations.

"My concern is that the Traditional Owners have done a deal, have negotiated something about the use of that land without all the information," he said.

"[I'm concerned] that they've done a deal for one thing, but it's going to be used for another thing."

Thom Mitchell is New Matilda's environment and industrial relations reporter.

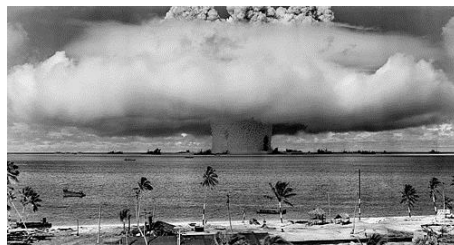


BREAK THE SILENCE

A World War has Begun: Break the Silence

by **John Pilger**

March 23, 2016



I have been filming in the Marshall Islands, which lie north of Australia, in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Whenever I tell people where I have been, they ask, "Where is that?" If I offer a clue by referring to "Bikini", they say, "You mean the swimsuit."

Few seem aware that the bikini swimsuit was named to celebrate the nuclear explosions that destroyed Bikini island. Sixty-six nuclear devices were exploded by the United States in the Marshall Islands between 1946 and 1958 — the equivalent of 1.6 Hiroshima bombs every day for twelve years.

Bikini is silent today, mutated and contaminated. Palm trees grow in a strange grid formation. Nothing moves. There are no birds. The headstones in the old cemetery are alive with radiation. My shoes registered "unsafe" on a Geiger counter.

Standing on the beach, I watched the emerald green of the Pacific fall away into a vast black hole. This was the crater left by the hydrogen bomb they called "Bravo". The explosion poisoned people and their environment for hundreds of miles, perhaps forever.

On my return journey, I stopped at Honolulu airport and noticed an American magazine called *Women's Health*. On the cover was a smiling woman in a bikini swimsuit, and the headline: "You, too, can have a bikini body." A few days earlier, in the Marshall Islands, I had interviewed women who had very different "bikini bodies"; each had suffered thyroid cancer and other life-threatening cancers.

Unlike the smiling woman in the magazine, all of them were

impoverished: the victims and guinea pigs of a rapacious superpower that is today more dangerous than ever.

I relate this experience as a warning and to interrupt a distraction that has consumed so many of us. The founder of modern propaganda, Edward Bernays, described this phenomenon as "the conscious and intelligent manipulation of the habits and opinions" of democratic societies. He called it an "invisible government".

How many people are aware that a world war has begun? At present, it is a war of propaganda, of lies and distraction, but this can change instantaneously with the first mistaken order, the first missile.

In 2009, President Obama stood before an adoring crowd in the centre of Prague, in the heart of Europe. He pledged himself to make "the world free from nuclear weapons". People cheered and some cried. A torrent of platitudes flowed from the media. Obama was subsequently awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

It was all fake. He was lying.

The Obama administration has built more nuclear weapons, more nuclear warheads, more nuclear delivery systems, more nuclear factories. Nuclear warhead spending alone rose higher under Obama than under any American president. The cost over thirty years is more than \$1 trillion.

A mini nuclear bomb is planned. It is known as the B61 Model 12. There has never been anything like it. General James Cartwright, a former Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has said, "Going smaller [makes using this nuclear] weapon more thinkable."

In the last eighteen months, the greatest build-up of military forces since World War Two — led by the United States — is taking place along Russia's western frontier. Not since Hitler invaded the Soviet Union have foreign troops presented such a demonstrable threat to Russia.

Ukraine — once part of the Soviet Union — has become a CIA theme park. Having orchestrated a coup in Kiev, Washington effectively controls a regime that is next door and hostile to

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Russia: a regime rotten with Nazis, literally. Prominent parliamentary figures in Ukraine are the political descendants of the notorious OUN and UPA fascists. They openly praise Hitler and call for the persecution and expulsion of the Russian speaking minority.

This is seldom news in the West, or it is inverted to suppress the truth.

In Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia — next door to Russia — the US military is deploying combat troops, tanks, heavy weapons. This extreme provocation of the world's second nuclear power is met with silence in the West.

What makes the prospect of nuclear war even *more* dangerous is a parallel campaign against China.

Seldom a day passes when China is not elevated to the status of a “threat”. According to Admiral Harry Harris, the US Pacific commander, China is “building a great wall of sand in the South China Sea”.

What he is referring to is China building airstrips in the Spratly Islands, which are the subject of a dispute with the Philippines — a dispute without priority until Washington pressured and bribed the government in Manila and the Pentagon launched a propaganda campaign called “freedom of navigation”.

What does this really mean? It means freedom for American warships to patrol and dominate the coastal waters of China. Try to imagine the American reaction if Chinese warships did the same off the coast of California.

I made a film called *The War You Don't See*, in which I interviewed distinguished journalists in America and Britain: reporters such as Dan Rather of CBS, Rageh Omar of the BBC, David Rose of the *Observer*.

All of them said that had journalists and broadcasters done their job and questioned the propaganda that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction; had the lies of George W. Bush and Tony Blair not been amplified and echoed by journalists, the 2003 invasion of Iraq might not have happened, and hundreds of thousands of

men, women and children would be alive today.

The propaganda laying the ground for a war against Russia and/or China is no different in principle. To my knowledge, no journalist in the Western “mainstream” — a Dan Rather equivalent, say — asks *why* China is building airstrips in the South China Sea.

The answer ought to be glaringly obvious. The United States is encircling China with a network of bases, with ballistic missiles, battle groups, nuclear-armed bombers.

This lethal arc extends from Australia to the islands of the Pacific, the Marianas and the Marshalls and Guam, to the Philippines, Thailand, Okinawa, Korea and across Eurasia to Afghanistan and India. America has hung a noose around the neck of China. This is not news. Silence by media; war by media.

In 2015, in high secrecy, the US and Australia staged the biggest single air-sea military exercise in recent history, known as Talisman Sabre. Its aim was to rehearse an Air-Sea Battle Plan, blocking sea lanes, such as the Straits of Malacca and the Lombok Straits, that cut off China's access to oil, gas and other vital raw materials from the Middle East and Africa.

In the circus known as the American presidential campaign, Donald Trump is being presented as a lunatic, a fascist.

He is certainly odious; but he is also a media hate figure. That alone should arouse our scepticism.

Trump's views on migration are grotesque, but no more grotesque than those of David Cameron. It is not Trump who is the Great Deporter from the United States, but the Nobel Peace Prize winner, Barack Obama.

According to one prodigious liberal commentator, Trump is “unleashing the dark forces of violence” in the United States. *Unleashing* them?

This is the country where toddlers shoot their mothers and the police wage a murderous war against black Americans. This is the country that has attacked and sought to overthrow more than 50 governments, many of them democracies, and bombed from Asia to

the Middle East, causing the deaths and dispossession of millions of people.

No country can equal this systemic record of violence. Most of America's wars (almost all of them against defenceless countries) have been launched not by Republican presidents but by liberal Democrats: Truman, Kennedy, Johnson, Carter, Clinton, Obama.

In 1947, a series of National Security Council directives described the paramount aim of American foreign policy as “a world substantially made over in [America's] own image”. The ideology was messianic Americanism. We were all Americans. Or else. Heretics would be converted, subverted, bribed, smeared or crushed.

Donald Trump is a symptom of this, but he is also a maverick. He says the invasion of Iraq was a crime; he doesn't want to go to war with Russia and China. The danger to the rest of us is not Trump, but Hillary Clinton. She is no maverick. She embodies the resilience and violence of a *system* whose vaunted “exceptionalism” is totalitarian with an occasional liberal face.

As presidential election day draws near, Clinton will be hailed as the first female president, regardless of her crimes and lies — just as Barack Obama was lauded as the first black president and liberals swallowed his nonsense about “hope”. And the drool goes on.

Described by the *Guardian* columnist Owen Jones as “funny, charming, with a coolness that eludes practically every other politician”, Obama the other day sent drones to slaughter 150 people in Somalia. He kills people usually on Tuesdays, according to the *New York Times*, when he is handed a list of candidates for death by drone. So cool.

In the 2008 presidential campaign, Hillary Clinton threatened to “totally obliterate” Iran with nuclear weapons.

As Secretary of State under Obama, she participated in the overthrow of the democratic government of Honduras. Her contribution to the destruction of Libya in 2011 was almost gleeful. When the Libyan leader, Colonel Gaddafi, was publicly sodomised with a

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knife – a murder made possible by American logistics – Clinton gloated over his death: “We came, we saw, he died.”

One of Clinton’s closest allies is Madeleine Albright, the former secretary of State, who has attacked young women for not supporting “Hillary”. This is the same Madeleine Albright who infamously celebrated on TV the death of half a million Iraqi children as “worth it”.

Among Clinton’s biggest backers are the Israel lobby and the arms companies that fuel the violence in the Middle East. She and her husband have received a fortune from Wall Street. And yet, she is about to be ordained the women’s candidate, to see off the evil Trump, the official demon. Her supporters include distinguished feminists: the likes of Gloria Steinem in the US and Anne Summers in Australia.

A generation ago, a post-modern cult now known as “identity politics” stopped many intelligent, liberal-minded people examining the causes and individuals they supported — such as the fakery of Obama and Clinton; such as bogus progressive movements like Syriza in Greece, which betrayed the people of that country and allied with their enemies.

Self absorption, a kind of “me-ism”, became the new zeitgeist in privileged western societies and signaled the demise of great collective movements against war, social injustice, inequality, racism and sexism.

Today, the long sleep may be over. The young are stirring again. Gradually. The thousands in Britain who supported Jeremy Corbyn as Labour leader are part of this awakening – as are those who rallied to support Senator Bernie Sanders.

In Britain last week, Jeremy Corbyn’s closest ally, his shadow treasurer John McDonnell, committed a Labour government to pay off the debts of piratical banks and, in effect, to continue so-called austerity.

In the US, Bernie Sanders has promised to support Clinton if or when she’s nominated. He, too, has voted for America’s use of violence against

countries when he thinks it’s “right”. He says Obama has done “a great job”.

In Australia, there is a kind of mortuary politics, in which tedious parliamentary games are played out in the media while refugees and Indigenous people are persecuted and inequality grows, along with the danger of war. The government of Malcolm Turnbull has just announced a so-called defence budget of \$195 billion that is a drive to war. There was no debate. Silence.

What has happened to the great tradition of popular direct action, unfettered to parties? Where is the courage, imagination and commitment required to begin the long journey to a better, just and peaceful world? Where are the dissidents in art, film, the theatre, literature?

Where are those who will shatter the silence? Or do we wait until the first nuclear missile is fired?

This is an edited version of an address by John Pilger at the University of Sydney, entitled *A World War Has Begun*.

John Pilger can be reached through his website: www.johnpilger.com

Here is the problem with “Peace”

Just Peace
Just Dream
Just Believe
Just Love
Just Imagine
Just Hope



Sign in a house on Stradbroke Island.

Michael Henry.

AMERICA’S AIRCRAFT CARRIER

March 14, 2016

America’s Aircraft Carrier: Australian Bases for US Bombers

by **Binoy Kampmark**

Subservience is a terrible state, not merely because of its indignities, but its distortions. Speech from the main political centre is garbled and marred, ever mediated by the higher power. Media releases from departments from the vassal or satrap state tend to be coloured by the broader interests of the larger power. For years, that has been characteristic of US-Australian relations.

The Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull was again sallying forth with a whitewashing measure, hoping that no one would notice that Australia was again offering itself up for conspicuous targeting in the event of any future conflict. In February, the Turnbull government had already announced a \$140 million package for military expansion that would see a greater reliance on Washington’s good will, and a greater desire to stick its neck out in the event of any conflict with China.

Washington had decided to press its Australian allies on permitting a rotation of bombers at the Darwin and Tindal bases, notably the long-range, nuclear capable B-1B type, in the aftermath of rising tensions in the South China Sea. In 2011, it got Canberra’s acquiescence in increased US troop deployment on Australian soil, a measure that will see US personnel rise to 2,500 in 2017. For all of that, Australians still insist they are not under a benevolent occupation.

According to the neo-conservative American Enterprise Institute’s Michael Auslin, “It is part of an overall rebalancing of military forces to the region.” It continues what is amounting to an increasingly dangerous theatre of demonstrations, with the USS aircraft carrier John C. Stennis along with a cruiser and destroyer stepping up patrols in an effort to maintain freedom of navigation.

Precisely by putting its eggs in this one notable basket of comfort, Canberra has persistently demonstrated its indifference to broader matters in the region. Economically, 60 percent of the

(continued on Page 11...)



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country's trade passes through the South China Sea, while China is Canberra's biggest trading partner.

Such a deployment does not bother such analysts as Jennifer Harris of the Council on Foreign Relations. Another China-watcher keen to see Beijing as unduly expansionist, Harris insists that the US move and its greater use of Australian soil in the measure "is simply making good on those promises [that further escalation by China] would bring [various consequences]."

While it insists on having good trade relations with China, it also insists on provoking it by happily permitting American military personnel from using its territory. This is not a point that Australian politicians understand. The Australian Northern Territory chief minister Adam Giles gave his "absolute" support for the measure, thinking "the greater level of security we can have in the NT... to protect Australia's interest and the Territory's interest, the better."

At the same time, a blinkered Giles was very aware about commercial interests that did involve a Chinese stake in the territory's economy, a point demonstrated by the leasing of Darwin Port to a Chinese company, Landbridge, for a 99 year period. "Our number-one priority is to stand up for territorians, particularly to stand up for jobs. We also stand up for investment coming into the Territory, that's how the Territory has been built in the past."^[1]

As if it mattered, the US ambassador John Berry was asked where the NT port deal with Landbridge fitted in the scheme of Washington's interests. This curious question arose largely because the State Department had been conducting its own polling through its intelligence and research bureau about Australian opinions on the subject. This point might have bothered the minions in Canberra, but not a peep came out of them.

Notwithstanding that overly keen interest, Berry seemed satisfied that Australia had behaved appropriately.

"Australia alone determines its sovereign criteria for investment projects," came the response in a statement. The concept would be novel to those more familiar with the actual relationship between the US and Australia.

As for the Chinese Foreign Ministry, spokesman Hong Lei advised that, "Any bilateral cooperation must not jeopardise a third party's interests." Further to that, the lease need not worry Australians. "This investment by a Chinese enterprise is a normal business operation that complies with market principles, international rules and Australian laws."^[2]

This is well and good, till one realises that the company in question has strong ties to various members of the Chinese Communist party, while the port itself has been used by the Australian navy and the military forces of other countries. Turnbull, in error, suggested in November that it was a purely "commercial port."^[3] It would be good, suggested Luke Gosling, the Labor candidate for the federal seat of Solomon in Darwin, "if the Prime Minister, when coming to the north, knew what he was talking about."

The US-Australian alliance continues to show itself to be a relationship without reciprocity, one dictated by the absolute needs of one over the misguided, misread needs of another. If Palmerston's dictum about permanent interests always existing over the notion of permanent friends count in international relations, then things look far rosier to the US establishment than they do to those down under.

Notes.

[1] <http://www.australianetworknews.com/nt-bombers-southchinasea/>

[2] <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-03-10/australia-nothing-to-fear-from-darwin-port-lease-says-china/7237218>

[3] <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-11-20/turnbull-gets-it-wrong-on-whether-darwin-port-used-by-military/6958404>

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BRUSSELS: TERROR ATTACK

The Scariest Thing about Brussels is Our Reaction To It

Paranoid politicians, sensational journalists – the Isis recruiting officers will be thrilled at how things have gone since their atrocity in Belgium

By **Simon Jenkins**

Published on Thursday, March 24, 2016 by [The Guardian](#)

Think like the enemy. Let's suppose I am an Islamic State terrorist. I don't do bombs or bullets. I leave the dirty work to the crazies in the basement. My job is what happens next. It is to turn carnage into consequences, body parts into politics. I am a consultant terrorist. I wear a suit, not explosives. A blood-stained concourse is a means to an end. The end is power.

This week I had another success. I converted a squalid psychopathological act into a warrior-evoking, population-terrifying, policy-changing event. I sent a continent into shock. Famous politicians dropped everything to shower me with clichés. Crowned heads deluged me with glorious odium.

I measure my success in column inches and television hours, in ballooning security budgets, butchered liberties, amended laws and – my ultimate goal – Muslims persecuted and recruited to our cause. I deal not in actions but in reactions. I am a manipulator of politics. I work through the idiocies of my supposed enemies.

Textbooks on terrorism define its effects in four stages: first the horror, then the publicity, then the political grandstanding, and finally the climactic shift in policy. The initial act is banal. The atrocities in Brussels happen almost daily on the streets of Baghdad, Aleppo and Damascus. Western missiles and Isis bombs kill more innocents in a week than die in Europe in a year. The difference is the media response. A dead Muslim is an unlucky mutt in the wrong place at the wrong time. A dead European is front-page news.

So on Tuesday the TV news channels behaved like Isis recruiting sergeants. Their blanket hyperbole showed not the slightest restraint (nor for that matter did that of most newspapers).

The BBC flew Huw Edwards to Brussels.

(continued on Page 12...)



(continued from Page 11...)

It flashed horror across the airwaves continually for 24 hours, incanting the words “panic”, “threat”, “menace” and “terror”. Vox pops wallowed in blood and guts. One reporter rode a London tube escalator to show possible future targets, to scare the wits out of commuters. It was a terrorist’s wildest dream.

With the ground thus prepared, the politicians entered on cue. France’s President Hollande declared “all of Europe has been hit”, megaphoning Isis’s crime. His approval rating immediately jumped.

David Cameron dived into his Cobra bunker and announced the UK “faces a very real terror threat”. An attack is now “highly likely”, according to the security services. Flags fly at half-mast. The Eiffel Tower is decked in Belgian colours. President Obama interrupts his Cuba visit to stand “in solidarity with Belgium”. Donald Trump declares that “Belgium and France are literally disintegrating”. It is hard to imagine what could more effectively promote the Isis cause.

Osama bin Laden set out on 9/11 to depict western nations as feckless and paranoid, their liberalism a surface charade easily punctured. A few explosions and their pretensions would wither and they would turn as repressive as any Muslim state.

By Tuesday evening, such a feeding frenzy was in full flood as the security lobby piled in. Cameron’s snoopers’ charter (or “investigatory powers” bill) was lauded as vital to national security. This is despite continued opposition both in parliament and from intelligence experts. This month in the Times, former NSA technical director Bill Binney ridiculed the bill’s “incredibly intrusive” powers of untargeted interception. Each citizen’s browsing history will soon be in the possession of the government, vulnerable to hacking by every marketer and blackmailer in the land.

Under the government’s Prevent strategy, universities and schools must develop programmes to counter “non-violent extremism, which can create an atmosphere conducive to terrorism”. The bureaucracy will be awesome. Primary schools are reportedly asking children to

spy on one another to check “suspicious behaviour”. So must passengers on Virgin trains, as requested after each station. England is becoming old East Germany.

The Brexit camp, in the person of Ukip’s Nigel Farage, claims that Brussels proves the need to leave Europe. The home secretary, Theresa May, says the opposite. Terrorists would roam free, she says, since it would take 143 days to process terrorist DNA samples as against 15 minutes in the EU.

Reacting to terrorist incidents otherwise, in ways that do not play into terrorism’s hands, may seem hard. A free media feels a duty to report events, as politicians feel a duty to show they can protect the public. That it’s hard to show restraint is no excuse for actively promoting terror. Everyone involved in this week’s reaction, from journalists to politicians to security lobbyists, has an interest in terrorism. There is money, big money, to be made – the more terrifying it is presented, the more money.

We can respond to events in Brussels with a quiet and dignified sympathy, with candles and silences. To downplay something is not to ignore it. The terrorists have specific aims, deploying their atrocities for a political cause. There is no sensible defence in a free society against atrocity. But there is a defence against its purpose. It is to avoid hysteria, to show caution and a measure of courage, not Cameron’s lapse into public fear. It is not to alter laws, not to infringe liberties, not to persecute Muslims.

During the more dangerous and consistent IRA bombing campaigns of the 1970s and 1980s, Labour and Conservative governments insisted on treating terrorism as criminal, not political. They relied on the police and security services to guard against a threat that could never be eliminated, only diminished. On the whole it worked, and without undue harm to civil liberties.

Those who live under freedom know it demands a price, which is a degree of risk. We pay the state to protect us – but calmly, without constant boasting or fearmongering. We know that, in

reality, life in Britain has never been safer. That it suits some people to pretend otherwise does not alter the fact.

In his admiral manual, *Terrorism: How to Respond*, the Belfast academic Richard English defines the threat to democracy as not the “limited danger” of death and destruction. It is the danger “of provoking ill-judged, extravagant and counterproductive state responses”.

The menace of Brussels lies not in the terror, but in the reaction to the terror. It is the reaction we should fear. But liberty never emerges from a Cobra bunker.

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Simon Jenkins is a journalist and author. He writes for the Guardian as well as broadcasting for the BBC. He has edited the Times and the London Evening Standard

QUOTATION: ALBERT CAMUS

From the *Notebooks*
Translated by Philip Thody
September 7, 1939

We used to wonder where war lived, what it was that made it so vile. And now we realize that we know where it lives, that it is inside ourselves. For most people, it’s the embarrassment, the need to make a choice, the choice which makes them go but feel remorse for not having been brave enough to stay at home, or which makes them stay at home but regret that they can’t share the way the others are going to die.

It’s there, that’s where it really is, and we were looking for in it the blue sky and the world’s indifference. It is in this terrible loneliness both of the combatants and of the noncombatants, in this humiliated despair that we all feel, in the baseness that we feel growing in our faces as the days go by. The reign of beasts has begun.

The hatred and the violence that you can already feel rising up in people. Nothing pure left in them. Nothing unique. They think together. You meet only beasts, bestial European faces. The world makes us feel sick, like this universal wave of cowardice, this mockery of courage, this parody of greatness, and this withering away of honor.

**ANOTHER MASS KILLING***U.S. Slaughters 150 People In Somalia*

Nobody Knows the Identity of the 150 People Killed by U.S. in Somalia, but Most Are Certain They Deserved It

By Glenn Greenwald

March 09, 2016 "[Information Clearing House](#)" - "[The Intercept](#)" -

The U.S. used drones and manned aircraft yesterday to drop bombs and missiles on Somalia, ending the lives of at least 150 people. As it virtually always does, the Obama administration instantly claimed that the people killed were “terrorists” and militants — members of the Somali group al Shabaab — but provided no evidence to support that assertion.

Nonetheless, most U.S. media reports contained nothing more than quotes from U.S. officials about what happened, conveyed uncritically and with no skepticism of their accuracy: The dead “fighters ... were assembled for what American officials believe was a graduation ceremony and prelude to an imminent attack against American troops,” pronounced the *New York Times*. So, the official story goes, The Terrorists were that very moment “graduating” — receiving their Terrorist degrees — and about to attack U.S. troops when the U.S. killed them.

With that boilerplate set of claims in place, huge numbers of people today who have absolutely no idea who was killed are certain that they all deserved it. As my colleague Murtaza Hussain said of the 150 dead people: “We don’t know who they are, but luckily they were all bad.” For mindless authoritarians, the words “terrorist” and “militant” have no meaning other than: *anyone who dies when my government drops bombs*, or, at best, *a “terrorist” is anyone my government tells me is a terrorist*. Watch how many people today are defending this strike by claiming “terrorists” and “militants” were killed using those definitions even though they have literally no idea who was killed.

Other than the higher-than-normal death toll, this mass killing is an incredibly common event under the presidency of the 2009 Nobel Peace laureate, who has so far bombed seven

predominantly Muslim countries. As Nick Turse has reported in *The Intercept*, Obama has aggressively expanded the stealth drone program and secret war in Africa.

This particular mass killing is unlikely to get much attention in the U.S. due to (1) the election-season obsession with horse-race analysis and pressing matters such as the size of Donald Trump’s hands; (2) widespread Democratic indifference to the killing of foreigners where there’s no partisan advantage to be had against the GOP from pretending to care; (3) the invisibility of places like Somalia and the implicit devaluing of lives there; and (4) the complete normalization of the model whereby the U.S. president kills whomever he wants, wherever he wants, without regard for any semblance of law, process, accountability, or evidence.

The lack of attention notwithstanding, there are several important points highlighted by yesterday’s bombing and the reaction to it:

1) The U.S. is not at war in Somalia. Congress has never declared war on Somalia, nor has it authorized the use of military force there. Morality and ethics to the side for the moment: What legal authority does Obama even possess to bomb this country? I assume we can all agree that presidents shouldn’t be permitted to just go around killing people they suspect are “bad”: they need some type of legal authority to do the killing.

Since 2001, the U.S. government has legally justified its *we-bomb-whenever-we-want* approach by pointing to the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF), enacted by Congress in the wake of 9/11 to authorize the targeting of al Qaeda and “affiliated” forces. But al Shabaab did not exist in 2001 and had nothing to do with 9/11. Indeed, the group has not tried to attack the U.S. but instead, as the *New York Times*’ Charlie Savage noted in 2011, “is focused on a parochial insurgency in Somalia.” As a result, reported Savage, even “the [Obama] administration does not consider the United States to be at war with every member of the Shabaab.”

Instead, in the Obama administration’s view, specific senior members of al

Shabaab can be treated as enemy combatants under the AUMF only if they adhere to al Qaeda’s ideology, are “integrated” into its command structure, and could conduct operations outside of Somalia. That’s why the U.S. government yesterday claimed that all the people it killed were about to launch attacks on U.S. soldiers: because, even under its own incredibly expansive view of the AUMF, it would be *illegal* to kill them merely on the ground that they were all members of al Shabaab, and the government thus needs a claim of “self-defense” to legally justify this.

But even under the “self-defense” theory that the U.S. government invoked, it is allowed — under its own policies promulgated in 2013 — to use lethal force away from an active war zone (e.g., Afghanistan) “only against a target that poses a continuing, imminent threat to U.S. persons.” Perhaps these Terrorists were about to imminently attack U.S. troops stationed in the region — immediately after the tassel on their graduation cap was turned at the “graduation ceremony,” they were going on the attack — but again, there is literally no evidence that any of that is true.

Given what’s at stake — namely, the conclusion that Obama’s killing of 150 people yesterday was illegal — shouldn’t we be demanding to see *evidence* that the assertions of his government are actually true? Were these really all al Shabaab fighters and terrorists who were killed? Were they really about to carry out some sort of imminent, dangerous attack on U.S. personnel? Why would anyone be content to blindly believe the self-serving assertions of the U.S. government on these questions without seeing evidence? If you are willing to make excuses for why you don’t want to see any evidence, why would you possibly think you know what happened here — who was killed and under what circumstances — if all you have are conclusory, evidence-free assertions from those who carried out the killings?

2) There are numerous compelling reasons demanding skepticism of U.S. government claims about who it kills in

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airstrikes. To begin with, the Obama administration has formally re-defined the term “militant” to mean: “all military-age males in a strike zone” unless “there is explicit intelligence posthumously proving them innocent.” In other words, the U.S. government presumptively regards all adult males it kills as “militants” unless evidence emerges that they were not. It’s an empty, manipulative term of propaganda and nothing else.

Beyond that, the U.S. government’s own documents prove that in the vast majority of cases — 9 out of 10 in fact — it is killing people other than its intended targets. Last April, the *New York Times* published an article under the headline “Drone Strikes Reveal Uncomfortable Truth: U.S. Is Often Unsure About Who Will Die.” It quoted the scholar Micah Zenko saying, “Most individuals killed are not on a kill list, and the government does not know their names.”

Moreover, the U.S. government has repeatedly been caught lying about the identity of its bombings victims. As that April *NYT* article put it, “Every independent investigation of the strikes has found far more civilian casualties than administration officials admit.”

Given that clear record of deliberate deceit, why would any rational person blindly swallow evidence-free assertions from the U.S. government about who it is killing? To put it mildly, extreme skepticism is warranted (after being criticized for its stenography, the final *New York Times* story yesterday at least included this phrase about the Pentagon’s claims about who it killed: “There was no independent way to verify the claim”).

3) Why does the U.S. have troops stationed in this part of Africa? Remember, even the Obama administration says it is not at war with al Shabaab.

Consider how circular this entire rationale is: The U.S., like all countries, obviously has a legitimate interest in protecting its troops from attack. But why does it have troops there at all in need of protection? The answer: The troops are there to operate drone bases and attack people they regard as a threat

to them. But if they weren’t there in the first place, these groups could not pose a threat to them.

In sum: We need U.S. troops in Africa to launch drone strikes at groups that are trying to attack U.S. troops in Africa. It’s the ultimate self-perpetuating circle of imperialism: We need to deploy troops to other countries in order to attack those who are trying to kill U.S. troops who are deployed there.

4) If you’re an American who has lived under the war on terror, it’s easy to forget how extreme this behavior is. Most countries on the planet don’t routinely run around dropping bombs and killing dozens of people in multiple other countries at once, let alone do so in countries where *they’re not at war*.

But for Americans, this is now all perfectly normalized. We just view our president as vested with the intrinsic, divine right, grounded in American exceptionalism, to deem whomever he wants “Bad Guys” and then — with no trial, no process, no accountability — order them killed. He’s the roving, Global Judge, Jury, and Executioner. And we see nothing disturbing or dangerous or even odd about that. We’ve been inculcated to view the world the way a 6-year-old watches cartoons: Bad Guys should be killed, and that’s the end of the story.

So yesterday the president killed roughly 150 people in a country where the U.S. is not at war. The Pentagon issued a five-sentence boilerplate statement declaring them all “terrorists.” And that’s pretty much the end of that. Within literally hours, virtually everyone was ready to forget about the whole thing and move on, content in the knowledge — even without a shred of evidence or information about the people killed — that their government and president did the right thing. Now *that* is a pacified public and malleable media.

Glenn Greenwald is a journalist, constitutional lawyer, and author of four *New York Times* best-selling books on politics and law. He was the debut winner, along with Amy Goodman, of the Park Center I.F. Stone Award for Independent Journalism in 2008, and also received the 2010 Online Journalism Award for his investigative work on the abusive detention conditions of Chelsea Manning.

C.I.A. MOTTO

“Proudly Overthrowing the Cuban Government Since 1959.”

by **William Blum**

March 15, 2016

Now what? Did you think that the United States had finally grown up and come to the realization that they could in fact share the same hemisphere as the people of Cuba, accepting Cuban society as unquestioningly as they do that of Canada? The *Washington Post* (February 18) reported: “In recent weeks, administration officials have made it clear Obama would travel to Cuba only if its government made additional concessions in the areas of human rights, Internet access and market liberalization.”

Imagine if Cuba insisted that the United States make “concessions in the area of human rights”; this could mean the United States pledging to not repeat anything like the following:

- Invading Cuba in 1961 at the Bay of Pigs.
- Invading Grenada in 1983 and killing 84 Cubans, mainly construction workers.
- Blowing up a passenger plane full of Cubans in 1976. (In 1983, the city of Miami held a day in honor of Orlando Bosch, one of the two masterminds behind this awful act; the other perpetrator, Luis Posada, was given lifetime protection in the same city.)
- Giving Cuban exiles, for their use, the virus which causes African swine fever, forcing the Cuban government to slaughter 500,000 pigs.
- Infecting Cuban turkeys with a virus which produces the fatal Newcastle disease, resulting in the deaths of 8,000 turkeys.

In 1981 an epidemic of dengue hemorrhagic fever swept the island, the first major epidemic of DHF ever in the Americas. The United States had long been experimenting with using dengue fever as a weapon. Cuba asked the United States for a pesticide to eradicate the mosquito involved but

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were not given it. Over 300,000 cases were reported in Cuba with 158 fatalities.

These are but three examples of decades-long CIA chemical and biological warfare (CBW) against Cuba. We must keep in mind that food is a human right (although the United States has repeatedly denied this).

Washington maintained a blockade of goods and money entering Cuba that is still going strong, a blockade that President Clinton's National Security Advisor, Sandy Berger, in 1997 called "the most pervasive sanctions ever imposed on a nation in the history of mankind".

Attempted to assassinate Cuban president Fidel Castro on numerous occasions, not only in Cuba, but in Panama, Dominican Republic and Venezuela.

In one scheme after another in recent years, Washington's Agency for International Development (AID) endeavored to cause dissension in Cuba and/or stir up rebellion, the ultimate goal being regime change.

In 1999 a Cuban lawsuit demanded \$181.1 billion in US compensation for death and injury suffered by Cuban citizens in four decades "war" by Washington against Cuba. Cuba asked for \$30 million in direct compensation for each of the 3,478 people it said were killed by US actions and \$15 million each for the 2,099 injured. It also asked for \$10 million each for the people killed, and \$5 million each for the injured, to repay Cuban society for the costs it has had to assume on their behalf.

Needless to say, the United States has not paid a penny of this.

One of the most common Yankee criticisms of the state of human rights in Cuba has been the arrest of dissidents (although the great majority are quickly released). But many thousands of anti-war and other protesters have been arrested in the United States in recent years, as in every period in American history. During the Occupy Movement, which began in 2011, more than 7,000 people were arrested in about the first year, many were beaten by police and

mistreated while in custody, their street displays and libraries smashed to pieces. ; the Occupy movement continued until 2014; thus, the figure of 7,000 is an understatement.)

Moreover, it must be kept in mind that whatever restrictions on civil liberties there may be in Cuba exist within a particular context: The most powerful nation in the history of the world is just 90 miles away and is sworn – vehemently and repeatedly sworn – to overthrowing the Cuban government. If the United States was simply and sincerely concerned with making Cuba a less restrictive society, Washington's policy would be clear cut:

*Call off the wolves – the CIA wolves, the AID wolves, the doctor-stealer wolves, the baseball-player-stealer wolves.

*Publicly and sincerely (if American leaders still remember what this word means) renounce their use of CBW and assassinations. And apologize.

*Cease the unceasing hypocritical propaganda – about elections, for example. (Yes, it's true that Cuban elections never feature a Donald Trump or a Hillary Clinton, nor ten billion dollars, nor 24 hours of campaign ads, but is that any reason to write them off?)

*Pay compensation – a lot of it.

**Sine qua non* – end the God-awful blockade.

Throughout the period of the Cuban revolution, 1959 to the present, Latin America has witnessed a terrible parade of human rights violations – systematic, routine torture; legions of "disappeared" people; government-supported death squads picking off selected individuals; massacres *en masse* of peasants, students and other groups. The worst perpetrators of these acts during this period have been the military and associated paramilitary squads of El Salvador, Guatemala, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Peru, Mexico, Uruguay, Haiti and Honduras. However, not even Cuba's worst enemies have made serious charges against the Havana government for any of such violations; and if one further considers education and health care, "both of which," • said President Bill Clinton, "work better [in Cuba] than most other countries", and both of which are

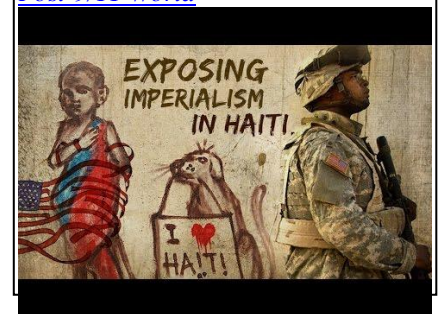
guaranteed by the United Nations "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" and the "European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms", then it would appear that during the more-than-half century of its revolution, Cuba has enjoyed one of the very best human-rights records in all of Latin America.

But never good enough for American leaders to ever touch upon in any way; the Bill Clinton quote being a rare exception indeed. It's a tough decision to normalize relations with a country whose police force murders its own innocent civilians on almost a daily basis. But Cuba needs to do it. Maybe they can civilize the Americans a bit, or at least remind them that for more than a century they have been the leading torturers of the world.

William Blum is the author of *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II*, *Rogue State: a guide to the World's Only Super Power*. His latest book is: *America's Deadliest Export: Democracy*. He can be reached at: BBlum6@aol.com

"The two main criminals are France and the United States. They owe Haiti enormous reparations because of actions going back hundreds of years. If we could ever get to the stage where somebody could say, 'We're sorry we did it,' that would be nice. But if that just assuages guilt, it's just another crime. To become minimally civilized, we would have to say, 'We carried out and benefited from vicious crimes. A large part of the wealth of France comes from the crimes we committed against Haiti, and the United States gained as well. Therefore we are going to pay reparations to the Haitian people.' Then you will see the beginnings of civilization."

— **Noam Chomsky**, *Imperial Ambitions: Conversations on the Post-9/11 World*



**SYRIA: HOLDING THE LINE***Syria: Holding the Line
Against the Forces of Hell*

by John Wight

March 3, 2016

When future historians sit down to write the history of the Syrian conflict there is a simple test that will determine whether their objective is to mine and reveal the truth, or whether it is merely to shovel more dirt onto the mountain of the stuff that's been erected over the course of its five long years as a monument to propaganda.

The test will be their depiction of the Syrian Arab Army and its role in the conflict. If said historians credit it with holding the line against the forces of hell that were committed to the country's destruction as a secular, non sectarian, multi-religious and ethnic state, enduring the kind of losses and casualties placing it among the most courageous, resilient, and heroic of any army of any nation that has ever existed, then people will know that truth rather than propaganda has prevailed.

The glorification of war and conflict is difficult to resist for those living safely many miles away from its horrors and brutality. Those who do glorify it should take a moment to study and imbibe the words of Jeannette Rankin, who said: "You can no more win a war than you can win and earthquake."

The war in Syrian confirms the abiding truth of those words when we consider the epic nature of the destruction it has wrought, the tragic human cost, and how it has shaken Syrian society to the very limits of endurance. It means that while the country's survival as an independent non sectarian state may by now be certain, its ability to fully recover from the earthquake Rankin describes is something that only time will tell.

But the fact the country has managed to achieve its survival and, with it, the opportunity to recover is predominately the achievement of the Syrian Arab Army, whose complexion is a microcosm of the very society and people it has defended – Sunnis, Shia, Druze, Christians, Alawites, etc. In the process of doing so, as these words are



being written, it has lost over 60,000 men according to the latest report by Robert Fisk, one of the more estimable Western correspondents based in the region. This is without factoring in the 1000-plus Hezbollah fighters who've been killed, along with Kurds and members of the various government-allied militia groups. It also does not include the tens of thousands who've been wounded or maimed.

But just think about this staggering statistic of 60,000 killed for a moment. In a country with a population before the conflict began of 25 million, and an army numbering in the region of 220,000 at full strength, the loss of 60,000 troops places the epic nature of the conflict in which they perished on a par with the Eastern Front during the Second World War.

Russian aid and solidarity has of course been a key factor in turning the tide of the Syrian conflict. But all the aid and solidarity in the world amounts little without a people and army's will to resist the invasion of the country by thousands of extremists whose passions for butchering human beings in the most heinous ways imaginable qualifies their labelling as barbarians.

The salient point lost in the countless columns, reports, and op-eds that have been written and published, equating these barbarians with the Syrian government and its military, is that the Syrian Arab Army and Syrian people are one and the same in that one begins where the other ends and vice versa. The ability and willingness of the army to endure the battering it has, and which no other army in the region could have withstood, has been contingent on the support from the Syrian people. This support has been constant even in the midst of the huge external pressure arrayed against the country from Western powers that at one point were convinced that the army's collapse and total defeat was only a matter of when and not if.

The current ceasefire, brokered by Russia and supported by Washington, takes place at a time when the conflict has turned emphatically in the government's favour. During an offensive operation that began in early February, the SAA has smashed its way across the north of the country. Combined with an offensive launched by the multi-ethnic SDF (Syrian Democratic Forces) in northern Aleppo province, it has effectively succeeded in encircling Aleppo city and cutting the main supply routes to the opposition forces in control of a large part of the city from Turkey. Given the number of armed factions involved in the conflict, the lack of any central command structure directing its activities, the fact that the ceasefire has thus far held with only a few minor violations is testament to the changed reality on the ground.

The machinations and plotting and mendacity of the Saudis and Turks – not forgetting their Western allies – have all come to naught in a country where every town and street, every hill, village, and road has been touched by war. It is proof that in the last analysis history is made not by governments, diplomats, or functionaries in palatial staterooms and chancelleries. It is made by ordinary men and women willing to fight and die in defence of their people, homes and communities, and whose honour in doing so contrasts with the dishonor of those who made the mistake of regarding Syria as just another piece on their geopolitical chessboard.

No one should ever underestimate the human cost of protecting Syria's sovereignty and integrity. Do so and you denigrate those who have fallen and those who will undoubtedly fall as and when the fighting resumes. Neither should we underestimate the size of the mountain to climb before Syria is put back together when the guns eventually fall silent.

As one struggle ends another will begin.

This article originally appeared at American Herald Tribune.

John Wight is the author of a politically incorrect and irreverent Hollywood memoir – *Dreams That Die* – published by Zero Books. He's also written five novels, which are available as Kindle eBooks. You can follow him on Twitter at @JohnWight1



INTIFADA FOR DUMMIES

Why Is a Popular Uprising Yet to Take Off?

Published on Friday, April 01, 2016 by
[Common Dreams](#)

By **Ramzy Baroud**



(Photo: [noaz](#)/flickr/cc)

Whether history moves in a straight or cyclical line, it matters little. The uncontested fact is that it is in constant motion. Thus, the current situation in Palestine is particularly frustrating to a generation that has grown up after the Oslo Peace Accord because they have been brought up within a strange historical phenomenon: where the earth below their feet keeps shrinking and when time stands still.

The nature of the current uprising in the West Bank and East Jerusalem is a testament to that claim. Previous uprisings were massive in their mobilization, clear in their message and decisive in their delivery. Their success or failure is not the point of this discussion, but the fact is that they were willed by the people and, within days, they imprinted themselves on the collective consciousness of Palestinians everywhere.

"The ambitions of these youth are huge, but their opportunities are so limited; their earth has shrunk to the size of a single-file queue before an Israeli military checkpoint."

The current uprising is different; so different, in fact, that many are still hesitating to call it an 'intifada'; as if intifadas are the outcome of some clear-cut science, an exact formula of blood and popular participation that must be fully satisfied before a eureka moment is announced by some political commentator.

It is different, nonetheless, for there is yet to be a clear sense of direction, a leadership, a political platform,

demands, expectations and short and long term strategies. At least that is how the 1987-93 Intifada played out and, to a lesser extent, the 2000-05 al-Aqsa Intifada as well. But is it not possible that the outcomes of these previous intifadas is what is making the current uprising different?

The first Intifada metamorphosed into a worthless peace process which eventually led to the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993. A year later, the Palestinian leadership of the PLO was reproduced into the emasculated form of the Palestinian Authority (PA). Since then, the latter has served largely as a conduit for the Israeli Occupation.

The second Intifada had less success than the first. It quickly turned into an armed rebellion, thus marginalizing the popular component of the revolt which is required to cement the collective identity of Palestinians, forcing them to overcome their division and unify behind a single flag and a distinct chant.

This Intifada was crushed by a brutal Israeli army; hundreds were assassinated and thousands were killed in protests and clashes with Israeli soldiers. It was a watershed moment in the relationship between the Israeli government and the Palestinian leadership in Ramallah, and between the Palestinian factions themselves.

The late PLO leader, Yasser Arafat, was held hostage by the Israeli army in his Ramallah headquarters. The soldiers taunted him in his office, while blocking his movement for years. Finally, he was slowly poisoned and died in 2004.

Israel then went through the painstaking effort of revamping the PA leadership, flushing out the nonconformists – through murder and imprisonment – and allowing the so-called moderates to operate but, even then, under very strict conditions.

Mahmoud Abbas was elected President of the PA in 2005. His greatest achievements include the cracking down on civil society organizations, ensuring total loyalty

towards him: personally, and towards his branch within the Fatah faction. Under Abbas, there has been no revolutionary model for change, no 'national project'; in fact, no clear definition of nationhood, to begin with.

The Palestinian nation became whatever Abbas wanted it to be. It consisted, largely, of West Bank Palestinians, living mostly in Area A, loyal to Fatah and hungry for international handouts. The more the Abbas nation agreed to play along, the more money they were allowed to rake in.

In 2006, this fragmentation became absolute. Many will recall that period of discord when Hamas was allocated majority of the seats in the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC); but the conflict, which resulted in the violent summer of 2007, had little to do with democracy. The paradigm – of endless 'peace talks', generous donors' money, growing illegal Jewish settlements, etc. – suited both Abbas and the Israelis very well. No one, Hamas especially, were to be allowed to impose a paradigm shift.

Israel immediately besieged Gaza, launched successive wars, and committed numerous war crimes with little criticism emanating from Gaza's brethren in Ramallah. Bolivia and Venezuela seemed more furious by Israel's war crimes in Gaza than Mahmoud Abbas' West Bank clique.

Until October of last year, when the current uprising slowly began building momentum, the situation on the ground seemed at a standstill. In the West Bank, Occupation was slowly normalized in accordance to the formula: occupation and illegal settlements in exchange for money and silence.

Gaza, on the other hand, stood as a model for barbarity, regularly meted out by Israel as a reminder to those in the West Bank that the price of revolt is siege, hunger, destruction and death.

It is against this backdrop of misery, humiliation, fear, oppression and corruption that Palestinians arose. They were mostly young people born after Oslo, became politically conscious after the Fatah-Hamas clash, raised in the conflicting worlds of their own leadership co-existing with the Occupation, on one hand, and clashing with other Palestinians on the other.

(continued on Page 18...)



(continued from Page 17...)

These youth, however, never perceived Occupation to be normal; never came to terms with the fact that the earth beneath their feet kept shrinking while illegal, massive Jewish cities kept on being erected upon their land; true, they learned to navigate their way across the checkpoints, but never assented to the superiority of their occupier. They abhorred disunity; rejected identity politics and factionalism; never understood why Gaza was being disowned and slowly slaughtered.

This is a generation that is the most educated, yet; most politically savvy and, thanks to the huge leaps in digital media technology, is the most connected and informed of the world around it. The ambitions of these youth are huge, but their opportunities are so limited; their earth has shrunk to the size of a single-file queue before an Israeli military checkpoint, where they are corralled on their way to school, to work and back home. And, like the Israelis who shot at anyone who dared to protest, Abbas imprisons those who attempted to do so.

It is a generation that simply cannot breathe.

The current Intifada is an expression of that dichotomy, of a generation that is so eager to break free, to define itself, to liberate its land, yet resisted by an Old Guard unremittingly holding on so tight to the few perks and dollars they receive in the form of allotments every month.

History must remain in constant motion, and the last six months have been the attempt of an entire generation to move the wheels of history forward, despite a hundred obstacles and a thousand checkpoints.

This might be the most difficult Intifada yet; for never before did Palestinians find themselves so leaderless, yet so ready to break free. The outcome of this tension, will not only define this whole generation, as it defined my generation of the 1987 Intifada, but it will define the future of Palestine altogether.

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PALESTINE OVERWHELMED

Palestine Overwhelmed by Illegal American Immigrants

By **Juan Cole**

August 30, 2015 "[Information Clearing House](http://www.informationclearinghouse.info)" -

If there were a Palestinian Donald Trump, he'd be fulminating against illegal immigrants swamping the Palestinian West Bank. And he'd be complaining that fully 1 in 6 of these undocumented squatters are Americans.

Since Americans have trouble understanding the basic facts of the situation, it is worthwhile underscoring that the United Nations General Assembly's partition plan for British Mandate Palestine in 1947 did **not** include Gaza or the West Bank of the Jordan. Those territories were never awarded to Jewish settlers or later Israelis by any legitimate authority (even the UNGC is not an executive body and the Security Council should have signed off to grant real legitimacy in law). Israel militarily conquered Gaza and the West Bank in 1967 and have by now so altered the ways of life, economy and society of these occupied territories that the Occupation is illegal by the Hague Convention of 1907 and the Geneva Convention of 1949 (designed to prevent atrocities against occupied populations of the sort the Axis carried out during WW II).

It is strictly illegal for the occupying power to attempt to annex occupied territory or to transfer its citizens into militarily occupied territory. Mussolini's Italy pulled that stunt with the parts of France he occupied during WW II. When you hear that someone has violated the Geneva Convention, that isn't just an abstract matter. It means that someone is acting the way the dictators acted during the war, because it is that kind of lawless behavior the conventions were attempting to forestall from happening again.

Israel illegally annexed part of the Palestinian West Bank to its district of Jerusalem and then settled it with Israeli squatters. Am I comparing Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu to Mussolini in Menton, France? If the shoe fits . . .

Outside the territory annexed to Jerusalem, there are at least 350,000 Israeli squatters who have usurped Palestinian land.

Some 60,000 of the squatters, today's equivalent of Mussolini's Black Shirts, are Americans, according to a new study.

Those American politicians like Mike Huckabee and Donald Trump, who make exaggerated and untrue statements against undocumented workers in the United States but who defend illegal Israeli immigration into the West Bank, are supreme hypocrites. The Israeli squatters, moreover, are often hostile and aggressive, excluding Palestinians from the townhouses they construct on stolen property.

Juan Cole teaches Middle Eastern and South Asian history at the University of Michigan.

SHADES OF THE NAZIS?

Israel seizes 790 Palestinian firms in Jerusalem

Wednesday, 20 May 2015 12:16

Some 790 Palestinian firms based in occupied Jerusalem are being transferred to Jewish ownership, Jordanian newspaper *Al-Ghad* reported yesterday.

Director of the Maps and Survey Department in the Orient House in Jerusalem, Khalil Al-Tafakji, said: "These properties are owned by Arab Palestinian families, including 595 residential apartments, 186 shops and 15 Islamic, nine Christian and 60 public facilities."

"The Israeli occupation confiscated these firms in 1968, turned them into state property, and now it is turning them into the ownership of Jewish settlers."

Al-Tafakji stressed: "The recent Israeli announcement to build new settlement units in occupied Jerusalem was a step towards turning Palestinian properties to Jewish settlers." He noted that the Israeli occupation does not hide its occupation and settlement plans.

Two days ago, the Israeli president and prime minister reiterated that Jerusalem, east and west, is a united city for the Jewish nation and it would

(continued on Page 30...)

**SYRIA AND KOREA***The Logic of Peace and War*By **Christopher Black**

Global Research, March 21, 2016

[New Eastern Outlook](#) 20 March 2016

The bold initiative by the Russian government to withdraw some of its forces from Syria is a lesson in the use of limited military means to achieve limited political ends. With the finesse of a skilled surgeon, the Russian intervention saved the Syrian government from being overwhelmed by the NATO proxies attacking it, inflicted a fatal blow to the American attempt to achieve hegemony in the Middle East, enhanced Russian prestige in the world, and demonstrated that the economic warfare being waged against Russia by the USA, EU and Canada, has had no effect on either Russian determination to choose an independent foreign policy or the military means to put it into effect.

The confusion and consternation in the NATO block as they realise that, once again, they have been outwitted, is dramatic. Once again the western intelligence services have proved to be asleep at the wheel, and their government leadership mired in fantasies of their own creation. The embarrassed silence from Washington, which for months has been claiming that Russia was going to be bogged down and chewed up by the Syrian war, reflects the incompetence of its political leadership, from President Obama to the contenders for the Presidency in the current American elections. None of them know what to do, except react in frustration, a reaction that does not exactly lead to rational policies.

The achievement of the limited ceasefire a few weeks ago, forced on the Americans by the reality on the

battlefield, set up the logic of this partial withdrawal. The withdrawal underscores the Russian and Syrian policy of achieving a satisfactory political settlement of the war, forces the western powers to support that policy, or be declared opponents of peace, yet, at the same time, gives Russia and Syria the flexibility to respond to any attempts to escalate the violence from whatever direction they may come.

The Russian defence ministry has stated that the remaining Russian air group will continue to provide air support to the Syrian forces and will continue to hit the groups that refuse to abide by the ceasefire or those determined to be “terrorist” groups, in fact the bulk of the forces attacking the Syrian people. Further the S400 air defence systems are to remain in place to cover the Russian forces remaining and to deter aggression from Turkey, Saudi Arabia or American forces. Yet, the withdrawal signals a clear de-escalation of the war and can be taken as an announcement that the enemy has been dealt a fatal blow.

This initiative was taken at the same time that Russia protested any further NATO military actions against Libya unless they had Security Council approval and at the same time that it joined China in calling for the Americans to reduce the pressure on North Korea and commit to a final and peaceful resolution of the conflict on the Korean peninsula. Unfortunately, both Russia and China have joined the United States in condemning North Korea’s attempts to defend itself with nuclear weapons against the threat of nuclear war coming from the United States.

This condemnation seems to be in reaction to the fear that North Korea’s defence doctrine will provoke the USA into launching a war that will affect all Asia or, at the least, give the Americans an excuse to put new anti-ballistic missile systems into south Korea which will threaten the security of not only North Korea but also China and Russia. Perhaps they have a valid point and perhaps there are other reasons unknown to us that prompted them to join in the virtual blockade of North Korea, but the injustice is blatant. All

three nuclear powers are enhancing and building their own nuclear weapon systems; Saudi Arabia is making noises that it has nuclear weapons, along with Israel, without any reaction from the big three; and the government of North Korea is being threatened with continuing military exercises that threaten an immediate decapitation strike of its government and nuclear annihilation.



The current exercises being carried out in Korea are the largest ever conducted, involving over 300,000 soldiers, US aircraft carrier battle groups, nuclear submarines, B-2 bombers, Australian naval ships and, to add insult to injury, Japanese forces that attacked and occupied Korea in the Second World War and that helped the Americans to attack the north in 1950. The stated objective of the exercises is to practice Operation Plan 5015, the action plan to kill the Korean leadership, destroy its bases and invade and occupy the country. A first strike using nuclear weapons is a part of that plan.

No one denies that North Korea has reason to feel backed into a corner and no one denies that they have the right to defend themselves as Russia and China are doing against the same enemy. Logic and fairness dictate that imposing an economic blockade on North Korea is tantamount to war and that this can only have the effect of making North Korea even more desperate and determined to react. This reaction to the situation in Korea is in stark contrast to the reasoned approach Russia, with Chinese support, has taken in Syria or Russia’s handling of the on-going crisis in Ukraine.

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It would seem obvious that the best way to reduce tension in Korea is to support North Korea in the same way that Syria has been supported, with some guarantee of its security and a diplomatic initiative to force the Americans to back down and come to terms with the government and people of the country. North Korea has stated time and again that all it wants is to be left alone and to have a peace treaty with the United States and a guarantee that it will not be attacked. Then it is prepared to consider eliminating its nuclear weapons systems.

The world breathes a sigh of relief that a peaceful resolution of the war in Syria has shifted from a dream to a distinct possibility but now we face the risk of world war in Asia. North Korea is Asia's eastern flank. If it is destroyed and its territory occupied by the United States and Japan and other allies, can China and Russia have any doubt what will happen next? It would seem that North Korea is a natural ally of both, but evidently not.

Meanwhile, the world watches the American elections and what it sees is a Fellini film in which the most grotesque of humanity vie for power over the military forces now threatening the world. President Obama, the man who won the Nobel Peace Prize, is the same man who ordered the military operations in Korea. This is about as peaceful a leader as we can hope for in that militaristic nation. What comes next will be even worse. Surely, there must be an attempt to bring peace to Korea as in Syria. But for that to take place, the pressure on North Korea must be reduced, and its government treated with respect and dignity. The doors to dialogue must be opened, instead of slammed shut, so reason and goodwill can prevail over the fear and malevolence that now guide the actions of the big powers. In Syria, war turns toward peace but, in Korea, peace is threatened by war. Both have their logic; the logic of peace and war, but the world is weary of the logic of war.

Christopher Black is an international criminal lawyer based in Toronto, he is known for a number of high-profile cases involving human rights and war crimes.

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MURDER IS POLICY

Murder Is Washington's Foreign Policy

By Paul Craig Roberts

March 04, 2016 "[Information Clearing House](#)" –

Washington has a long history of massacring people, for example, the destruction of the Plains Indians by the Union war criminals Sherman and Sheridan and the atomic bombs dropped on Japanese civilian populations, but Washington has progressed from periodic massacres to fulltime massacring. From the Clinton regime forward, massacre of civilians has become a defining characteristic of the United States of America.

Washington is responsible for the destruction of Yugoslavia and Serbia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, and part of Syria. Washington has enabled Saudi Arabia's attack on Yemen, Ukraine's attack on its former Russian provinces, and Israel's destruction of Palestine and the Palestinian people.

The American state's murderous rampage through the Middle East and North Africa was enabled by the Europeans who provided diplomatic and military cover for Washington's crimes. Today the Europeans are suffering the consequences as they are over-run by millions of refugees from Washington's wars. The German women who are raped by the refugees can blame their chancellor, a Washington puppet, for enabling the carnage from which refugees flee to Europe.

Mattea Kramer points out that Washington has added to its crimes the mass murder of civilians with drones and missile strikes on weddings, funerals, children's soccer games, medical centers and people's homes. Nothing can better illustrate the absence of moral integrity and moral conscience of the American state and the population that tolerates it than the cavalier disregard of the thousands of murdered innocents as "collateral damage."

If there is any outcry from Washington's European, Canadian, Australian, and Japanese vassals, it is too muted to be heard in the US.

As Kramer points out, American presidential hopefuls are competing on

the basis of who will commit the worst war crimes. A leading candidate has endorsed torture, despite its prohibition under US and international law. The candidate proclaims that "torture works" — as if that is a justification — despite the fact that experts know that it does not work. Almost everyone being tortured will say anything in order to stop the torture. Most of those tortured in the "war on terror" have proven to have been innocents. They don't know the answers to the questions even if they were prepared to give truthful answers. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn relates that Soviet dissidents likely to be picked up and tortured by the Soviet secret police would memorize names on gravestones in order to comply with demands for the names of their accomplices. In this way, torture victims could comply with demands without endangering innocents.

Washington's use of invasion, bombings, and murder by drone as its principle weapon against terrorists is mindless. It shows a government devoid of all intelligence, focused on killing alone. Even a fool understands that **violence creates terrorists**. Washington hasn't even the intelligence of fools.

The American state now subjects US citizens to execution without due process of law despite the strict prohibition by the US Constitution. Washington's lawlessness toward others now extends to the American people themselves.

The only possible conclusion is that under Clinton, George W. Bush, and Obama the US government has become an unaccountable, lawless, criminal organization and is a danger to the entire world and its own citizens.

Dr. Paul Craig Roberts was Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Economic Policy and associate editor of the Wall Street Journal. He was columnist for Business Week, Scripps Howard News Service, and Creators Syndicate. He has had many university appointments. His internet columns have attracted a worldwide following. Roberts' latest books are [The Failure of Laissez Faire Capitalism and Economic Dissolution of the West](#), [How America Was Lost](#), and [The Neoconservative Threat to World Order](#).

**A MILITARY LEVIATHAN**

A Military Leviathan Has Emerged as the United States' 51st and Most Powerful State

By William J. Astore

Tuesday, 22 March 2016



What if our post-democratic military is driven by an autocrat who insists that it must obey his whims in the cause of "making America great again"?

(Photo: [Ssgt. Aaron D. Allmon / USAF](#))

In the decades since the draft ended in 1973, a strange new military has emerged in the United States. Think of it, if you will, as a post-democratic force that prides itself on its warrior ethos rather than the old-fashioned citizen-soldier ideal. As such, it's a military increasingly divorced from the people, with a way of life ever more foreign to most Americans (adulatory as they may feel toward its troops). Abroad, it's now regularly put to purposes foreign to any traditional idea of national defense. In Washington, it has become a force unto itself, following its own priorities, pursuing its own agendas, increasingly unaccountable to either the president or Congress.

Three areas highlight the post-democratic transformation of this military with striking clarity: the blending of military professionals with privatized mercenaries in prosecuting unending "limited" wars; the way senior military commanders are cashing in on retirement; and finally the emergence of U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM) as a quasi-missionary imperial force with a presence in at least 135 countries a year (and counting).

The All-Volunteer Military and Mercenaries: An Undemocratic Amalgam

I'm a product of the all-volunteer military. In 1973, the Nixon administration ended the draft, which also marked the end of a citizen-soldier tradition that had served the nation for

two centuries. At the time, neither the top brass nor the president wanted to face a future in which, in the style of the Vietnam era just then winding up, a force of citizen-soldiers could vote with their feet and their mouths in the kinds of protest that had only recently left the Army in significant disarray. The new military was to be all volunteers and a thoroughly professional force. (Think: no dissenters, no protesters, no antiwar sentiments; in short, no repeats of what had just happened.) And so it has remained for more than 40 years.

Most Americans were happy to see the draft abolished. (Although young men still register for selective service at age 18, there are neither popular calls for its return, nor serious plans to revive it.) Yet its end was not celebrated by all. At the time, some military men advised against it, convinced that what, in fact, did happen would happen: that an all-volunteer force would become more prone to military adventurism enabled by civilian leaders who no longer had to consider the sort of opposition draft call-ups might create for undeclared and unpopular wars.

In 1982, historian Joseph Ellis summed up such sentiments in a prophetic passage in an essay titled "Learning Military Lessons from Vietnam" (from the book *Men at War*):

[V]irtually all studies of the all-volunteer army have indicated that it is likely to be less representative of and responsive to popular opinion, more expensive, more jealous of its own prerogatives, more xenophobic -- in other words, more likely to repeat some of the most grievous mistakes of Vietnam ... Perhaps the most worrisome feature of the all-volunteer army is that it encourages soldiers to insulate themselves from civilian society and allows them to cling tenaciously to outmoded visions of the profession of arms. It certainly puts an increased burden of responsibility on civilian officials to impose restraints on military operations, restraints which the soldiers will surely perceive as unjustified.

Ellis wrote this more than 30 years ago -- before Desert Storm, the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, or the launching of the War on Terror. These wars (and other U.S. military

interventions of the last decades) have provided vivid evidence that civilian officials have felt emboldened in wielding a military freed from the constraints of the old citizen army. Indeed, it says something of our twenty-first-century moment that military officers have from time to time felt the need to restrain civilian officials rather than vice versa. Consider, for instance, Army Chief of Staff General Eric Shinseki's warning early in 2003 that a post-invasion Iraq would need to be occupied by "several hundred thousand" troops. Shinseki clearly hoped that his (all-too-realistic) estimate would tamp down the heady optimism of top Bush administration officials that any such war would be a "cakewalk," that the Iraqis would strew "bouquets" of flowers in the path of the invaders, and that the U.S. would be able to garrison an American-style Iraq in the fashion of South Korea until hell froze over. Prophetic Shinseki was, but not successful. His advice was dismissed out of hand, as was he.

Events since Desert Storm in 1991 suggest that the all-volunteer military has been more curse than blessing. Partially to blame: a new dynamic in modern American history, the creation of a massive military force that is not of the people, by the people, or for the people. It is, of course, a dynamic hardly new to history. Writing in the eighteenth century about the decline and fall of Rome, the historian Edward Gibbon noted that:

In the purer ages of the commonwealth [of Rome], the use of arms was reserved for those ranks of citizens who had a country to love, a property to defend, and some share in enacting those laws, which it was their interest, as well as duty, to maintain. But in proportion as the public freedom was lost in extent of conquest, war was gradually improved into an art, and degraded into a trade.

As the U.S. has become more authoritarian and more expansive, its military has come to serve the needs of others, among them elites driven by dreams of profit and power. Some will argue that this is nothing new. I've read my Smedley Butler and I'm well aware

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that historically the U.S. military was often used in un-democratic ways to protect and advance various business interests. In General Butler's day, however, that military was a small quasi-professional force with a limited reach. Today's version is enormous, garrisoning roughly 800 foreign bases across the globe, capable of sending its Hellfire missile-armed drones on killing missions into country after country across the Greater Middle East and Africa, and possessing a vision of what it likes to call "full-spectrum dominance" meant to facilitate "global reach, global power." In sum, the U.S. military is far more powerful, far less accountable -- and far more dangerous.

As a post-democratic military has arisen in this country, so have a set of "warrior corporations" -- that is, private, for-profit mercenary outfits that now regularly accompany American forces in essentially equal numbers into any war zone. In the invasion and occupation of Iraq, Blackwater was the most notorious of these, but other mercenary outfits like Triple Canopy and DynCorp were also deeply involved. This rise of privatized militaries and mercenaries naturally contributes to actions that are inherently un-democratic and divorced from the will and wishes of the people. It is also inherently a less accountable form of war, since no one even bothers to count the for-profit dead, nor do their bodies come home in flag-draped coffins for solemn burial in military cemeteries; and Americans don't approach such mercenaries to thank them for their service. All of which allows for the further development of a significantly under-the-radar form of war making.

The phrase "limited war," applied to European conflicts from the close of the Thirty Years' War in 1648 to the French Revolution in 1789, and later to conventional wars in the nuclear age, has fresh meaning in twenty-first-century America. These days, the limits of limited war, such as they are, fall less on the warriors and more on the American people who are increasingly cut out of the process. They are, for instance, purposely never mobilized for battle, but encouraged to act as though they were living in a war-less land. American war efforts, which invariably take place in

distant lands, are not supposed to interfere with business as usual in the "homeland," which, of course, means consumerism and consumption. You will find no rationing in today's America, nor calls for common sacrifice of any sort. If anything, wars have simply become another consumable item on the American menu. They consume fuel and resources, money, and intellect, all in staggering amounts. In a sense, they are themselves a for-profit consumable, often with tie-ins to video games, movies, and other forms of entertainment.

In the rush for money and in the name of patriotism, the horrors of wars, faced squarely by many Americans in the Vietnam War era, are now largely disregarded. One question that this election season has raised: What if our post-democratic military is driven by an autocrat who insists that it must obey his whims in the cause of "making America great again"?

Come 2017, we may find out.

Senior Military Men: Checking Out and Cashing In

There was a time when old soldiers like Douglas MacArthur talked wistfully about fading away in retirement. Not so for today's senior military officers. Like so many politicians, they regularly go in search of the millionaires' club on leaving public service, even as they accept six-figure pensions and other retirement benefits from the government. In the post-military years, being John Q. Public isn't enough. One must be General Johannes Q. Publicus (ret.), a future financial wizard, powerful CEO, or educator supreme. Heck, maybe all three.

Consider General David Petraeus, America's "surge" general in Iraq and later head of U.S. Central Command. He left the directorship of the CIA in disgrace after an adulterous affair with his biographer-mistress, with whom he illegally shared classified information. Petraeus has since found teaching gigs at the University of Southern California, the City University of New York, and Harvard's Kennedy School while being appointed chairman of the investment firm KKR Global Institute. Another retired general who cashed in with an investment firm is Ray Odierno, the

former Army chief of staff, who became a special adviser to JP Morgan Chase, the financial giant. (Indeed, the oddness of Odierno, an ex-football player known for his total dedication to the Army, being hired by a financial firm inspired this spoof at a military humor site.)

But few men have surpassed retired Air Force General John Jumper. He cashed in by joining many corporate boards, including the board of directors for Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC), a major defense contractor. After five years he became its CEO with a seven-figure salary.

Then you have retired general officers who pull down more than \$300 an hour (no \$7.25 federal minimum wage for them) advising their former subordinates at the Pentagon as "senior mentors."

No one expects generals to take vows of poverty upon retirement. Indeed, those hefty government pensions and assorted other benefits would preclude such vows. But in the post-democratic military world, duty, honor, country has become duty, honor, cash.

For today's crop of retiree generals, no Cincinnatus need apply. Of course, there's long been a revolving door between Pentagon offices and corporate boardrooms, but that door seems to be spinning ever faster in the twenty-first century.

The peril of all this should be obvious: the prospect of cashing-in big time upon retirement can't help but affect the judgment of generals while they're still wearing the uniform. When you reach high rank, it's already one big boys' club where everyone knows everyone else's reputation. Get one for being an outspoken critic of a contractor's performance, or someone who refuses to play ball or think by the usual rules of Washington, and chances are you're not going to be hired to lucrative positions on various corporate boards in retirement.

Such an insular, even incestuous system of pay-offs naturally reinforces conventional thinking. Generals go along to get along, embracing prevailing thinking on interventionism, adventurism, and dominance.

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Especially troublesome is the continued push for foreign military sales (arms exports) to some of the world's most active war zones. In this way, weaponry and wars are increasingly the business of America, a "growth" industry that is only reinforced when retired generals are hired to lead companies, to advise financial institutes, or even to teach young adults in prestigious schools.

For Petraeus is not the only retired general to lecture at such places. General Stanley McChrystal, who infamously was fired by President Obama for allowing a command climate that was disrespectful to the nation's civilian chain of command, is now a senior fellow at the Jackson Institute at Yale University. Admiral William McRaven, former head of U.S. Special Operations Command during the era of black sites and deaths by torture, is now the chancellor of the entire University of Texas system. McRaven had no prior background in education, just as Odierno had no background in finance before being hired to a top-tier position of authority. Both of them were, however, the military version of "company men" who, on retirement, possessed a wealth of contacts, which helped make them highly marketable commodities.

If you're wearing three or four stars in the military, you've already been carefully vetted as a "company man," since the promotion process screens out mavericks. Independent thinkers tend to retire or separate from the military long before they reach eligibility for flag rank. The most persistent and often the most political officers rise to the top, not the brightest and the best.

Special Operations: The US Military's "Jesuits"

As Nick Turse has documented at *TomDispatch*, post-9/11 America has seen the rapid growth of U.S. Special Operations Command, or SOCOM, a secretive military within the military that now numbers almost 70,000 operatives. The scholar and former CIA consultant Chalmers Johnson used to refer to that Agency as the president's private army. Now, the commander-in-chief quite literally has such an army (as, in a sense, he also now has a private robotic air force of drone assassins dispatchable

more or less anywhere). The expansion of SOCOM from a modest number of elite military units (like the Green Berets or SEAL Team 6) into a force larger than significant numbers of national armies is an underreported and under-considered development of our post-democratic military moment. It has now become the regular go-to force in the war on terror from Iraq to Afghanistan, Syria to Cameroon, Libya to Somalia.

As Gregory Foster, a Vietnam veteran and professor at the National Defense University noted recently, this now-massive force "provides an almost infinite amount of potential space for meddling and 'mission creep' abroad and at home due, in part, to the increasingly blurred lines between military, intelligence, police, and internal security functions... [T]he very nature of [special ops] missions fosters a military culture that is particularly destructive to accountability and proper lines of responsibility... the temptation to employ forces that can circumvent oversight without objection is almost irresistible."

Like the Jesuit order of priests who, beginning in the sixteenth century, took the fight to heretical Protestants and spread the Catholic faith from Europe and Asia in the "Old World" to nearly everywhere in the New World, today's SOCOM operators crusade globally on the part of America. They slay "evildoers" while advancing U.S. foreign policy and business goals in at least 150 countries. Indeed, the head of SOCOM, General Joseph Votel III, West Point grad and Army Ranger, put it plainly when he said that America is witnessing "a golden age for special operations."

A military force effectively unaccountable to the people tears at the very fabric of the Constitution, which is at pains to mandate firm and complete control over the military by Congress, acting in the people's name. Combine such a military with a range of undeclared wars and other conflicts and a Congress for which cheerleading, not control, is the order of the day, and you have a recipe for a force unto itself.

It used to be said of Prussia that it was a military with a state attached to it. America's post-democratic military,

combined with the proliferation of intelligence outfits and the growth of the country's second defense department, the Department of Homeland Security, could increasingly be considered something like an emerging proto-state. Call it America's 51st state, except that instead of having two senators and a few representatives based on its size, it has all the senators and all the representatives based on its power, budget, and grip on American culture.

It is, in other words, a post-democratic leviathan to be reckoned with. And not a single Democratic or Republican candidate for commander-in-chief has spent a day in uniform. Prediction for November: another overwhelming victory at the polls for America's 51st state.

William J. Astore, a retired Air Force lieutenant colonel, and writes regularly for [TomDispatch](http://TomDispatch.com).

THE END OF WWI

How did the first world war actually end?

By **Paul Mason**

Friday 01 Aug 2014

Quiz question: why did the first world war end? We're about to witness a commemoration in which the human preference for restraint and dignity will be under pressure from the televisual tendency for wittering on without knowledge or feeling.



So one crucial piece of knowledge should be, for schoolchildren and for TV presenters alike: how and why did it actually end?

Well, on 24 October 1918, with the German army retreating and its discipline disintegrating, the right-wing aristocrats who ran the German navy launched a suicidal mass foray from the base in Kiel, where they'd been holed

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up. It was quite clear, rebel sailor Ernst Schneider later wrote, that this was to be a “death ride”.

But the sailors had other ideas. The crews of German battleships were drawn from the families of skilled, socialist working class. Since Easter 1916 the entire underground culture of the German ports – Hamburg, Kiel, Wilhelmshaven – had been pervaded by far-left agitation. There was a “whispering campaign”: under the cover of seamen’s yarns in the lower decks, in the lockers, the munition rooms, crow’s nests of the fighting masts – even in the lavatories – an underground organisation was built up, Schneider remembered.

The sailors’ organisation met in the dark, kneeling between the stones of a war cemetery. This was no Potemkin-style, spontaneous outburst. With extreme order they took over the bridges, ran up red flags and pointed the guns of rebel ships at the hulls of those that did not rebel.

Mutinous sailors

On 4 November 1918 they armed themselves and set off, in their thousands, for the industrial centres of northern Germany. Jan Valtin, a participant, remembered: “That night I saw the mutinous sailors roll into Bremen on caravans of commandeered trucks – from all sides masses of humanity, a sea of swinging, pushing bodies and distorted faces were moving toward the centre of town. Many of the workers were armed with guns, with bayonets and with hammers.”

By 9 November, with workers swarming into the streets of Berlin, the Kaiser abdicated: only the declaration of a republic, with a Labour government and the promised “socialisation of industry”, prevented outright Soviet-style revolution.

These incredible events do not fit easily into the narrative the mass media has been feeding us about the 1914-18 war. We’ve had TV presenters telling us most soldiers “actually enjoyed the war”; we’ve had the former education secretary declaring Britain’s most famous anti-war play – *Oh What A Lovely War* – to be full of left-wing myths.

But the termination of war by working-class action fits uneasily at a deeper level: for most of history the existence of a

workforce with its own consciousness and organisations is an afterthought, or an anomaly. I’ve tried this quiz question again and again on highly-educated people and, even once they know the answer, there are looks of “does not compute”.

‘Stab in the back’

For Hitler, the German workers’ role in ending the war became the “stab in the back”: it was his ultimate justification for eradicating the German labour movement after 1933. In the British imperialist version of events the Kiel sailors become useful ancillaries: Yanks and tanks turn the western front and, naturally, the Germans throw the towel in once their front starts to crumble.

But to social historians the German workers’ role in ending the war is no surprise. Because exactly 100 years ago this week, they had also turned out in their hundreds of thousands to try and prevent it starting. The German socialist party was a massive social institution – with libraries, schools, choirs, nurseries – and during the fatal slide to war they called their members onto the streets in every major city.

Then, under the pressure of war fever and fearing their institutions would be outlawed, the socialist leaders swung behind the war effort.

We know now, thanks to the publication of records and memoirs, that it was entirely possible to have stopped the first world war. Key members of the British cabinet were against it; large parts of the social elite in most countries, including Germany, were stunned and appalled by the unstoppable process of mobilisation.

But within 18 months of its outbreak, dissident German socialist MPs were leading mass strikes, demonstrations and riots against the war. Despite censorship, mobilisation and the natural moral solidarity people have with troops sent to the front, the German arms industry was repeatedly hit by strikes after 1916.

When they reached Berlin, the first thing the insurgent sailors did was try to seize its radio tower: their aim was to send a message of solidarity to Russian sailors at Kronstadt in the

eastern Baltic Sea, who they had been fighting until a year before.

Stereotypes and ideology

Why don’t we know this story? In one sense, it is all too familiar: the Kiel mutiny is part of the staple diet of high school history. But by the time we get to popular representations of the 1914-18 war they are wrapped in stereotypes and ideology. In TV dramas about the period before and during the war, the most popular working-class characters are servants. That’s how the elite experienced the working class – as domestic skivvies. Representations of life in factories and working-class communities are rare. Even when it comes to comedy, there are way more officers in the cast of *Blackadder Goes Forth* than there are men from the ranks.

People who command armies, and politicians who order them to fight, have to believe “the nation” is united behind them: that’s as true for Hamas, the Israelis, the Ukrainian army and the Donetsk rebels today as it was for Hindenburg in 1914. And the war ideologies of the present demand the war ideologies of the past be perpetuated.

The best antidote to ideology is detail. But the autobiographies of those who took part in the Kiel mutiny are, themselves, clouded by their subsequent politics: a few emerged after 1945 as ruthless bureaucrats in East Germany. Others, like Ernst Schneider, who ended his days working on the London docks, remained inveterate anarchists.

But once you get to the detail, the big picture becomes clear.

Alongside the tragic and glorious place names of the 1914-18 war – Ypres, Gallipoli and the Somme – we should also remember Kiel and Wilhelmshaven, for it was here German workers finally did what they had been trying to do since August 1914: they stopped the war.

Follow [@paulmasonnews](https://twitter.com/paulmasonnews) on Twitter

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

**BOOK REVIEW: THE FALLACY OF "HUMANITARIAN WAR"**

The new excuse for U.S. imperial wars is "humanitarian" or "liberal" interventionism with Hillary Clinton and other proponents citing noble motives for destroying foreign societies, as ex-CIA official Graham E. Fuller discusses.

By Graham E. Fuller

March 21, 2016 "[Information Clearing House](http://www.informationclearinghouse.info)" - "[Consortium News](http://www.consortiumnews.com)" -

Rajan Menon's new book, *The Conceit of Humanitarian Intervention*, launches a timely argument against a dominant argument lying behind so much of modern American foreign policy — "humanitarian intervention" or "liberal interventionism."

We are, of course, well familiar with Republican and neocon readiness to go to war, but the reality is that many Democrat Party leaders have been no less seduced into a series of optional foreign military interventions, with increasingly disastrous consequences. Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is today one of the leading exponents of the idea, but so are many of the advisors around President Barack Obama.

Menon offers powerful argumentation skewering the concept of "humanitarian intervention," demonstrating how it operates often as little more than a subtler form of an imperial agenda. Naked imperial ambitions tend to be recognizable for what they are. But when those global ambitions are cloaked in the liberal language of our "right to protect" oppressed peoples, prevent humanitarian outrages, stop genocide, and to topple noxious dictators, then the true motives behind such operations become harder to recognize.

What humanitarian could object to such lofty goals? Yet the seductive character of these "liberal interventionist" policies end up serving — indeed camouflaging — a broad range of military objectives that rarely help and often harm the ostensible objects of our intervention.

Professor Rajan Menon brings a considerable variety of skills to bear in this brief and lucid book. Despite his first-class academic credentials in the

field, he also writes in clear and persuasive language for the concerned general reader. Second, Menon is no theoretician: he has worked closely with policy circles for many years and understands the players and operations as well as anyone outside government.

In rejecting the premise of "liberal interventionism," Menon is not exercising some hard-minded, bloodless vision of policy — quite the opposite. He is deeply concerned for the wellbeing of peoples and societies abroad — who are often among the primary victims of such liberal interventionism. He argues not as an isolationist but rather as an observer who has watched so many seemingly well-minded interventions turn into horror stories for the citizens involved.

From a humanitarian point of view, can the deaths of half a million Iraqis and the dislocation of a million or so more be considered to have contributed to the wellbeing of "liberated Iraq?" As former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright once said, she regretted the death of 500,000 Iraqi children who, in Saddam's Iraq, had been deprived of medicines under a long U.S. embargo, but, she concluded, "it was worth it." One wonders to whom it was worth it? Where is the humanitarian vision behind such a comment?

Libya too has been transformed from an unpleasant but quiescent dictatorship under Muammar Gaddafi into a nightmare of raging militias, civil war, anarchy and a breeding ground of ISIS and al-Qa'ida. Afghanistan is still mired in conflict. So Menon is arguing not for a hardening of hearts, but for questioning the real-world outcomes of such seemingly "well-intentioned" wars.

Ultimately the case for "humanitarian intervention" is justified by the quest for international justice, protection of civilians, and the broadening of democratization and human rights. The U.S. has regularly invoked these principles in justifying its ongoing — indeed nonstop — wars over the past several decades.

Yet the sad reality is that the *selective nature* of U.S. interventions raises serious questions about the true motivation behind invoking such "universal" values. U.S. calls for

"democratization" more often operate as punishment to its enemies ("regime change") but rarely as a gift to be bestowed upon friends ("friendly dictators.")

Menon argues, buttressing his case with striking examples from around the world, that such selective implementation of "universal values" by a global (imperial) power ends up tarnishing and diminishing the very values they are meant to promote; as a result they create broad cynicism around the world among those who perceive them as mere instruments of aggressive U.S. global power projection.

Yet when many genuine humanitarian crises do burst forth, as in Rwanda or in the ongoing agonies of the Congo (five *million* dead and counting) Washington has opted not to intervene because it did not perceive its immediate national interests to be threatened.

In short, the selective and opportunistic character of liberal interventionism ends up giving a bad name to liberalism. And it cruelly deceives many in the West who seek a more "liberal" foreign policy and yet who find that, in the end, they have only supported the projection of greater American geopolitical power — and usually at considerable human cost to the Iraqs, Afghanistans, Somalias, Libyas, and Columbias of the world.

Any reader of the book is eventually forced to confront a deeper question: when is war in fact "worth it"? Few would respond "never," but many might respond "rarely." Yet Menon is not arguing against war as such, so much as forcing us to acknowledge the faulty "liberal" foundation of our relentless quest for enemies to destroy — in the name of making the world a better place.

The title of the book, *The Conceit of Humanitarian Intervention*, suggests that at the very least such policies are self-deceiving, in other cases perhaps deliberately meant to obfuscate. Menon here poses the question whether, for whatever motivation, great powers can ever sufficiently master the complexity of foreign societies to truly engineer a
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better life in the countries we target for remodeling. And whether we can afford an enterprise that might take decades at the least.

In the end we become aware of the unhealthy nature of combining broad ideals married to global power. In the case of the British Empire, and now the American, this combination readily leads to the manipulation and then corruption of those ideals — discrediting U.S. prestige and credibility and damaging the lives of those living in troubled areas.

None of this is to say that there is never room for international intervention in arenas of horrific depredations against civilian populations. But it is only when such intervention is truly international (essentially U.N.-sanctioned and not a mere maneuver to insert NATO into another global hotspot) that it can take on a measure of credibility and international respect. Otherwise it ends up perceived as a U.S. proxy move against Russia, China, Iran or some other adversary.

Menon's book constitutes essential reading for anyone troubled by the ugly character of so much of the international scene these days, and yet dismayed by its exploitation by policy-makers who cloak invasion, power projections and military operations in the garb of humanitarian effort.

Here is a cogent critique of the recent decades of U.S. foreign policy misadventures in which our military has become the primary instrument of U.S. policy — and justified in the name of humanitarian goals. We rarely get to hear these arguments so clearly presented.

Graham E. Fuller is a former senior CIA official, author of numerous books on the Muslim World. His latest book is *Breaking Faith: A novel of espionage and an American's crisis of conscience in Pakistan*. <http://grahamefuller.com/>

Pesticides came about after the First World War. Some brainy petrochemical money maker said, 'Hey, that mustard gas worked great on people, maybe we could dilute it down and spray it on our crops to deal with pests.'

Woody Harrelson

FILM REVIEW: "EYE IN THE SKY"

By **Michael Henry**

There have been several occasions in my life when I have broken down and sobbed. In retrospect they all came as cathartic releases at the end of a period — from hours to days - of emotional stresses of varying intensity. In just two instances — to my shame — I have audibly sobbed during a film. The first of these was the holocaust movie *Schindler's List*, directed by Steven Spielberg. The second was the recently released military drone film *Eye in the Sky*. I should confess at this point that I have been watching and remembering and loving movies — shamelessly - for over 65 years. I blame my father. Anyway, I like to immerse myself in the worlds that movie makers can create. But I am not entirely swept away. My mind ticks over simultaneously as I watch the cinematography, listen to the music and sound effects, appreciate the authenticity of a fictional film's design, critique the acting, marvel sometimes at the beauty of the actors, peer into the background of most scenes and follow the plot and dialogue.

Eye in the Sky tracks with relentless tension the myriad decisions that must be made on exactly how and when to kill a group of most wanted Al-Shebaab terrorists and two suicide bombers, gathered together in a house in Nairobi, Kenya. The gathering has been watched by military and political personnel — all on or under the ground - from several locations in the United Kingdom and the United States, using the high resolution cameras on board a top-secret drone armed with two hellfire missiles and flying at 20,000 feet above the city. Unfortunately just before the irreversible decision can be made, a young girl sets up a table to sell bread next to the wall outside the house. The drone "pilot" in charge of pulling the trigger balks at destroying the house, as it will harm or even kill the girl. His decision sets off an intense debate in the film amongst military personnel and politicians from Britain and America about two things: the legality of accidentally killing innocent bystanders and the public relations scandal resulting from killing an American citizen, a British citizen and an innocent

bystander. The military in charge of this operation must also of course consider the possible consequences of allowing the suicide bombers to escape and kill up to an estimated 80 innocent Kenyans, including many children. This would be an even greater public relations scandal and a terrible humanitarian tragedy.

I was reluctantly drawn to seeing this film because of most of the previous work of the main actor — Helen Mirren — and the directing by South African Gavin Hood. I had a feeling that this was going to be another piece of pumped up propaganda for the use of wonderful technology in the war against terrorism. Well it was and it wasn't one of those movies. Mainly it was — propaganda masquerading as a tale of morality, with a significant dose of cynicism and corruption. I was enthralled by the expertise brought to bear of telling the story.

So why was I so upset? For the same reason I broke down near the end of *Schindler's List*. Primarily because Spielberg's film was a terrible reminder of the unimaginable horror of the holocaust, about which I knew too much. I broke down at the end of *Eye in the Sky*, not because of the film itself, but because I know too much about the use of military drone technology. This movie is a terrible reminder of the increasing use of drones by the USA and the UK. Over 500 drone strikes by Britain in Iraq in 2015 using Reaper weapons — the one shown in *Eye in the Sky*. It is also deeply distressing to know also that the spying facility in central Australia, Pine Gap, provides a vast amount of intelligence data, which is passed on to the United States for use in their drone strike program. This data is often in the form of received radio signals gathered through satellites positioned above the Indian Ocean and Indonesia. It has been said that "the United States will never fight another war in the eastern hemisphere without the direct involvement of Pine Gap".

Michael Henry is an active member of *Just Peace*

The greatest crime since World War II has been US foreign policy.

~William Ramsey Clark

**BRINKSMANSHIP**

*Brinksmanship, but by Whom?
Russia...or the US?*

by **Dave Lindorff**

April 15, 2016

US news reports on an incident Tuesday in which two Russian jet fighters buzzed very close to a US destroyer, the USS Donald Cook, in the Baltic Sea, make it sound like a serious threat in which the US might have been justified in defending itself against a simulated attack on the high seas.

Nowhere in the reports in the US was it mentioned that the Cook was itself engaging in provocative behavior.

The Baltic Sea is an international waterway, bordering the countries of Denmark, Germany, Poland, Russia, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Finland and Sweden and as such, if the US wants to sail a military ship there, it has every right to do so. But honest reporting on this incident should have included that the Cook wasn't just sailing around innocently in the open waters of the Baltic. It had moved to within a 70-mile radius of the Russian port enclave of Kaliningrad — an isolated and thus sensitive part of Russian territory located on the Baltic coast that is bounded by Lithuania and Poland and thus is separated from the rest of Russia. Kaliningrad is the site of a major Russian naval base, and is also home to 500,000 Russian people.

Here's a map of Kaliningrad showing the 70-mile radius within which the USS Cook had positioned itself at the time of the multiple flybys by two Russian Su-24s (and where it was engaging in landing and takeoff exercises with Polish military helicopter.

The US reporting on this whole incident has been hysterical.

CNN's Pentagon reporter said the jets were "demonstrating a simulated strafing run" and implied that it was dangerous because "if it had been a real strafing run, we wouldn't have known it until it was too late." Of course, Russia and the US are not at war, so why would Russia have strafed a US destroyer? The reporter didn't say. Instead, he said the ship's commander deserved "kudos" for keeping his cool and not losing the

ships anti-aircraft defenses on the two jets.

The Russian jets, it should be noted (but wasn't in this report until late in the piece), were not armed, with no missiles mounted on the wings. The Cook, on the other hand, is armed not only with deadly defensive anti-aircraft weapons, but also with offensive (and potentially nuclear-tipped) Tomahawk cruise missiles, making its maneuvers in and around the Russian base and Russian territory anything but innocent.

Other US news reports were similarly breathless and one-sidedly jingoistic in their reporting about the encounter.

In fact, there was nothing dangerous about the incident at all except if the US ship's crew had been foolish enough to respond to the harassment by shooting down the planes. (in truth, nobody on the US vessel seems to have been particularly anxious about the Russian jets zipping by them.)

A fairer reporting job might have speculated as to how US forces would have responded, had a Russian cruise-missile-armed frigate or destroyer approached within 70 miles of naval bases at Newport News, Virginia, or San Diego, or perhaps the Pensacola Naval Air Station on the coast of Florida just east of Mobile in the Gulf of Mexico. See map below, to understand to how near the USS Cook was to Kaliningrad when it was buzzed.

Under international maritime laws, a country can claim the waters within 12 miles of its coast to be "territorial waters," and can exclude foreign ships within that distance, but when it comes to military bases, and countries that a country views as potentially rivals, such as the US and Russia or China, ships further off from a base are liable to be surveilled and maybe even harassed if they approach. I'm guessing if a Russian warship were to get within 70 miles of a US Naval installation, it would, like the USS Cook, find itself being buzzed by US Navy attack planes, or visited by US Coast Guard vessels.

And remember, while US government officials keep referring to Russian aggression (falsely claiming, for example, the the Russian Army "invades" Ukraine and especially the erstwhile Ukrainian territory of Crimea,

it has actually been the US that has been taking a very aggressive stance towards Russia. This has been true ever since the US backed a coup in Ukraine, which ousted the elected pro-Russian leader of that country and installed a fascist anti-Russian government that then launched a war against the Russian minority in Eastern Ukraine. The US lately has been moving offensive weaponry into Poland, Estonia and other countries bordering Russia in what can only be seen as threatening moves, while leading an embargo against Russia — itself an act of economic warfare.

It is in light of these aggressive US moves that the USS Cook's incursion near Kaliningrad has to be seen, and also the Russian aerial response to it.

But that kind of reporting is absolutely absent from US corporate media reports on this incident, which instead simply parrot the Pentagon and State Department line and present it all as an example of Russian "brinksmanship."

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

"The Greatest Generation?"

They tell me I am a member of the greatest generation. That's because I saw combat duty as a bombardier in World War II. But I refuse to celebrate "the greatest generation" because in so doing we are celebrating courage and sacrifice in the cause of war. And we are miseducating the young to believe that military heroism is the noblest form of heroism, when it should be remembered only as the tragic accompaniment of horrendous policies driven by power and profit. The current infatuation with World War II prepares us--innocently on the part of some, deliberately on the part of others--for more war, more military adventures, more attempts to emulate the military heroes of the past."

— [Howard Zinn](http://HowardZinn)



POETRY

Alexander Blok

Translated by Alex Miller

***The Kite* (1916)**

Describing circle after circle,
 The wheeling kite looks down upon
 A dream-like, empty meadow. A mother
 Grieves in the cabin for her son:
 "Here, suck this breast, here, take this bread.
 Grow up, be humble, trust in God."

The ages pass, endless war rages,
 Revolt flares, villages are burned,
 But you are still the same, my homeland,
 In beauty ancient and tear-stained.
 How long must that poor mother cry,
 How long the kite wheel in the sky?

Untitled (1905)

Then they charged, straight at
 the breast-bone
 Came the glittering bayonet.
 Someone shouted, "Hallelujah!"
 Someone whispered, "Don't forget!"

Someone fell, arms flailing wildly,
 Then the ranks closed over him.
 Underfoot, someone was struggling,
 Who – no time to take it in.

Only in a cheerful memory
 Was a candle lit somewhere,
 On and on they thundered, trampling
 That warm body lying there.

No one's destined to grow older –
 Death from mouth to mouth is passed...
 Fury blazes ever higher,
 Far ahead lies bloody waste...

Gnashing shall be all the louder.
 Pain more sweet, life swifter spent.
 Afterwards, the earth will try to
 Soothe the affrighted firmament.

Untitled (1911)

Yes, inspiration so commands me:
 My vision, being wholly free,
 Is drawn to where all's degradation,
 And dirt, and gloom, and poverty.
 And yet I love this world of horror;
 Through it I glimpse another one,
 A promised land that's full of beauty,
 A land that's simple and humane.
 But if you neither sow nor harvest,
 If you're just human, as you say –
 What can you know? How can you venture
 Judgement in this mad century?
 Have you not been reduced by sickness,
 Poverty or starvation ever?
 Have you not seen children in Paris?
 Beggars in winter by the river?
 Open your eyes, open them quickly,
 To life's unfathomable horrors,
 Before the great storm that's impending
 destroys all in this land of yours.
 But do not let your proud wrath strike
 The ones who bear life's heavy burden.
 Another sowed the seeds of evil.
 And yet that sowing was not barren...
 He's right, who has at least rejected
 Life's cheap cosmetic show outright,
 And, like the timid mole, has burrowed
 Underground, hiding from the light,
 And wilted there, his whole life hating
 That light and railing at it so,
 Not even looking to the future,
 And saying to the present, "No!"

Bertolt BrechtFrom *Threepenny Novel* (1934)

Translated by Christopher Isherwood

War-Song

And now they're off to the war
 And they all need cartridges badly
 And of course there are plenty of nice kind people
 Who'll find them the cartridges gladly
 "No ammunition, no war!"

Leave that to us, my sons!
 You go to the front and fight,
 We'll make you ammunition and guns."

And they made ammunition in piles
 And there wasn't a war to be found
 And of course there were plenty of nice kind people
 Who conjured one out of the ground.
 "Off you go, dear boy, to the front!
 For they threaten your native sod
 March, for your mothers and sisters,
 For your King and for your God!"

**RECOVERY FROM MILITARISM**By **Robert C. Koehler**Published on Thursday, March 24, 2016
by [Common Dreams](#)

"The American military," laments Koehler, "is an unceasing hemorrhage of cash and aggression, committed — perhaps only at the unconscious level — to nothing more than its own perpetuation, which is to say, endless war." (Image: [gimmegimmegames.com](#))

The pols cry glory and revenge.
They cry security. They cry greatness.

Then they stick in the needle, or the missile or the rifle shell, or the nuclear bomb. Or at least they imagine doing so. This will fix the world. And they approve more funding for war.

U.S. militarism, and the funding — and the fearmongering — that sustain it are out of control . . . in the same way, perhaps, that stage 4 cancer is out of control.

We talk about "the Pentagon" as though it were a rational entity, hierarchically in control of what it does, dispensable as needed to trouble spots around the world: a tool of America's commander in chief and, therefore, of the American people. The reality, undiscussed on the evening news or the presidential debates, is something a little different. The American military is an unceasing hemorrhage of cash and aggression, committed — perhaps only at the unconscious level — to nothing more than its own perpetuation, which is to say, endless war.

"Despite the lost wars and the endless consumption of money, despite the failures of security and horrific growth of global terrorism since the U.S. began its war on terror, the country continues to militarize, both internationally and domestically."

As Ralph Nader has noted recently: ". . . the military — this huge expanse of bureaucracy, which owns 25 million acres (over seven times the size of Connecticut) and owns over 500,000

buildings in the U.S. and around the world — is beyond anybody's control, including that of the secretaries of defense, their own internal auditors, the president, tons of GAO audits publically available, and the Congress. How can this be?"

The Department of Defense, which consumes over half the nation's annual discretionary funding, has never been audited. The money disappears into a black hole and much of it is simply never heard from again. The situation is so outrageous that a congressional coalition of progressives and conservatives have launched an initiative, H.R. 5126, called the Audit the Pentagon Act of 2014.

According to the legislation's sponsors: "The Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990 requires every federal agency to pass a routine financial audit each year. The Pentagon is the only cabinet agency that is 'unauditable,' according to the non-partisan Government Accountability Office. In the last dozen years, the Pentagon has broken every promise to Congress about when DoD would pass an audit. Meanwhile, Congress doubled Pentagon spending."

But this is only a small part of the hemorrhaging, metastasizing mess. We need to heal ourselves from, not simply audit, U.S. militarism.

"And no, the military doesn't win wars anymore. It hasn't won one of note in 70 years." Gregory Foster, a West Point graduate and professor at National Defense University in Washington, D.C., wrote recently at TomDipatch. "The dirty wars in the shadows it now regularly fights are intrinsically unwinnable, especially given our preferred American Way of War: killing people and breaking things as lethally, destructively, and overwhelmingly as possible. . . ."

"Instead of a strategically effective military," he adds, "what we have is quite the opposite: heavy, disproportionately destructive, indiscriminately lethal, single-mindedly combat-oriented, technology-dominant, exorbitantly expensive, unsustainably consumptive, and increasingly alienated from the rest of society. Just as important, wherever it goes, it provokes

and antagonizes where it should reassure and thereby invariably fathers the mirror image of itself in others."

No, this is not the military the presidential candidates invoke so recklessly, but this is the military we have. And it is not stagnant. It's growing, growing, growing — eating up the American budget and most members of Congress and most of the media, which at most are tepidly critical of the excesses of military spending (\$640 toilet seats, \$137 million F-35 Joint Strike Fighters) and the occasional moral lapses that reach public attention (rape, murder, Marines urinating on enemy corpses).

Despite the lost wars and the endless consumption of money, despite the failures of security and horrific growth of global terrorism since the U.S. began its war on terror, the country continues to militarize, both internationally and domestically.

Indeed, every outbreak of terror feeds the cancer, e.g.: "We need to empower law enforcement to patrol and secure Muslim neighborhoods before they become radicalized," presidential candidate Ted Cruz declared in the wake of this week's Brussels bombings, stoking the fears of his potential supporters and heedlessly tossing them a scapegoat.

Fear consumes intelligence. And militarism is all about simplistic solutions: Identify an enemy and kill him. Problem solved!

The more people militarize their thinking, the stupider they get.

But the world is extraordinarily complex. Simon Jenkins, writing this week in the *Guardian*, [*Ed — see Page 9 of this newsletter*] talked about "seeking to alleviate, or not aggravate, the rage that gives rise to acts of terror," which can only happen by seriously de-escalating our own aggression.

Maybe, as Foster put it, our only alternative is to "reconsider the very purpose and function of the military and to reorient it accordingly. That would mean transforming a cumbersome, stagnant, obsolescent, irrelevant warfighting force — with its own inbuilt self-corrupting qualities — into
(continued on Page 30...)

*(continued from Page 18...)*

remain the "eternal united capital" for them.

According to Al-Tafakji, the recent ongoing Israeli measures regarding the so-called "Absentee Property Law" is the Israeli tool used to target Palestinian properties owned by Palestinians living outside Jerusalem.

"Using this law, the occupation is targeting the remaining 13 per cent of occupied Jerusalem controlled by Palestinians," he said.

(continued from Page 29...)

a peacekeeping, nation-building, humanitarian-assistance, disaster-response force far more attuned to a future it helps shape and far more strategically effective than what we now have.

"... this would mean seeking to demilitarize the military."

I call this trans-military thinking: a take on personal and national security that is not centered on aggression and dominance, but on diplomacy and, my God, understanding. Is such a level of social reorganization impossible? Only if we concede that we have no future.

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

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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