

"Exposing the true costs of war"

# The War Crimes Times

WarCrimesTimes.org

A publication of



Vol. V No. 2

Spring 2013

Donations Welcome



A U.S. Navy Grumman F-14A Tomcat, whose fuel load is 16,000 pounds in internal tanks and 4,000 pounds in external tanks, flies over a Kuwaiti oil well set ablaze by Iraqi troops during the 1991 Gulf War. (US Navy photo)

## Global Warring Global Warming

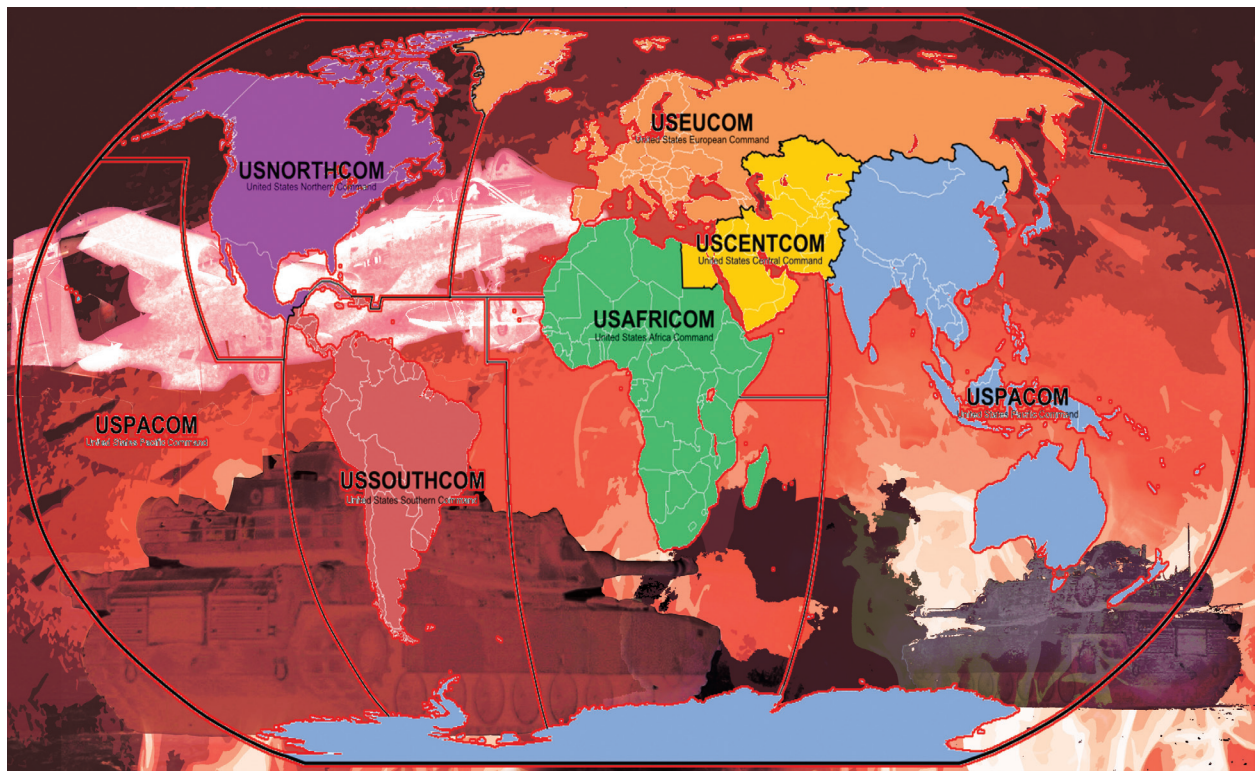
### The Math of the Military Industrial Fossil Fuel Complex

by Danbert Nobacon

SCHOOL'S BACK IN. A quick Math 101 refresher to keep in mind: a billion is a thousand million; a trillion is a million millions, or a thousand billions. Don't forget to review the homework assignments at the end.

According to thinkprogress.org, proven fossil fuel reserves will last the planet until 2050 at current consumption rates. At present day prices, that makes a pie worth around \$22 trillion, but the catch is that in order to keep global warming below 2 degrees C—a level some scientists now believe is actually too high—80% of those fossil fuels have to remain unburned.

When Big Fossil Fuel boasts of the millions they are investing in green energy, what they are really saying is that they spend more money advertising their green credentials than they do in actually financing green projects on the ground. When they spend millions on lobbyists they are doing it to maintain annual hundred billion dollar profit margins, which *(continued on page 10)*



The United States of America has brazenly divided the planet into military commands, geographical regions including all the continents and "sovereign" nations of the world. Conflicts rage and temperatures rise throughout the world — events that are not unrelated. (Image by Mark Runge based on map by Lencer)

### Warring is Warming: How Militarism Contributes to Climate Destabilization

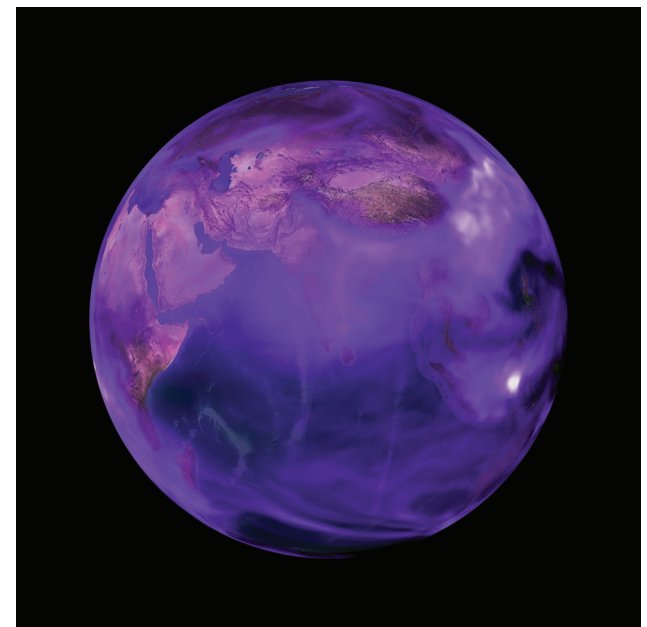
by Kim Carlyle

*A system with an unchecked positive loop ultimately will destroy itself.*

—Donella Meadows

The greatest threat to U.S. security is not terrorism; it is nothing that requires a military solution. In fact, we'd make significant progress toward U.S.—and global—security if we had a military *dissolution*.

Human security is compromised and civilization itself is imperiled due to the disruption of the biosphere that is well underway as the average temperature of the planet rises because of human activity. War and militarism are human activities that significantly contribute to the problem. Three links between warring and warming are described below. The first two interact in a loop of self-reinforcing cause and effect, but the third has the most adverse effects. *(continued on page 8)*



Black carbon (soot) from the incomplete combustion of fossil fuels is in perpetual motion across the globe. It contributes to global warming by absorbing heat in the atmosphere and by reducing albedo, the ability to reflect sunlight, when deposited on snow and ice. Black carbon is found worldwide, but its presence and impact are particularly strong in Asia. (NASA photo)

#### In this issue:

#### World War — World Warm

Nations on every continent are participants—as instigators, aggressors, defenders, suppliers, profiteers, coalition partners, or victims—in ongoing wars. This endless warfare contributes to global warming; it also distracts us from addressing that very problem.

On these pages, our contributors explore and deplore wars past, present, and future—in Afghanistan, Vietnam, Latin America, and Africa—and they describe the adverse effects on climate of an unbridled military machine.

We're grateful to the journalists, activists, and veterans who contributed to this spring edition.

We hope this issue engages you, enrages you, and inspires you to action. Homeplanet security is at stake. Weather of Mass Destruction is imminent.



# Letters

## Constructive Criticism

Acting on behalf of Veterans For Peace Chapter 134 of which I'm a member, I have distributed bundled copies of WCT, the past two editions. We believe it to be a powerful instrument in helping to change public opinion re: the Warfare State, U.S. Imperialism, and the prevailing climate of militarism.

However, I found the article, "UN-Backed Rogue States Plan Syria's Slaughter" (WCT, Fall 2012), by Felicity Arbuthnot to be lacking in good journalistic standards and, in some respects, counterproductive to your cause (and ours).

Her snide remarks, as I have highlighted in the enclosed copy, are sophomoric and detract from the overall impact of the article, which otherwise contains some informative and pertinent information. The accompanying cartoon depicting a fiendishly smiling Hillary Clinton, along with the author's remark about her "hurtling around the world like a headless chicken" are unnecessarily insulting and opinionated.

My concern is that remarks such as this will tend to disgust and alienate many readers and render WCT as a less worthy and reliable publication.

I tend to view this article as the solitary "bad apple" in the barrel, and not at all typical of the good work generally contained in WCT.

Please be as bit more selective editorially. Keep up your splendid effort.

In peace,

Charles Dils  
Tacoma, WA

Editor responds:

Dear Charles,

Thank you for your strong support, your kind words, and your honest criticism.

We try to present a diversity of expression in the WCT, within our bias of being pro peace and anti war.

Our contributors range from academics to legal experts to veterans to seasoned journalists, such as Ms. Arbuthnot.

Her experience is impressive. She has visited Iraq more than thirty times, being one of the few journalists to cover Iraq extensively even during the sanctions of the 1990s. She was senior researcher for John Pilger's award winning documentary: Paying the Price—Killing the Children of Iraq. And she has graciously allowed the WCT to print her articles several times in the past.

That said, Ms. Arbuthnot's prose can sometimes be quite satirical (as can the work of Carlos Latuff, another gracious contributor, whose cartoon you mention).

While we have no problem with opinionated pieces—indeed, we are an opinion-driven publication—we would prefer not to be insulting. And we certainly don't want to alienate readers.

The passages you've highlighted in your enclosed WCT page are mostly Ms. Arbuthnot's opinions and observations. For example, in response to a quote from Susan Rice, U.S. Ambassador to the UN, that the U.S. "condemned all terrorism" and would use all its powers to combat terrorism "including the power of our values," the author refers to the many civilian victims of U.S. drone attacks and opines, "Some 'values.' Quite some terrorism."

That doesn't seem offensive to us. But the "headless chicken" remark does approach, if not exceed, the limits of good taste. Ms. Arbuthnot had made reference to the Secretary of State's reaction to the news of the death of Muammar Gaddafi. Ms. Clinton gleefully chuckled, some would say cackled, "We came; we saw; he died." This callous display on learning of the murder of another human being was inappropriate to say the least, especially for the head of our country's State Department. (See for yourself the 12-second video clip on YouTube.)

While this context might mitigate Ms. Arbuthnot's gibe a bit, two wrongs don't make it right.

We value your opinion and have duly noted your concern.

## The Longest War?

A minor correction to John Dear's opening paragraph in "Peace is Possible" (WCT, Winter 2013). He says the Afghanistan War is the longest in U.S. history. That isn't correct. A longer war, which still continues, is against the Moros (Muslims) in the Philippines. We have been fighting them since the Spanish-American War. While we "gave" the Philippines their independence after WWII, our military continues to aid the ongoing fight against these people.

One can also argue the wars against Native Americans were much longer. They began in 1622 (against the Powhatan Confederacy) and ended in 1890 with the Wounded Knee Massacre. You might also add the FBI attack on the AIM movement in 1973 at Wounded Knee as a continuation of that war.

Willard Hunter  
Albuquerque, NM

Editor responds: Michael McPearson's article, "IRAQ—8 years of occupation, 20 years of war 1991-2011: The Iraqi People Have Suffered Enough" (WCT, Spring 2011), described our two decades

in Mesopotamia; and a report late last year indicated that a few hundred U.S. troops remain there. So, it's now into three decades; and the Korean War is a sexagenarian! Then again, if it's not officially declared by Congress, is it really a "war"?

## Women killing on the field of battle no cause for rejoicing

Love and pain compels this letter.

Several weeks ago women were fully cleared for frontline combat. As a former Marine taught how to kill, there is little doubt in my mind that women will be highly effective in combat. I am sure they will participate with the same esprit de corps as men. The psychological techniques of conditioning now thoroughly developed and highly refined turn all but the best of us into programmed killers.

And, yes, feminism works for gender equality, and a new gender equality has been achieved. "You've come a long way, baby," as the expression goes. Yet author and poet Sharon Doubiago expresses a jaw-dropping and pivotal insight: "Men create war to compete with women who create life." As a man, I doubt I can completely understand the depth of this statement. If you are a woman, I am praying that you can.

This is breaking my heart. Please forgive me, but I don't want you to have the same opportunity to participate fully in the murderous conduct of our species. I don't want you to kill women, children, and men who are noncombatants and return home only to wake up to a new nightmare far worse than the nightmare of combat. I don't want you to be part of the suicide epidemic and receive the same neglect and mistreatment as your male counterparts. And most emphatically, I don't want you to believe you have to kill to be equal.

John Amidon  
Albany, NY.

The War Crimes Times is published and distributed quarterly by volunteer members of Veterans For Peace in Western North Carolina, Florida, and California and is funded entirely by donations from readers and from organizations that help with distribution of the paper.

The War Crimes Times provides information on war and the war crimes that invariably accompany war, the need to hold war criminals accountable, the many costs of war, and the effects of our war culture on our national character and international reputation. Additionally and importantly, we also report on the efforts of the many people who sacrifice their time, money, and comfort to work for peace.

Our contributors include journalists, legal experts, poets, artists, and veterans speaking from experience. While their views may not always be entirely consistent with ours, their topics address the concerns of the War Crimes Times.

Order copies and make donations online at WarCrimesTimes.org or by mail: WCT c/o VFP Chapter 099, PO Box 356, Mars Hill, NC 28754. Make checks payable to VFP Chapter 099 (memo "WCT")

We welcome submissions of original articles, poetry, artwork, cartoons, news items, and letters to the editor—which are due no later than the 1st of the months of publication: March, June, September, December. See guidelines at WarCrimesTimes.org. Contact: editor@WarCrimesTimes.org

This issue was produced and distributed by: Kim Carlyle, Susan Carlyle, Clare Hanrahan, Ron Kuykendall, Susan Oehler, Lyle Petersen, Michael Prysner, Mark Runge, and Robert Yoder.

WCT has been endorsed by March Forward! and the Justice for Fallujah Project.



veteransforpeace.org

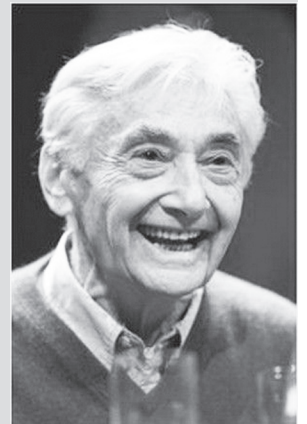
## The Howard Zinn Fund

for Peace and Justice has been established by Veterans For Peace to help VFP chapters and members develop projects that advance the VFP mission to abolish war as an instrument of public policy.

The Fund is named in honor of Howard Zinn, a long-time peace activist and author of *A People's History of the United States*. It provides small grants for VFP projects that reach out to the community to promote peaceful alternatives to conflict, to raise public awareness of the implications of military interventions, and to support changes in public policy that would further VFP goals.

VFP chapters and members that are interested in applying for Zinn Fund grants, should check the VFP website for more information. The fund welcomes all contributions. Donate at veteransforpeace.org or send a check to:

Howard Zinn Fund  
Veterans For Peace  
216 South Meramec Ave  
St. Louis MO 63105





## Afghan Peace Volunteer Says Drones Bury Beautiful Lives

This is a transcript of an interview of Afghan Peace Volunteer Raz Mohammad with questions prepared by Maya Evans of Voices for Creative Nonviolence UK. Reprinted with permission from Voices for Creative Nonviolence ([vcnv.org](http://vcnv.org)).

**Raz Mohammad:** Salam 'aleikum. I am Raz Mohammad. I'm from Maidan Wardak province and I'm Pashtun.

**Kathy Kelly:** Raz Mohmmad, what do you think about drones?

**Raz Mohammad:** I think drones are not good. I remember how, in my village, a drone attack killed my brother-in-law and four of his friends. It was truly sad. A beautiful life was buried and the sound of crying and sorrow arose from peaceful homes. I say that this is inhumane. Today, the idea of humanity has been forgotten. Why do we spend money like this? Why don't we use an alternative way? The international community says that drones are used to kill the Taliban. This is not true. We should see the truth. Today, it's hard to find the truth and no one listens to the people.

**Kathy Kelly:** How have drones impacted Wardak, Afghanistan?

**Raz Mohammad:** Drones have a negative impact on the lives of the people of Wardak and other provinces in Afghanistan, because drones don't bring peace. They kill human beings. Drones bring nothing but bombs. They burn the lives of the people. People can't move around freely. In the nights, people are afraid. Drones don't improve people's lives, they limit the people's lives. The people are not happy with drones. When they hear the sound of drones, they feel sad. Those who live in Kabul and those who live in the provinces especially in Pashtun areas feel differently about drones. Those in Kabul don't feel the pain of those in the provinces where there's war and family members are being killed. It is those families of victims who should be asked and whose voices should be heard.



**We are human beings and are always your friends**

**Kathy Kelly:** Are drones making Afghanistan safer?

**Raz Mohammad:** No. Drones don't protect the people of Afghanistan. Instead, drones kill the people of Afghanistan. You hear in the news and reports that every day, families, children and women are killed. Do you call this safety?

**Kathy Kelly:** Is there a mental impact on Afghans from the presence of drones?

**Raz Mohammad:** Yes, drones have a negative impact on the mind. For me, when I go home, I recall the incident with my brother-in-law which affected me a lot and changed my life. I don't have a peaceful mind. When I'm home and study at night, my father and mother are very worried and tell me not to stay up too late because they may make a mistake and bomb the house. When my younger brother knows of a drone incident, he says he won't go to school or get out of bed early today because the drones may come. See how it affects the mind of a 5-year-old or 8-year-old child?

**Kathy Kelly:** What do you think about the use of drones after the 2014 withdrawal?

**Raz Mohammad:** I think that the use of drones today or in 2014 is inappropriate. Why has the international community sent drones to wage war in Afghanistan? Why have we forgotten the concepts of humanity and the love of humanity? War is not a solution. We can see this from the past 30 years of war in Afghanistan. Wars bring killing and enmity. Drones after 2014 will cause enmity between Pashtuns, Tajiks, and Hazaras because those in government use the people for their own benefit. For their own power and lives, they drop bombs on the people, and bring division and inhumanity. As I see it now and after 2014, innocent human beings will be killed.

**Kathy Kelly:** Do you have any other message to give?

**Raz Mohammad:** My message to the ordinary people of the world is to listen, and become aware of drone warfare because what international governments say about using drones to kill terrorists is not true. Friends who come here can see that innocent people and women are killed. We should listen to the voices of Afghans and promote and defend humanity and humane relations. My message to the governments of the world is: Why have you forgotten humanity and the love of humanity? You are killing human beings for your own monetary benefit. I demand that this (drone warfare) be stopped, especially the spending of so much money on drones in Afghanistan and the killing of so many innocent people. Isn't it appropriate for you to help the people in alternative ways? We are human beings and are always your friends, thank you.

## Drones Produce Shrapnel

*The use of these weapons is neither "effective" nor "wise"*

by Bill Distler

John Brennan, Obama's recent nominee for CIA director, says that missiles and bombs from drones (pilotless aircraft) are the most "effective" weapon against terrorists and that missiles and bombs can be "precise," minimizing civilian casualties.



Mr. Brennan often uses the word "effective," a soft and soothing sound. But the main product of missiles and bombs is shrapnel, a sharp and ugly word. Shrapnel is the jagged bits of metal formed from the casing of an explosive.

I have some experience with shrapnel. My unit in Vietnam was hit at night by our own artillery. The shrapnel killed two and wounded about twelve. The wounded moaned and screamed like wounded animals. As medics stumbled around in the dark giving morphine to those who were hurt, the screaming subsided. Medevac helicopters came immediately to carry away the wounded.

I was hit by shrapnel twice. Both times it came from our own side. The first time, I thought my finger had been torn off. The second time, I thought my throat was ripped open and that I was dying. Another time, I was bumped by a piece of shrapnel that landed against my hip. When I tried to pick it up, it burned me. It came from our own artillery, exploding about 700 meters away, supposedly a safe distance.

I saw three of our men killed by shrapnel from hand grenades and a land mine.

My brother Ken was in the 4th Infantry Division. His left leg was broken by a bullet during a firefight in May, 1969. While he lay there, unable to move, our own artillery landed too close and shrapnel broke his right foot.

When I hear John Brennan painting a reassuring picture of precision missiles and bombs, and when I hear the president's spokesman, Jay Carney, describe the drone program as "wise," I ask myself: "Are they ignorant? Or are they liars?"

The Hellfire missile used by our Predator drones weighs 100 pounds, roughly 80 pounds of which becomes shrapnel, plus whatever gravel, rocks, and glass are thrown out by the blast. The 500-pound bombs carried by Reaper drones are even more destructive. (What mad scientist names these things?)

How many children are maimed by this shrapnel? There are no medics to help them, there is no morphine to ease their pain, and there are no medevacs waiting to rescue them. As their parents look on helplessly and curse the United States, we should ask ourselves: Is this the most "effective" way to fight terrorism, or are we creating terror? This is neither precise nor wise.

This is the reality of war as I have seen it, as opposed to the reassuring but false picture painted by our morally hollow politicians.

Here at home, we don't hear the missiles exploding or see the pain and fear on the faces of the wounded children. Our politicians like it that way. They want to make silent war, using drones, to maintain our silent consent. We should not give it to them.

### Take action

Our government's policies in Afghanistan and Pakistan are neither wise nor just. We should speak out against them.

We can start by contacting our U.S. Senators. Tell them to speak out against the policy of drone warfare and to speak out against never-ending war.

As citizens of the United States we have a responsibility to call on our senators and representatives to help us to, as it says in the Constitution, "establish Justice."

*Bill Distler, a member of Veterans For Peace in Bellingham, WA, was a fire team leader and squad leader in Delta Company, 2/506th (Airborne Infantry Regiment), 101st Airborne Division, in Vietnam from December 1967 to September 1968. This article is reprinted with the author's permission.*



# Maintaining the “Lethal Edge” — Militarism’s War Against Nature

*“A wise species doesn’t annihilate itself and ruin its living quarters, which is what war and war readiness are doing.”*<sup>1</sup> —Tom H. Hastings, *Ecology of War and Peace*

by Clare Hanrahan

Military planners consider climate change a “threat multiplier” affecting national security and postwar rehabilitation of the ecosystem. The Pentagon is well aware of the immense and possibly irreversible climate consequences from its massive dependence on fossil fuels, and of the strategic implications for its primary function: maintaining “war fighter readiness” throughout its empire of toxic bases.

“...To maintain our lethal edge, we must change the way we use energy,” says Marine Corps Commandant James F. Amos in the 2011 document, “Marine Corps Expeditionary Energy Strategy.” The Marine vision, he adds, is of “a warrior ethos that equates the efficient use of vital resources with increased combat effectiveness.”

The National Research Council reported in 2011 that “...low-elevation naval installations are at a very high risk from more intense storm surges, sea-level rise, and other climate change impacts.” A recent study, “Sea Level Rise Risk Assessment for DoD Coastal Installations,” predicts that major training interruptions could begin as soon as 2050, and by 2100 all Air Force and Navy testing and training operations in the region may be halted.



Princeville, NC, 9/18/1999—Detour Ahead! U.S. Coast Guard and North Carolina Department of Transportation employees move detour signs by boat to roads in eastern Edgecombe County. Miles of roads have been flooded, cutting off access to cities throughout the state. Photo By DAVE SAVILLE/FEMA News Photo

The highly-militarized North Carolina coast, in the nation’s “most military friendly” state, is one of the most vulnerable regions to climate change, with five DoD installations on the Dare County peninsula at risk as sea levels rise and forested areas convert to wetter marsh transition vegetation. Nationwide, more than 30 U.S. bases are threatened.

“Climate change can reasonably be expected to increase the frequency and intensity of a variety of potentially disruptive environmental events—slowly at first, but then more quickly,” according to the National Academy of Sciences.<sup>2</sup> “...Certain climate-related events will produce consequences that exceed the capacity of

the affected societies or global systems to manage; these may have global security implications.”

Even though the Pentagon acknowledges the serious consequences of climate change upon its own operations, it has a long way to go before it reduces its fossil fuel emissions enough to slow down the accelerating climate catastrophes. “By changing the way we think about and use energy, we will continue to be the most formidable fighting force the world has ever known,” the U.S. Navy

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*In overseas military operations, where wars are fought for access to oil, it requires as much as 1.4 gallons of petroleum fuel to deliver every 1 gallon to forces on the battlefield.*

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declared in 2012, when launching a demonstration of the “Great Green Fleet,” a Carrier Strike Group fueled by non-petroleum energy sources, including nuclear power.

But despite DoD sustainability programs and the rhetoric of “building green, buying green, and going green,” nearly 80 percent of the total energy consumed by the Department of Defense comes from oil. Even with the significant climate change impact of burning such a massive amount of fossil fuel, the military is not required to report emissions to any national or international body monitoring climate change.

In Fiscal Year 2011, DoD spent about \$17.3 billion on petroleum-based fuels, and according to the Defense Logistics Agency, in 2011 the U.S. Armed Forces consumed about 117 million barrels of oil, more than enough fuel for 1,000 cars to drive around the world 4,620 times, or 7.6 million cars to drive 15,000 miles each year.

In overseas military operations, where wars are fought for access to oil, it requires as much as 1.4 gallons of petroleum fuel to deliver every 1 gallon to forces on the battlefield.<sup>3</sup> The impact of burning fossil fuels for Air Force and Navy aircraft is almost double that caused by burning the same fuels at ground level. Jet fuel constitutes nearly 70 percent of the DoD’s petroleum use. This staggering amount of fuel for military jets, ships, and tactical vehicles and for powering domestic installations and forward operating bases, does not take into account the considerable fuel use of private contractors or DoD-leased facilities. The energy used by thousands of for-profit military contractors in production of the Pentagon’s lethal arsenal is often embedded in contracts and not included in DoD’s data on fuel use.

In April 2012, the White House announced the Defense Department goal to deploy three gigawatts of renewable energy—including solar, wind, biomass, or geothermal—on Army, Navy, and Air Force installations by 2025 to “enhance installation energy security and reduce installation energy costs. President Obama doubled DoD energy efficiency spending to \$1 billion in his 2012 budget.

But before environmentalists breathe a sigh of relief, they should understand that the military is not exactly looking out for the future viability of the planet. Thomas Hicks, the Navy’s Deputy Assistant Secretary for Energy, clarified the military position in a 2012 *Scientific American*<sup>4</sup> article: “Energy investments are not about ‘advancing an environmental agenda,’ they’re about improving our combat capability, improving our mission effectiveness, and reducing our vulnerabilities to foreign sources of fossil fuel.”

The issue of climate change is clearly politically charged, and military leaders from all branches of the Armed Forces are quick to point out that environmental concerns are secondary to the DoD mission “to provide the military forces needed to deter war and to protect the security of our country.”

## Sustaining the Planet or Maintaining the Military

The legacy of the Cold War is a litany of hazardous wastes, nuclear contamination, polluted air, water, and soil, and the wanton destruction of entire ecosystems and of numerous other natural and cultural resources. The damage is done in the name of national defense, covered up in the name of national security, and allowed to continue with “military readiness” exemptions to environmental laws enacted to protect the earth that sustains us all.

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*Militarism is a deadly enterprise that causes routine and massive harm to the environment, adding injury that accumulates and interacts with all the other injuries, endangering not only the people of the earth, but the entire biosphere.*

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Unfortunately, no amount of “building green, buying green, and going green,” will be sufficient to reverse the costs of decades of environmental destruction. The DoD’s potential liability for the ecocide “is of such magnitude that it could deplete much of the defense budget as well as force many governmental contractors to consider or file bankruptcy,”<sup>5</sup> according to a writer with the Center for Defense Information. Perhaps this is why the Pentagon with its vast conglomerate of allied industries, all engaged in the lethal and profitable business of warfighting, has opted for deception and at times criminal disregard for the life-threatening effects of its operations.

Militarism is a deadly enterprise that causes routine and massive harm to the environment, adding injury that accumulates and interacts with all the other injuries, endangering not only the

(continued on page 13)



In 1933 the Oxford Union, the university undergraduate debating society, passed a famous motion that “This House would not in any circumstances fight for King and Country.” It was passed by 275 votes to 153 and it made headline news at the time.

On February 7, 2013, the 80th anniversary of the original debate, the Oxford Union held the debate “This House Would Not Fight for Queen and Country. Speaking for the motion were Ben Sullivan (Christ Church College), Ben Griffin (former SAS soldier), and Gareth Porter (U.S. historian). Speaking against were Rory Stewart (Conservative MP), Nikolai Tolstoy (International Monarchist League), and Malcolm Rifkind (former Foreign Secretary).

On that night, the motion was defeated as it has been on every occasion that it has been held since 1937.

This is a transcript of the speech given by Ben Griffin.

Fight for Queen and Country, what does that mean? It is a jingoistic phrase dreamt up by some propaganda merchant intent on stoking the fire of that false religion patriotism.

The idea of fighting for Queen and Country is held tight by those who never have and never will actually fight.

It is held by those who long to bask in the reflected glory of war.

It is held by those who have no experience of the suffering that war inflicts.

It is a phrase that is dredged up again and again to stifle dissent and build unquestioning support for the aggression we choose to unleash.



“Erected to the Glory of God and In Memory of Those Who Fell Fighting for Queen and Country.” (photo of monument in South Africa by RedNovember82)

inevitability of unforeseen consequences. The existence of blow-back—the fact that it is our own policy that creates our enemies.

They deny that we have been defeated to maintain support for current and future bloodletting.

The reasons they give for starting wars rarely match the reasons they give for continuing wars and rarely match the actual outcomes.

These scoundrels currently hold the noble position of backing a military junta in Mali against insurgents that we decided to arm in Libya.

In both Iraq and Afghanistan, once the reasons for going to war were found to be false, or unattainable, or just forgotten, those with a vested interest in continuing the wars resorted to one of the oldest tricks in the book.

They cultivated the myth of the soldier as hero.

They told you that you might not understand why the war continued but that you should support the soldiers.

They told you that to stop the pointless slaughter would be sacrilege to those heroes that had already died.

Truth is the first casualty of war and tonight you will see this phenomenon first hand. You will hear men speak in reasonable tones using educated language to mount a defense of Fighting for Queen and Country.

They will argue that at the very least we must be ready to defend this country. But they are talking about a hypothetical situation. The Taliban are not going to invade, the Chinese are not massing on the coast of France.

From positions of vested interest, they will try to convince you that Fighting for Queen and Country is your highest duty. But what they are really calling for is a continuation of business as usual. Fighting and killing

# I Will Not Fight for Queen and Country

We must look at what lies behind this decrepit phrase.

Who is it doing the fighting?

A well-trained and professional force that’s highest collective desire is to go to war, any war.

This force does not fight for Queen and Country. It fights when it is told to fight.

Even when the generals believe that a certain war is illegal or unwinnable or detrimental to the long-term security of these isles, when it comes to the crunch they always want war.

What does the fighting involve?

In my experience the reality is a lot darker.

Long periods of waiting punctuated by unforeseen moments of extreme violence.

Having your legs blown off by an IED.

A supposed ally shooting holes in your chest.

Dying in a helicopter crash.

Burning to death in a transport plane.

Being beaten to death by an angry mob.

The reality is setting up thousands of checkpoints in the country you have occupied, disrupting the lives of the people, and then killing them when they approach too quickly or fail to stop in time.

The reality is raiding people’s houses, using explosives to enter homes. Detaining previously unknown

males, some as young as 15, and handing them over to be tortured while their families are left to fend for themselves, traumatized by your action.

The reality is killing people from the safety of an attack helicopter or drone control room, as if you are playing a computer game, with no regard for the lives of people who have been dehumanized.

***These scoundrels always predict victory. Always insist that violence is the answer. They ignore the inevitability of unforeseen consequences. The existence of blow-back—the fact that it is our own policy that creates our enemies.***

Haji, Raghead, Sand Nigger, Chogie, Argie, Paddy, Gook, Chink, Jap, Kraut, Hun. All terms used by our armed forces. The product of a society which still believes in its superiority over other peoples and cultures.

We pretend that we wage war for higher, noble causes. We claim that our armed forces fight for Freedom, Democracy, or Human Rights.

This is not the case. We wage war according to Policy. It is a choice determined by Government. This policy is influenced by those who gain the most from war. Politicians, Generals, the Arms Industry, and the Media.

These scoundrels always predict victory. Always insist that violence is the answer. They ignore the

in accordance with their policy. Which is designed to fulfill their interests, their greed, their ambition.

I am a Human Being and my allegiance is not to Queen and Country but to the whole of Humanity.

I no longer accept the lies which perpetuate war.

I no longer accept that violence can lead to Peace.

Never again will I be complicit in the killing and torture of my Brothers and Sisters.

Never again will I accept the vile religion of Patriotism.

I refuse to pull on that rancid uniform.

I refuse to fight for Queen and Country.

Ben Griffin, a British soldier from 1997 until 2005, served in the Parachute Regiment in Northern Ireland, Macedonia, and Afghanistan. In 2003 he joined the Special Air Service and deployed to Iraq in 2005. Home on leave that year, he refused to return to Iraq on moral grounds and was discharged. Since then, he has been an anti-war activist and in 2011 he helped form the United Kingdom chapter of Veterans For Peace.





# The Shameful Legacy of the Monroe Doctrine

## Militarizing Latin America

by Conn Hallinan

This past December marked the 190th anniversary of the Monroe Doctrine, the 1823 policy declaration by President James Monroe that essentially made Latin America the exclusive reserve of the United States. And if anyone has any doubts about what lay at the heart of that Doctrine, consider that since 1843 the U.S. has intervened in Mexico, Argentina, Chile, Haiti, Nicaragua, Panama, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Honduras, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Uruguay, Granada, Bolivia, and Venezuela. In the case of Nicaragua, nine times, and Honduras, eight.

Sometimes the intrusion was unadorned with diplomatic niceties: the U.S. infantry assaulting Chapultepec Castle outside Mexico City in 1847, Marines hunting down insurgents in Central America, or Gen. “Black Jack” Pershing pursuing Pancho Villa through Chihuahua in 1916.

At other times the intervention was cloaked in shadow—a secret payoff, a nod and a wink to some generals, or strangling an economy because some government had the temerity to propose land reform or a re-distribution of wealth.

For 150 years, the history of this region, that stretches across two hemispheres and ranges from frozen tundra to blazing deserts and steaming rainforests, was in large part determined by what happened in Washington. As the wily old Mexican dictator Porfirio Diaz once put it, the great tragedy of Latin America is that it lay so far from God and so near to the United States.

But Latin America today is not the same as it was 20 years ago. Left and progressive governments dominate most of South America. China has replaced the U.S. as the region’s largest trading partner. And Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Venezuela have banded together in a common market, Mercosur, that is the third largest on the planet. Five other nations are associate members. The Union of South American Nations and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States have sidelined that old Cold War relic, the Organization of American States. The former includes Cuba, but excludes the U.S. and Canada.

On the surface, Mr. Monroe’s Doctrine would appear to be a dead letter.



Which is why the policies of the Obama administration vis-à-vis Latin America are so disturbing. After decades of peace and economic development, why is the U.S. engaged in a major military buildup in the region? Why has Washington turned a blind eye to two successful, and one attempted, coups

bases, and there are U.S. military installations in Honduras, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Panama, and Belize. The newly reactivated Fifth Fleet prowls the South Atlantic. Marines are in Guatemala chasing drug dealers. Special Forces are in Honduras and

Colombia. What are their missions? How many are there? We don’t know because much of this deployment is obscured by the cloak of “national security.”

The military buildup is coupled with a disturbing tolerance for coups. When the Honduran military and elites overthrew

Dark memories of American engineered and supported coups against governments in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and Guatemala are hardly forgotten on the continent, as a recent comment by Argentine economics minister Hernan Lorenzino made clear. Calling a U.S. Appeals Court ruling that Buenos Aires should pay \$1.3 billion in damages to two “vulture fund” creditors “legal colonialism,” the minister said “All we need now is for [Appeals Court Judge Thomas] Griesa to send us the Fifth Fleet.”

Much of this military buildup takes place behind the rhetoric of the war on drugs, but a glance at the placement of bases in Colombia suggests that the protection of oil pipelines has more to do with the marching orders of U.S. Special Forces than drug-dealers. Plan Colombia, which has already cost close to \$4 billion, was conceived and lobbied for by the Los Angeles-based oil and gas company, Occidental Petroleum.

Colombia currently has five million displaced people, the most in the world. It is also a very dangerous place if you happen to be a trade unionist, in spite of the fact that Bogota is supposed to have instituted a Labor Action Plan (LAP) as part of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Washington. But since the Obama administration said the Colombian government was in compliance with LAP, the attacks have actually increased. “What happened since then [the U.S. compliance statement] is a surge in reprisals against almost all trade unions and labor activists that really believed in the Labor Action Plan,” says Gimena Sanchez-Garzoli of the Latin American watchdog organization, WOLA. Human Rights Watch reached a similar conclusion.

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### *Dark memories of American engineered and supported coups against governments in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and Guatemala are hardly forgotten on the continent.*

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in the last three years? And why isn’t Washington distancing itself from the predatory practices of so-called “vulture funds,” whose greed is threatening to destabilize the Argentinean economy?

As it has in Africa and Asia, the Obama administration has militarized its foreign policy vis-à-vis Latin America. Washington has spread a network of bases from Central America to Argentina. Colombia now has seven major

President Manuel Zelaya in 2009, rather than condemning the ouster, the Obama administration lobbied—albeit largely unsuccessfully—for Latin American nations to recognize the illegally installed government. The White House was also silent about the attempted coup against leftist Rafael Correa in Ecuador the following year, and has refused to condemn the “parliamentary” coup against the progressive president of Paraguay, Fernando Lugo, the so-called “Red Bishop.”

The drug war has been an unmitigated disaster, as an increasing number of Latin American leaders are concluding. At least 100,000 people have been killed or disappeared in Mexico alone, and the drug trade is corrupting governments, militaries, and police forces from Bolivia to the U.S. border. And lest we think this is a Latin American problem, several Texas law enforcement officers were recently indicted



for aiding and abetting the movement of drugs from Mexico to the U.S.

The Obama administration should join the growing chorus of regional leaders who have decided to examine the issue of legalization and to de-militarize

By lowering or eliminating tariffs, NAFTA has flooded Latin America with cheap, U.S.-government-subsidized corn that has put millions of small farmers out of business, forcing them to either immigrate, flood their country's overstressed cities, or turn



Defense.gov News Photo 110315-N-EC642-756 - U.S. Marine Sgt. Michael G. Roth demonstrates proper building entry techniques to soldiers assigned to 11th Honduran Army Battalion during a training exercise.

the war against drugs. Recent studies have demonstrated that there is a sharp rise in violence once militaries become part of the conflict and that, as Portugal and Australia have demonstrated, legalization does not lead to an increase in the number of addicts.

A major U.S. initiative in the region is the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), even though it has led to increases in poverty, social dislocation, and even an increase in the drug trade. In their book "Drug War Mex-

to growing more lucrative crops—marijuana and coca. From 1994, the year NAFTA went into effect, to 2000, some two million Mexican farmers left their land, and hundreds of thousands of undocumented people have emigrated to the U.S. each year.

According to the aid organization Oxfam, the FTA with Colombia will result in a 16 percent drop in income for 1.8 million farmers and a loss of income between 48 percent and 70 percent for some 400,000 people



The President of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez casting his vote on December 2, 2007.

ico" Peter Walt and Roberto Zapeda point out that deregulation has opened doors for traffickers, a danger that both the U.S. Customs Service and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) warned about back in 1993.

working under that country's minimum monthly wage of \$328.08.

"Free trade" prevents emerging countries from protecting their own industries and resources, and pits them against the industrial might of the

U.S. That uneven playing field results in poverty for Latin Americans, but enormous profits for U.S. corporations and some of the region's elites.

The White House has continued the Bush administration's demonization of president Hugo Chavez of Venezuela, in spite of the fact that Chavez has been twice elected by large margins, and his government has overseen a major reduction in poverty. According to the United Nations, Venezuelan inequality is the lowest in Latin America, poverty has been cut by half, and extreme poverty by 70 percent. These kinds of figures are something the Obama administration supposedly hails.

As for Chavez's attacks on the U.S., given that the U.S. supported the 2002 coup against him, has deployed Special Forces and the CIA in neighboring Colombia, and takes a blasé attitude toward coups, one can hardly blame the Chavistas for a certain level of paranoia.

Washington should recognize that Latin America is experimenting with new political and economic models in an attempt to reduce the region's traditional poverty, underdevelopment, and chronic divisions between rich and poor. Rather than trying to marginalize leaders like Chavez, Correa, Evo Morales of Bolivia, and Christine Kirchner of Argentina, the Obama administration should accept the fact that the U.S. is no longer the Northern Colossus that always gets its way. In any case, it is the U.S. currently being marginalized in the region, not its opponents.

Instead of signing silly laws, like "The Countering Iran in the Western Hemisphere Act" (honest to God!), the White House should be lobbying for Brazil to become a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, ending its illegal and immoral blockade of Cuba, and demanding that Britain end support for its colony in the Falkland's or Malvinas. The fact is that Britain can't "own" land almost 9,000 miles from London just because it has a superior navy. Colonialism is over.

And while the administration cannot directly intervene with the U.S. Court of Appeals in the current dispute between Elliot Management, Aurelius Capital Management, and Argentina, the White House should make it clear that it thinks the efforts by these "vulture funds" to cash in on the 2002 Argentine economic crisis are despicable. There is also the very practical matter

that if "vulture funds" force Buenos Aires to pay full fare for debts they purchased for 15 cents on the dollar, it will threaten efforts by countries like Greece, Spain, Ireland, and Portugal to deal with their creditors. Given that U.S. banks—including the "vultures"—had a hand in creating the crisis in the first place, it is especially incumbent on the American government to stand with the Kirchner government in this matter. And if the Fifth Fleet does get involved, it might consider shelling Elliot's headquarters in the Cayman Islands.

After centuries of colonial exploitation and economic domination by the U.S.

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and Europe, Latin America is finally coming into its own. It largely weathered the worldwide recession in 2008, and living standards are generally improving throughout the region—dramatically so in the countries Washington describes as "left." These days Latin America's ties are more with the BRICS—Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa—than with the U.S., and the region is forging its own international agenda. There is unanimous opposition to the blockade of Cuba, and, in 2010, Brazil and Turkey put forth what is probably the most sensible solution to date on how to end the nuclear crisis with Iran.

Over the next four years the Obama administration has an opportunity to rewrite America's long and shameful record in Latin America and replace it with one built on mutual respect and cooperation. Or it can fall back on shadowy Special Forces, silent subversion, and intolerance of differences. The choice is ours.

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*Conn Hallinan is a columnist for Foreign Policy In Focus and the Berkeley Daily Planet and a recipient of a Project Censored "Real News Award." This article was reprinted with his permission.*



**Warring is warming** *from page 1***Climate change amplifiers**

Positive feedback loops, climate scientists say, accelerate the rate of global warming. For example, rising temperatures melt the arctic permafrost releasing methane that has been trapped in the polar ice for millennia. Methane, a potent heat-trapping gas, joins carbon dioxide and other atmospheric greenhouse gases to further warm the planet, thus melting more arctic ice and releasing more methane.

Other change amplifiers such as increasing atmospheric moisture, decreasing albedo effect (the reduced reflectivity of sunlight due to diminishing polar ice and glaciers), desertification, upsurge in forest fires, and ocean-warming are recognized. But we'll make no progress in forestalling global warming unless and until we check the cause and effect cycle involving war and militarism.

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***The war machine, both in its active engagements and in its now-rare "peaceful" mode of training and preparation only, is a significant emitter of heat-trapping gases. In fact, the U.S. Department of "Defense" is the biggest single user of fossil fuels in the world.***

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**Link 1: War begets global warming**

**Fossil fuels.** The war machine, both in its active engagements and in its now-rare "peaceful" mode of training and preparation only, is a significant emitter of heat-trapping gases. In fact, the U.S. Department of "Defense" is the biggest single user of fossil fuels in the world; it consumed 355,000 barrels of oil per day in 2011. Not only does the military burn carbon at a prolific rate, it puts a low priority on fuel efficiency and environmental impact. The U.S. Air Force accounts for most of the fuel consumption and its planes often emit their greenhouse gases at high altitudes where their adverse effects are most potent.

Consider also the "collateral pollution" of war. Recall the images of more than 600 oil wells that burned 6 million gallons a day for nearly 10 months during the Gulf War in 1991—black billowing clouds of carbon smoke. That's certainly one of the more conspicuous examples, but any fire caused by war is a needless fire, and all fires are chemical processes that release carbon dioxide. Try to imagine war without fire.

Then there's the—often massive—post-conflict cleanup and reconstruction work. In countries ravaged by war, wreckage must be hauled away, and destroyed buildings and infrastructure must be restored or rebuilt. This requires heavy construction equipment which spews more greenhouse gases. Add to that the fossil fuels burned in the building supply chain from material extraction to on-site delivery. These emissions are not trivial, and they are totally avoidable.

Also, consider that the primary function of the war machine is to secure access to petroleum supplies for the global economy. The oil industry profits handsomely as they extract this fossil carbon from the ground to provide fuel for the world; the expense is borne by the impoverished—the

first to suffer from global warming—and by those poor unfortunates collaterally damaged as the access is secured. The fuel powers the planet's more than one billion automobiles and other modes of convenient conveyance and it provides for the manufacture of consumer goods and heating and air conditioning—indoor climate control (good grief!)—all for the world's affluent. Oh yes, the fuel is also used for the machines of war. This profligate consumption of oil, along with the profligate consumption of coal, releases more than 30 gigatons (30,000,000,000 tons) of carbon into the atmosphere each year.

**Defoliation and deforestation.** In the last century, the ravages of war have destroyed millions of acres of forests from Reims-Verdon to Vietnam. This "scorched earth" strategy is not new. Since ancient times, armies—the Scythians in Persia, the Romans in Carthage, and Sherman's Union troops in Georgia—have trashed the land. But modern technologies of warfare, including massive aerial bombardment, napalm, Agent Orange, and huge earth-moving equipment, have exponentially increased the military's destructive capability. Such large-scale environmental destruction releases vast amounts of sequestered carbon dioxide, the major greenhouse gas, into the atmosphere. Compounding the problem, residual contaminants often prevent the ecosystems from recovering and re-sequestering the CO<sub>2</sub>. This is clearly ecocide, a crime against nature.

**Link 2: Global warming begets war**

Warfare, like weather, arises from a complex of causes, none of which can be absolutely proven since a control group cannot be set up to isolate and test any single factor. A queen is kidnapped; an archduke assassinated; a domino is expected to fall; religion, racism, and economic conditions are often blamed. We can never know for sure. But today, a new and clearly recognized cause for war has emerged: climate change. A number of studies strongly suggest that recent conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa are, at least in part, the result of global warming. This does not bode well for the future.

As the Earth heats up, regional weather patterns are changing. Some areas experience more rainfall—and flooding; some less rainfall—and drought. The climate disruption creates shortages of food and water which create climate refugees. The consequent disruption of the social order creates political instability which leads to war. This is not a new concept. In 1998, in *The Heat Is On: The Climate Crisis, The Cover-up, The Prescription*, Russ Gelbspan wrote:

Long before the systems of the planet buckle, democracy will disintegrate under the stress of ecological disasters and their social consequences...it is the poor, precarious, nations of the developing world that would face the threat of totalitarianism first. In many of these countries, where democratic conditions are as fragile as the ecosystem, a reversion to dictatorship will require only a few ecological states of emergency. Their governments will quickly find democracy to be too cumbersome for responding to disruption in food supplies, water sources, and human health—as well as to a floodtide of environmental refugees from homelands that have become incapable of feeding and supporting them.

That such social disintegration can lead to conflict is also known to our Masters of War in the Department of Defense. In a 2004 Pentagon report, "An Abrupt Climate Change Scenario and Its Implications for United States National Security," authors Peter Schwartz and Doug Randall wrote:



Above: World War I in Reims-Verdon sector, France, 1917. Original caption: "Midsummer in the Argonne forest."

Below: During Operation Ranch Hand (1962-71), whose motto was "Only You Can Prevent Forests," more than 5 million acres of forest were heavily damaged or destroyed by Agent Orange. Huge Rome plows, bombs, and napalm also contributed to the forest ecocide in Vietnam.



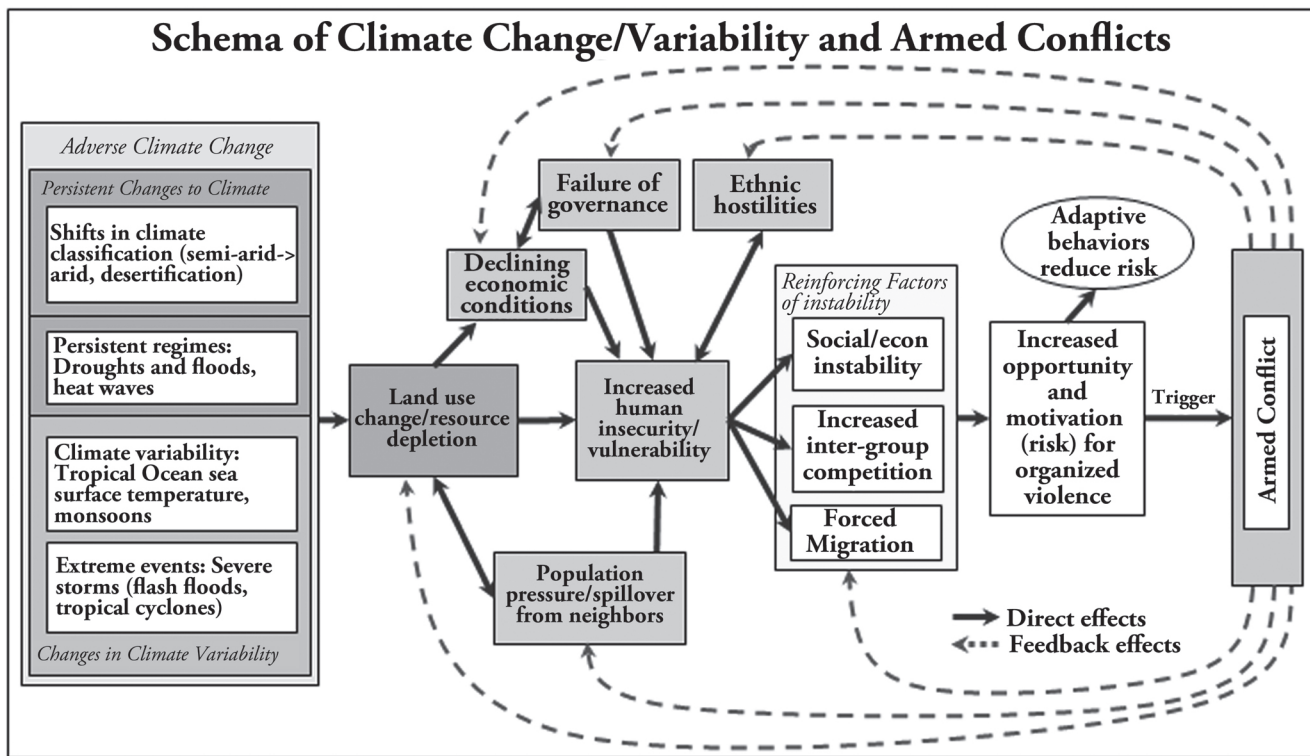
Violence and disruption stemming from the stresses created by abrupt changes in the climate pose a different type of threat to national security than we are accustomed to today. Military confrontation may be triggered by a desperate need for natural resources such as energy, food, and water rather than by conflicts over ideology, religion, or national honor.

While the report describes some extreme, but plausible, scenarios resulting in a "world of warring states" where "nuclear arms proliferation is inevitable," it also soberly states, "Regardless, it seems undeniable that severe environmental problems are likely to escalate the degree of global conflict."

But this causal link is not merely conjecture about the future. We can already see its effects, as expected, in "the poor, precarious nations of the developing world." In their research report, "Drought and Civil War in Sub-Saharan Africa" (revised October 2012), Mathieu Coutenier and Raphael Soubeyran write:

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2007), changes in the global climate will generate an increase in the number of abnormal climatic events across the world, such as droughts and floods. These climatic anomalies might have disastrous consequences for countries with a scarce fresh water supply and economies that depend on the local agriculture. Given that agricultural activities account for between 60% and 100% of the income of the poorest African households and that these households often have no access to safe water, sub-Saharan Africa is one of the regions most adversely affected by climate change in the world. One of the possible consequences of climate change is an increase in conflicts. For instance, there is now a consensus that drought has been a contributory cause of the civil war in Darfur because it increased disputes over arable land and water, even if the conflict also had an ethnic component since it opposed Arabs and Black Africans.





Graphic from the article, "Climate Change/Variability and Armed Conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa," a Collaborative Project of the Environment, Society and the Economy (ESE) Initiative of the National Science Foundation (NSF). Used with permission from co-author John O'Loughlin, University of Colorado.

**Link 3: Misplaced Priorities**

The greatest obstacle to dealing with global warming is the notion that other threats have higher priorities. They do not. But a complex of powerful institutions that inform our culture by misinforming it have successfully led Americans to believe that terrorists, the "evil empires" of Iran and North Korea, and even China pose the greatest threats to our security, and that the only way to overcome such "bad actors" is with excessive military might.

The elite of these political, industrial, financial, and military institutions have much to gain by maintaining a state of perpetual war, and nothing to lose (at least in the short term) since the underclass always carries the burden of war. The lackeys of the elite—in the media, entertainment, public relations sectors, and (sadly) much of the religious community—obediently promote their agenda.



Graphic from We Are One World Foundation. Learn more and get cards and bookmarks at [weareoneworldfoundation.org](http://weareoneworldfoundation.org).

(Actually "military solution" is an oxymoron; war makes any problem worse except, of course, overpopulation.)

Global warming is the most critical danger. Its effects are already being felt. The climate will continue

to destabilize over time. Indeed, climate change has momentum; even if the whole world immediately and completely quit emitting greenhouse gases today, the warming would continue for decades.

But before we can direct our attention toward mitigating this imminent cataclysm of climate, we must direct our attention—and resources—away from futile, destructive, climate-altering war.

**Peace on Earth, Peace with Earth**

*"When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it is tied to everything else in the universe."*

— John Muir

*"Relationships are all there is. Everything in the universe only exists because it is in relationship to everything else. Nothing exists in isolation. We have to stop pretending we are individuals that can go it alone."*

— Margaret J. Wheatley

The links and the feedback loops between warring and warming are examples of a reality that we ignore at great peril: everything is interconnected and interdependent. Everything. Every cause has an effect; every action has a reaction; and these consequences radiate through the web of interrelated physical, biological, meteorological, and human social systems.

During the last century, this has been the founding principle of the ecological sciences and the predominant theme of quantum physics. For millennia, this has been the central truth of Eastern philosophies and the underlying basis of most religions.

Until we recognize, accept, and live by this lesson from science and spirituality and reject the ruinous, arrogant ideology of the dominator culture, we won't be able to solve any of the major problems we face. The inseparable and mutually reinforcing goals of peace on Earth and peace with Earth require a cultural transformation. Selfless cooperation, humility, and a sense of

**Obama's Greatest Crime Against Humanity**

Dear Mr. President,

Congress allocated \$50 billion in disaster relief for victims of Superstorm Sandy. About the same amount was handed out after Katrina. That's more than \$100 billion for devastation from natural disasters. However, these are not really natural disasters, they're man-made from the burning of fossil fuel, a topic some politicians deny outright and others, including you, refuse to address. Impending doom is not a subject anyone wants to talk about, but still, it will not go away in spite our ignoring it. For 30 years the U.S. has subverted any meaningful progress on reducing global emissions and when you came along in 2008 and promised to address the issue, you were like a breath of fresh air and people backed you. You could have done something significant but you were in Big Oil's pocket and adopted their mantra of Drill Baby Drill; after all, global warming doesn't give campaign contributions. The Solyndra debacle killed the last hope for change and at the Doha conference last year, you sent the same old hit men to sabotage the talks and they were effective; no progress was made. But still, global warming will not go away and the climate scientists have gone from warnings to hard facts that it's happening faster and with more deadly results than any of them had imagined a few years ago. Now some speculate that it may be too late to prevent catastrophic climate change, that we have already passed the tipping point but still, nothing from the political class in Washington. You pore over Kill Lists but ignore the real enemy—pollution of the planet. You open Arctic waters to Big Oil and do nothing to regulate fracking while you de-fund solar and wind research. How is this any different than the Bushes? Mr. President, you were not hired to commit war crimes and crimes against humanity but to identify the real threats to the country and address them and those threats are not some sandal-clad Kalashnikov-toting militant in the mountains of Waziristan or the deserts of Yemen or Somalia but the rape of our planet and impending ecological disaster. Why do we spend trillions on war against a phantom enemy and almost nothing to fight the heating of planet, the pollution of our air, and the poisoning of our water? This is beyond irresponsible, Mr. President. You are dooming future generations to misery, to unnecessary suffering and want, to a life filled with chaos and uncertainty. It is your greatest crime yet against humanity.

—Robert Yoder

Robert writes a letter each day at [dearmrprezident-letters.blogspot.com](http://dearmrprezident-letters.blogspot.com)

solidarity—not just with all of humanity, but with the entire natural world—are essential for our survival. The truth is: We are one.

Kim Carlyle, WCT editor-in-chief, began his activism as an environmentalist. His entertaining, informative PowerPoint presentation on global warming and energy conservation predated Al Gore's. He switched his emphasis to peace work when he realized that no serious problem could be solved until money, resources, and political will could be directed away from the military and toward solving real problems.

*If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.*

—Mother Teresa



**Math from page 1**

across the fossil fuel board add up to trillions per decade. When government talks of their investments in alternative energies with a price tag of tens of billions, they are talking a time frame of ten years, so by comparison, are still only dipping their toe in the water.

Unless we start putting trillions of dollars into alternative energy, we are unlikely to challenge the stranglehold that fossil fuel has over the economy. However, considering how we spend our trillions at present, it is neither unrealistic nor unreasonable

groups and bogus scientists, paid for by fossil fuel and its friends, the specific aim has been to malign the science of global warming in the public eye and, in so doing, to slow any progress towards a non-fossil-fuel economy.

per day, below pre-invasion levels. This misunderstands the nature of nature of MIFFC.

The Iraq war, and the war on Afghanistan—eleven years old this past October—is a continuation of what the

U.S. military has done since taking over Britain's role as global cop in the Middle East in the 1970s. Quite simply it means having a military boot-print somewhere, anywhere, in the shifting

***Calling it the U.S. military is actually a misnomer. The military machine, which recruits on the basis of myth and legend and loyalty to the idea of stars and stripes, in actuality serves the fossil fuel cartel who have long since outgrown the usefulness, other than as a cover story, of nationhood.***

to make the leap towards a non-carbon economy.

Let us call the collaboration of vested interests that currently have the controlling interest in running the planet the military industrialized fossil fuel complex (MIFFC). And let us use the full weight of the word col-

Their mission—hugely successful thus far, and measurable by increasing parts per million of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere and increasingly extreme weather events—has been to keep fossil fuels, and particularly oil, the fuel of choice. Our mission is to see oil and coal go the way of tobacco. While cigarettes still exist, of course, after decades of propaganda to the contrary, no one today seriously believes that they are anything but bad for your health. With the environment, the stakes are much higher as it is not nicotine warming the earth, but greenhouse gases.

The smart lie which keeps the MIFFC up and running is that we the people have some freedom of choice in the matter. That when we go to the gas station and fill up the tank, we are choosing oil over other energy sources. Or that in the choice of electric companies, we have a choice in which fossil fuel they use to generate power. What we are actually allowed to choose is one brand of oil over another, one fossil fuel power company over another. Fossil fuel itself aggressively remains the monopoly.

It is a political choice to keep fossil fuels center stage, but it is one made by the royal we-the-corporations, not by we-the-people. The addiction to fossil fuel exists because it has proven again and again to be hugely profitable for those who control it. Despite the plethora of car designs since the Model T Ford, the basic construction of the internal combustion engine has not fundamentally changed in a century. More horsepower simply means more consumption, keeping us more hooked.

Before World War I, Winston Churchill took a huge risk, switching the British Navy from being coal powered to oil powered, a choice of one fossil fuel over another. The gamble being that Britain had plenty of domestic coal reserves but, at that time, had no oil reserves. It paid off in terms of increased military efficiency, extending Britain's shelf-life as the superpower of the day, and was possible because Britain could facilitate oil supply from within the reaches of its Empire.

The geo-strategic modus remains unchanged today. As a "war for oil," the invasion of Iraq seems like an abject failure. Iraqi oil output still languishes at around 3.4 million barrels

sand of the region, as a means of competitor deterrence. It doesn't matter if U.S. "permanent" bases rotate around every few years, from Iran, to Saudi Arabia, to Iraq, to Afghanistan. As long as the military is in the area, the oil can stay in the ground, because no competitor is getting their hands on it. And as long as no one else can get their hands on it, then no one else can develop an economy, which fuels a machine, which could actually challenge the overwhelming superpower status of the current configuration of MIFFC.

The cost of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are \$1 trillion and counting if you take President Obama's word for it or \$3.2 to \$4 trillion if go with the math provided by costsofwar.org. I am not the first person to note that this could have paid for a switch to a non-carbon economy in the U.S. and been an

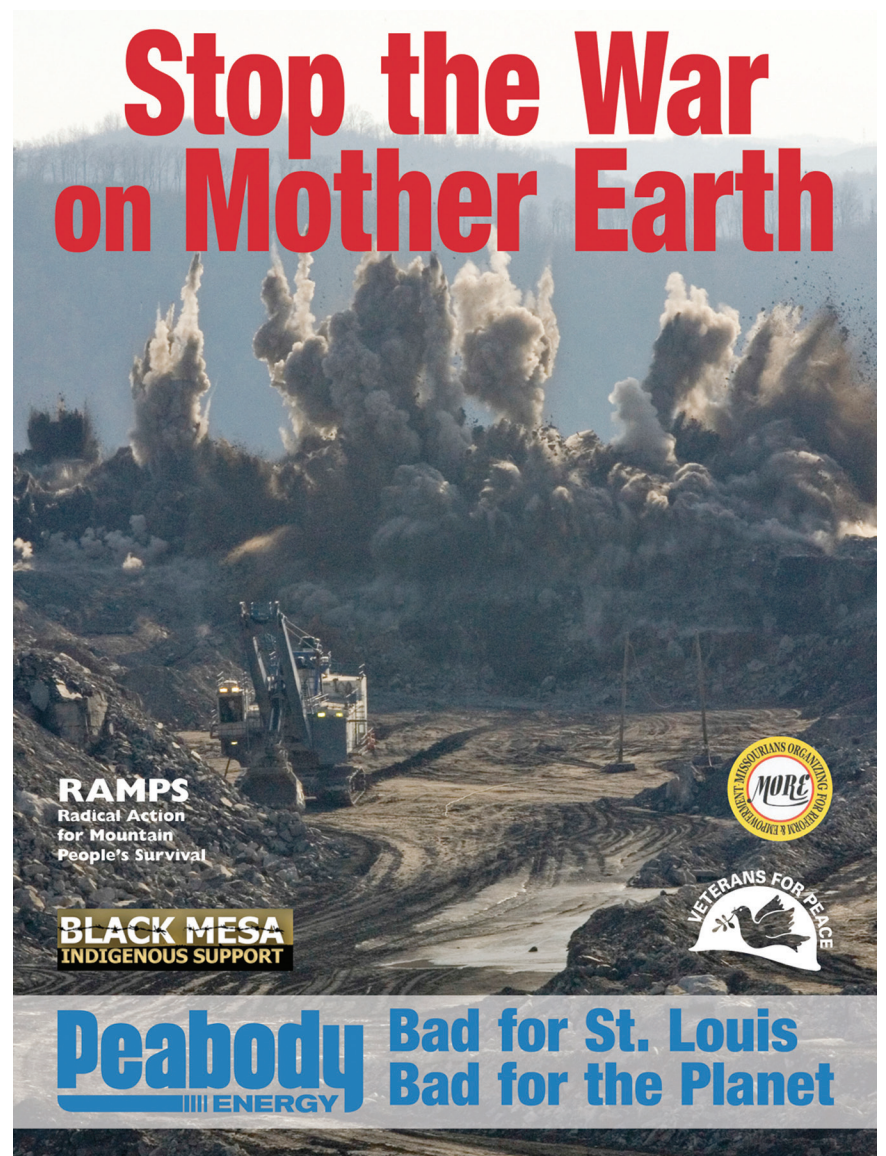
*(continued on page 12)*



laboration—as it was applied to those non-Germans who sided with the invading Nazis—meaning, in the current context, aligning oneself with the forces of genocide, with those interests that are willingly perpetrating Crimes against Humanity and the Planet. A report by [the international humanitarian organization] DARA in September 2012 “calculated that five million deaths occur each year from air pollution, hunger, and disease as a result of climate change and carbon-intensive economies.” Which is, by any standard, pretty genocidal.

The little-aided truth is that fossil fuel corporations, learning from the methods of their friends in the tobacco industry, have knowingly and deliberately collaborated, AT LEAST AS FAR BACK AS 1989, to obfuscate the science of global warming. Referencing ten years of prior research, James Hansen testified before the Senate in 1988 that global warming was already happening. In response, the UN sanctioned the establishment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in 1988, and the fossil fuel industry—worried about the detrimental economic impact that global warming would have on its profits—set up its Global Climate Coalition in 1989. The GCC, a coalition of 50 fossil-fuel-reliant businesses, was later credited with convincing the Senate to reject the Kyoto Protocol in 1997, not least through the efforts of lobbyists employed by its members, and Fossil Fuel's political donations to Senators.

During the subsequent, and continuing, era of buying politicians and running perception management campaigns, led by PR companies mobilizing fake grassroots



Members of Veterans for Peace joined MORE (Missourians Organizing for Reform and Empowerment), RAMPS (Radical Action for Mountain People's Survival) and Black Mesa Indigenous Support (BMIS), at the St. Louis headquarters of Peabody Energy Corp. to demand an end to the war on Mother Earth, beginning with the destructive mining and burning of coal. Ten protesters were arrested for trespassing when they crossed the police line in front of the Peabody building.



# The real invasion of Africa is not news and a license to lie is Hollywood's gift

*The invasion has almost nothing to do with "Islamism," and almost everything to do with the acquisition of resources*

by John Pilger

A full-scale invasion of Africa is under way. The United States is deploying troops in 35 African countries, beginning with Libya, Sudan, Algeria, and Niger. Reported by Associated Press on Christmas Day, this was missing from most Anglo-American media.

The invasion has almost nothing to do with "Islamism," and almost everything to do with the acquisition of resources, notably minerals, and an accelerating rivalry with China. Unlike China, the U.S. and its allies are prepared to use a degree of violence demonstrated in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, and Palestine. As in the cold war, a division of labor requires that western journalism and popular culture provide the cover of a holy war against a "menacing arc" of Islamic extremism, no different from the bogus "red menace" of a worldwide communist conspiracy.

Reminiscent of the Scramble for Africa in the late 19th century, the U.S. African Command (AFRICOM) has built a network of supplicants among collaborative African regimes eager for American bribes and armaments. Last year, AFRICOM staged Operation African Endeavor,

with the armed forces of 34 African nations taking part, commanded by the U.S. military. AFRICOM's "soldier to soldier" doctrine embeds U.S. officers at every level of command from general to warrant officer. Only pith helmets are missing.

It is as if Africa's proud history of liberation, from Patrice Lumumba to Nelson Mandela, is consigned to oblivion by a new

*The war on Africa became urgent in 2011 when the Arab world appeared to be liberating itself from the Mubaraks and other clients of Washington and Europe. The hysteria this caused in imperial capitals cannot be exaggerated.*

master's black colonial elite whose "historic mission," warned Frantz Fanon half a century ago, is the promotion of "a capitalism rampant though camouflaged."

A striking example is the eastern Congo, a treasure trove of strategic minerals, controlled by an atrocious rebel group known as the M23, which in turn is run by Uganda and Rwanda, the proxies of Washington.

Long planned as a "mission" for NATO, not to mention the ever-zealous French, whose colonial lost causes remain on permanent standby, the war on Africa became urgent in 2011 when the Arab world appeared to be liberating itself from the Mubaraks and other clients of Washington and Europe. The hysteria this caused in imperial capitals cannot be exaggerated. NATO bombers were dispatched not to Tunis or Cairo but Libya, where Muammar Gaddafi ruled over Africa's largest oil reserves. With the



On January 21, French troops board a U.S. Air Force C-17 Globemaster III cargo aircraft en route to Mali. The crew, out of Dover Air Force Base, DE, transported more than 80,000 pounds of equipment and over 40 French soldiers in the Air Force's first flight in support of the French military operation. (USAF photo)

Libyan city of Sirte reduced to rubble, the British SAS directed the "rebel" militias in what has since been exposed as a racist bloodbath.

The indigenous people of the Sahara, the Tuareg, whose Berber fighters Gaddafi had protected, fled home across Algeria to Mali, where the Tuareg have been claiming a separate state since the 1960s. As the ever watchful Patrick Cockburn points out, it is this local dispute, not al-Qaida, that the West fears most in northwest Africa... "poor though the Tuareg may be, they are often living on top of great reserves of oil, gas, uranium, and other valuable minerals."

Almost certainly the consequence of a French/U.S. attack on Mali on January 13, a siege at a gas complex in Algeria ended bloodily, inspiring a 9/11 moment in David Cameron. The former Carlton TV PR man raged about a "global threat" requiring "decades" of western violence. He meant implantation of the west's business plan for Africa, together with the rape of multi-ethnic Syria and the conquest of independent Iran.

Cameron has now ordered British troops to Mali, and sent an RAF drone, while his verbose military chief, General Sir David Richards, has addressed "a very clear message to jihadists worldwide: Don't dangle and tangle with us. We will deal with it robustly"—exactly what jihadists want to hear. The trail of blood of British army terror victims, all Muslims, their "systemic" torture cases currently heading to court, add necessary irony to the general's words. I once experienced Sir David's "robust" ways when I asked him if he had read the courageous Afghan feminist Malalai Joya's description of the barbaric behavior of westerners and their clients in her country. "You are an apologist for the Taliban" was his reply. (He later apologized).

These bleak comedians are straight out of Evelyn Waugh and allow us to feel the bracing breeze of history and hypocrisy. The "Islamic terrorism" that is their excuse for the enduring theft of Africa's riches was all but invented by them. There is no longer any excuse to swallow the BBC/CNN line and not know the truth. Read Mark Curtis's *Secret Affairs: Britain's Collusion with Radical Islam* (Serpent's Tail) or John Coolsey's *Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America and International Terrorism* (Pluto Press) or *The Grand Chessboard* by Zbigniew Brzezinski (Harper-Collins) who was midwife to the birth of modern fundamentalist terror. In effect, the mujahedin of al-Qaida and the Taliban were created by the CIA, its Pakistani equivalent, the Inter-Services Intelligence, and Britain's MI6.

Brzezinski, President Jimmy Carter's National Security Adviser, describes a secret presidential directive in 1979 that began what became the current "war on terror." For 17 years, the U.S. deliberately



United States Africa Command, (U.S. AFRICOM) is one of six of the U.S. Defense Department's geographic combatant commands and is responsible to the Secretary of Defense for military relations with African nations, the African Union, and African regional security

cultivated, bank-rolled, armed, and brain-washed jihadi extremists that "steeped a generation in violence." Code-named Operation Cyclone, this was the "great game" to bring down the Soviet Union but brought down the Twin Towers.

Since then, the news that intelligent, educated people both dispense and ingest has become a kind of Disney journalism, fortified, as ever, by Hollywood's license to lie, and lie. There is the coming Dreamworks movie on WikiLeaks, a fabrication inspired by a book of perfidious



U.S. Army Africa Sgt. 1st Class Grady Hyatt leads an after action review with soldiers of the Ghana Army as part of the U.S. Department of State's effort to train Ghanaians to prepare for possible future United Nations deployments. (US Army photo)

tittle-tattle by two enriched *Guardian* journalists; and there is *Zero Dark Thirty*, which promotes torture and murder, directed by the Oscar-winning Kathryn Bigelow, the Leni Riefenstahl of our time, promoting her master's voice as did the Fuhrer's pet film-maker. Such is the one-way mirror through which we barely glimpse what power does in our name.

*John Pilger is an award-winning journalist and documentary filmmaker. His latest film is The War You Don't See. This article originally appeared in the New Statesman, UK, and is reprinted with the author's permission.*



**Math from page 10**

example of leadership to the world. From the sick perspective of MIFCC, it is money well spent, because there is still a \$22 trillion Fossil Fuel pie to chomp away at. And it is not like the oil barons had to finance the wars themselves.

Living in an enforced permanent war economy, whether we personally choose to drive a car or not, we pay taxes, not only for the military hardware and personnel, but for their gas bill to stay in position with regard to that \$22 trillion pie. Meanwhile our pension companies invest in MIFCC stock across the board, because it provides returns in effect guaranteed by military force. The U.S. military, both the biggest purchaser of oil in the world and the biggest consumer of oil in the U.S., gorges itself on a one million barrels-per-day appetite [see box below], which dwarfs that of many individual countries. The whole shebang runs off oil. To stay ahead in the game requires throwing more trillions of dollars at the military, to increase its reach and horsepower, keeping oil as the fuel of choice, as the life-blood of the machine.

In the face of a burning planet, U.S.-led wars are bankrolled by the rather quaint but utterly obsolete idea of nationhood with its catch-words “freedom” and “democracy,” where the people pay taxes as a guarantee of elected representation and the military exists to defend the freedom of the nation’s citizens. Like we have any say in how MIFCC operates? A warming atmosphere doesn’t recognize national boundaries any more than a global corporation does.

Calling it the U.S. military is actually a misnomer. The military machine, which recruits on the basis of myth and legend and loyalty to the idea of stars and stripes, in actuality serves the fossil fuel cartel who have long since outgrown the usefulness, other than as a cover story, of nationhood. American men and women are not being sent to war to kill and die for their country, but to serve as the uniformed presence of the cartel in the ‘hood. Our troops combat the resentment which the MIFCC has previously generated and further exacerbates by reducing the economy and infrastructure of some other nation to rubble.

**A million barrels a day?**

A million barrels a day would seem to be an overstatement. And numbers found elsewhere in this issue don’t jibe. But obtaining accurate information about the U.S. military is mission impossible. Transparency is not among the Pentagon’s virtues.

Fuel use also varies—from over a million barrels a day during the Vietnam experience to “officially” 320,000 barrels a day currently. What’s more, the war machine’s fuel use extends far beyond any discrete budget categories.

Sara Flounders in “Pentagon’s Role in Global Catastrophe” writes: “The U.S. military officially uses 320,000 barrels of oil a day. However, this total does

The more resentment stirred up, the greater the scope to justify maintaining armies abroad, using traditional, but fictional, narratives of war. And in deterring any potential rival cartel from thinking of getting their hands on too much of the fuel of choice, the U.S. military defends the freedom of the 1% to be able to continue to live in circumstances of obscene wealth (and not all of the 1% are American). We are not being offered a choice of whether or not the planet should be run into the ground. That is what is actually happening, and any shift to the contrary is one that we that will have to assert by all means necessary. The switch to a non-carbon economy, then, means looking beyond traditional electoral narratives and taking on all aspects of Military Industrial Fossil Fuel Complex.

When it comes to fossil fuels, the candidates are in perfect agreement.

In the recent election, we were offered a feeble choice of two Presidential contenders—who were bound to do everything in their power to serve and protect the interests of corporations, as the Congressional

***The switch to a non-carbon economy, then, means looking beyond traditional electoral narratives and taking on all aspects of Military Industrial Fossil Fuel Complex....In the recent election, we were offered a feeble choice of two Presidential contenders—who were bound to do everything in their power to serve and protect the interests of corporations.***

political system demands of them.

The first presidential debate was thus a puppet show game of math, Punch slamming Judy, Judy slamming back. Obama swiping at Romney for his promise to give the U.S. military a further \$2 trillion it had not asked for, Romney slamming back with a jibe that the \$90 billion Obama gave to green initiatives was money well wasted. Romney went on to say that \$90 billion would have hired 2 million teachers, though Obama declined to point out that Romney’s extra \$2 trillion for the military would pay for 44 million teachers.

Of course much of that \$90 billion was approved by Bush junior before Obama took office, but then Obama has never been a slouch in giving the military what it wants, so let’s not get bogged down with detail. The U.S.

not include fuel consumed by contractors or fuel consumed in leased and privatized facilities. Nor does it include the enormous energy and resources used to produce and maintain their death-dealing equipment or the bombs, grenades, or missiles they fire.”

Consider this thought experiment: The mission of U.S. foreign policy is changed from whatever it is (a cynic would say protecting and expanding American business interests) to sincerely working to advance world peace and harmony. How much fuel—not to mention lives, pain, suffering, money, ill will—would be saved?

A million barrels a day would seem to be an understatement.

government has never seriously denied the military what it wants, and in the near future as resources get scarcer and the U.S. military actually needs some of the oil that is under Iraq, or Iran, whether it is Obama or Romney, or whether Jenna Bush beats Chelsea Clinton in 2020, they will keep throwing trillions at the fossil fuel war economy until we do our homework.

**HOMEWORK**

- Put the trillions in service of the people and the planet.
- Effect the separation of state and corporation. Dismantle the Military Industrial Fossil Fuel Complex.
- Remove the special privilege extended to the fossil fuel corporations—cost free dumping of its major waste product CO<sub>2</sub>—and bill them for clean-up costs backdated to 1988.
- Put the Big Fossil Fuel corporations on trial for Crimes against Humanity and the Planet. Strip corporations of their “rights as an individual.” Remove “limited liability” protection from corporations. Seek damages as reparations based on Big Fossil Fuel profits since 1988.
- Effect a law of reverse eminent domain, whereby we the people can reclaim land and assets previously land-grabbed by corporations and banks, under the guiding principle that we are securing the planetary environment for future generations (e.g. according to the 2012 Tax Justice Network report, “The Price of Offshore Revisited,” between \$21 and \$32 trillion is sitting in untaxed offshore accounts, with up to \$12.8 trillion accrued by U.S. individuals and companies. Seize the monies and put it to work.)
- Scale back the U.S. military to that of a robust defensive force akin to that of Switzerland, and proportionately tone down red-white-and-blue hoopla which is too easily misappropriated by those seeking to send people to war.
- Use monies saved and seized to create jobs and industries in a switch to a non-carbon economy, and protection of the planet, with more than enough left over to finance free universal health-care and hire those 2 million extra teachers.
- Ban campaign contributions completely. Candidates should be given a modest and equal operating budget, and ensure independents get to take part in the TV debates.
- Keep the 80% of that \$22 trillion fossil fuel pie that needs to stay buried, buried.
- Lead by example ... reach out to peoples of the world instead of burying them with “smart” bombs or terrorizing them with drone wars.
- Get over the destructive idea that national rivalries matter. Embrace the idea of we the people means we the people of the planet.



*Danbert Nobacon, freak music legend, was in the English punk rock band Chumbawamba for 22 years, and he continues to write and perform music and spoken word. He is also an actor, radio host, performance artist, and dad. His first young adult novel, 3 Dead Princes: An Anarchist Fairytale, was published in 2010. He lives in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains near Twisp, WA. This article first appeared at theweeklings.com and is reprinted with the author’s permission.*



# Trillions in US Defense Spending to Protect “Big Oil”

by Willard Hunter

The new motto of the U.S. military branches is not “Go Army” or “Go Navy.” Rather, it is “Go Green.” And, for good reason—the world’s biggest War Department is a major energy hog. First, a few statistics:

The U.S. Department of Defense is the largest single energy consumer in the U.S.

It is the biggest purchaser of oil in the world.

It accounts for 90% of the federal government’s energy use.

In FY2010, it spent \$15 billion—about 2% of the U.S. defense budget—on energy. Operational energy fuel (for tanks, ships, and planes, and to run generators at forward operating bases) costs, subject to spot market price vagaries, account for 75% of the total; \$4 billion was spent to operate 200,000 vehicles and to provide electrical power for 300,000 buildings.

PERSIAN GULF. A 2010 study titled “United States cost of military force projection in the Persian Gulf, 1976–2007” by Roger J. Stern in *Energy Policy* provides sobering insight into a major priority of the U.S. military over this time frame: protecting the global oil supply in the Persian Gulf. He calculates between 1976 and 2007 the cost to maintain the U.S. military Persian Gulf force (in 2008 dollars) was \$6.8 trillion, including half a trillion in 2007 alone.

## *This Persian Gulf Mission (PGM) now costs roughly as much as the Cold War did.*

Guidance policy statement) declaring “the U.S. must preempt the regional hegemonic power that would emerge if one state were to control the resources of its neighbors.”

### Maintaining from page 4

people of the earth, but the entire biosphere. More and more the military is given a pass to carry out these environmental assaults. The civilian government has become a willing accomplice with its passion to be “military friendly” no matter what the cost. The true “security threats” are those posed by abrupt climate change—including an increased prospect of nuclear war, widespread famine, uprisings over food and water, and mass migration.

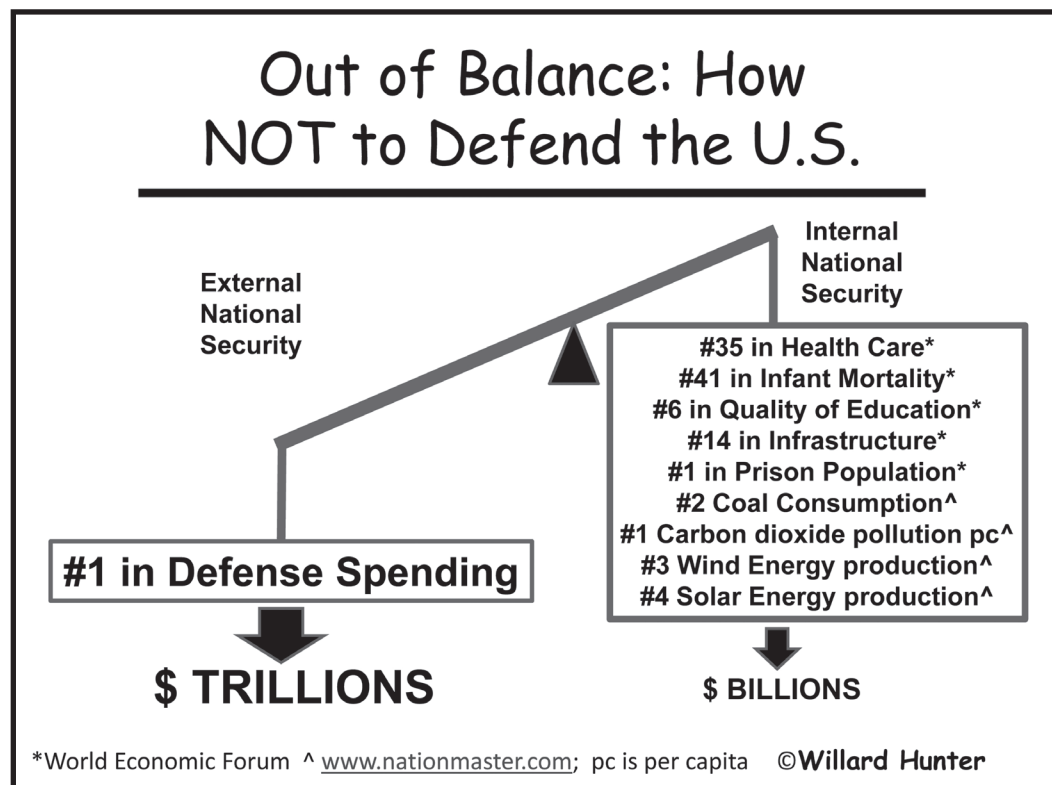
Times are urgent, mass extinctions are underway. The Earth and its interdependent systems of life are in dire peril. According to a 2010 Defense Department review, climate change is an “accelerant of instability and conflict.”

But we must be wary of false solutions to this accelerating climate crisis. The Navy and Marine Corps have set the goal of generating at least 50 percent of all the energy needs from alternative sources no later than 2020. Biofuels and other suggested fossil fuel alternatives, including nuclear technologies, will only worsen the problem—our acceptance of militarism with its lethal priorities. The problem is militarism—the primary contributor to climate change and the largest source of toxic chemical and radioactive poisoning worldwide.

A recent National Academy of Sciences report warns that the security establishment is going to have start

Succinctly, the justification is to prevent a terrorist organization from gaining control over a major regional oil supplier and jacking up the world petroleum price to \$300-\$400/barrel.

In perspective, he shows this Persian Gulf Mission (PGM) now costs roughly as much as the Cold War did. And, the PGM “exceeds the value of Gulf petroleum exports in all years except 1990 and the value of U.S. petroleum imports from the region by roughly an order of magnitude over most of the study period.”



In another 2010 article, “Measuring energy security: Can the United States achieve oil independence?” David L. Greene observes “Oil dependence costs can be substantial. It is estimated that oil dependence costs to the U.S. economy in 2008 will exceed \$500 billion.” That is same amount the U.S. military spent on its PGM. Essentially, the U.S. economy experiences a double whammy—the excess costs for its imported oil because of the oil cartel and the U.S. military costs.

ENERGY CONSERVATION. “Go Green” is the new unofficial motto of the U.S. military. It is spending millions of dollars to reduce its dependence on conventional energy sources. It has numerous publications (available online) outlining its goals and its accomplishments in detail.

CONCLUSION. The U.S. military will never get control of its fundamental energy costs until its mission is changed. The massive costs of PGM will prevent realization of any significant savings. And recent and current administrations, regardless of political party, have shown no indication of interest in decreasing the Persian Gulf presence. As long as the military-industrial complex has Iran, al-Qaeda, and other “terrorists” as straw men to defend against, the country will continue to spend inordinate amounts of money in that region of the world. Even achieving energy “independence” would not stop the hemorrhaging of U.S. government and taxpayers’ moneys—because U.S. petroleum is priced on a global basis.

*Willard Hunter is a member of Veterans For Peace in Albuquerque, NM.*

planning for natural disasters, sea-level rise, drought, epidemics, and the other consequences of climate change. Author and environmental activist Rebecca Solnit says “We need to talk about climate change as a war against nature, against the poor (especially the poor of Africa), and against the rest of us....”<sup>6</sup>

Rather than our acceptance of the military’s false solutions intended primarily to maintain their lethal edge as a “lean, green, fighting machine,” we must join with the Peace & Justice Studies Association, a professional association for scholars in the field of peace and conflict resolution studies, in demanding “a redirection of the vast majority of military funding to fund human services, ensure decent quality of life, payment of ecological and climate debt, and compensation to countries and peoples damaged by militarism.”<sup>7</sup>

“The issue of climate change is one that we ignore at our own peril,” President Obama once said, “...unless we free ourselves from a dependence on these fossil fuels and chart a new course on energy in this country, we are condemning future generations to global catastrophe.”

*Clare Hanrahan is an activist/organizer with New South Network of War Resisters. Contact her at newsouthnetwork@gmail.com.*

(Endnotes)

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5 Winslow T. Wheeler, “The Pentagon’s Black Hole,” *Huffington Post*, November 9, 2009

6 Rebecca Solnit on Tom Dispatch. Oct. 2012

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### **Atomic Appalachia and the Militarized Southeast—Environmental Impact**

The New South Network of War Resisters is planning a Southeast regional Spring tour with presentations on the environmental impact of militarism and discussion of strategies for action. For details on hosting this presentation: [newsouthnetwork@gmail.com](mailto:newsouthnetwork@gmail.com) or 828-301-6683.



# Old and New Wars: “Dehumanizing” War

by Lesley Docksey

*Do we want a generation of veterans who return without guilt?*

—Prof. Jonathon Moreno

Last November global governance expert Professor Mary Kaldor gave a lecture [the annual Remembrance Day Lecture for the Movement for the Abolition of War] at the Imperial War Museum, London. Her theme was “Old and New Wars—how the nature of warfare and the organization of its participants have changed.” Old wars, she said, were essentially a battle of wills between two states or leaders. A war of two sides, two armies, can be vicious as it progresses but sooner or later one side wins, one loses, and some kind of treaty is negotiated. In a literal sense the war ends but, as any good historian knows, each war has carried and planted the seeds of the following war.

However, armies facing armies no longer happens. There is a halfway stage between old and new wars—such as happened in Vietnam and now in Iraq and Afghanistan—where an invading army finds itself at a loss as to how to fight what is essentially a guerrilla war fought by people trying to rid their country of a force that has come in from outside and is trying to impose its own solution on their state’s difficulties.

There is no clear way to end new wars, something which we should take account of. They are far more complicated in the make-up of combatants, but all are seeking some form of power. And money (or more accurately, profit) plays a large part. Nor is it easy to tell who is raising money to fund the war, or who is fighting the war to raise money to further their aims.

There are too many actors—soldiers in uniform, freedom fighters, religious fighters, Mujahideen, war lords, mercenaries and, of course, men who simply love killing and migrate from country to country, conflict to conflict. They went to Iraq and now they are part of the Syrian Free Army. Foreign passports proliferate in modern conflicts. So—too many competing interests, with scant attention paid to those who are truly “on the ground,” the little people living in little villages, growing little amounts of food for their little families and sadly fertilizing their fields with their blood.

How many of these combatants have a natural right to be there, in that country or that province? How many are interfering in someone else’s conflict? How many are making the situation worse while justifying their actions by claiming they are there to sort things out? How many are fighting for power and control over their countrymen? How many are fighting because they have a particular vision of their

like ISAF [NATO’s International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan] and not splinter groups representing different interests?

The desire for power, control and profit never alters.

All soldiers, across all time, can and often do act in an inhumane way, committing appalling acts of cruelty. One only

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***Killing at a distance dehumanizes those doing it—it is not killing but a computer game.***

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has to read some of the evidence given at the Baha Mousa Inquiry to understand that war insists that other people are “the enemy” and that soldiers feel, as they did in Iraq, that they have the right to torture and beat those whose only crime is to live in the invaded country. But now soldiers are taking that one step further, too far, treading beyond the line.

The tools and training of modern warfare are dehumanizing them. Take drones.

It is hard to believe that the first armed drones were used in Afghanistan in 2001. In less than ten years they have become an essential part of fighting war. They are controlled from half a world away by people who have never been to the country they are targeting; who have no knowledge of the way of life, the culture of the little blobs of humanity they track in their monitors; who have no understanding of the political and corporate background to the “war” they are fighting; and, most importantly, by people who are in no danger of having their own blood spilt.

The deaths they cause are meaningless to the hand that presses the button. They have meaning enough for the people on the ground, gathering what they can of shattered bodies for burial, and unsurprisingly their use creates more so-called terrorists.

Killing at a distance dehumanizes those doing it—it is not killing but a computer game. Scoring a “hit” that involves no blood, no entrails, no broken lives brings no guilt, no remorse, and no proper awareness of the hurt inflicted on others.

But with the physical damage being inflicted on Western forces (in the U.S. Army alone, 73,674 soldiers have been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and 30,480 soldiers have returned from combat with traumatic brain injury)\*, this in itself is a good enough reason to use nothing but drones. And if both sides use them, then the only casualties will be absolutely guaranteed to be civilian.

\* The numbers from a Rand Corporation report were: PTSD 300,000 and TBI 320,000.

It is bad enough that the U.S. thinks it is fighting a global war on terror, so all the world is a battlefield. What price the world if another state takes that attitude thinking, quite rightly, that the U.S. drones are a form of terrorism?

Using drones also dehumanizes the people they kill. These are not fellow humans but terrorists, not civilians but collateral damage, not 8-year-old boys or old men of eighty but potential combatants. The enemy becomes nothing more than a fly to be swatted, a worm to be stepped on.

President Obama has to personally authorize U.S. drone strikes, more than 300 of them in his first four years of office.

That many of the deaths were of children cannot be disputed, regardless of the fact that the U.S. insists that only “combatants” are killed. But at the beginning of December last year, a senior U.S. army officer speaking to the *Marine Corps Times* said that troops in Afghanistan were on the lookout for “children with potential hostile intent”—in other words, children could be deliberately targeted. Yet a few days later, there was Obama weeping on camera over the shocking deaths of the Connecticut school children. Afghan children obviously don’t rate tears.

Having gone past the old form of war of charging into battle against another army, it is inevitable that soldiers should be expected and trained, when fighting “terrorists”—aka: freedom fighters, resistance fighters, insurgents, supporters of “regimes,” religious fundamentalists (non-Christian of course)—to operate in the same way as drones, with targeted assassinations, raids on homes or farmers out in fields.

We are told—and oh, am I tired of this being parroted by politicians justifying murderous actions by their forces—that the terrorists are “hiding” in civilian areas, using women and children, even their own families as human shields. If they are not regular soldiers but people resisting occupying forces, they are not using their families as human shields; the houses are their homes, where they live, where they and their families belong. They are all civilians.

And in much of the Middle East the prevailing culture is that most men, particularly in rural areas, own guns. Before the West visited so much war upon them, the guns appeared mostly to be used for firing shots into the air at weddings and other celebrations. But they own guns, therefore they must be terrorists. By that logic, many U.S. citizens are also terrorists.



A student pilot and a sensor operator manned the controls of a Reaper drone in a ground-based cockpit. Defense Department via The Associated Press

But when, politicians having realized they are never going to “win” this war, the invading troops are pulled out, the fighting goes on. It morphs into a “new” war. Afghanistan does not have a good outlook, and Iraq is still at war with itself, where no such divisions existed before the invasion. Nor does the imported heavy battlefield equipment do that well against insurgents with roadside bombs or hand-held rocket launchers—which must be a sore disappointment to those who love big machines.

country and are trying to force that vision on others?

For each and every one of these fighters, one has to ask: What is that one trying to gain? It is a far cry from the old wars with kings or politicians deciding to go to war to protect their “interests” and sending off hapless soldiers to do the killing and dying. Or is it? Is the difference between the old wars and the new simply that the old wars were mostly fought by national armies, not coalitions of convenience





Marines watch the unfolding battle of "Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2" during the Call of Duty Modern Warfare 2 Tournament 2 held at the Single Marine Program Shopping Night Dec. 1, 2009. (photo by Lance Cpl. Andrew D. Thorburn from an article, "Shopping Night puts Combat Center into Christmas spirit")

And now we have the possibility of super-soldiers, the ultimate killing machines. Not satisfied with the vulnerability of soldiers to fatigue, stress, madness, drug addiction, and worse, a sudden sense of morality, the Pentagon and others are researching ways of bypassing all that humanity.

According to bioethicist Professor Moreno, the military co-option of neuroscience is now the fastest growing area of science. Millions of dollars are being spent in researching the soldier's brain, testing drugs that will wipe out unpleasant memories of dark deeds done, quell the fatigue, mask pain, and eliminate feelings of guilt. It is not so much using robots (which in one sense is what drones are) as turning humans into unfeeling robots.

But if armies become mere operators of drones, or the "super soldier," guilt-free and heartless, becomes reality, then there really is no end to war. For the public's reaction to damaged soldiers coming back home and being a drain on families' emotions and the public purse because of PTSD or multiple disabilities will be the only thing that just might finally persuade the politicians that war is not worth the fighting.

*Lesley Docksey is the editor of Abolish War, the newsletter of the Movement for the Abolition of War (abolishwar.org.uk). This article first appeared on Global Research (globalresearch.ca) and is reprinted with permission.*

## The Uncommon Courage of Bradley Manning

by Marjorie Cohn

Bradley Manning has pleaded guilty to 10 charges including possessing and willfully communicating to an unauthorized person all the main elements of the WikiLeaks disclosure. The charges carry a total of 20 years in prison. For the first time, Bradley spoke publicly about what he did and why. His actions, now confirmed by his own words, reveal Bradley to be a very brave young man.

When he was 22 years old, Pfc. Bradley Manning gave classified documents to WikiLeaks. They included the "Collateral Murder" video, which depicts U.S. forces in an Apache helicopter killing 12 unarmed civilians, including two Reuters journalists, and wounding two children.

"I believed if the public, particularly the American public, could see this it could spark a debate on the military and our foreign policy in general as it applied to Iraq and Afghanistan," Bradley told the military tribunal during his guilty plea proceeding. "It might cause society to reconsider the need to engage in counter terrorism while ignoring the human situation of the people we engaged with every day."

Bradley said he was frustrated by his inability to convince his chain of command to investigate the "Collateral Murder" video

and other "war porn" documented in the files he provided to WikiLeaks. "I was disturbed by the response to injured children." Bradley was bothered by the soldiers depicted in the video who "seemed to not value human life by referring to [their targets] as 'dead bastards.'"

People trying to rescue the wounded were also fired upon and killed. A U.S. tank drove over one body, cutting the man in half. The actions of American soldiers shown in that video amount to war crimes under the Geneva Conventions, which prohibit targeting civilians, preventing the rescue of the wounded, and defacing dead bodies.

No one at WikiLeaks asked or encouraged Bradley to give them the documents, Bradley said. "No one associated with the WLO [WikiLeaks Organization] pressured me to give them more information. The decision to give documents to WikiLeaks [was] mine alone."

Before contacting WikiLeaks, Bradley tried to interest the *Washington Post* in publishing the documents but the newspaper was unresponsive. He tried unsuccessfully to contact the *New York Times*.

During his first nine months in custody, Bradley was kept in solitary confinement, which is considered torture as it can lead

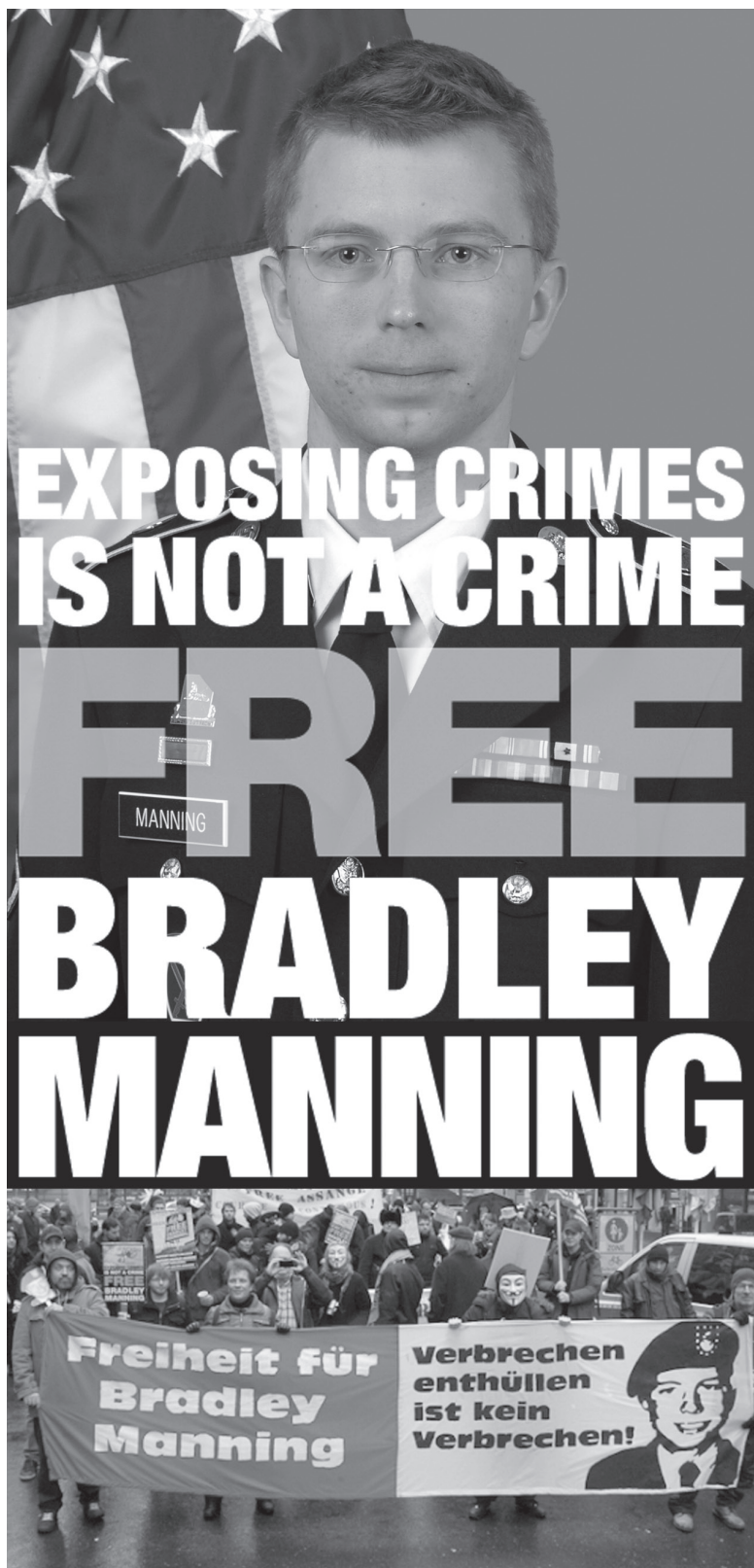
to hallucinations, catatonia, and suicide.

Bradley maintained his not guilty pleas to 12 additional charges, including aiding the enemy and espionage, for which he could get life imprisonment.

***Bradley said he was frustrated by his inability to convince his chain of command to investigate the "Collateral Murder" video and other "war porn" documented in the files he provided to WikiLeaks.***

Bradley's actions are not unlike those of Daniel Ellsberg, whose release of the Pentagon Papers helped to expose the government's lies and end the Vietnam War.

*Marjorie Cohn is a professor at Thomas Jefferson School of Law and co-author of Rules of Disengagement: The Politics and Honor of Military Dissent (with Kathleen Gilberd). She testifies at military hearings about the illegality of the wars, the duty to obey lawful orders, and the duty to disobey unlawful orders. See [www.marjoriecohn.com](http://www.marjoriecohn.com).*





*Kill Anything That Moves: The Real American War in Vietnam* by Nick Turse

## Then and Now: Déjà vu All Over Again

by Kim Carlyle

They called it the American War; we called it the Vietnam War. Congress never officially declared it a “war.” Some called it a “police action.” But, however you refer to it, the U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia was an ongoing, wanton massacre of civilians; it was genocide.

Wars traditionally had been contests between military forces, often evenly matched, fought in battlefields away from populated areas. Civilian casualties, a small fraction of the total, actually were “collateral.” But the way of war changed in the twentieth century. Weapons became more destructive and less discriminating; populated areas, and populations, became targets; and combatants became more proficient at killing, and also less discriminating.

In *Kill Anything that Moves*, Nick Turse offers a compelling partial history of the ongoing campaign of genocide in the American War. The history is partial because much of the documentation has been disappeared over the years to protect military personnel—especially those of the higher ranks—and the American Way of War itself.

## White Noise

by Daniel J. Shea

I often fall asleep on the couch watching the idiot tube because as long as it is on I don’t have to think about Vietnam and all the wars that came after. My wife has set the timer for the TV to turn off, I wish she could set the timer in my head.

As I toss and turn, the white noise from the screen in front of me does nothing to cover up the sounds I thought I had left in a country on the other side of the world. The noise of helicopters, the smell of diesel fuel, I remember the laughter of marines sitting around drinking beer, smoking cigarettes and other substances—all these things invade my living room. I can hear artillery off in the distant night, the mosquitoes buzz like bullets biting my ears.

I remember a Vietnamese scout being accused of being a traitor for marking trails, they put a gun to his head, a belt around his neck and with this leash made him walk point, all the way back to our camp. I get a cramp in my back and shrug pulling the blanket up over my shoulder, wondering what ever happened to the scout when we got back.

I still hear the screams of those who stepped on mines as we entered a farming village or maybe it was just a small rice paddy hamlet. Some of these thoughts are fuzzy, surreal, images like a collage not in chronological order.

I was a witness to war but I am not stuck just in Vietnam; the wars that came after pull at my conscience. I learned firsthand from revolutionaries and refugees from El Salvador and Guatemala the stories of the executions, assassinations, and disappearance of their families. I got to know them and the story of their lives and the horrors they experienced; some were tortured while others witnessed the carnage of others, and genocide of their village.

I began to question what really happened in Vietnam. It has been a long a painful journey and it never seems to end. Just when I think my dreams will spare me another haunt, a new war is on the horizon and we are now told we are entering the fray in a preemptive

The book, while often quite disturbing in its graphic exposition of massacres, torture, and other atrocities, nonetheless grips the reader. Turse, a gifted writer, is also an exceptional researcher. Starting at the National Archives with what documentation remains of the hundreds of war crime investigations, he then followed up with interviews of the people involved, the U.S. military personnel—of all ranks—and the Vietnamese victims. Even after more than four decades, many of the interviewees reacted emotionally on recalling the events of the past.

While these war crimes are odious in their brutality and their scale, Turse, without absolving the perpetrators, explains how individuals at all levels of command were almost compelled to such behavior by the systemic depravity of the American Way of War. Let’s start with the corruption of our youth.

Our American civilian culture offers moral guidance to enable us to get along with one another. We learn

war to stop Weapons of Mass Destruction and to liberate the people of such and such country from evil despots. They told me in my war it was because of the “Domino Theory” to stop the spread of communism and to liberate the people. Yet, we used WMD, we bombed, and shot everything in sight, we were supposed to be ending their suffering but we did it with more suffering.

My ears begin ringing and it gets louder and louder. I have to get up and pee. I turn the TV back on because now I can’t sleep but as I rest my head on the pillow I fall right back into my head. I have done a lot of reading on wars and the crimes of wars long past, veterans and victims have told me their stories or I have read them in books and journals. History books may not tell lies but they do not tell the whole truth, they edit out our complicity in murder, massacres, and genocide. Truth will not allow itself to be covered up, no matter how deep they, the criminals, try to bury her, she will eventually rise from her grave.

Whistleblowers are the real heroes and the Pentagon and Washington want to silence them. They will resort to threats and even murder, I suspect. And why not? If it gets out, they will be tried for Crimes Against Humanity.

I hear the birds as morning dawns and I awake from the nightmare, one I have become accustomed to. But each morning I ask myself, how can I help end these lies, cover ups, and war crimes? Will the real monsters of these horrors ever pay the price for their slaughter of innocent civilians, will they ever be accountable for their hiding the evidence, will their names ever be published?

Yes, at least a new book published by Nick Turse called *Kill Anything That Moves* has dug up the truth; and it is a treasure chest of smoking guns. I just finished reading it; you read it and then demand these criminals, if they are still alive, be brought to justice before the world courts for all to see.

Then, maybe then, I can turn off the TV and just go to bed and get a good nights’ sleep.

*Daniel J. Shea is a Vietnam veteran and Agent Orange victim who served in the U.S. Marines fom 1968 to 1969. He is a past board member of Veterans For Peace.*



“Kill! Kill! Kill! To kill without mercy is the spirit of the bayonet!” A Vietnam-era draftee related that at first he only mouthed the chants, but later found himself overtaken by the ethos.

right from wrong. We learn that some behaviors are taboo. We are told, “Thou shalt not kill!” The American military culture recruits—or, as during the American War, drafts—young people and turns the morality upside down. “Kill!” it not just teaches, it commands!

The marines who would need to call on their consciences concerning the children of Trieu Ai [the scene of a massacre that predated My Lai] were not that far from childhood themselves. Indeed, most U.S. troops who served in Vietnam were in their teens or barely out of them. Whether they had been drafted or had volunteered (often to avoid the uncertainty of the draft), they had gone to basic training as little more than boys.

The boot camp experience was consciously organized to reduce recruits to a psychological state akin to early childhood. Their previous eighteen or so years of learning were to be stripped away through shock, separation, and physical and psychological stress, creating a tabula rasa on which the military imprint could be stamped. For eight weeks of up to seventeen-hour days, every detail of their lives was prescribed, every action relearned in a military manner, all stringently enforced by the omnipresent authority of the drill instructor....

Recruits were also indoctrinated into a culture of violence and brutality, which emphasized above all a readiness to kill without compunction (26-7).

One veteran told the author, “For eleven months I was trained to kill. For eight weeks, during basic training, I screamed ‘kill,’ ‘kill.’ So when I got to Vietnam I was ready to kill” (27).

The military also teaches recruits to devalue the lives of the enemy. It makes it that much easier to kill another human being:

Remorseless killing was additionally legitimized by the explicit racism that suffused the training. As [one army veteran] remembered, “The drill instructors never ever called the Vietnamese, ‘Vietnamese.’ They called them dinks, gooks, slopes, slants, rice-eaters, everything that would take away humanity... That they were less than human was clearly the message” (28).

When the troops arrived “in country,” the lesson was reinforced. They were told that “all Vietnamese were to be distrusted, that even women and small children were possible foes or outright enemies—a particularly sinister attitude in the context of a war that was supposedly being fought to protect Vietnamese civilians from communist aggression” (28).

While the grunts on the ground were thus programmed, their superiors, both noncoms and officers,



David C. Unger's *The Emergency State*

## Jolting the ideology which thrives on conflict abroad and stagnation at home

by Jeanne Riha

At this time of polarized publics and ineffectual government, the sane and searching fraction of the public owes a gigantic debt of gratitude to those scholar-writers who have tried to jolt the national ideology.

Chalmers Johnson with his trilogy on U.S. militarism explored and exposed that disease and its consequences. Andrew J. Bacevich examined the political, military, and civic results of our outdated ideology. And in 2012 David G. Unger dove into the historical roots, the 70-year persistence of what he called the Emergency State that also might be tagged the national security state, which thrives on conflict abroad and stagnation at home.

Unger traces the ersatz democracy that America has become through 13 successive presidential administrations, sparing no one from Franklin Roosevelt to Barack Obama. Long before Nixon's enemy list was compiled, FDR cooperated with investigations bureaucrat J. Edgar Hoover in monitoring "subversives" and authorizing FBI spying on the president's political opponents. In needing to swiftly build a war machine for WW II, FDR initiated the military-industrial complex by giving special privileges and benefits to encourage industrialists to come aboard. The consequences of their special privileges continue to adversely affect our economy, weapons choices, and resultant social spending.

In his president-by-president analysis, Unger sharply criticizes Bill Clinton for his priorities. His campaign talk was all about the economy. With a conservative panel of economic advisors, he made very minor cuts in military spending and used the fiscal resources to cut the deficit and advance the trade agreements and economic policies that boosted business and finance but not the working classes. Missing were the promised public investments in education, skills, and infrastructure. The business boom led to the later asset bubbles that sank the economy's gains.

Unger pays modest tribute to Obama's domestic achievements but lines him up squarely with Emergency

State presidents on foreign, military, and security policies.

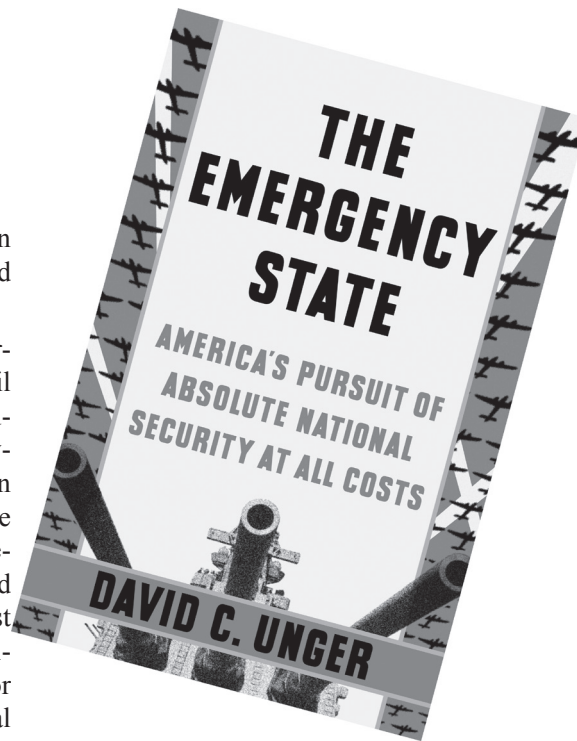
Obama's miserable record on civil liberties: his prosecution of whistle blowers, court reliance on "state secrets," failure to do anything to penalize Bush-initiated transgressions against traditional American freedoms or against constitutional rights—this record finally gets some of the attention it deserves and had avoided under submissive Democrats.

At the end of the book, Unger, like most other competent critics, offers a list of 10 common sense suggestions. Among them:

- Presidential war powers come only with a congressional declaration of war
- No branch of the federal government should exercise unreviewable powers
- Supplement the all-volunteer military with a new version of Harry Truman's plan for universal military training (This may or may not get veteran support)
- Declassify all information held by the U.S. government involved in deciding foreign and international economic policy, with security exceptions
- Publish and audit the annual intelligence budget of the U.S., with security exemptions.

The usual problem with reform proposals is that, with a president and Congress as the targets to be changed and with a Supreme Court even less movable, where is the pressure to come from?

This is not—at least not yet—a population marching in the streets or organizing to stop foreclosure sales as



*Most Americans are too young to have lived their lives in anything other than the emergency state. It's always been a condition of anticipating what the next war or the next insurgents or terrorists will bring, and how we will fight them.*

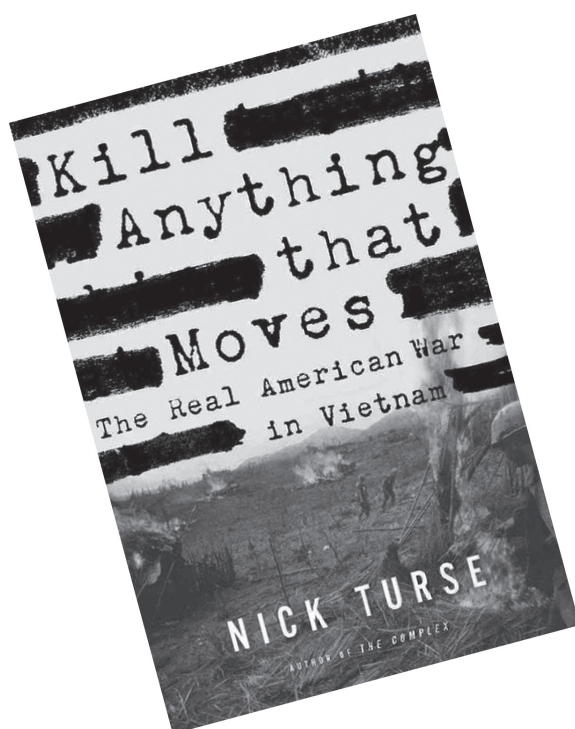
in the Great Depression, or retracting their expectation of being lifted to Heaven before the final battle, or even banding together in community groups to discuss and reject the work out and disastrous ideology of the national security emergency state.

Making things more difficult, Unger says, most Americans are too young to have lived their lives in anything other than the emergency state. It's always been a condition of anticipating what the next war or the next insurgents or terrorists will bring, and how we will fight them.

To make wholesome changes will require qualities and degrees of persistence, information, leadership, integrity, bravery, and unselfishness seldom seen in this society.

Unger and his colleagues have made a brave start on what could be an overhaul of this disappointing nation. Now the rest is up to us.

*Jeanne Riha is a retired journalist, a reporter or editor of five dailies and weeklies, and a free lance writer whose articles have appeared in publications including Christian Science Monitor, America, New Politics, Frontier, and Progressive.*



were under pressure to perform and deliver. The U.S. military establishment had undergone a metamorphosis in the 1960s, heavily influenced by the business model. In business, success can be measured, quantified, in terms of project deliverables. In Vietnam, the deliverables were bodies:

At the most basic level, though, everything came down to "body count"—the preeminent statistic that served in those years as both the military's scorecard and its *raison d'être*. . . . The war managers, of course, gave little thought to what this strategy—basing the entire American military effort on such an indicator as Vietnamese corpses—might mean for Vietnamese civilians. . . . The pressure to produce high body counts flowed from the Pentagon to Westmoreland's Saigon villa, down through

the chain of command, and out to the American patrols in the Vietnamese countryside. . . . As a result, low-level officers, who generally had six months in the field to prove themselves and earn a promotion, and the young combat troops they led were under constant pressure to produce enemy "kills" (43-4).

But it wasn't just the enlisted men and the junior officers who had the racist, "kill anything" attitude. "U.S. commanders wasted ammunition like millionaires, hoarded American lives like misers—and often treated Vietnamese lives as if they were nothing at all" (107). In fact, Turse devotes part of a chapter to the "gook-hunting general"—who was almost called to account. An "Army Criminal Investigation Command concluded that [he], 'on 13 separate occasions during the period

October 1968 through March 1969... while flying in a helicopter over Quang Ngai Province, fired at from the air and apparently killed or ordered the killing of, unarmed and unresisting Vietnamese persons'" (203).

But he went unpunished, as did the sergeant who amassed "an astonishing personal body count of more than 1,500 KIAs [killed-in-action]" (192), as well as countless other war criminals. They were all beneficiaries of the MGR (the "mere-gook-rule"), which "held that all Vietnamese—northern and southern, adults and children, armed enemy and innocent civilian—were little more than animals, who could be killed or abused at will" (50).

This impunity was enabled by a military culture that intimidated whistleblowers and protected its own, and



## THE FOREST OF ENLIGHTENMENT

by Edward Tick

Before a great Buddha statue in an outer garden of the Forest of Enlightenment Pagoda, Ho Chi Minh City

Sweet sutras dripping from her tongue  
 she sits before Buddha cross-legged and sincere  
 while traffic squeals and children squawk.  
 I light my joss stick and take my place  
 beside her supine form. Only then,  
 in this small banyan park, do I see  
 the raw flesh stretched thin, the crooked scar  
 that crawls from where her ear should be  
 to plunge beneath her plain and simple dress.  
 I strain to keep my gaze on Buddha.  
 She just bows and sings.  
 I kowtow with my glowing sticks  
 not to the calm Lord in marble  
 but to this woman with the wounds of the world  
 fried into her living flesh.



## ROUND FOOTPRINTS

by Tran Dinh Song

You've returned to your native village  
 from the battlefields where you left your foot forever.  
 Every morning your round footprints  
 quietly follow you to school.  
 The round footprints, the invalid teacher –  
 every step you take is slow and difficult.  
 Your young, innocent students can never understand  
 all that you lost in your youth.

*(Translated from the Vietnamese  
 by Tran Dinh Song and Edward Tick)*

*Tran Dinh Song was in ARVN Air Force for seven years and then spent two-and-a-half years in the "re-education camps" where the new government imprisoned several hundred thousand former military officers and government workers from the former regime of South Vietnam.*

by an internal agency that covered up the mess: "[T]he War Crimes Working Group, a secret Pentagon task force that had been assembled after the My Lai massacre to ensure that the army would never again be caught off-guard by a major war crimes scandal" (14).

The secret task force did its job well:

[T]he Vietnam War Crimes Working Group continuously kept an eye on the army's atrocity investigations and provided regular reports to the military brass and the White House. The group did not work to bring accused war criminals to justice or to prevent war crimes from occurring in the first place. Nor did it make public the constant stream of allegations flowing in from soldiers and veterans. As far as the War Crimes Working Group was concerned, these allegations were purely an image problem, to be parried or buried as quickly as possible. Over time, the group became a key part of the Pentagon's system for hiding the true nature of the war from the American public" (230-1).

Nick Turse, in *Kill Anything That Moves*, provides the working group's antithesis. He identifies incidents by place and time, graphically describes the events, and names names (which I've omitted in this article). It would be some consolation if this regrettable chapter of American history, which Turse chronicles so well, had ended and led to reforms. That it hasn't is more disturbing than the book itself.

The military culture has not changed. It still reprograms our innocent youth to become reflexive killers. It

still teaches racism. Ben Griffin, a British soldier (whose "Queen and Country" speech appears in this issue), left the military after his experience with American troops in Iraq. In an interview reported in the UK *Telegraph* in 2006, he said:

The Americans had a well-deserved reputation for being trigger happy. In the three months that I was in Iraq, the soldiers I served with never shot anybody. When you asked the Americans why they killed people, they would say "we were up against the tough foreign fighters." I didn't see any foreign fighters in the time I was over there....

As far as the Americans were concerned, the Iraqi people were sub-human, untermenschen [a term used by the Nazis for Jews and Slavs]. You could almost split the Americans into two groups: ones who were complete crusaders, intent on killing Iraqis, and the others who were in Iraq because the Army was going to pay their college fees. They had no understanding or interest in the Arab culture. The Americans would talk to the Iraqis as if they were stupid and these weren't isolated cases, this was from the top down. There might be one or two enlightened officers who understood the situation a bit better but on the whole that was their general attitude. Their attitude fueled the insurgency. I think the Iraqis detested them.

The American military establishment, along with its accomplices in the Congress, the White House, and the media, still protects its criminals and vilifies those who report them. It still covers its tracks while trying to

maintain a wholesome image. And it still tortures people.

*Kill Anything That Moves* should be required reading for every American. As Ben Griffin suggests, the American Way of War is both immoral and counterproductive. Perhaps Turse's exceptional book would provide the shock Americans need to get off their complacent duffs and demand the total abolition of war, or at least, top-down military reform. Then we'd have fewer innocent victims—not just the unfortunate civilians of foreign lands, but also the next generation of America's children.



The pioneers of a warless world are the youth who refuse military service.

—Albert Einstein



# VETERANS AND GIs BUILD RESISTANCE TO THE AFGHANISTAN WAR

## Bold campaign takes message of refusing to fight to U.S. military bases

The following is the Mission Statement of *Our Lives, Our Rights*, a project of *March Forward!* and *Veterans For Peace*. For more information visit [OurLivesOurRights.org](http://OurLivesOurRights.org)

**Our Lives, Our Rights** is a campaign led by active-duty troops, veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, and war resisters whose mission is to reach out to and educate U.S. service members about their rights, help exercise those rights, and advocate for those rights. Among these rights is the right to be a Conscientious Objector to war and refuse deployment to Afghanistan.

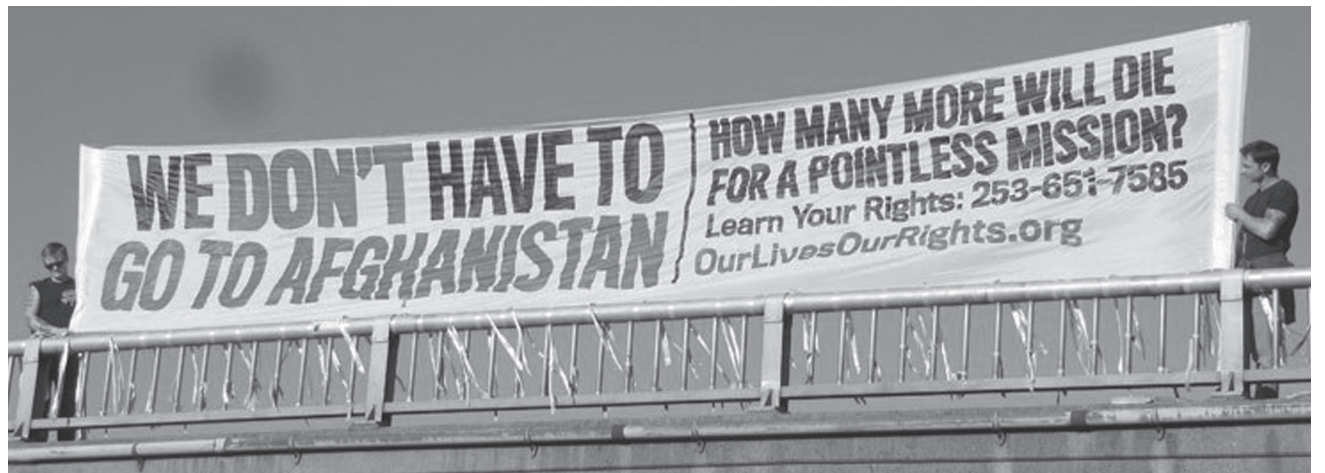
### The war we have no reason to fight

The ongoing Afghanistan war—not-so-coincidentally located in one of the most profitable regions in the world for the oil tycoons and defense contractors—is the longest war in U.S. history. Mainstream polls show that more than 2/3 of the U.S. public as well as active-duty service members oppose the war and want it to end. But the generals and politicians continue to lie and mislead the public in order to continue a war—like the Iraq war—to control access to resources for Wall Street. Even if the cause was just, high-ranking Pentagon officers openly admit that the war against the Afghan resistance is unwinnable, yet continue to send U.S. soldiers to kill and be killed to avoid the perception of defeat. With more every day, over 2,000 of us have died, tens of thousands have had life-changing wounds, and hundreds of thousands psychologically traumatized.

For the people of Afghanistan, who have overwhelmingly opposed and resisted the occupation, the U.S./NATO war has resulted in death and injury of tens of thousands of innocent civilians, destroyed villages, thrust the country deeper into poverty—all supposedly for a crime they had no role in whatsoever. U.S. service members increasingly recognize that the people of Afghanistan are not our real enemies and that the war has been a humanitarian catastrophe. We have a right to not be party to crimes against humanity and the subjugation of our brothers and sisters in Afghanistan, the vast majority of whom want all U.S./NATO forces out of their country now.

### The crisis in mental health care

The politicians and military brass have shown disregard for the lives of U.S. service members not only in the battlefield but also at home. The epidemic of veterans'



Iraq war veterans hold 50-foot banner outside the gates of Joint Base Lewis-McChord during outreach trip to inform soldiers deploying to Afghanistan of their right to resist. (Photo: Gerry Condon)

suicides has been a crisis for years, with active-duty suicides shockingly outpacing combat deaths, yet the command has taken no meaningful steps to address it. In fact, they have deliberately refused to diagnose cases of PTSD to cut costs and repeatedly re-deploy service members. Every service member who has tried knows the difficulty of trying to get adequate treatment or a fair discharge process. For female service members, this problem is compounded by being treated like criminals for reporting sexual abuse and Military Sexual Trauma. The military brass has acted with historic disregard for our lives. Our commanders are solely responsible for the epidemic of suicides, which is nowhere near being resolved, making it necessary for us to take action outside the chain of command.

The generals and politicians have proven, for years, incapable and unwilling to treat our lives like they matter at all. They are playing politics with our lives while we commit suicide in record numbers, lose limbs and lives at an increasing rate, and while our families and families in Afghanistan suffer immensely.

### These are our lives. We can exercise our rights.

Thousands of U.S. service members would qualify as Conscientious Objectors, or have the right to not deploy to Afghanistan or serve in the military based on moral opposition to war. Conscientious Objector status entitles one to an honorable discharge with full benefits.

Many thousands with psychological wounds, properly diagnosed yet or not, have the right to demand exemption

from deployment, with adequate treatment, compensation and a fair process.

Many feel they have no other option to escape the war or their difficult situation in garrison other than to go AWOL or refuse their orders—they, too, have rights and legal options, and deserve help and support.

Most service members do not know these rights. For those who do, the chain of command actively blocks service members from exercising them.

*Our Lives, Our Rights* seeks to turn that situation around. We reach out to service members to ensure that they know their rights and options. We assist those who need information about their rights and legal support, and help in successfully navigating the maze of paperwork. We give a voice to those who want to take a stand and tell their stories to build a movement for the rights of their sisters and brothers in uniform. Alone, we are powerless against the will of the officers—but service members and veterans, united and organizing together, can challenge their callous disregard for our lives and the lives of others.

*Our Lives, Our Rights* holds that service members have inalienable rights, including the right to refuse deployment to Afghanistan. The time is critical to exercise our rights. We have the power to drastically improve the conditions for service members and their families, and prevent the suffering of other families in Afghanistan. These rights will not be handed down by the politicians or military brass. It is up to us to come together, organize, and fight for them.

## OUR LIVES OUR RIGHTS IS DEPLOYING TO FORT HOOD! Another 'deployment to stop a deployment' as III Corps prepares to deploy to Afghanistan

This past October, the *Our Lives Our Rights* campaign deployed to Joint Base Lewis-McChord to engage in an aggressive outreach campaign to soldiers in 4th Brigade, just weeks before their deployment to Afghanistan, with a simple

message: "You don't have to go."

Thousands of leaflets and stickers were distributed on and off base by veterans and active-duty soldiers. A massive 50-foot banner was held at the base gates for morning

and evening traffic every day. The local press covered the initiative heavily.

Now, the *Our Lives Our Rights* campaign is mobilizing to do the same at Fort Hood, TX (the biggest U.S. Army base), as Fort Hood's

III Corps prepares to deploy to Afghanistan in May.

To learn more or get involved in this bold initiative by veterans and GIs to support and inspire resistance to war, visit [OurLivesOurRights.org](http://OurLivesOurRights.org).

Fellow soldiers in 4th Brigade:

**WE DON'T HAVE TO GO TO AFGHANISTAN**

• We don't have to risk life and limb for the failed policies of politicians who don't care about us.  
• Soldiers have a variety of rights and legal options to avert deployment to Afghanistan.  
• It's not too late to exercise your rights. We can help.  
[OurLivesOurRights.org](http://OurLivesOurRights.org) • 253-651-7585

Thousands of the above stickers and flyers were distributed at Fort Lewis.



*Voices for Creative Nonviolence*

# We Share Life in Kabul

by Martha Hennessy

January 9, 2013

We are two weeks into our stay with the Afghan Peace Volunteers and the time is filled with many meetings and discussions. Before their departure, our British delegates interviewed several of the peace volunteers about conditions in their country. Zekerullah's testimony stood out to me; he held such compassion and wisdom beyond his years. He was asked what he would have to say to a young man from the U.K. who is considering joining the military and possibly coming to fight in Afghanistan. He stated that he hoped the man (his counterpart) would not become a soldier but would stay home, do the work that is needed there, and take care of his parents. Zekerullah's insightfulness typifies the responses I've heard, again and again, from the Afghan Peace Volunteers when they talk about the ravages of war and their visions for the future.

Despite the long-term degradations of poverty and war, we are hearing sentiments of hope from a variety of individuals and groups. The majority of Afghanistan's population is under 25 years of age and they want reform and an end to the violence and corruption perpetrated by foreign, regional, and internal self-interests.

We sat with the secretary-general of the Afghanistan Youth Peace National Jirga, a governmental organization of 1,700 members that has a central office in Kabul. Members come from all 34 provinces around the country and include those involved in different Afghan political parties. The purpose of the Youth Jirga is to create a space for a national discourse on Afghanistan's peace process, involving all domestic groups. There are significant obstacles to peace for the Afghan people who find themselves caught between so many hostile interests with complex alignments that can easily shift. The U.S., UK, Russia, China, Pakistan, India, Iran, and Saudi Arabia all play varying roles. Internal factions include the Taliban (often described as a mask which hides many players),

Hezb-i-Islami, past warlords turned ministers, and Karzai's puppet government.

The Youth Peace National Jirga's agenda consists of these points:

- Establish a way forward for the peace process.
- Address corruption in governmental administration.
- Discuss/clarify the Bilateral Security Agreement and the future of the U.S. military presence.
- Address the higher educational needs of the population.
- Generate employment for both educated and uneducated youth.

This is a very tall order but the issues are clearly identified by the younger generation.

The Youth Peace National Jirga met with President Karzai last summer, hoping to have their voices heard. The Jirga is aware of the peace processes held in or mediated by Doha, with Japan, Turkey, France, Germany, and the U.S. Many Afghans feel this effort is being used for political purposes and that a genuine peace process has yet to emerge.

We frequently hear concerns being expressed over the upcoming transitional period of 2014. The im-

portance of this time hinges on the movement of power from Karzai's administration to a new government, as well as the shifting of security from foreign military to local and national entities. If the power falls into the hands of those who would continue to neglect the people's needs, there will be another lost decade and generation. But many of the young people do have a vision for peace and reconciliation. Our delegation members have listened to dozens of young men and women who are ready to transform the old military and political strategies into a different model. They want a new approach that is based on humanitarian rights and the social well-being of the people, especially those left in abject poverty. It is work and education that will keep the youth out of the hands of the military and Islamic fundamentalists who preach the taking up of arms.

*I am convinced that the human heart is created for love and love is a stronger force than fear or hatred.*



A boy living at the Darlaman Refugee Camp. (photo by Martha Hennessy)

The statistics are grim with many new refugees being displaced daily, the deaths of one in five children under age five, and half of Afghan children unable to attend school. Two billion dollars have been spent weekly on maintaining foreign troops. Despite these realities the young people continue to envision a peaceful and independent tomorrow with education for everyone.

We visited elderly widows who live on the surrounding hillsides above Kabul City where the paths are steep and icy. With no other option, it is the cheapest housing that they can afford. When the water lines freeze they must carry heavy containers up the treacherous paths.

We met victims of U.S. rocket attacks as well as people with other disabilities who work valiantly to organize and provide humane care for those in need.

These small-level efforts are happening all over Kabul. When I look out the window in the early mornings I see the bustle of life, people carrying on with work and school. It is hard to imagine that our friends live with memories that are "painted in blood" as Hakim, our mentor, tells us. I am convinced that the human heart is created for love and love is a stronger force than fear or hatred. I see it every day in the eyes and smiles of those who work so hard to get by each day and who keep hope for tomorrow.

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**The War Crimes Times** could use a helping hand or, better, several helping hands to join our crack team of volunteers. We have need for a reliable person with spreadsheet/database skills. We also could use a few reliable people, a small team, without technical skills for some basic grunt work. The time demands are minimal; the pay is nonexistent; the compensation is satisfaction that you are helping to raise public awareness of true costs of war.

Inquire at  
[editor@WarCrimesTimes.org](mailto:editor@WarCrimesTimes.org)

We could also use editorial and layout assistance.

**Tour de Peace: the road less taken**

A bike ride for Peace from California to Washington, DC — April 4th-July 3rd, 2013  
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White House to present these demands:  
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**To End Immunity for U.S. War Crimes**  
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**To End the Use of Fossil Fuels**  
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