



U.S. Withdrawal and Defeat in Iraq

by Immanuel Wallerstein

It is now official. All uniformed U.S. troops will be withdrawn from Iraq by Dec. 31, 2011. There are two major ways of describing this. One is by President Obama, who says that he is thereby keeping an electoral promise he made in 2008. The second is by the Republican presidential candidates, who have condemned Obama for not doing what they say the U.S. military wanted, which is to keep some U.S. troops there after Dec. 31 as "trainers" to the Iraqi military. According to Mitt Romney, Obama's decision was either "the result of naked political calculation or simply sheer ineptitude in negotiations with the Iraqi government."

Both statements are nonsense, and merely represent self-justifying arguments for the American electorate. Obama tried his hardest, and in total conjunction with the U.S. military commanders and the Pentagon, to keep U.S. troops there after Dec. 31. He failed, not because of ineptitude, but because the Iraqi political leaders forced the U.S. troops to leave. The withdrawal marks the culmination of the U.S. defeat in Iraq, one comparable to the U.S. defeat in Vietnam.

What really happened? For the last eighteen months at least, the U.S. authorities have been trying as hard as they could to negotiate an agreement with the Iraqis that would override the one signed by President George W. Bush to withdraw all troops by Dec. 31, 2011. They failed, but not for want of trying hard.

By any definition, the most pro-American groups are the Sunni groups led by Ayad Allawi, a man with notoriously close links with the CIA, and the party of Jalal Talebani, Kurdish president of Iraq. Both men in the end said, no doubt reluctantly, that it was better that U.S. troops leave.

The Iraqi leader who tried hardest to arrange for U.S. troops to remain was Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. He obviously believed that the poor ability of the Iraqi military to maintain order would lead to new elections in which his own position would be gravely weakened, and he would probably cease to be prime minister.

The United States made concession after concession, reducing constantly the number of troops they would leave behind. The sticking point in the end was the insistence of the Pentagon on immunity for U.S. soldiers (and mercenaries) from Iraqi jurisdiction for any crimes of which they might be accused. Maliki was ready to agree to this, but no

(See DEFEAT IN IRAQ on page 6)



The Sleep of an Iraqi Child by Huynh Chi Trung, age 15

The Sleep of an Iraqi Child

A child wrapped in war
in sheets of bloodshed
rests on soil long fought over
on the ashes of his people.

How will this child grow to love
when raised in this greenhouse of hate,
this place where the sky cannot hold hope
but only the promise of bombs?

—Luke Moore

Luke Moore attends Coventry High School in Akron, Ohio, and wrote "The Sleep of an Iraqi Child" in his junior year. He is active in band and his church. Luke recently returned from a mission trip to Haiti and plans to spend more time there in the future.

See more images and poetry from the Vietnamese Children's Art Exhibit on pages 12 & 13.

I WOKE UP ONE MORNING AND THE WAR WAS OVER

by Mike Ferner

America's war in Iraq is over. The last U.S. troops will leave by year's end, "with their heads held high, proud of their success and knowing that the American people stand united in our support for our troops." So sayeth President Obama.

A "sham of a mockery of a sham," is what Groucho would call Obama's announcement and he would be right.

For several reasons Mr. Marx would be much closer to the truth than Mr. Obama.

1) Even with "all" troops pulled out...well...who knows about Special Forces since their presence in a country never seems to really equal a "troop presence." But even if all the "non-combat" combat troops leave and even if we don't count the Marine Corps' standard complement of guards at the world's largest embassy,

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INSIDE

Fallujah Veteran: “I Served the 1%”

by Ross Caputi

I did not serve my country in Iraq; I served the 1%. It was on their behalf that I helped lay siege to Fallujah, helped kill thousands of civilians, helped displace hundreds of thousands of innocent people, and helped destroy an entire city. My “service” served Exxon-Mobil, Halliburton, KBR, Blackwater, and other multinational corporations in Iraq.

My family in Massachusetts is not safer because of my service, and Iraqis are not freer. I helped oppress Iraqis in a manner far more brutal than what has been experienced by the Occupy Movement at the hands of the New York and Oakland police departments.

I was an occupier and am now an Occupier. I once served the 1%, but now try to serve the 99%. That is why I must speak up when I see the Occupy Movement being led astray by the same nationalism and “Ameri-centrism,” the same thoughtless praises for U.S. troops and veterans, and the same hypocrisy that led us into the so-called “War On Terror” and the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Many of us have joined the Occupy Movement, because we identify as members of the 99%, but the media only began to highlight our participation after Cpl. Scott Olsen was shot in the head by the Oakland police with a projectile on Oct. 25. Olsen was immediately rushed to the emergency room, and his name soon became a rallying cry. A nationwide call was put out for vigils in solidarity with Olsen.

Going to war is not “serving our country”

The Occupy Movement was quick to highlight Olsen's “service” and his two deployments to Iraq. The *New York Times* noted that “his injury—and the oddity

of a Marine who faced enemy fire only to be attacked at home—has prompted an outpouring of sympathy, as well as calls for solidarity.”

Although Olsen appears to oppose the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan—he is a member of Iraq Veterans Against the War and Veterans For Peace—the Occupy Movement's response to his attack has revealed ambivalence on these issues.

The Occupy Movement has glossed over the irony that Olsen was put in the hospital by some of the same tactics that his Marine Corps has used against Iraqis. It has not drawn a connection between what happened to Olsen and what happened to Iraqis who peacefully protested against the U.S. occupation of their country—like in Fallujah on April 28, 2003, when the U.S. fired into a crowd of protesters and killed 13 civilians. Countless other identical incidents have taken place, even today as Iraqis also protest unemployment, corruption, and lack of services.

When the Occupy Movement mentions Olsen's “service” without clarifying *who* he served, they hide the lies of the 1% and ignore the more than 1 million dead Iraqis, the millions of refugees and orphans, and the dramatic rise in cancers and birth defects in Iraq.

We must stand for the most affected victims of Wall Street

I watched a YouTube video the other day of U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Shamar Thomas shouting at the NYPD: “If you want to go kill or hurt people, go to Iraq. Why are you hurting U.S. citizens?” as a crowd of Occupy Wall Street protesters cheered him on.

Over 2.5 million people have watched this video, and Thomas appeared on Rosie O'Donnell's television show and made several appearances on Keith Olbermann. Everyone championed his “service” and decried police brutality against U.S. citizens. Nobody questioned the dismissal of the value of Iraqi lives.

We should all decry police brutality wherever it rears its ugly head. Yet police brutality and the murder of innocent civilians in foreign countries in service of the 1% are both moral issues, and to decry one without decrying the other suggests a serious disconnect.

These attitudes in our movement are deeply troubling to me. We decry economic injustice at home, but stay silent about the unjust occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. We decry police brutality at home, while the U.S. war machine brutalizes innocent people abroad. We need to understand that Iraqis, Afghans, Palestinians, Libyans, and everyone else who has fallen victim to the 1% and its war machine are part of the 99%, too.

We can love our country, but we should not value American lives more than any

We need to understand that Iraqis, Afghans, Palestinians, Libyans and everyone else who has fallen victim to the 1% and its war machine are part of the 99%, too.



other. We can set up a Scott Olsen Support Fund, but we should not ignore the rise in cancers and birth defects that U.S. weapons have caused in Iraq.

Veterans have an important role to play in this movement, but we are not heroes because of our participation in the wars, and it is shameful for anyone to use us to appeal to patriotism; that only serves the 1%. What we have to offer this movement is a first-hand account of what the 1% has done all over the world at the expense of the 99%. We as veterans are in a better position than anyone else to fight against the dangerous beliefs that put veterans on a pedestal. It is our responsibility to speak out against injustice, no matter where it occurs in this world.

Ross Caputi is a Marine Corps veteran of the second siege of Fallujah and a member of March Forward! He is the founder of the “Justice for Fallujah Project” <http://thefallujahproject.org>.

The War Crimes Times
is a project of



(www.VeteransForPeace.org)

a nonprofit, national organization of veterans working together for peace and justice through nonviolence.

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, the effects of our war culture on our national character, as well as the efforts of the many people who 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 the mission of Veterans For Peace, their topics address the concerns of *War Crimes Times*.

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“To Dare to Aspire Grandly” U.S. Veterans Stand in Solidarity with the Occupy Movement

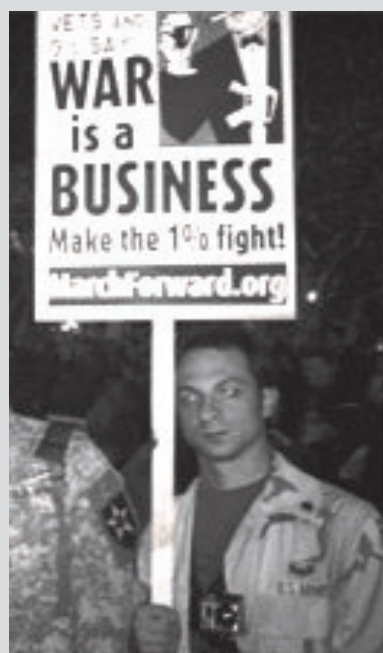
By Clare Hanrahan

“This movement against the system isn't ending!” predicts Mike Prysner, co-founder of March Forward! an organization of veterans and active-duty service members. Prysner was among hundreds jailed November 29 when 1,000 police in riot gear broke up the Occupy Los Angeles encampment.

“The only times I've felt proud wearing my army uniform is when I've worn it fighting the 1%,” Prysner said.

With veterans of U.S. wars from Korea to Afghanistan still subsisting in the margins of the economy and on the mean streets of U.S. cities, solidarity with the Occupy Movement is a natural alliance. “We in Veterans For Peace refuse to live in a moral vacuum as Americans lose their jobs and their homes, as veterans old and new wind up on the streets,” writes former CIA analyst Ray McGovern in a letter to VFP members.

(See *DARE TO ASPIRE* on page 20)



Mike Prysner just before his arrest at Occupy LA

Now is the nonviolence moment

Now is not the moment to declare, “We tried nonviolence and it didn’t work.” The purpose of a nonviolent movement is not to prevent police violence. The purpose is to change the society. And there is always every expectation that the police will be ordered to respond with violence if we begin to have any success. We are having success and the 1% is scared. Big city mayors are holding conference calls to discuss those fears and their militarized responses. War criminals and pirates like Cheney, Rice, and Paulson are canceling their events. Referenda are being passed in favor of working people. States are pulling out of mortgage (non)settlement deals. Obama is at least pretending to listen to the people on the tar sands pipeline. The corporate media are discussing inequality and the unfair concentration of wealth, power, and tax breaks in our corporatocracy. The Occupy camps are returning, resisting, growing, and finding ways to build a movement broader than the encampments. Now, when there are encouraging (if brutal) signs that the other side knows we are winning, now is the moment when we need a nonviolent movement. Until now it has just been a movement. Now is when we nonviolently escalate. Now is when we take it from the streets to the suites. Now is when we refocus the discussion on taxing the rich, ending the wars, and moving the money from the military and corporate handouts to people and our natural environment. Now is when we shut down the stock exchange, the committee hearings, and the gated communities. Now is the winter of our discontent. Now is the nonviolence moment.

—David Swanson



The nonviolent resister must not succumb to the temptation of becoming bitter or indulging in hate campaigns. Attack the forces of evil, not those who happen to be doing evil.

[Occupy Oakland photo by Kaldari]

Martin Luther King on Nonviolence

Adapted from *Stride Toward Freedom*, 1958

First, it must be emphasized that nonviolent resistance is not a method for cowards; it does resist. If one used this method because he is afraid, he is not truly nonviolent. That is why Gandhi often said that if cowardice is the only alternative to violence, it is better to fight. He made this statement conscious of the fact that there is always another alternative: no individual or group need ever submit to any wrong, nor need they use violence to right the wrong; there is the way of nonviolent resistance. This is ultimately the way for the strong man. It is not a method of stagnant passivity. The phrase “passive resistance” often gives the false impression that this is a sort of “do-nothing method” in which the resister quietly and passively accepts evil. But nothing is further from the truth. For while the nonviolent resister is passive in the sense that he is not physically aggressive toward his opponent, his mind and emotions are always active, constantly seeking to persuade his opponents that he is wrong. The method is passive physically, but strongly active spiritually. It is not passive resistance to evil, it is active nonviolent resistance to evil.

A second basic fact that characterizes nonviolence is that it does not seek to defeat or humiliate the opponent, but to win his friendship and understanding. The nonviolent resister may often express his protest through noncooperation or boycotts, but he realizes that these are not ends in themselves; they are merely means to awaken a sense of moral shame in the opponent. The end is redemption and reconciliation. The aftermath of nonviolence is the creation of the beloved community, while the aftermath of violence is tragic bitterness.

A third characteristic of this method is that the attack is directed against forces of evil rather than

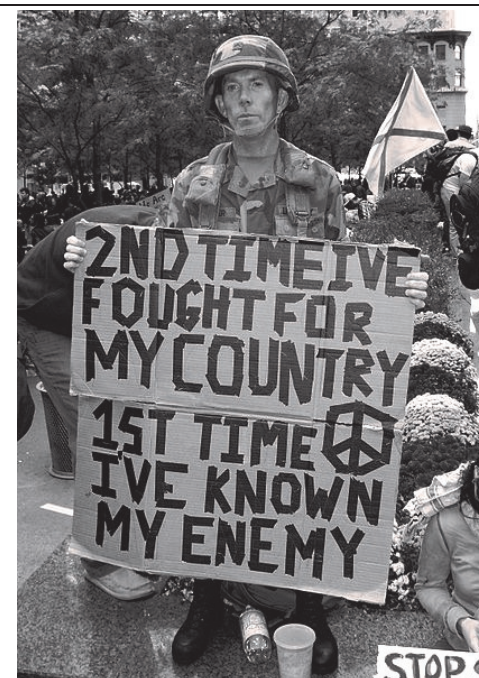
against persons who happen to be doing the evil. It is evil that the nonviolent resister seeks to defeat, not the person victimized by the evil. If he is opposing racial injustice, the nonviolent resister has the vision to see that the basic tension is not between races. As I like to say to the people in Montgomery: “The tension in the city is not between white people and Negro people. The tension is, at bottom, between justice and injustice, between the forces of light and the forces of darkness. And if there is a victory, it will be a victory not merely for 50,000 Negroes, but a victory for justice and the forces of light. We are out there to defeat injustice and not white persons who may be unjust.”

A fourth point that characterizes nonviolent resistance is a willingness to accept suffering without retaliation, to accept blows from the opponent without striking back. “Rivers of blood may have to flow before we gain our freedom, but it must be our blood,” Gandhi said to his countrymen. The nonviolent resister is willing to accept violence if necessary, but never to inflict it. He does not seek to dodge jail. If going to jail is necessary, he enters it “as a bridegroom enters the bride’s chamber.”

One may well ask: “What is the nonviolent resister’s justification for this ordeal to which he invites men, for this mass political application of the ancient doctrine of turning the other cheek?” It is the realization that unearned suffering is redemptive. Suffering, the nonviolent resister realizes, has tremendous educational and transforming possibilities. “Things of fundamental importance to people are not secured by reason alone, but have to be purchased with their suffering,” said Gandhi, “Suffering is infinitely more powerful than the law of the jungle for converting the opponent and opening his ears which are otherwise shut to the voice of reason.”

A fifth point concerning nonviolent resistance is that it avoids not only external physical violence but also internal violence of spirit. The nonviolent resister not only refuses to shoot his opponent but he also refuses to hate him. At the center of nonviolence stands the principle of love. In the struggle for human dignity, the oppressed people of the world must not succumb to the temptation of becoming bitter or indulging in hate campaigns. To retaliate in kind would do nothing but intensify the existence of hate in the universe. Along the way of life, someone must have sense enough and morality enough to cut off the chain of hate. This can only be done by projecting the ethic of love to the center of our lives.

By love, we don’t mean to some sentimental or affectionate emotion. It would be nonsense to urge men to love their oppressors in an affectionate sense.



Know your enemy: evil and injustice.

[Occupy Wall Street photo by David Shankbone]

Love in this connection is in the sense of the Greek word *agape*.

Agape means understanding, redeeming good will for all men. It is love which is purely spontaneous, unmotivated, groundless, and creative. It is not set in motion by any quality or function of its object. It is the love of God operating in the human heart.

Agape is not a weak, passive love. It is love in action, seeking to preserve and create community. He who works against community is working against the whole of creation. Therefore, if I respond to hate with a reciprocal hate I do nothing but intensify the cleavage in broken community. I can only close the gap in broken community by meeting hate with love. Agape means recognition of the fact that all life is interrelated. All humanity is involved in a single process, and all men are brothers. To the degree that I harm my brother, no matter what he is doing to me, to that extent I am harming myself.

A sixth basic fact about nonviolent resistance is that it is based on the conviction that the universe is on the side of justice. Consequently, the believer in nonviolence has deep faith in the future. This faith is another reason why the nonviolent resister can accept suffering without retaliation. For he knows that in his struggle for justice he has cosmic companionship. It is true that there are devout believers in nonviolence who find it difficult to believe in a personal God. But even these persons believe in the existence of some creative force that works for universal wholeness, to bring the disconnected aspects of reality into a harmonious whole.



Love (agape) in action creates community.

[Occupy Wall Street photo by David Shankbone]

The War Was Over

(Continued from page 1)

5,000 armed mercenaries will remain indefinitely. The State Department, not the War Department will be responsible for them, but a killer for hire is not likely to become a diplomat at the stroke of midnight on December 31.

2) Summing up nearly a decade of butchery, Obama chooses to hide behind the worn-out “support the troops” smokescreen by saying the last troops

In so many places we terrorized whole populations, laid waste to their society, destroyed their currency...and then just walked away. “That war is over,” we joyfully repeat after the President.



A Soldier carries a wounded Iraqi child into the Charlie Medical Center at Camp Ramadi, Iraq on March 20, 2007 (Photo by Cpl. James F. Cline III)

will hold their heads high, proud of their success and the American people will be “united in our support for our troops.” How many will question nine years of war and \$800 billion, when placed in that context?

3) In truth, if the administration actually got its way, we would never have heard this news. Washington wanted to stay well beyond the end of this year but the people of Iraq, through their parliament, forced the U.S. to get (mostly) out of Iraq, by saying as of January 1, foreign troops will be prosecuted in Iraqi courts for crimes committed in their country. Given our lengthy criminal record in Iraq, the only viable choice for Obama was to get out.

Anybody who thinks the war will really be over has never been in one nor had a loved one in war. The American War in Iraq will never end for over 4,000 families of U.S. troops killed, tens of thousands of wounded and their families and the hundreds—yes, hundreds of thousands of young men and women who will suffer the terror of PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury for the rest of their lives.

Here is how one Iraq War vet, Matt Southworth puts it. Matt now works for the Friends Committee on National Legislation and is on the Veterans For Peace board of directors.

“I lost my first friend to the U.S. war in Iraq by an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) in February 2004. I lost my most recent friend to the U.S. war in Iraq by suicide in September 2011. This war will never end for me. I will live with its scars and traumas from now until the end of my life whether I want to or not. This battle, for me and so many others, is life long.”

Tragic indeed, but not quite on the order of magnitude for the millions who lived under our sanctions for 12 years and our bombs for nine years after that. It is impossible to comprehend the suffering we bought in Iraq, so let’s not even guess at the number of killed, wounded and homeless Iraqis we’ve created.

Instead, let’s contemplate the scale of devastation that would occur in our country if a similar war had been visited on us. What would be the comparable impact? Based on reports from UNICEF, the UN, and studies carried out by Johns Hopkins University

field researchers published in the British medical journal, *Lancet*, here are the figures as of five years ago.

If you’re not already sitting, you may want to take a seat.

In the former cities of Atlanta, Denver, Boston, Seattle, Milwaukee, Fort Worth, Baltimore, San Francisco, Dallas, and Philadelphia every single person is dead.

In Vermont, Delaware, Hawaii, Idaho, Nebraska, Nevada, Kansas, Mississippi, Iowa, Oregon, South Carolina, and Colorado every single person is wounded.

The entire populations of Ohio and New Jersey are homeless, surviving with friends, relatives or under bridges as they can.

The entire populations of Michigan, Indiana, and Kentucky have fled to Canada or Mexico.

Over the past three years, one in four U.S. doctors left the country. Last year alone 3,000 doctors were kidnapped and 800 killed.

Is U.S. really leaving Iraq?

Despite planned troop withdrawal, our continued influence and presence there will be huge

by Adil E. Shamoo and Bonnie Bricker

“After nearly nine years, America’s war in Iraq will be over.”

With his Oct. 21 statement on our withdrawal of troops from Iraq by year’s end, President Barack Obama is keeping his promise to the American people for complete withdrawal of U.S. troops and satisfying the Status of Forces Agreement with the Iraqi government. Mr. Obama declared that the U.S. and Iraq would have a “relationship between sovereign states, an equal partnership based on mutual interests and mutual respect.”

Yet even with the withdrawal under way, Mr. Obama’s actions continue to undermine the sovereignty of Iraq.

Even without the presence of U.S. troops, America’s footprint in Iraq is immense. In addition to the fortress near the site of Saddam Hussein’s palace, two additional, \$100 million buildings are slated to be built outside Baghdad as mini-embassies in the north and south of Iraq. Iraqis know that U.S. troops acting as trainers will still be in Iraq, both as a permanent presence of less than 200 and as an undetermined presence of U.S. troops permanently stationed in neighboring countries. In addition to these troops and embassy personnel, a large and robust force of



BAGHDAD (Oct. 13, 2008) Cutting the celebratory cake during the Navy’s 233rd birthday celebration at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad. (U.S. Navy photo.)

The Embassy of the United States in Baghdad is the largest and most expensive embassy in the world; it is larger than the Vatican, employs 15,000 people, and cost \$750 million to build. (Source: Wikipedia)

CIA agents are presumed to be on the ground. As one of the largest contingencies of foreign personnel in any sovereign nation, it is no surprise that Iraqis refused to bargain away their right to enforce their own laws by giving our troops immunity from prosecution.

The use of a huge personnel force, with a large number of private contractors, has even stoked the ire of some Republicans. Rep. Darrell Issa, chairman of the House Oversight Committee, in a recent letter to President Obama expressed his dismay at the drastic increase of contractors as a private army in Iraq. “The American people have a

(See LEAVING IRAQ? on page 6)

In short, nobody “out there” can come to save us. We are in hell.

4) And finally, there is one way in which the U.S. peace movement must simply not allow this war to be over. It’s spelled r-e-p-a-r-a-t-i-o-n-s. We have to pay a full measure of reparations to repair what we have destroyed of Iraq’s agriculture and infrastructure and leave a sizable trust fund to at least partially deal with the deformities and childhood cancers caused by our depleted uranium munitions.

In so many places, like Nicaragua two decades ago for example, we terrorized whole populations, laid waste to their society, destroyed their currency...and then just walked away. “That war is over,” we joyfully repeat after the President. Another country has been given freedom and democracy. We brush off the misery and stride forward to the next and the next and the...We cannot let this happen again to our brothers and sisters in Iraq.

Maybe in Obama’s dreams; maybe in the minds of his spin doctors prattling on Sunday morning talk shows; maybe in the minds of pundits comfortably opining from New York and Washington. Perhaps for them the American War in Iraq is over. But not to the millions living it out in reality.

Mike Ferner is a former Navy corpsman, acting director of Veterans For Peace and author of Inside the Red Zone: A Veteran For Peace Reports From Iraq.

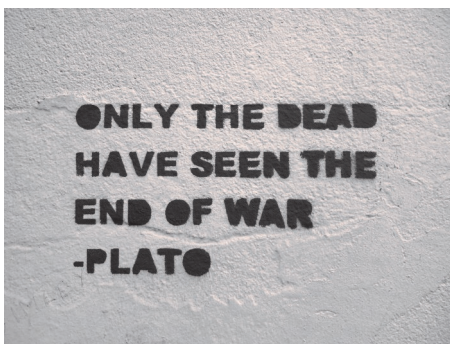


Image by Leo Reynolds

Somalis Under Relentless Drone Attack as U.S. Tightens Military Grip on Continent

Africa, under President Obama, is an expanding theater of war for the United States. There are few points on the African map where the U.S. military does not operate independently, through proxies, or by agreement with local governments and militaries. AFRICOM has penetrated the continent to a degree power could have

by Glen Ford

Scores of Somali civilians have been killed in U.S. drone attacks in the southern region of the country, as Washington tightens its military grip on much of the continent. The current offensive involves thousands of Kenyan troops that are threatening the major Somali city of Kismayo. The American drones are supporting the Kenyan invasion. The drones' origins are officially secret, but it is known that the U.S. operates drone bases in Ethiopia and Djibouti, which is home to a huge American base.

For all practical purposes, the U.S. has made proxies of Ethiopia and the five member states of the East African Community: Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi and Rwanda. The Ugandans and Burundians safeguard the airport that is the lifeline for Somalia's puppet regime in Mogadishu, where the CIA operates a major facility. In September, the militaries of the East African Community held joint exercises with AFRICOM, the U.S. Africa Command.

Such exercises with American forces have become commonplace. The U.S. Defense Department is busily training the militaries of Mali, Chad, Niger, Benin, Botswana, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Gabon, Zambia, Uganda, Senegal, Mozambique, Ghana, Malawi, and Mauritania.

ECOWAS, the Economic Community of West African States, is considering asking the U.S. Navy to help it out with its pirate problem. Most of the militaries of the African Union already communicate with American command-and-control equipment, requiring U.S. advisors. The overlapping entanglements have allowed the U.S. military to achieve deep penetration of the armed forces of most African nations.

In such a web of dependency, few standing African armies are capable of defending themselves—if the aggressor is the United States. But in most cases, the U.S. would likely get its way without a fight, since the officer class of so many African militaries have direct ties



and militaries. AFRICOM armed forces of the no single European ever aspired.

with their American counterparts. The U.S. has so thoroughly infiltrated African armies, many, if not most, would be of no use for national defense against the Americans.

The Americans are almost everywhere, but the French never left

Africa. Although France and the U.S. were long-time rivals in Africa, waging proxy wars against each other through their African flunkies, their joint actions against Haiti and Libya, and in bringing down the government in the Ivory Coast, signal that the French and Americans are full partners in neocolonialism.

Now President Obama has officially sent 100 U.S. Special Forces troops to Uganda and neighboring countries, ostensibly to track down a rebel force. They will also operate in the new nation of South Sudan.

Meanwhile, the NATO attack on Libya threatens to set the whole northern tier of Africa ablaze, a pretext for further U.S. and French operations.



American penetration of Africa has reached the point that any nation—such as Eritrea—that does not have a military relationship with the United States is marked for regime change. Instead of the pan-Africanist dream of a United States of Africa, we are seeing an Africa under the military thumb of the United States.

Glen Ford is executive director of BAR (www.BlackAgendaReport.com). This article is adapted from a Black Agenda Radio commentary and is reprinted with the author's permission.

Action possible against Bush, Blair

by Eunice Au

KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA: The Kuala Lumpur War Crimes Tribunal found former United States president George W. Bush and former British prime minister Tony Blair guilty of crimes against peace after a four-day trial that ended on Tuesday, November 22.

The charge of war crimes—the first against Bush and Blair—was tried in compliance with due legal process, and formal charges were instituted by the Kuala Lumpur War Crimes Commission based on investigations into the complaints by war victims.

Although the tribunal had no authority to sentence the two men, the guilty verdict was a significant precedent that could be referenced in other courts of law. And nations that ratified the Rome Statute could also commit both Bush and Blair to trial if the two appeared on their shores.

This verdict would also be reported at the next United Nations general assembly to further the cause of ending the U.S. occupation in Iraq.

The two former leaders and their counsel were not present at the hearing. Therefore, an *amicus curiae* (someone who is not a party to a case) was appointed by the tribunal to act as defense for the accused.

At the commencement of the proceedings, the tribunal had a full bench of seven judges. But judge Prof Niloufer Bhagwat and judge Datuk Dr Zakaria Yatim later recused themselves because of objections by the defense counsel.



War Crimes Tribunal Chief Judge Abdul Kadir Sulaiman reading the guilty verdict. (Photo: Mohd Yusni Ariffin)

The guilty verdict was a significant precedent that could be referenced in other courts of law...and all countries can take notice of this.

order the invasion of Iraq based on the doctrines of “responsibility to protect,” “anticipatory self-defense,” and “humanitarian intervention.”

At the end of the hearing, Chief Judge Abdul Kadir Sulaiman and the tribunal judges—Salleh Buang, Tunku Sofiah Jewa, Alfred L. Webre, and Shad Saleem Faruqi—concluded that Bush and Blair's invasion of Iraq was unjustified, had violated the laws regulating the use of force, and amounted to mass murder.

Bush and Blair were found responsible for the war that had killed more than 1.4 million Iraqis and declared guilty as charged.

Whether or not the tribunal's findings will make an impact at the UN assembly, the fact remains that both men had been tried and found guilty, and all countries can take notice of this.

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During the proceedings, members of the tribunal and audience heard evidence presented by the prosecution that Bush and Blair had planned, prepared, and invaded Iraq on March 19, 2003, in violation of the UN and international law.

Chief prosecutor Professor Gurdial S. Nijar and his team—Professor Francis A. Boyle, Avtaran Singh, Usha Kulasegaran, and Gan Pei Fern—submitted documents, including excerpts of UN resolutions in support of their case.

Chief defense counsel Jason Kay Kit Leon and his team—Soo Kok Weng, Pan Shan Ping, Mohd Zharif Shafiq, Auzaan Syaidi, and Muhammad Khairul—said Bush and Blair were justified to

Defeat in Iraq

(Continued from page 1)

one else was. In particular, the Sadrists [followers of Muqtada al-Sadr] said they would withdraw their support for the government if Maliki agreed. And without their support, Maliki did not have the necessary majority in parliament.

The United States has been defeated... the reality is that the United States is in serious decline.

reached out to Sunni leaders and to Kurdish leaders in the hope of creating a pan-Iraqi nationalist front, centered on the restoration of full Iraqi autonomy. He has won.

Of course, al-Sadr, like Maliki and many other Shi'ite politicians, has spent much of his life in exile in Iran. Is therefore al-Sadr's victory a victory for Iran? No doubt Iran has improved its credibility inside Iraq. But it would be a major analytical error to believe that what has happened is that Iran has somehow replaced the United States in dominating the Iraqi scene.

There are fundamental strains between Iranian Shi'ites and Iraqi Shi'ites. For one

thing, the Iraqis have always considered Iraq and not Iran to be the spiritual center of the Shi'ite religious world. It is true that, in the last half-century, the transformations on the geopolitical scene have allowed the ayatollahs in Iran to appear to dominate the Shi'ite religious world.

But this is akin to what happened to the relationship between the United States and western Europe after 1945. The geopolitical strength of the United States forced a shift in the cultural

relationship of the two sides. Western Europeans had to accept the new cultural as well as political dominance of the United States. They went along, but western Europeans never liked it. And they are seeking now to regain their top dog cultural position. So it is with Iran/Iraq. In the last half century, the Iraqi Shi'ites had to accept Iranian cultural dominance, but they never liked it. And they will work now to regain their top dog cultural position.

Despite their public statements, both Obama and the Republicans know that the United States has been defeated. The only Americans who don't really believe this is that small fringe of U.S. leftists who somehow cannot accept that the United States doesn't always win out everywhere geopolitically. This small and diminishing fringe is just too invested in denouncing the United States to tolerate the reality that the United States is in serious decline.

This fringe group is arguing that nothing has changed because the United States has simply shifted its key player in Iraq from the Pentagon to the State Department, which is doing two things: bringing in more Marines to provide security for the U.S. embassy; and hiring trainers for the Iraqi police forces. But bringing in more Marines is a sign of weakness, not strength. It means that even the well-guarded U.S. embassy is not safe enough from attacks. The United States has cancelled plans to open more consulates for the very same reason.

As for the trainers, it turns out that we are talking about 115 police advisors who need to be "protected" by thousands of private security guards. I would warrant that the police advisors are going to be very cautious about ever leaving the Embassy grounds and that it is going to be difficult to hire enough private security guards, given that they will no longer have immunity.

Trainers (about 115 police advisors) will need to be "protected" by thousands of private security guards.

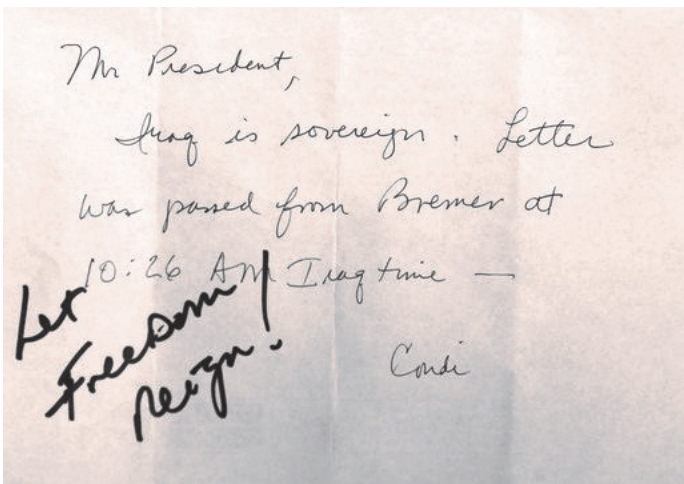


Republican Palace, American Embassy Annex, U.S. State Department security (Blackwater), International (Green) Zone, central Baghdad, Iraq December 6, 2007 (Photo by jamesdale10)

No one should be surprised if, after the next Iraqi elections, the prime minister will be Muqtada al-Sadr. Neither the United States nor Iran will be overjoyed.

Immanuel Wallerstein, Senior Research Scholar at Yale University, is the author of The Decline of American Power: The U.S. in a Chaotic World (New Press).

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Note to George W. Bush from national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice, at the NATO Summit in Istanbul, June 28 2004, notifying him that the sovereignty in Iraq had been handed over from the U.S. administration to the Iraqi provisional government: **Mr President, Iraq is sovereign. Letter was passed from Bremer at 10:26 AM Iraq Time - Condi**

"Let freedom reign," he wrote on it.

Who won then? The withdrawal was a victory for Iraqi nationalism. And the person who has come to incarnate Iraqi nationalism is none other than Muqtada al-Sadr. It is true that al-Sadr leads a Shi'ite movement that has historically been violently anti-Baathist, which for his followers has usually meant being anti-Sunni Muslims. But al-Sadr has long since moved beyond this initial position to make himself and his movement the champion of U.S. withdrawal. He has

Leaving Iraq?

(Continued from page 4)

right to know the past, present and future status of private security contractors in these regions," Mr. Issa wrote. Taken a step further, the American people have a right to know that our stated withdrawal is far from a true withdrawal of our presence from Iraq.

How can Iraqis believe in their system of government while they watch the continued construction of permanent U.S. facilities in Iraq?

The danger of this continued involvement in the country we invaded on false pretenses almost nine years ago cannot be ignored. With aspirations for freedom and democracy spreading throughout the region, a perceived U.S. client-state will act as a thorn in the region's side. How can Iraqis believe in

their system of government while they watch the continued construction of permanent U.S. facilities in Iraq?

Many nationalist Iraqi groups—including those in the insurgency as well as underground organizations—oppose America's large presence, and some have promised increased violence. Muqtada al-Sadr's party, with 40 seats in parliament and an underground army, has threatened a variety of measures, demonstrating its opposition to the extended presence of the U.S. footprint. These militants do not care whether the Americans in their country are troops or contractors. The continuing influence of Mr. al-Sadr's group should not be underestimated; in late September, a huge demonstration of his followers marched against the extension of U.S. troops in Iraq.

Our current policy in the region, as it convulses with the fever of freedom and democracy, is to treat each country as a specific case rather than prescribe a one-size-fits-all reaction to these revolutions. That is the most realistic and measured response. But as the Arab spring turns to fall, the Obama administration's claims of support for these movements and its call for "other nations [to] respect Iraq's sovereignty" must show in our actions. We won't be believed if pronouncements of a free and sovereign Iraq are made from the top floors of our office complex in Baghdad.

Adil E. Shamoo, a native of Iraq, is a senior analyst for Foreign Policy in Focus and the author of the forthcoming book Equal Worth—When Humanity Will Have Peace. His email is ashadoo@som.umaryland.edu. Bonnie Bricker is a contributor to Foreign Policy in Focus, a teacher, and writer. Reprinted with the author's permission.

If what you have done is unjust, you have not succeeded.

—Thomas Carlyle

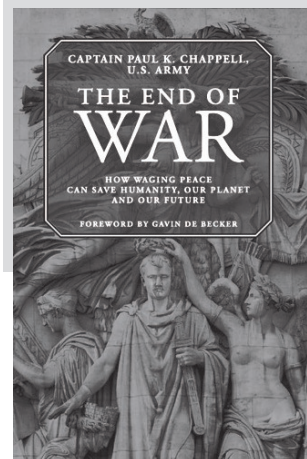
right to know the past, present and future status of private security contractors in these regions," Mr. Issa wrote. Taken a step further, the American people have a right to know that our stated withdrawal is far from a true withdrawal of our presence from Iraq.

FIGHTING WITH ANOTHER PURPOSE

Leslee Goodman interviews veteran Paul Chappell on the need to end war

(part two of two parts)

Paul Chappell graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 2002 and served in Iraq as an army captain in 2006 and 2007. But even as he signed up for a tour of duty, Chappell was starting to doubt that war was ever going to bring peace in the Middle East, or anywhere else.



While still an active-duty officer, he published his first book, *Will War Ever End? A Soldier's Vision of Peace for the 21st Century*. He has since written *The End of War: How Waging Peace Can Save Humanity, Our Planet, and Our Future*. Chappell now works at the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation and travels the country talking about the necessity of ending war and "waging peace." His website is www.paulkchappell.com.

This is the second and concluding part of Leslee Goodman's interview. This first part appeared in the Fall 2011 issue of the *War Crimes Times*.

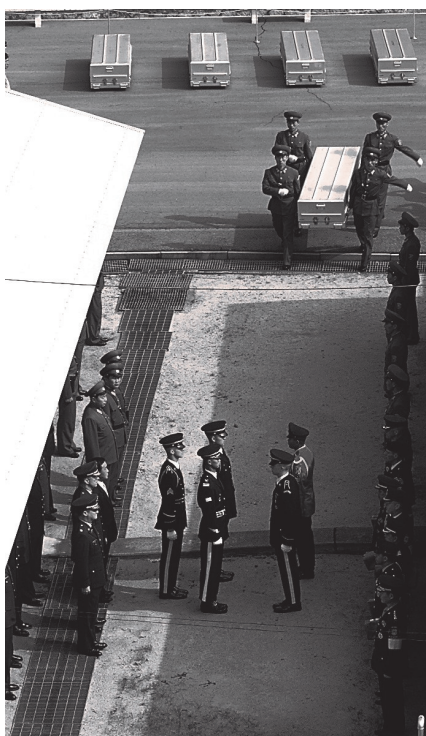


Goodman: Tell me about the distinction you make between rage and fury.

Chappell: Fury is a rush of adrenaline combined with concern for the safety and

well-being of a loved one, so you act to prevent harm. Rage is a rush of adrenaline combined with anger and hatred, so you act to inflict harm. For example: My martial-arts training partner was out with a friend who was attacked by a stranger. My training partner experienced fury and put the attacker in a submission hold, harming him as little as possible while stopping the attack. Rage typically escalates the violence. It is more concerned with inflicting harm on the person who committed the offense. If my training partner had been motivated by rage, he probably would have killed the attacker.

Goodman: In *Will War Ever End?* you write that a lot of so-called aggressive behavior is actually defensive.



North Korean soldiers carry the remains of five U.S. Korean War soldiers to U.N. Command Honor Guard soldiers during a repatriation ceremony at the Military Demarcation Line between North and South Korea attended by members of the U.S. Veterans of Foreign Wars. (1998 USAF photo.)

Chappell: Right. The same way a rattlesnake shakes its tail, or a gorilla beats his chest, or a dog growls, most aggressive behavior comes from fear and is meant to prevent additional violence by scaring a potential attacker. The most insecure people are the most aggressive. Men will yell at each other, get in each other's face, even push their opponent away. It looks and sounds violent, but it's actually posturing intended to scare the other man off. Unfortunately when nations posture aggressively, there's nowhere for them to run.

Goodman: Does it seem to you that American culture is growing increasingly violent, from video games to music lyrics to crime rates to our military budget, which now accounts for as much as fifty-three cents of every tax dollar?

Most aggressive behavior comes from fear and is meant to prevent additional violence by scaring a potential attacker, but when nations posture aggressively, there's nowhere for them to run.

Chappell: I think there are two things going on. In his book *On Killing*, Lieutenant Colonel Dave Grossman points out that throughout most of human history people had to face and acknowledge death. They saw their loved ones die; they buried the bodies; they killed the food they ate. We live in a society that has been sanitized to the point that most people have never seen a dead body, and if they have, it's been in a funeral home, where it's been made to look as if it were still alive. Grossman theorizes that, just as the repression of sex in the Victorian Era led to an increase in sexual fetishes, the repression of death in our culture has led to violence fetishes. Never seeing death causes us to be fascinated with images of it in movies, on television, and in video games. At the same time, we fear and deny death: we don't want to get old; we don't even want to look old; we pretend that we will live forever. Whenever you repress a natural part of life, strange behaviors emerge.

The murder rate in the U.S. has gone down since 1900, but Grossman says what you really need to look at is the aggravated-assault rate, which is the rate at which people try to kill each other. In 1900 there were fewer roads, no motorized ambulances, few telephones, and no antibiotics, so deaths from aggravated assaults were much higher than they are now. Today the aggravated-assault rate is five or six times what it was in 1900, but most aggravated-assault victims survive. If we had the same limited lifesaving abilities today as we did in 1900, our murder rate would be far higher now than it was then.

Grossman also finds a distinct correlation between violent media and violent

crime. For example, during World War II only 15-20 percent of combat soldiers who had a chance to shoot at the enemy actually fired. During the Korean War that went up to 55 percent. During the Vietnam War it went up to 90-95 percent. Today it's nearly 100 percent. The primary reason the number went up so dramatically is that the military added desensitization and conditioning techniques to its training. During World War II soldiers were trained to shoot at a round bull's-eye. When they had to shoot at a human being in combat, they often couldn't bring themselves to fire their weapons. During the Vietnam War soldiers were trained to fire at targets shaped like human beings. Violent video games offer countless lifelike depictions of human beings for players to shoot, breaking down the mental barriers that make it difficult for most of us to kill another person. If shooting a silhouette shaped like a human being increased firing during the Vietnam War, think about the effect of killing photo-realistic human beings who bleed, scream, and writhe on screen when they die. When people say that violent video games don't train us to kill, they are showing how little they know about military training.

The military's training is actually less extreme than violent media. *America's Army*, a video game made by the army as a recruiting tool, is less violent than such popular video games as *Modern Warfare 2*. In the original *America's Army* game if you fire your weapon when you aren't supposed to, you end up in jail, and the game is over. In *Modern Warfare 2* there is a part of the game where you are encouraged to execute a crowd of civilians.

(See PAUL CHAPPELL on page 8)

In *Modern Warfare 2* there is a part of the game where you are encouraged to execute a crowd of civilians.



Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 2 (photo by bigdigo)

Paul Chappell

(Continued from page 7)

There is an option to skip that segment, but if you do, you miss an integral part of the plot. Some violent video games reward you for shooting your weapon recklessly. Warlords have used these video games to train child soldiers to terrorize and massacre civilian populations. This doesn't mean that violent video games will lead everyone who plays them to massacre civilians, but playing them makes it easier for us to kill.

We're biologically hard-wired to stare at violence: it's a threat; it demands our attention. Just as we'd stare at a bear that came into the room, we stare at violence when it occurs—not just for immediate protection, but to gather survival data. One reason little kids will come running to see a fight is because, on a subconscious level, they want to know what to do if they're ever in that situation.

Goodman: *A lot of times they're not just staring. They're cheering.*

Chappell: It depends. Some kids are horrified when they see a fight. Some will try to break it up. But we do live in a society where people cheer for the side they want to win. If you've watched boxing or action movies or wrestling, you've been conditioned to cheer. And what if a kid is standing up to a bully? We all cheer for the underdog.

In *On Killing* Grossman says that human-on-human violence is the universal human phobia. Not everyone is afraid of snakes or spiders or heights, but 98 percent of people are afraid of being attacked by another human. Every year tens of thousands of people are killed in car accidents; yet every day tens of millions of people casually drive to work. Every year hundreds of thousands of people die from smoking; yet every day millions of people smoke. But if a serial killer kills two people, the whole town goes on alert. One terrorist attack, and the entire country freaks out.

What makes terrorism so dangerous is that it triggers this universal human phobia. We end up doing far more harm to ourselves in reaction to the threat of terrorism than the terrorists could ever do.

If Osama bin Laden had told us to give up our values, betray our principles, curtail our civil liberties, spy on our own people, torture captives, and escalate our national debt, we never would have done it. But by attacking us, he got us to do all those things willingly.

Goodman: *As a parent of sons, I heard that if I didn't let my boys play*

with toy guns, they would just make guns out of sticks. Is this not an indication that violence is in our genes?

Chappell: We need to look at the difference between violence and play. In play as soon as someone gets hurt, the game stops. When two puppies are biting each other, and one puppy yelps in pain, the play stops. If two boys are playing swords with sticks and one boy gets hurt, the play stops. The intention of violence is to inflict pain; you *want* to hurt people. The intention of play is to have fun, practice hand-eye coordination, test your strength against your peers, bond socially, and so on. Play is crucial, not just for humans but for all mammals. Nearly all young mammals like to wrestle. It builds muscular strength and the connections in your brain that govern motor control and balance. But it has nothing to do with violence.

Goodman: *So how can we wage peace?*

Chappell: First we have to challenge the myths that support the institution of war. It can be done. Look at slavery. It was a global institution that had been around since the beginning of recorded history. It's in the Bible. Every country had some form of it. It built the economies of most of them. What made people believe it was possible to abolish state-



General Omar Bradley said, "Wars can be prevented just as surely as they can be provoked, and we who fail to prevent them must share in the guilt for the dead."

sanctioned slavery? Did all these slave owners suddenly look in the mirror and realize they were bad people? No, slavery was rationalized through a myth that said it was in the nature of some races, or certain subgroups of races, to be slaves. Today if I said, "White people yearn for freedom, but black people don't," you'd think I was crazy, but that's what people used to believe: A

cat's happy being a cat; a dog's happy being a dog; a slave is happy being a slave. And just as I'm a kind master of my sheep and my horse and my dog, I'm a kind master of my slave. To let my slaves go would be morally irresponsible, just like letting my sheep go. They would die! They need my protection.

Then, during the eighteenth century, some thinkers put forth the idea that all



Tuol Sleng — S21 Genocide Museum in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. May 2009
(Photo by Adam Jones adamjones.freeservers.com.)

humans yearn for freedom. Further, it was recognized that you have to use harsh methods to suppress people's yearning for freedom. After that, we had the American Revolution, the French Revolution, and slave revolts around the world. People started to realize it wasn't a part of some people's nature to want to be slaves.

Now many of us believe the myth that human beings are naturally violent, so war is inevitable. Look at who benefits from that myth. If human beings are naturally violent, politicians can't be held responsible for making war; they're just trying to protect us from the violent people all over the planet. Weapons makers can't be held responsible; they're just trying to help us defend ourselves. But in truth humans aren't naturally violent, so we're all responsible. War is a *choice*. General Omar Bradley, a veteran of World War II, said, "Wars can be prevented just as surely as they can be provoked, and we who fail to prevent them must share in the guilt for the dead."

There have been grassroots campaigns to end slavery, to end apartheid, to secure the rights of women and workers, to save the whales, to save the planet, but there has never been a grassroots campaign to go to war against people in a distant land. War always comes from the top down. The people are typically reluctant to go to war, and the government has to use propaganda or force to get them to go.

Goodman: *What about the American Revolution, or the Civil War, or the war between the Serbs and the Croats? Aren't those grassroots-inspired wars?*

Chappell: The American Revolution was designed and initiated by the wealthy elites. Most Americans had nothing to gain from it. Well into the 1800s the only Americans who could vote were white male landowners. Poor white people couldn't vote. African Americans couldn't vote. Women couldn't vote. Westward expansion was also driven by the government. Where civil wars and genocide are concerned, author Daniel Jonah Goldhagen has said that genocide is always political. There is a myth that genocide erupts spontaneously from the masses, but in reality it is always planned, political in nature, and manufactured by politicians and leaders.

Goodman: *So how can we end war?*

There is a myth that genocide erupts spontaneously from the masses, but in reality it is always planned, political in nature, and manufactured by politicians and leaders.

Chappell: As I said, the first step is to challenge the underlying myths that perpetuate war. War comes from the human mind, from how people think. That's what we have to change.

Goodman: *But the people who wage war have convinced themselves of its necessity.*

Chappell: They've decided that war is their best option, but if you give them a more appealing one, they'll switch. The problem with the peace movement is that it doesn't give people better alternatives to fight terrorism and keep the world secure.

Goodman: *In a world of increasingly scarce resources, what's to keep Americans from thinking it's justifiable to use military power to ensure our access to resources, and the rest of the world be damned?*

Chappell: That strategy is like the Chinese finger trap: the harder you pull, the tighter it gets. The more you care only about yourself, the more you undermine your own position. Look at the organs of the body: The brain, the heart, and the kidneys don't work only for their own health but for the health of the body. They have to be selfless to some extent, or they'll kill the body—and themselves along with it. The more we can protect and secure the safety and freedom of other countries, the better we can protect our own. If we think only of our own self-interest, we are going to destroy the planet and our

(See PAUL CHAPPELL on page 16)

America's Defeat in Iraq and Beyond

by Patrick Seale

America's nine-year adventure in Iraq is drawing to a humiliating close. President Barack Obama has said that "the last American soldiers will cross the border out of Iraq" on 31 December. Most Iraqis—those who have survived the nightmare of the past decade—will heave a great sigh of relief, but healing the wounds of their stricken country will be neither quick nor easy.

Nor, it appears, will the United States be gone from Iraq altogether. Some 16,000 U.S. personnel are due to remain behind in the form of diplomats, Defense Department experts, military and police trainers, and a large number of contractors, of whom some 5,000 will be armed to protect the U.S. mission. They will provide attractive targets for anti-American militants of various sorts.

History's verdict on America's Iraqi war is likely to be severe. The United States may not have suffered a military defeat in the conventional sense of the word, but the damage to its reputation, moral stature, and political influence is irreparable. It may take a generation to set right.

The Iraq war will be seen as a landmark in the downward slide of the United States from its once pre-eminent place in the community of nations. After the Soviet collapse in 1991, the United States was the world's unchallenged hyper-power. Today, twenty years later, it seems to have lost its way. Even its closest friends look at it askance and wonder what has become of it.

The invasion was launched on fraudulent premises; the occupation grossly ill-managed; the cost in human lives and treasure immense. Some 4,500 U.S. soldiers died in Iraq and tens of thousands more were wounded. The cost to the American taxpayer has been estimated at \$700 billion and upwards. The economist Joseph Stiglitz believes the ultimate cost will be \$3 trillion. As for the Iraqi victims of the American onslaught, they have died in the hundreds of thousands, while another four to five million have been internally displaced or driven abroad as refugees. The material damage to the country, including its vital oil industry, will take decades to repair.

America's war released sectarian demons in Iraq, triggering a savage civil war between Shi'is and Sunnis. This has heightened tensions between these two Islamic communities and their various offshoots in countries as far afield as Syria, Lebanon, Bahrain, and Yemen. Once a strong and united country, Iraq is now a weak and querulous federation. The Kurds have broken loose and enjoy something close to independence under their own regional government, while Sunni Arabs, outraged at the discrimination they suffer at the hands of the Shi'i Prime Minister, Nuri al-Maliki, are threatening secession in a northern province around Irbil.

An unintended consequence of America's war was to put the Shi'is in power in Baghdad, thereby opening the door to Iranian influence; and in the wider Gulf area, the destruction of Iraq overturned the regional balance of power to Iran's advantage. Saudi Arabia,

the Arab world's leading Sunni power, is understandably perturbed. Saudi-Iranian rivalry is now intense while relations between Saudi Arabia and Shia-led Iraq are close to breaking point.

To ease the tensions, Qatar's Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Shaykh Hamad bin Jasssem—a leading mediator of regional conflicts—has proposed that Saudi Arabia and Iran hold talks over American allegations of an Iranian plot to kill the Saudi ambassador in Washington. Few experts believe the American accusations have much substance, but they have served to destabilize an already volatile region. Overall, therefore, the geopolitical costs of the Iraqi war have been very great indeed.

Not the least astonishing aspect of the Iraqi adventure is that the United States

has made no systematic attempt to establish who was responsible for the catastrophe. No one has been held to account.

The prime responsibility must rest with former President George W. Bush, together with his Vice-President Dick Cheney, and his Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. After Al-Qaeda's devastating attacks on the American mainland on September 11, 2001, their overwhelming urge was to teach the Arabs a lesson about American power which they would never forget. Cheney may have dreamed of extending American control over Iraq's oil, while Rumsfeld may have dreamed of setting up American bases in Iraq from which to dominate the region.

However, the prime architects of the Iraqi war were not Bush and his close colleagues but the neoconservatives—Paul Wolfowitz and Douglas Feith at the Pentagon, David Wurmser in the Vice-President's office, Richard Perle, chairman of the Defence Policy Board, and many others embedded in the administration and in right-wing think tanks. In seeking to destroy Iraq, their principal aim was to protect Israel from any possible attack from the east.

A study group chaired by Perle, and including Feith and Wurmser, produced a strategic paper for Israel's incoming Likud Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu. Notoriously, it was entitled "A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm." It recommended that a key Israeli objective should be the removal of Saddam Hussein. The neocons then set themselves the task of getting America to do the job instead.

Intelligence about Iraq's alleged weapons of mass destruction was forged. Skilful propaganda roused American opinion in favor of war. Iraq was attacked, occupied, and fatally weakened. Israel's interests were satisfied, but the human, financial, and political costs for the United States were beyond measure.

On coming to office, President Barack Obama seemed determine to throw off George Bush's legacy, tame the pro-Israeli neocons, and change course. His Cairo speech of June 2009 was a call for friendship with the Arab and Muslim world and a pledge of

American support for the Palestinians. As recently as September 2010, he was still expressing the hope that an independent Palestinian state would emerge within a year.

But pressure from Israel and its American

supporters have forced him to eat his words. He has had to sabotage his own policies. He has abdicated America's once dominant role in the failed peace process and now opposes Palestinian statehood. He has allowed Israel's far-right government to dictate American policy in the Middle East. This is a strategic blunder of historic proportions. How are the mighty fallen?

The outcome has been to destroy Obama's reputation and isolate the United States. On October 31, 107 countries defied the United States and voted to admit Palestine to UNESCO. The United States promptly suspended its funding for the organization. But pandering to Israel's fanatical settlers and their expansionist ambitions will speed the decline of America's regional influence and makes Israel less, rather than more, secure.

Can America change course? Nothing is less likely. It is widely predicted that if the Republican Mitt Romney wins the White House, the pro-Israeli neocons will be back in power in Washington. Their target this time will be Iran.

Patrick Seale is a leading British writer on the Middle East. His latest book is The Struggle for Arab Independence: Riad el-Solh and the Makers of the Modern Middle East (Cambridge University Press).

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And Beyond: Is Iran Next?



A U.S. Navy Grumman A-6E Intruder aircraft dropping CBU-59 cluster bombs over Iranian targets in retaliation for the mining of the guided missile frigate USS Samuel B. Roberts (FFG-58) on 18 April 1988. (US Navy photo)

Sole Military Super-Bloc: NATO Issues Daily Reprieves To The World

by Rick Rozoff

On October 31, North Atlantic Treaty Organization chief Anders Fogh Rasmussen arrived in the Libyan capital of Tripoli at the end of seven full months of the military bloc's war in the country and effused: "It's great to be in Libya, free Libya."



Scipio Africanus by Lucas van Valckenborch (1535-97)

Like Scipio Africanus the Younger almost twenty-two centuries earlier in what is now Libya's western neighbor Tunisia, then Carthage, Rasmussen planted the banner of a conquering power on the soil of North Africa. Perhaps NATO will grant Rasmussen, too, the honorific agnomen, Africanus, after the military bloc's first war and first conquest on the continent.

While basking in the triumph of what Western commentators have celebrated as NATO's first complete and uncontested military victory—"the most successful in NATO history" in Rasmussen's words—in the Libyan capital, the secretary general was questioned by a reporter about plans to replicate the Libyan model in Syria and stated: "My answer is very short. NATO has no intention (to intervene) whatsoever. I can completely rule that out."

However, to belie his claim he immediately added: "Having said that, I strongly condemn the crackdown on the civilian population in Syria. What has happened in Libya sends a clear signal. You cannot neglect the will of the people."

The 227-day war against Libya waged first by U.S. Africa Command from March 19 to 31, and thereafter by NATO is, according to the NATO chieftain, "a clear signal" to Syria, but "NATO has no intention" to commence military actions against Syria. Scant assurance to the nation's government and populace alike, to be sure.

On the day Muammar Gaddafi was brutally killed, Senator John McCain, ranking member of the Senate Armed Services Committee and presidential candidate in 2008, threatened the president of Syria, the prime minister of Russia, and unnamed Chinese leaders with the less than eloquent admonition that they "got a reason to be uneasy" according to one account. He told the BBC on October 20: "I think dictators all over the

world, including Bashar al-Assad, maybe even Mr. Putin, maybe some Chinese, maybe all of them, may be a little bit more nervous." He repeated the parallel between Libya and Syria three days later while in Jordan.

Had Rasmussen been someone other than who he is, which is to say an honest individual, his comments in the Libyan capital would have been limited to the line of Tacitus about a Roman campaign in the century following the Third Punic War: *Aufferre, trucidare, rapere, falsis nominibus imperium; atque, ubi solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant* (They plunder, they slaughter, and they steal: this they falsely name Empire, and where they make a wasteland, they call it peace). Libya has been destroyed. What is left of the city of Sirte presents a vivid image that suits all too well the Roman historian's words.

Back at home in NATO Headquarters in Brussels three days later, Rasmussen gave his latest monthly press briefing, in which he stated:

"Let me stress that NATO has no intention whatsoever to intervene in Iran, and NATO is not engaged as an alliance in the Iran question."

He began his comments with this account: "This week I had the privilege to visit Tripoli, the capital of free Libya. It was the first time ever that a NATO Secretary General set foot in the country and something none of us could have imagined only a year ago."

During the question and answer period which succeeded his presentation he responded to a question on Libya by stating:

"We would be prepared to offer the same kind of assistance as we have offered to other partners within defense and security sector reforms. That is, overall to help put defense and security agencies under civilian and democratic control. We can also help in organizing a modern defense, modern structures. In more specific terms we can help when it comes to institution-building like the building of a defense ministry, how to organize General Staff of the Armed Forces, just to mention some examples.

"NATO has a lot of expertise within defense and security sector reform, and actually a number of our Allies have gone through a similar transition from dictatorship into democracy, so they have a very valuable experience to offer. And I talked with Chairman Jalil and made clear that we are ready to assist Libya within such reform efforts if requested..."

Given the alliance's history over the past twenty years, what he in fact pledged was that NATO will train—from scratch and in English—the armed forces of the new Libyan proxy regime as it has done previously and is still engaged in doing in other nations and provinces it has invaded and in other manners subjugated: Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

Libya, which until now has been the only North African nation not to be pulled into NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue

military partnership—Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria are members as are Israel, Jordan and Mauritania—will become the eighth member and a joint asset of NATO and U.S. Africa Command.

The chief of what is not only the sole extant mili-

tary bloc in the world, but the largest and longest-lived multinational armed alliance in history may have taken to issuing regular disclaimers concerning attacking new nations well outside the so-called Euro-Atlantic zone, but how much credence the secretary general's pronouncements should be given is best indicated by how unconscionably NATO lied its

way into full-fledged wars in three continents over the past twelve years.

With 28 full members at present, after a 75 per cent increase between 1999 and 2009, and over 40 partners around the world, the North Atlantic bloc has integrated the militaries of a third of the world's nations for deployments to war and post-war zones in the Balkans and South Asia, with Africa the next destination.

Its latest trophy is the battered, bloodied, and brutalized body of Muammar Gaddafi, murdered after a U.S. Hellfire missile and French laser-guided bombs struck his convoy outside Sirte on October 20, eight months before what would have been his seventieth birthday. So bereft of the most elementary notions of decency and values, moral and aesthetic, are the governments of the West and the people they deserve (as a British writer a century ago reversed the well-known dictum of Joseph de Maistre), that the only stimulants left to awaken their satiated and dehumanized sensibilities are—as they are inured to violence, even on a

(See NATO MILITARY SUPER BLOC on page 11)



NATO, the sole extant military bloc in the world and the largest and longest-lived multinational armed alliance in history, lied its way into full-fledged wars in three continents over the past twelve years.

They plunder, they slaughter, and they steal: this they falsely name Empire, and where they make a wasteland, they call it peace.
—Tacitus



Libération de Syrte, November 11, 2011 (Photo by Esam Al-Fetori)

GOP Candidates Advocate Torture

by Marjorie Cohn

At their November 12 debate, Republican presidential candidates Herman Cain and Michele Bachmann defended waterboarding. Cain said, “I don’t see it as torture. I see it as an enhanced interrogation technique,” which is what the Bush administration used to call its policy of torture and abuse. Bachmann declared, “If I were president, I would be willing to use waterboarding. I think it was very effective. It gained information for our country.” And after the debate, Mitt Romney’s aides told CNN that he does not think waterboarding is torture.

President Obama correctly retorted, “Waterboarding is torture.” He added, “Anybody who has actually read about and understands the practice of waterboarding would say that is torture—and that’s not something we do, period.”

The United States has long considered waterboarding to be torture. Several federal court opinions refer to waterboarding as torture. Our government prosecuted, convicted, and hung Japanese military leaders following World War II for waterboarding. The U.S. War Crimes Act defines torture as a war crime.

George W. Bush, Dick Cheney, and John Yoo have all admitted participating in decisions to waterboard detainees, knowing that interrogators would carry out their orders. Under the doctrine of command responsibility, commanders all the way up the chain of command to the commander-in-chief can be prosecuted for war crimes if they knew or should have known their subordinates would commit them and the commanders

did nothing to stop or prevent it. Therefore, Bush, Cheney, and Yoo have admitted to the commission of war crimes.

But by refusing to investigate them for their admitted torture, the Obama administration has given the Bush officials a free pass.

Moreover, Bachmann was wrong when she claimed torture is effective. Former high level FBI interrogators, including Ali Soufan and Dan Coleman, say the person being tortured will say anything to get the torture to stop—even providing false information. The best results, interrogators add, are obtained with humane methods.

Obama also accurately noted that waterboarding “is contrary to America’s tradition, it’s contrary to our ideals. That’s not who we are. That’s not how we operate. We don’t need it in order to prosecute the war on terrorism. We did the right thing by ending that practice. If we want to lead around the world, part of our leadership is setting a good example.”

Unfortunately, during his hearing to be confirmed as CIA director, David Petraeus told Congress there might be occasions in which we must return to



Above: Republican candidates in Ames, Iowa (AP Photo/Charlie Neibergall)

Below: Carlos Latuff cartoon: "It's not torture when U.S. forces are doing it..."



“enhanced interrogation” to get information. Alarming, that comment signaled that the Obama administration may return to the use of torture and abuse. That would be unacceptable.

Marjorie Cohn is editor of The United States and Torture: Interrogation, Incarceration, and Abuse (NYU Press 2011).

NATO MILITARY SUPER BLOC

(Continued from page 10)

mass scale—necrophilia and fiendish, ghoulish Grand Guignol. The lower tier of American culture, mass-market escapist entertainment, is consumed by a fascination with vampires, flesh-eating zombies, and the like—and graphic depictions of foreign leaders and former leaders being mauled and murdered are simply more lurid diversions for jaded ennuyés.

In reference to the murder of Gaddafi and his son Muatassim, the public display of their corpses, and the sports enthusiast-like celebration of those gruesome acts by the likes of U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Russian representative to NATO Dmitry Rogozin lambasted them as emblematic of sadistic triumphalism. Prime Minister Vladimir Putin denounced them as disgusting. And Deputy Speaker of the State Duma Ivan Melnikov characterized the first as “a striking illustration of American and their NATO allies’ policy in the North-African country,” according to Interfax.

They are in fact grotesque, in the sense that Hegel defined the word, as the idealization of the ugly.

In his own words, the last-cited Russian official warned: “I think that

the entire world should watch today the published photographs and video records of Gaddafi’s murder. It is not just a dead former leader of Libya. It’s the symbol of the sovereignty of an independent country that was torn to pieces by Americans.”

The day after Gaddafi’s murder the same news agency cited another deputy of the lower house of parliament of the same, Communist, party, Vadim Solovyov, as affirming: “The American economy is in need of inexpensive oil, so the U.S. government is even ready to wage wars, if only oil arrives...Any country with large reserves of energy resources—Iran, Syria, Venezuela or Nigeria—could come next.”

NATO ground, air, and naval forces continue their murderous rampages in Afghanistan, across the border into Pakistan, in Kosovska Mitrovica, in Libya, and off the coast of Somalia in the Gulf of Aden and adjoining waters (where NATO killed the captain of a Taiwanese fishing vessel and wounded two Iranian fishermen in separate attacks earlier this year).

It’s time to demand the disbanding of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as the gravest threat to world peace.

A Stop NATO feature in August provided an, admittedly incomplete, list of nations that NATO—actuated by its first Strategic Concept for the 21st century adopted at the bloc’s summit in Lisbon last November and its initial implementation in Libya this year—could attack or otherwise intervene in next: Algeria, Belarus, Bolivia, Central African Republic, Chad, Cuba, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cyprus, Ecuador, Eritrea, Iran, Lebanon, Madagascar, Mali, Moldova, Trans-Dniester, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Korea, Pakistan, Palestine, Somalia, the South Caucasus (Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia), Sudan-South Sudan, Suriname, Syria, Uganda, Venezuela, Western Sahara, Yemen, and Zimbabwe.

In the interim the Obama administration announced the deployment of special forces to four of the above nations. And on the day of Gaddafi’s murder the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee’s subcommittee on African affairs, Senator Chris Coons, was reported by Associated Press as asserting that “Muammar Gaddafi’s

death and the promise of a new Libyan regime are arguments for the measured U.S. military response in central Africa where the U.S. has sent roughly 100 troops” to Uganda, Congo, the Central African Republic, and South Sudan.

That the nations of the world require almost daily assurances, however untrustworthy, that they will not be attacked by the mightiest multinational military formation in history is an indictment of the age that submits to living under such ongoing and ubiquitous threats. The time is ripe and in fact long overdue for issuing a call for an international anti-NATO initiative addressed to individuals, organizations, political parties, and governments to convene an extraordinary session of the United Nations General Assembly to demand the disbanding of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as a—the gravest—threat to world peace.

Rick Rozoff lives in Chicago, Illinois and has been involved in anti-war and anti-interventionist work in various capacities for forty years. He is the manager of the Stop NATO international email list at: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/stopnato/> See Stop NATO at (<http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com/>)

The Vietnamese Children's Art Exhibit

Kent State University's Wick Poetry Center (www.kent.edu/wick) and School of Art Galleries have collaborated with Soldier's Heart (www.soldiersheart.net) to create the Vietnamese Children's Art Exhibit. This exhibit features Vietnamese children's drawings and paintings on themes of peace and war that have been collected by the War Remnants Museum in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam. Paired with original poems written by American children, veterans, and established poets, this collaborative, international art exhibit encourages a creative dialogue between image and word, promoting cross-cultural understanding, reconciliation, and global citizenship.



War Consequences by Huynh Le Huong Giang, age 14 — crayon

In War

We stand watching as the sky closes in like a tomb, shutting out the light. The clouds burn a choleric red, and the air fills with dust, turning inside itself, hissing for waves to put out the fire. Overhead, planes whir, their bombs like tears to the soft forgivable Earth; the blues bluer in darkness, the yellows more saturated in hue. We are mesmerized, transfixed, and yet repulsed. The ground rattles beneath our feet, the sound of empty shells, a sound big as God, a sound faceless and nearing, a knock on the gate. We have fallen from ourselves, wandering deeper into the mouth of the cave with but little light to find our way back.

—Jinae West

Small Hands

Together Protect Peace: four hands hover around an origami crane. But you don't even know how to hold onto it. You sift flour into metal cups, measure water and salt and yeast, then press palms deep into the yielding dough and feel peace begin to rise in the chest, the heart warm and leavened. In the evening you listen to the whispered nightbreaths of your children, as if they are holy chants in a foreign tongue you don't need to translate. You stroke your daughter's tiny hand as she sleeps and wonder, how durable is peace? And which is more fragile, the paper bird or the small hands that fold it into being.

—Scott Parsons



Together Protect Peace by Ta Thank Khue, age 15



Terrible War by Nguyen Pham Bao Tran, age 12 — crayon

Terrible War

The air fertilizes flames of terror.
Clouds inherit billowing smoke.
Bombshells rain over my land.
My home erupts into broken glass,
shattering my hardened heart.
The shadow of Grandpa's carcass
melts into my tears.
The sound of his last breath
surrenders my knees.

—R. N.

See the complete traveling exhibit and news about the project at www.speakpeace.net.

The traveling exhibit debuted in Kent, Ohio, in September 2010 and will continue to tour nationally through September 2013. To bring the Speak Peace traveling exhibit or programs to your community, contact Nicole Robinson, Wick Poetry Center Outreach Coordinator at nlrobin1@kent.edu or (330) 672-2101.

Why Not?

Why not change a torpedo
into a loving dolphin?
Why not take barbed wire
and soften it, then knit a sweater?
I see a bullet flying through the air, and I think,
why not have it be a graceful bird?
Why not take a tank
and shoot out bubbles?
Why not cover a helmet
with sparkles and wear it to the prom?
Why not use battleships
in a giant bubble bath?
Why not use a bazooka
as a high-powered bottle opener?
Why not take a gun
and load it with chocolate?
Why not disable a landmine
and make a Frisbee?
Why not take all the soldiers
and turn them into elves?
Instead of war, why not
Peace?

—Marcia Skidmore's seventh graders



Weapons No More Malicious by Phung Van Khai, age 11 — watercolor



Emotion on War by Hong Ngoc, age 7 — crayon

Red Bird

We stand
in a scribble of darkness,
black as the day
you left,
black as the day
my daughter's
baby died—
(we named her for you,
now you are gone).
Our feet cannot bear
to touch down.
I fall back.
I am color of ash.
Out of a smelt-fire furnace,
a bird, heavy laden with blood,
hangs in hot air.
And the red sun
dull and wounded,
longing for night.

—Mary Greer

In the Flower Market

Tiger lilies roar in the cold April rain.
Tulips seek friends with their spray of pollen.

Sunflowers flash in the night,
illuminating the world like a candle.

Bluebells drip with dew—
they love just being themselves.

Marigolds sing, mango trees ding.
Orchids fly like birds in the wind.

Flowers from all over the world
spread their colors like peacocks.

Peace is what puts them all together.

—Lori Golambos's fourth-grade class



Visiting the Flower Market by Huynh Thi Thuy Loan, age 13 — crayon

It Never Goes Away – Facing Agent Orange in Viet Nam

by Nadya Williams

It takes substantial courage and deep morality to own up to wrongdoing. Such is the task ahead of the American people and their governmental representatives with the terrible legacy of the defoliant Agent Orange 50 years after its use began in 1961 in the Viet Nam War. Dioxin is the most toxic substance known to science, period. Agent Orange and other herbicides—all 20 million gallons of them—were contaminated with dioxin, an extreme poison that attaches itself to human and animal fatty tissue to do its DNA-warping damage.

Thus, the people who were sprayed decades ago: the U.S. veterans, and even nurses who served in-country on American bases, as well as millions of Viet Nameese are continuing to pay the price of what can only be described as a war crime. Their children and grandchildren as well are still being damaged today—with no end in sight. Compounding this human catastrophe is the fact that new exposure continues today through the consumption of dioxin-contaminated food from areas that have been literally saturated with the chemical defoliants.

But there is hope of some relief in new legislation proposed in Washington. **H.R. 2634, the Victims of Agent Orange Relief Act of 2011**, which California Congressman Bob Filner just introduced in the House,



AO Patients in Tu Do Hospital in Ho Chi Minh City

would provide crucial assistance for social and health services to Viet Nameese, Viet Nameese-American, and U.S. victims of Agent Orange (AO). In the present budgetary crisis, co-sponsorship and the release of aid is urgently needed.

BACKGROUND

- Aerial spraying from 1961 to 1971, over 25% of rural South Viet Nam, exposing more than 4 million people, plus up to 2.8 million American military personnel.
- Areas of Cambodia and Laos along the borders were also sprayed.
- Purpose: “To destroy the enemy’s jungle cover and food crops.”
- The perimeters of all American bases were also regularly sprayed, exposing non-combatants and non-military personnel as well.
- The destruction to Viet Nam’s flora and fauna has been labeled “ecocide.”

- As early as the 1940s, some scientists and others warned of the toxicity of herbicides containing dioxin, but were silenced by censorship, defunding and propaganda.
- 39 chemical corporations produced the herbicides for the war—at 50 times domestic strength—always promoting them as “safe for humans and agriculture.”
- Dioxin (or TCDD) could have easily been removed with higher temperatures and longer time periods during the manufacturing process, but was not—to increase profit margins.
- Dow issued a memo in 1968 chiding Monsanto for producing especially “dirty” (dioxin-contaminated) AO—which was ignored.
- Chemical Warfare became “illegal” after WW I, but the U.S. did not sign on to the worldwide covenant until after the Viet Nam War.

THE RESPONSE

From American Veterans:

- After the war’s end (for the U.S., 1972; and for Viet Nam, 1975), many U.S. vets became seriously ill and attributed this to exposure to AO.
- A 1984 veterans-led, class-action lawsuit against the 39 chemical corporations ended in a payment of \$180 million (average \$5,000 per plaintiff)—with no admission of responsibility and on the condition that no further suits be filed.
- As illnesses and birth defects continued, the Veterans Administration allowed, in the early 1990s for 13 conditions to be recognized as being “possibly AO-related” for which the VA pays—effectively shifting the corporate financial culpability onto the tax-paying public.
- Recently, 3 more diseases have been added to the list of those eligible for compensation.
- Today, as of 2008, a staggering \$13.8 Billion in AO medical care and compensation has been paid to U.S. vets. Only the children of American female veterans are now being compensated for only one birth defect, *not* the progeny of male vets.
- The International Agency for Research on Cancer and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences classify dioxin as a known human carcinogen that is toxic over many decades and does not degrade easily. Yet neither the chemical companies, nor the U.S. military nor the Veterans Administration will admit full or direct responsibility.
- As a “gesture of friendship to our new ally,” the U.S. government has allocated \$37 million to decontaminate the Da Nang air field—the most toxic of the many remaining “hot spots.” Tests have shown some residents of Da Nang have 100 times the “acceptable” levels of dioxin. No U.S. aid has gone to the victims.



Agent Orange badge from U.S. Veterans

From Viet Nameese Veterans and Civilians:

- The Red Cross estimates that from 3 to 4 million AO victims live in Viet Nam today, including more than 150,000 children.
- In early 2004 a lawsuit against the 39 chemical corporations was filed in New York District Court by VAVA (the Viet Nam Association of Victims of Agent Orange) for unspecified damages.
- Twice the lawsuit was denied and twice appealed, with representatives of the U.S. government standing side-by-side with the corporations stating: a.) the intent was to protect American troops, and b.) the intent was not to harm humans. Therefore AO was not considered “a chemical weapon.” It’s use in warfare, however, has now become globally “unacceptable.”
- The suit was submitted to the U.S. Supreme Court in 2009, but was never heard.
- The Viet Nameese government provides \$50 million per year in small monthly allotments for people with disabilities believed to be caused by AO/dioxin. This reaches only about 150,000—a fraction of those afflicted.

From the World Community:

- American allies were also damaged by Agent Orange. South Korea sent nearly a third of a million men to our war, and the South Korean government has long-ago given AO compensation and care, but has stated that the American corporations should pay.
- Australia and New Zealand sent a few thousand troops who have also had to be cared for by their governments with no help from the U.S.
- Many private and public international entities provide funds, clinics, rehabilitation centers, etc. to the Viet Nameese victims, but many are still not reached. Of all industrialized countries, America gives the least.
- Total international and Viet Nameese aid is estimated to be less than 10% of what is needed.
- The American Public Health Association passed a very progressive statement on AO/dioxin in Viet Nam in November 2007.
- The U.S.-Viet Nam Dialogue Group on Agent Orange/Dioxin, founded in 2007 by the Ford Foundation and other groups, calls for a \$300 million, ten-year clean up and assistance program from a mix of private and U.S. governmental funding. Nothing has materialized thus far.

The Human Side: The girl with one foot.

In early April of 2008, this writer visited a center for disabled youth outside of Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), which is directed by Mme. Dang Hong Nhut, herself a victim of AO and a leader of VAVA. We ate lunch by the open-air kitchen next to a small girl in a wheel chair who had the use of only one foot, which she used to hold her spoon to eat. Her arms, hands, and other foot were so distorted; they were of no use to her whatsoever. She seemed to be in her early teens. A recent inquiry revealed that she is Ms. Quynh Thi Xam, 31, who is now attending a first year correspondence class in sociology at an open college in HCMC.

The story of Heather Bowser

Heather was born in Ohio in 1972 to a father who was drafted as a 20-year-old to serve in Viet Nam in 1968, where he was exposed to AO on several army bases. She is missing her right leg below the knee, the big toe on her left foot, and several of her fingers. She has never been eligible for help with medical care. Married now with two healthy young sons, she still mourns her dad who, after diabetes and five heart surgeries, died at age 50. On a trip to Viet Nam to tour AO facilities in late 2010, she encountered a 12-year-old Viet Nameese boy in a wheelchair who had *exactly* the same abnormalities that she was born with. She took this photo of their hands.



Heather Bowser and a 12-year-old Agent Orange victim connect hands in Ho Chi Minh City's Tu Do Hospital

THE NEW LEGISLATION

The Victims of Agent Orange Relief Act of 2011, H.R. 2634, has the following elements:

- Clean up the hotspots in Viet Nam (the more than 25 former U.S. bases & storage sites).
- Provide substantive assistance to the public health system in Viet Nam targeting AO victims.
- Create two or more regional health centers in the U.S. for the children and grandchildren of U.S. Viet Nam War veterans.
- Provide assistance to AO-affected Viet Nameese Americans.

To look at photos of the current three to four million Viet Nameese who suffer from grotesque birth defects, severe deformities of all kinds, and life-threatening cancers and illnesses is to “have your soul seared,” as one American veteran who lives and volunteers full

time in Viet Nam has said. There is no way to soften the brutal reality that the worst chemical war crime in the history of the world was committed by the United States during the Viet Nam War. But we can act now to help to rectify a “forgotten responsibility.”

TAKE ACTION

- Read the bill and follow it: At <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/legislation.xpd>, enter **HR 2634**.
- Contact *your* member of Congress (call and visit their office).
- Tell them, as their constituent, you want them to co-sponsor this bill!
- Contact info@vn-agentorange.org to let them know how you're doing!



RESOURCES

The Viet Nam Agent Orange Relief and Responsibility Campaign—a project of Veterans For Peace. www.vn-agentorange.org; makeagentorangehistory.org; childrenofvietnam.org; agentorangerecord.com. Find the Action Plan of the Dialogue Group on Agent Orange/Dioxin by entering “agent orange” in the search box at www.aspeninstitute.org.

Nadya Williams is WCT contributing editor; a member of Veterans for Peace, San Francisco Chapter 69;

and a member of the board of Vietnam Agent Orange Relief and Responsibility Campaign.

Return To Vietnam

You break it down,
and you break it down,
and you break it down,
until you see the absolute truth.
When the truth no longer has
different opinions,
the lies die a tormenting death.
What you have left is the corpse
of your old belief system.
Betrayal forces you to see the real enemy.
What you are is the survivor of all the lies
that took you to Vietnam in the beginning.
Freedom forces you to roll over in your grave.

—Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Viet Nam 1970-71
May 6, 2011



Photograph by Mike Hastie
Viet Nam veteran
at the "Moving Wall"
in Salem, Oregon
in 1989.

Paul Chappell

(Continued from page 8)

country along with it. Two hundred years ago people in this country didn't identify themselves as Americans first. They identified as Virginians, Georgians, or New Yorkers. Now everyone is an American first and a New Yorker or a Virginian second. It's just another small leap to identify oneself as a citizen of the planet first and an American second. And when we make that leap, it will change how we interact with other countries.

Goodman: *Peace activists are often accused of being unpatriotic, of giving aid and comfort to the enemy.*

Chappell: But patriotism is at the heart of the peace movement. It's based on love of country—not blind love, but love that works to make our country as good as it can be. If you love your child, you don't let that child lie and steal and abuse other people; you correct him or her. If you love your country, you try to correct it when it goes off course. There are peace activists who say they hate America, who burn the flag, but that's typically because they are angry and hurt at what America is doing. I tell those activists that such behavior is counterproductive; it turns people against them. I've seen protests that made me *not* want to be a peace activist. They were poorly planned, hateful circuses.

Goodman: *What does an effective protest look like?*

Chappell: The message is clear, and the action is well thought out, peaceful, and orderly. Peace activist Colman McCarthy told me, "I like to dress like a conservative and talk like an anarchist." If we care about reaching the people who disagree with us, we have to look more like them. The liberals are already with us. We also have to offer real hope, real solutions. Burning the American flag—what's the point of that? I don't see the American flag as a holy symbol, but burning it doesn't bring mainstream people over to our side. It just alienates them.

Goodman: *You said that people who burn the flag are angry at America. What should war protesters do with their anger?*

Chappell: Find a way to channel it away from bitterness and into constructive action. Most peace activists are middleclass citizens who aren't living under the yoke of oppression. We should be able to control our anger. Look at Gandhi: He lived under British oppression. He was attacked on numerous occasions, received death threats,



March 20, 2010 anti-war protest in Washington, DC
(Photo by Rrenner)

Patriotism is at the heart of the peace movement. If you love your country, you try to correct it when it goes off course.

and spent about seven years in jail. Yet he didn't burn the British flag. He considered himself a British citizen and said that what he was doing was for the well-being of Great Britain as well as the Indian people. Martin Luther King Jr. lived under segregation. Someone bombed his house. He was arrested

saying, *This is wrong!* When outrage is not supported by a foundation of patience and empathy for all sides, it quickly descends into yelling, resentment, and a shutting down of reason, which doesn't effectively advance the cause of peace. We can spark people's outrage without inciting their anger. So, yes, let's all be outraged by these things, but let's channel our outrage into *productive* action.

The way you get rid of anger is through understanding. As Gene Knudsen Hoffman, founder of Compassionate Listening, said, "An enemy is someone whose story you haven't heard." The reason I'm not angry at conservatives is because I've lived my whole life around them and don't see them as bad people. They are not the enemy. My opponents are ignorance, greed, and hatred, which seem to have taken these people hostage.

Goodman: *How do you convince people who are unapologetically greedy, who want what they want regardless of how it affects anyone else?*

Chappell: Appreciation is the cure for greed. Greed is a painful way to live, because you're never satisfied. It's psychologically exhausting. But some

Chappell: Long-lasting social change has to come from changing the way people think. So I would challenge the myths that support war, and I'd explain that the economy is unstable because of war; the jobless rate is so high because of war; there's no money for cities or states or education because of war. In other words, I would make the costs of war immediate and apparent to citizens, while showing that war doesn't make us safe. Because when people believe that war protects their freedom, families, and way of life, they are willing to pay any price.

Goodman: *What about tax resistance as a strategy for opposition?*

Chappell: The problem is that people will say, "Are you really that opposed to the war, or do you just not want to pay taxes?" They asked the same question of conscientious objectors: Were they really opposed to the war, or were they just afraid of getting shot? When people can't prove their true motivations, their actions lose impact. That's why it's so effective when veterans speak out against war, because people know they aren't afraid to fight.

Goodman: *Couldn't refusal to pay taxes apply a "submission hold," similar to Gandhi's refusal to buy British goods or his famous Salt March?*

Chappell: Perhaps, if enough people did it. Gandhi's Salt March worked because it challenged such an outrageous law—preventing people from harvesting salt from the ocean—that the injustice was instantly grasped by millions. Did Great Britain own the oceans? Of course not. Gandhi carefully chose the right battle.

Goodman: *What kind of training do you give peace activists?*

Chappell: How to remain calm is important. And the key to remaining calm is to have empathy for your opponent. The more I empathize with you, the harder it is for me to get angry at you. If you get angry at me, I don't respond in kind, because I see how you are suffering. It takes years of practice—and getting tired of being angry—to master it, but it's such an important skill to have. Without empathy it's easy to become bitter and cynical.

Goodman: *I have trouble identifying with the suffering of wealthy, white Americans who have more than anyone else on the planet and are fighting for their right to impose their will on the rest of the world. Sometimes I want to strangle them.*

Chappell: [Laughs.] It is outrageous! But here's the thing: if you'd been born into their circumstances and had their life experiences, you'd probably be just like them. So what happened to them to make them like that? In the army there's a saying: "If someone goes wrong, you have to examine

(See PAUL CHAPPELL on page 17)

Cost of War to the United States*

Total Cost of Wars Since 2001

\$1,290,317,674,721

Cost of War in Iraq
\$806,608,424,915

Cost of War in Afghanistan
\$483,709,249,806

The economy is unstable because of war; the jobless rate is so high because of war; there's no money for cities or states or education because of war.

*Source: <http://costofwar.com/> as of one instant on 12/11/2011—it's a running total.

multiple times and received daily death threats. But he wasn't bitter. Can you imagine Martin Luther King Jr. burning the American flag? If these leaders could go through all they went through and not become bitter, then I think war protesters can muster up a little more fortitude and resilience.

Goodman: *But aren't you angry on behalf of the millions of people around the world who have been killed in our name? Aren't you angry about the villages that have been napalmed, the jungles defoliated, the cities incinerated, the innocents massacred?*

Chappell: I am indeed outraged by these things, but I think outrage is different from anger. What do Buddha, Jesus, Sun Tzu, Seneca, Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Albert Schweitzer, martial-arts philosophy, and West Point have in common? They all taught me that anger is dangerous. Outrage is my conscience

people are taught that greed will make them happy; that if they just had a new car, a bigger house, or another face-lift, they'd be happy. The problem is that greed never ends.

Another myth is that human beings are naturally selfish. Ayn Rand, author of *The Fountainhead*, and John Nash, the scientist depicted in *A Beautiful Mind*, both postulated that allowing people to exercise their natural selfishness and greed would create the best possible society. But later in life Nash retracted his theory, which he'd promulgated while he was an untreated paranoid schizophrenic. In the BBC documentary *The Trap*, filmed after his condition had improved, Nash said he'd been mistaken. The same documentary showed research that only two groups of people consistently make decisions in a self-interested way: psychopaths and economists. [Laughs.]

Goodman: *How would you design a peace strategy for the U.S.?*

Paul Chappell

(Continued from page 16)

their training.” So what did society and the educational system and these people’s parents teach them that made them like that? It’s easy to empathize with our friends, but the real test is to empathize with those we feel deserve our compassion the least.

Goodman: *It’s easy to empathize with the oppressed. It’s hard to empathize with oppressors.*

Chappell: I think being an oppressor is another kind of oppression. Mother Teresa called this the “poverty of spirit,” the “poverty of lack of love.” She said that there was no sickness in the world greater than that one.

Goodman: *Yes, ultimately, but most political debate is not going to reveal the personal scars and wounds that are causing them to oppress others.*

Chappell: I try to imagine them as children, before they became the way they are. I imagine them as three-year-olds. It’s hard for me to hate even a horribly misguided three-year-old. I firmly believe that people can change, even when the chance of change is small. Also, you don’t have to convince every single person for dramatic change to occur; you just have to convince enough people.

Goodman: *I believe that too, but I think it will have to be life experiences that turn them around—not a conversation.*

Chappell: A conversation can plant the seed. The right conversation creates tension in a person’s mind, which can initiate change. Don’t discount one-on-one efforts.

Goodman: *What other skills do peace activists need besides the ability to remain calm?*

Chappell: We need training in how to be persuasive and in understanding other people’s worldviews, because if you attack someone’s worldview, they are likely to react as if you are attacking them physically. It’s part of who they are. When Martin Luther King Jr. challenged segregation, he was challenging everything that white Southerners believed: that black people were inferior; that racial harmony was impossible; that segregation was the only way the races could live peaceably together. So King took an innovative approach: he tied his ideas to his opponents’ existing worldview by likening black Americans’ fight for civil rights to the Hebrews’ struggle for freedom

from oppression in Egypt. This made the challenge to segregation less threatening. King also reminded Americans what the Declaration of Independence says: that “all men are created equal.”

We need to learn to tie a new idea to a familiar one so that it becomes less threatening. For example, in the healthcare debate some people on the Left said, “We should be more like Canada.” But most Americans don’t know much about Canada. Maybe they don’t want to be like Canada. So when I talk to conservatives about healthcare, I talk to them about Jesus and the Good Samaritan. The Good Samaritan helped the stranger; he paid for his medical bills. I once saw a bumper sticker that said, “Jesus treated preexisting conditions.” Jesus told his disciples to “go and do likewise.”

When I’m talking about ending war, I quote Eisenhower or MacArthur, or I reference what I learned at West Point, because those are people and institutions that conservatives respect. For them to call me “crazy” would be like saying that Eisenhower and West Point are crazy. By quoting someone they trust, I’m also trying to circumvent their fear. The difference between manipulation and persuasion is that manipulation uses fear, which clouds the mind. It’s difficult to think clearly when you’re afraid. Persuasion appeals to people’s reason, understanding, compassion, and conscience. If I’m trying to persuade you, I want you to be calm, rational. I want to give you all the evidence so that you can make the right decision.

Goodman: *What do you say to people who consider peace a noble but naive ideal?*

Chappell: Anyone who thinks ending war is naive hasn’t put enough thought into it. What’s naive is to think that wars can continue and humanity will survive. It’s naive to think the planet is a limitless resource. It’s naive to think that we can create ever more powerful means of killing each other and not destroy the planet.

Goodman: *Still, we seem to be firmly in the grasp of the military-industrial complex. Can we really free ourselves?*

Chappell: Think about the civil-rights movement. At that time the people who maintained segregation controlled the government, the news media, the universities, the military, and most of the money. What did the activists have? The truth. We now acknowledge that African Americans are not inferior to whites; that racial harmony is possible; that it’s unnatural to keep black and white people separate. It was the same with the women’s-

suffrage movement: Women were denied the right to vote because they were thought to be intellectually inferior to men. And men controlled the government, the media, the military, and most of the money. But truth was on the side of the women’s movement.

How will we win? We have the truth.

Leslee Goodman is a freelance writer, an artist, and a consultant to nonprofits. She divides her time between Washington State’s Methow Valley and Santa Barbara, California.

POINT OF VIEW

From the point of view of the bullet
One will live, one will die.

From the point of view of a man
My life is his death.

From the point of view of the bullet
You took the right step, he the wrong.

From the point of view of a man
His death should have been mine.

From the point of view of the bullet
Fate is a swift straight shot.

From the point of view of a man
Fate is a fickle whore.

From the point of view of the bullet
I am a servant of destiny.

From the point of view of a man
Destiny is a greedy whore.

From the point of view of the bullet
His destiny was complete.

From the point of view of a man
He left me to live for two.

From the point of view of the bullet
You survived to finish your mission.

From the point of view of a man
I wish I had died instead.

From the point of view of the bullet
Your service was not your mission.

From the point of view of a man
My time in hell was enough.

From the point of view of the bullet
Life wants more from you.

From the point of view of a man
Tell me what I must do.

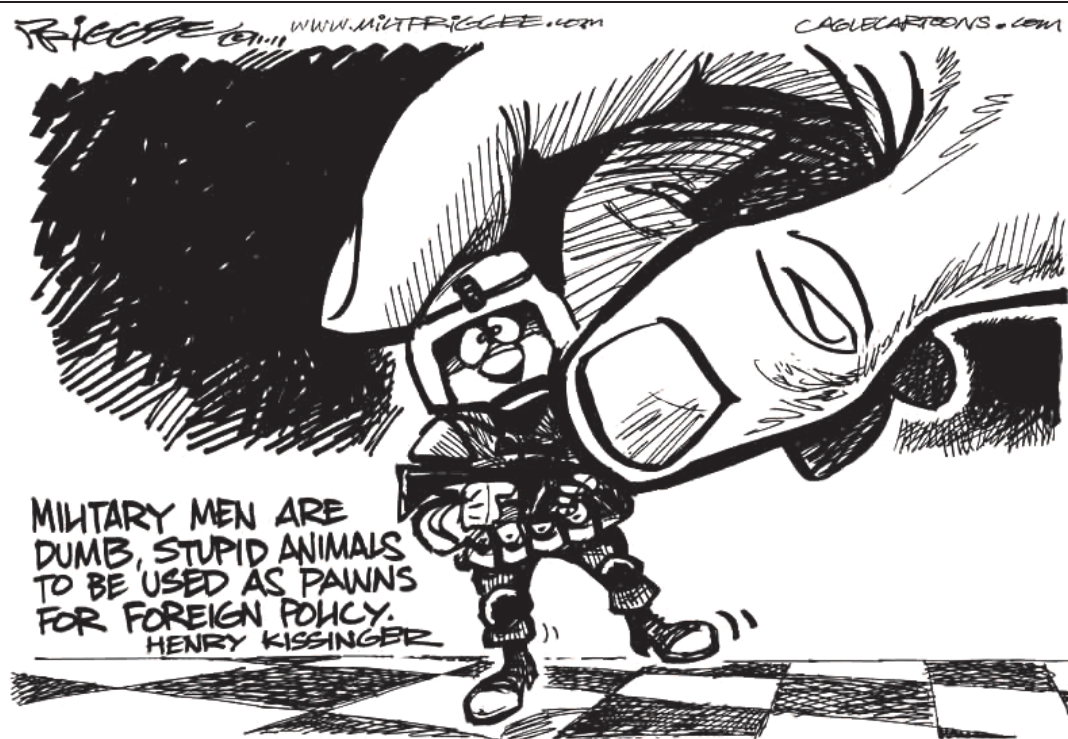
From the point of view of the bullet
Live for all who died.

From the point of view of a man
Too many lamenting ghosts.

From the point of view of the bullet
Those voices are now your voice.

From the point of view of a man
Those voices are now my voice.

—Edward Tick



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WCT could use help with editorial tasks, proofreading, & record-keeping. Contact editor@WarCrimesTimes.org

Constitution Incommoded

Justice misdirected in U.S. Capital

Peace activists convicted; War criminals remain at large.

by Kim Carlyle

If you want peace, work for justice.

—Pope Paul VI

But if you work for justice, where do you find it? Not in the District of Columbia Superior Court—at least not the kind of justice that will bring peace.

On March 19, 2011, the eighth anniversary of the illegal invasion of Iraq, hundreds of justice-seekers converged on the front gate of the White House fence. Many of these activists have been working for years to put a stop to our country's immoral foreign military adventures. They had exhausted the conventional means of persuasion—letters, phone calls, petitions, visits to elected officials; now they came in person to exercise their First Amendment rights to peaceably assemble and petition the chief executive of their government for redress of grievances and to act in accordance with the Nuremberg Principles—namely, to make the moral choice to refuse to be complicit in the ongoing war crimes committed by the United States.

More than a hundred persons were arrested that day for unlawful assembly-disorderly conduct (specifically, obstructing or incommoding the sidewalk) and failing to obey the order to leave the area. Eighteen of those arrested chose to contest the charges in court. The trial was held in late October with most of the defendants representing themselves (*pro se*), a tactic that provides more latitude in defense arguments. All faced up to 90 days in jail and up to \$1500 in fines.

The nonviolent action in March had been organized and led by Veterans For Peace. The veterans present had, upon their induction to the military, taken an oath to “defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic.” Since this oath has no expiration date, veterans remain obliged to honor this commitment.

That the Constitution has been violated is fact. Article VI states: “all Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States, shall be the supreme Law of the Land; and the Judges in every State shall be bound thereby...” Such treaties include the UN Charter which limits war-making to two conditions: UN Security Council approval and self-defense against an attack. The U.S. invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq satisfied neither condition.

Additionally, in conducting its illegal wars of aggression, the U.S. has violated international humanitarian law—rules established to limit the effects of armed conflict on people and property and to protect particularly vulnerable persons—by targeting civilians, destroying civilian infrastructure, torturing prisoners, and extrajudicial killings.

Defendant Richard Duffee submitted a pre-trial motion to admit factual evidence that the U.S. persistently commits crimes against peace. Such evidence was intended to show that the defendants' belief that they should attempt to prevent war crimes is a reasonable belief; that they acted on the privilege the Nuremberg treaty gives all citizens of nations engaged in war crimes, to act in “a measured but effective way” to prevent the continuing commissions of those crimes; and that they acted to prevent the “greater harm” of the government's commission of war crimes.

Judge Russell Canan denied the motion.

Instead, the trial centered on whether or not the sidewalk was incommoded. According to the police testimony, a person trying to cross the sidewalk in front of the White House might have needed to spend several seconds walking around the peaceably assembled demonstrators—not unlike the detour that pedestrians routinely take to avoid being in the line of sight as a tourist takes a photograph in this “picture postcard area.”

(Continued on page 19)

Principles of Nuremberg Tribunal—Adopted by the International Law Commission of the United Nations, 1950

Principle I: Any person who commits an act which constitutes a crime under international law is responsible therefore and liable to punishment.

Principle II: The fact that internal law does not impose a penalty for an act which constitutes a crime under international law does not relieve the person who committed the act from responsibility under international law.

Principle III: The fact that a person who committed an act which constitutes a crime under international law acted as Head of State or responsible Government official does not relieve him from responsibility under international law.

Principle IV: The fact that a person acted pursuant to order of his Government or of a superior does not relieve him from responsibility under international law, provided a moral choice was in fact possible to him.

Principle V: Any person charged with a crime under international law has the right to a fair trial on the facts and law.

Principle VI: The crimes hereinafter set out are punishable as crimes under international law:

(a) Crimes against peace:

- (i) Planning, preparation, initiation or waging of a war of aggression or a war in violation of international treaties, agreements or assurances;
- (ii) Participation in a common plan or conspiracy for the accomplishment of any of the acts mentioned under (i).

(b) War crimes: Violations of the laws or customs of war include, but are not limited to, murder, ill-treatment, or deportation to slave-labour or for any other purpose of civilian population of or in occupied territory, murder or ill-treatment of prisoners of war, of persons on the seas, killing of hostages, plunder of public or private property, wanton destruction of cities, towns, or villages, or devastation not justified by military necessity.

(c) Crimes against humanity: Murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation and other inhuman acts done against any civilian population, or persecutions on political, racial or religious grounds, when such acts are done or such persecutions are carried on in execution of or in connexion with any crime against peace or any war crime.

Principle VII: Complicity in the commission of a crime against peace, a war crime, or a crime against humanity as set forth in Principle VI is a crime under international law.



Above: Sober, conscientious, orderly citizens at the White House on the afternoon of March 19 nonviolently and peaceably assemble to **protest the violation** of international humanitarian law and the U. S. Constitution. Police arrested 113 people, including World War II veteran Jay Wenk. (Photos by Ellen Davidson)

Below: Thousands of raucous demonstrators amass at the White House on the evening of May 1 (the day of Osama bin Laden's summary execution) and on into the early morning of May 2 to **celebrate the violation** of numerous international laws as well as President Ronald Reagan's Executive Order 12333 in 1981: “No person employed by or acting on behalf of the United States Government shall engage in, or conspire to engage in, assassination.” Although demonstrators climbed trees and lampposts, and some were even drinking, no one was arrested. (Photos by theqspeaks)



(Continued from page 18)

Despite the fact the prosecution provided no specific instance of a real pedestrian being obstructed or incommoded, but relied on the testimony of the police (who were on the periphery of the peaceable assembly, not within it); and despite the defendants' direct testimony that there was plenty of room for passage through the demonstrators—they even provided a three-dimensional model to demonstrate that the police perspective gave a false impression, Judge Canan found the defendants guilty on both charges.

Curiously, in cross-examination, the police commander at the scene, Lt. LaChance, said he did not know of any instance where someone was arrested in front of the White House who was not protesting some government policy. This suggests that if you demonstrate in support of government policy, anything goes (see photos).

So here is "justice" in the U.S. capital:

For seven months, the government expended much energy and expense to attempt to prove that a hypothetical person—not a real person; not a named person, but a hypothetical person—might possibly have been inconvenienced (incommoded) as he walked in front of the White House on a Saturday afternoon.

Meanwhile, the government has made no effort to even bring charges against the criminals in the government who lied and led our country into illegal and immoral wars that have:

- killed thousands of real—not hypothetical—Americans;
- injured, physically and psychologically, hundreds of thousands of real—not hypothetical—Americans;
- caused suffering for the families and friends of the dead and injured—more real people!;
- killed hundreds of thousands of real—not hypothetical—children, women, and men in the countries we've illegally bombed, invaded, and occupied;
- displaced millions more real—not hypothetical—people from their homes; caused untold suffering to millions of innocent civilians—real, not hypothetical people!;
- and wasted trillions of real—not hypothetical—dollars in the process.

Statement in Support of Veteran-Led Resistance to Current U.S. Military Policies, December 16, 2010

by S. Brian Willson

The magnitude of the U.S. policy of full spectrum dominance, and the extraordinary level of deceit that seeks to mask its egregious nature, is beyond the pale. With no genuine people's process available to address this grotesque militarism while our domestic society heads toward collapse, the popular business must now be resistance and more resistance as we relocalize our lives into thousands of locally sufficient economies networked with one another.

Our country's current exaggerated militarism and plunder is but the latest in a long pattern of aggression since our founding, itself based on a gargantuan genocide. Examination of the empirical record reveals at least 560 overt military interventions in scores of countries and territories since 1798. Since the end of WWII, 390 of these overt aggressions have occurred mostly in what we call "The Third World," along with thousands of covert interventions in more than 100 countries (bombing 28 of them). Additionally, U.S. warships have sailed thousands of times into foreign ports since the post-Civil war days. Today, the U.S. military, in contingents of 100 or more, are dispatched to at least 150 countries at over 1,000 installations. U.S. military planes fly in virtually every airspace; U.S. ships sail in virtually every seaspace.

There is the letter of the law. There is the spirit of the law. And there is justice. The court followed the letter of a minor law in finding eighteen conscientious people guilty of a minor crime. Perhaps the day will come when the letter of the law and the spirit of the law and the elusive justice we seek will all come together to hold accountable the perpetrators of the much larger crimes—the grievances that people sought to redress on March 19 at the White House. Then we'll take a step towards peace.

Until then, how do we keep seeking justice, if not through the judicial system? Is it surprising that some are choosing to take to the streets? Let's remember to be nonviolent out there!

This is astounding; but it represents a nation that, with but 4.6 percent of the world's population, insists on continued insatiable consumption of anywhere from a quarter to a third of the world's resources. This systematic theft can only occur by force or its threat, but is always rationalized in noble sounding rhetoric, repeated over and over.

This incredible barbarism is so pervasive it is the equivalent of what philosopher Hannah Arendt described as the banality of evil. The political process, and many of her citizens, barely questions its absurdity and diabolical nature, even if it is noticed.

Thus our task, as veterans and citizens, is to reclaim our genuine and evolutionary universal humanity from the pathology of the nation state. Resistance, through various forms of creative and bold nonviolence, no matter the risks involved, especially at the local level everywhere, is now our obligation knowing our survival with dignity is at stake.

Veterans who choose to become truth tellers are among our most important resources in the United States.

Brian Willson USAF, 1966-1970, Viet Nam 1969, is an activist, a trained lawyer, and the author of Blood on the Tracks, which was reviewed in the Fall 2011 issue of WCT.

For Brian Wilson

This stops a trainload of bullets,
Destined for Central American hearts.

Now there is blood on the heavy wheels,
And a man gives his legs for peace.
Oh shame for those who stand upright,
And pay for murders out of sight.

—Fred Nagel

Even though the universal convictions with absolutely no personal evidence were disappointing, that was to be expected. The small fines probably express the extent of sympathy any U.S. judge feels able to express for civil resisters.

—Ellen Barfield, Baltimore, MD; post-trial comment

In the first half of the last century our government made a number of serious efforts to expand international law and extend the reach of international legal institutions. In 1945 we took the unprecedented step of setting up war crimes tribunals for German and Japanese officials, and we pledged ourselves to be subject to the same rules. We set up the UN. But in the late 1960's we lost our forward momentum and for the last 30 years we have been reneging on our commitments.

—Richard Duffee, Stanford, CT; from his sentencing statement

In particular I mentioned that I continue to pay a high personal price for having failed to comply with, failed to enforce, International Humanitarian Law.

Let me be clear about the long-term, delayed, cost of failing to comply with IHL.

Night after night at 4AM you heard the scream in your ear. There was the image. You and your squad hit the dirt because there was suspected enemy activity. Through a break in the brush you see something moving. Over your sights you see it looks like a woman, and it looks like she is carrying a baby. You ask, "Should you open up and fire on her?" Your orders are that this is a free fire zone and all people are considered the enemy. You double-check yourself; can she be a threat? She could be a weapon courier, she could be growing the rice for the Viet Cong, and she could be a scout for an ambush.

March 19 Defendants Speak

As you jolt awake you know you followed the wrong law, you asked the wrong questions. Instead of asking, "Is she in a free fire zone?" you should have asked your command, "Is it legal to force a population to leave their homes and ancestral village under threat of death?" Instead of asking, "Could she be growing food for the Viet Cong?" you should have asked, "How is it legal for you, a U.S. soldier, to be lying in wait in her field?" If I had asked the right questions, if I had followed the right law, only our imagination can say how many innocent lives would have been saved? That was an opportunity to support IHL—I failed the test. These opportunities come and we are tested.

—Elliott Adams, Sharon Springs, NY; from his sentencing statement

We emphasize that our intent on March 19 was not to commit a crime, but to prevent a crime; to keep the law, not break the law. Judge Canan, although you have ruled that International law is not a valid defense in this case, we ask you to please reconsider your position and reverse your ruling in light of all the evidence we have presented.

What more evidence is needed to show the applicability of international law in this case than the testimony and closing statement we just heard from Mr. Adams (regarding atrocities he was ordered to carry out in Vietnam—actions he now knows were in violation of International humanitarian law).... We acted on March 19 because there were no other political or legal alternatives available to us as the executive and legislative branches of government continue to wage war.

(See DEFENDANTS SPEAK on page 20)

“To Dare to Aspire Grandly”

(Continued from page 2)

Ed Bloomer, a VFP member and Catholic Worker from Iowa, has long been involved in service to the marginalized and homeless, and in connecting militarism to the deepening poverty among the 99 percent. “The important thing is that the spirit of the movement is from the bottom up,” he said.

Throughout the nation, from Oakland to New York City to Boston, surveillance has been high, arrests are mounting, and the militarized arsenals of local police have been deployed on peaceful Occupiers and unarmed students, using excessive force to disperse peaceable assemblies. But the movement persists, and veterans are rising to stand in solidarity.

The Smedley Butler Brigade, with VFP flags flying, stood between advancing police and the young people of Occupy Boston on October 11. “They had to take us out first,” said Chapter coordinator Pat Scanlon. VFP members left a Chapter 19 meeting in nearby Cambridge to come to the aid of the Occupy encampment.

In a recent statement supporting the Occupy Movement, Iraq Veterans Against the War declared, “The 1% is profiting from our sacrifices. Our nation’s leaders have betrayed us. We have been asked to risk our lives and mental health for the defense of our country and the well being of foreign allies. The causes for military conflict have proven false while corporations profit. The military-industrial complex continues to grow in wealth while the rest of the world pays for it in dollars and blood.”

IVAW reports that membership has increased about 10 percent since Marine Corps veteran Scott Olsen, a survivor of two tours of duty in Iraq, was seriously

injured during a police assault of Occupy Oakland in October.

The Occupy Movement isn’t the first time veterans have taken to the streets to assert the right to assemble for redress of grievance. In 1932, the Bonus Army of 15,000 veterans marched on Washington, DC, and set up camp around the U.S. Capitol demanding pay-



Above Bonus Army in Washington, DC, 1932: (Left) Police charge camping veterans; (Right) Shacks, put up by the Bonus Army on the Anacostia flats, Washington, DC, burning after the battle with the military. (National Archives photos)

Veterans Peace Teams launched to stand with Occupy Movement

(excerpts from a statement issued December 5, 2011)

Veterans For Peace will establish Veterans Peace Teams to deploy to as many Occupy sites and actions as we can. We ask any and all military/law enforcement veterans to join us in this endeavor as nonviolent Veterans Peace Teams will attempt to act as mediators with the police, and as a buffer between Occupy protesters and police violence. Our goal is to protect constitutional rights and minimize conflict and injury to all involved....

Excessive use of force by police toward those in the Occupy movement has led to arbitrary arrests, a fractured skull for one veteran and a ruptured spleen for another, near-asphyxiation and trampling of peaceful protesters, and pepper-spraying of students sitting peacefully on a sidewalk obstructing nothing at all, among many abuses and injuries. Pepper spray, tear gas, bean bag projectiles, rubber bullets, tasers, and other weapons—all of which can cause grave injury and death—have all been deployed against peaceful U.S. citizens.

ment of promised bonuses for war time service. They too faced police assaults and bloody reprisals for demanding their due from the government that sent them to war.

Joey King, a former Army Ranger speaking at the VFP meet up at the annual School of the Americas Watch gathering in Columbus, GA, reported that in the month following Olsen’s injury, VFP enrolled more than 200 new members and received 93,000 hits on the website. King participates in a Veterans Caucus of Occupy Nashville, connecting abuses of the military-industrial complex with the banking industry.

Eleven veterans from Minnesota Chapter 27 braved freezing temperatures camping out with Occupy Minneapolis at People’s Plaza, engaging in “amazing dialog,” on Armistice Day according to one participant.

In Asheville, NC, three Veterans were arrested after asserting Constitutional rights to assemble beyond a 10 p.m. park curfew. The veterans were surrounded by scores of supporters during a solemn reading of names of North Carolina soldiers killed in Iraq and Afghanistan. VFP 099 President John Spitzberg participates in the Occupy Asheville general assembly and helps out

in the camp kitchen. Associate members are in various working groups, including Media, Nonviolent Direct Action Training, and Legal Observing.

“What a breath of fresh air Occupy has been,” said Kevin Cahalan, of Kenner, LA, Southern Occupations in Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Tennessee, Louisiana, and Texas have benefitted from the input of VFP members. Viet Nam Veteran S. Brian Willson said he visited 14 Occupy sites while on a speaking tour for his political memoir, *Blood on the Tracks*.

In the Occupy Movement, VFP acting director Mike Ferner sees a parallel to the people of the Populist movement of the 1880s, about whom Lawrence Goodwyn wrote in *The Populist Moment*, “they...created

the psychological space to dare to aspire grandly.”

Author David Swanson, writing from Freedom Plaza in Washington, DC, where veterans and others have been occupying since early October believes we need to connect on a personal level. “So here’s the plan: Bring us your reports from around the country at your local occupations. Fill us in here in Empire’s capital. We will fill you in, too. We will train and inspire and connect you with the rest of this global movement. Then go back home energized.”

“We are Unstoppable. A New World is Possible.”

Clare Hanrahan is an associate member of VFP 099, an editor with War Crimes Times and a National Lawyers Guild Legal Observer with Occupy Asheville.

(Continued from page 19)

We acted to prevent an imminent harm from occurring. People are dying now as a direct result of U.S. drone attacks and other U.S. military actions, just as they were dying at the time of our March 19 action. These people aren’t merely statistics—they have names and families. We seldom hear in the media who the innocent dead really are! For example, you heard Joan Nicholson testify that on March 1, 2011, U.S. military forces in a helicopter gunship, killed nine boys in Afghanistan as they collected firewood. But do we know their names? Do we know anything about them or their families? Do we, as society, even care? The youngest of the boys killed was named Shahidullah, son of Rahman—he was 7 years old, 7 years old! As the father of a young son, I went to the White House on March 19 to be a voice for Shahidullah...

Judge Canan, who will speak for the victims? What recourse do we, as citizens have, when people, even young children, are being killed indiscriminately, but to engage in nonviolent acts to seek redress such as we did. What recourse do we have when an estimated 2 million Iraqis have died over the last 20 years as direct result of U.S. bombings, U.S.-UN lead sanctions, and U.S. invasion?

—Art Laffin, Washington, DC; from his sentencing statement

Defendants Speak

There was an older black woman sitting in the courtroom amongst our supporters during today’s sentencing process. She was waiting for her son to be sentenced—he had been brought into the courtroom in orange jail garb with chains connected to his feet and hands before our case was called.

During our sentencing statements I saw her paying close attention and at times crying; so after we were finished, right before the judge began to pass judgment on her son, I went up to her and wished her good luck. She looked deeply into my eyes and said, “I am so proud of you people.”

It is not only the people in Iraq-Afghanistan-Pakistan-Libya-Yemen-Somalia who are being destroyed at the hands of U.S. militarism. The poor in our own country are left without jobs and then have to turn to selling drugs or their own bodies on the streets in order to make a buck so they can survive. They are then locked into the jails of the Prison-Industrial-Complex. The judge is just one more cog in this evil machine.

For several days this week we interrupted the judge’s mundane job of sending legions of poor people from the nation’s capital to these cells of desperation. For a short time we challenged him, his clerk, the U.S. Marshall, the court stenographer, the two

(See DEFENDANTS SPEAK on page 22)

Murder as Instrument of Foreign Policy

by Liaquat Ali Khan

President Obama has openly deployed murder as an instrument of foreign policy. Soon after assuming office, Obama authorized the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to plan and execute the murder of terrorists and other enemies, regardless of whether they are U.S. citizens. Osama bin Laden, Anwar al-Awlaki, and Muammar Gaddafi are the prominent murder victims while numerous others in Afghanistan, Yemen, Somalia, Iran, and Pakistan have been purposely targeted and killed.



President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden, along with members of the national security team, receive an update on the mission against Osama bin Laden in the Situation Room of the White House, May 1, 2011.

The legitimization of extra-judicial killing is a disturbing development in international law as other nations are certain to follow suit. In pursuit of premeditated murders, the collateral damage (the killing of the obviously innocent) has been extensive. The claim that such murders can be executed with electronic precision, though false, serves as an incentive for other

nations to develop drones to perpetrate their own surgical assassinations. For now, however, the CIA enjoys the monopoly over drone kills.

Covert Murders

The 1947 National Security Act created the CIA for the purpose of gathering and evaluating information necessary to protect the nation from foreign threats. Right from the beginning, however, the CIA assumed a proactive role in promoting U.S. economic and military interests. In 1948, the CIA was transformed into a paramilitary organization, empowered under law to engage in “propaganda, economic warfare, sabotage, subversion against hostile states through assistance to underground resistance movements and guerillas.” Ever since, the CIA has engineered world events for U.S. hegemony.

The murder policy under the CIA aegis is by no means an Obama invention. Over the decades, the CIA has spearheaded what Vice President Dick Cheney once described as the “dark side” of the United States. Previously, however, the murders were covert, not to be openly admitted. In the 1960s, the CIA planned the murders of “communists who threatened the free world,” including those of Patrice Lumumba of Congo and Fidel Castro of Cuba. Researchers dispute over whether the CIA participated in Che Guevara’s murder. The evidence is mounting, however, that the CIA head in Bolivia had a “prior agreement or understanding with the Bolivians that Che would be killed if captured.” (See Ratner & Smith, *Who Killed Che?: How the CIA Got Away with Murder*).

Covert murders were planned to shield the President from the attendant foreign policy fallout and the moral discomfort emanating from cold-blooded strategies. Notably, the President chairs the National Security Council (NSC), the supreme body that empowers the CIA to conduct covert operations. In the early decades, intelligence experts instituted the doctrine of plausible deniability under which the facts of a covert operation were reported to the President in a way that he could deny the knowledge of a murder. The words “killing” or “murder” or “assassination” were rarely used in oral and written memos to the President. For example, Che’s murder was reported to President Johnson as a “stupid murder.” Such “wink, wink” linguistic deceptions allow the President to occupy the high moral ground and deny that the U.S. “murders” foreign enemies or “tortures” detainees. The President’s veil of deniability was considered necessary to safeguard America’s image as “the city on the hill,” “the beacon of liberty,” “the greatest nation in the world,” etc.

Audacity of Murder

Since the 9/11 attacks, the policy logistics of murder have been dramatically transformed. The doctrine of plausible deniability has been discarded. Moral

constraints on killing enemies, including heads of states and governments, have been cast away. The notion of the U.S. as a “moral nation” is now viewed as an impediment in the conduct of international relations. The “dark side” freely informs the foreign policy. The audacity of murder has gained depth and momentum. The President does not think twice about the moral implications of boasting a drone kill.

In a major policy shift, the murder has been institutionalized. Now, the NSC may itself approve a pending murder. Remember the President and statutory members of the NSC (including Secretaries of State and Defense and the CIA Director) watching bin Laden’s murder as it was happening. The NSC released the picture for public consumption, implying that watching the murder of a noted enemy is morally acceptable. Imagine barbarism if this practice is writ large in the world. No one would be surprised if the NSC itself has authorized the murder of Anwar Awlaki, a U.S. citizen, or if the NSC itself has authorized the drone attack on the Gaddafi motorcade to flush him out for murder in public view.

These and similar international murders are no longer the CIA secrets that the Senate needs to investigate as it did in the 1970s. This time, the fascination with murder has metastasized. It is bipartisan. Excepting Ron Paul, Re-

publican Presidential candidates endorse the murder of “terrorists” who threaten “our way of life.” (Juxtapose the historical massacres of Indian “savages” who too threatened “our way of life.”) Upon the execution of a successful murder, President Obama walks to the podium to express joy in a causal tone of voice. Many politicians join the happy hours. Congratulations are exchanged. The corporate media invites the public to celebrate the great news. This is the most vivid moral collapse of a nation that brazenly talks about human rights and universal values. The American people cannot choose to be silent. They must restore the nation’s moral dignity.

L. Ali Khan initially trained as a civil engineer. He later switched to law. In 1976, Khan immigrated to the United States and studied law at New York University School. He teaches commercial law, arbitration, and international law at Washburn. This article was reprinted with permission from Media with Conscience (www.mwcnews.net) where it first appeared.



SENTRY

I look into your soft eyes as you hold up your tattered shield –
to keep me from seeing ...
The Beast
fangs dripping...
and you with nowhere to run.

But I am a grown woman.
I can only feel your story
like a distant mist,
a dream I can only glimpse in pieces.

But don't think I can't hear
the desperate howl behind your silence,
the crashing of your heart on the jungle floor.

It is you I really want to see,
even when it hurts.

I know there is safety in the Inside Place,
when there is no more *olle olle oxinfree*,
and the wound and the growl are deeper than Earth.

I ache to hold your broken heart,
and sing and rock and rest.
But I know the power of that Inside Place
to hide you away forever.

So, I keep vigil outside your door,
three feathers in my hair,
beating my woman round drum,
humming the ancient Warrior Song ...
all night long.

—Kate Dahlsted

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Letters

A Lotta Dues to Pay

Recently I have read in “mainstream” newspapers the term “devout Catholics” used in contexts that bring to mind a statement by an iconic devout Catholic written in 1968: “...the things that make our news, the things that are contemporary, are abominations of superstition, of idolatry, proceeding from minds that are full of myths, distortions, half-truths, prejudices, evasions, illusion...Ideas that claim to be humane and prove themselves, in their effects, to be callous, cruel, cynical, sometimes even criminal.” (Thomas Merton, *Faith and Violence*).

I refer to articles about the “devout Catholic couple” who fired five shots from a rifle at Jehovah’s Witnesses who weren’t leaving their front porch fast enough, and the “devout” Catholic mother of a WTC victim of the 9-11 attacks who was “relieved” at the assassination of Osama bin Laden. I add a couple of other “devout” Catholics: “blessed” John Paul II who, while visiting Nicaragua had his speech interrupted by mothers of fallen Sandinistas who had died in fighting to overthrow Somoza. They had asked for prayers from the pontiff. His reply was to tell them to “shut up.” And the unforgettable “devout” Catholic and daily communicant, CIA station chief William Colby, director of Operation Phoenix in Vietnam, which saw an estimated 60,000 “neutralized” (i.e. shoved out of helicopters) “suspected” Viet Cong to stem the tide of the international communist menace.

I have *not* seen “devout” used in the case of Father Roy Bourgeois, for years a Maryknoll Missionary, Vietnam Vet, and proponent of women being admitted to the priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church.

For the past twenty years, he has led massive demonstrations at the School of Assassins at Ft. Benning, Georgia. This is where U.S.-trained torturers, rapists, and murderers from Latin America hone their skills and carry out their missions when they return to El Salvador,

Columbia, Bolivia, Guatemala, etc. Their victims include two archbishops, six Jesuits, their housekeeper and her daughter, and four Catholic church women, to name but a few. Father Roy was recently defrocked for violating the Church’s teaching that since Jesus was a man, obviously women cannot possibly be ordained priests. (Of course, if God had decided that the Incarnation would take the form of a female, we would, by the same logic, refer to the Pope as *Her* Holiness.)

Judging from many letters to the editors of the local newspapers since 9-11, I doubt that many have read anything since the publication of *Heidi*, or *My Pet Goat*. So to suggest that the readers pick up and read a book such as *The Politics of War* by Walter Karp, or *Blowback* by Chalmers Johnson (published a year before 9-11 and all but predicting the 9-11 attacks) is to whistle in the wind. But these books and others (*Freedom Next Time* by John Pilger) might dent the invincible impermeability of the American mind and possibly hint that the attacks on the WTC didn’t happen in a vacuum.

Osama bin Laden didn’t wake up one morning, stretch, yawn, look around at all his happy, well-fed people and get together his band of 20 cutthroats because, as our Rhode Scholar president George Bush said, “They hate us for our freedom.”

The “unintended consequences of U. S. policies kept secret from the American people” (blowback) were sown with President McKinley’s “splendid little war” in 1890, and we continue to sow the wind and reap the whirlwind with our every illegal war, war crime, NAFTA, CAFTA, tax-payer bailout of rich scam corporations, banks, sub-prime mortgages, hedge funds, deregulated oil and gas companies, etc. etc...

There are no “innocent” Americans. As Lenny Bruce used to say, “We’re gonna pay a lotta dues.”

Bernard J. Berg
Easton, PA

Retro Lyrics and More

Greetings (and not the draft board kind): I’m the vet who approached you [the WCT ed. at a VFP chapter peace vigil] in the square a couple of weeks back while you were exercising your Constitutional rights (at least I think they still are). My Army M.O.S. was 67n20—helicopter crew chief on the beloved ‘Hueys.’

I quoted a few limericks from the Bush years. They are archival now but since you asked for the full list, here they are. They should be read in a Ronald Coleman voice for best effect. They started out as simply great poetry but morphed into a song (I play banjo). The chorus had been in a “drawer in my head” for years but I couldn’t fit it to any verses. I tried blues, satire, love songs...nothing.’ Then I realized it fit perfectly with the lyrics since Bush was in Babylon. The chorus:

As they used to say in ancient Babylon,
I’ll be seein’ ya,
I’ll be seein’ ya.
Or as they used to say in ol’ Abyssinia,
Buddy how you Babble on.

The verses:

Now Georgie the “Prez,” he up and he says,
“I’ve got a real case of the blues.
My I.Q. is low, and my brain is so slow,
without velcro I can’t tie my shoes.”

My name is Dick Cheney, some folks think I’m brainy
But that’s just a clever old ruse,
I’m all about gas to enrich my white ass
With more dough than I ever could use.

[Verses on the National Security Advisor, Defense Secretary, Secretary of State, and Press Secretary were omitted for space considerations. —ed.]

(Continued on page 23)

(Continued from page 20)

Park Police who testified against us, and the two government prosecutors to think outside their normal boxes. But the most important heart we reached during this trial was the black mother who feels alone in our heartless society as she sees her beloved child suffer inside this demented and broken system.

—Bruce Gagnon, Bath, ME; from his blog

Defendants Speak

Therefore, I ask that the court take this into consideration in its sentencing, and any future rulings, to help correct the trajectory of this society by giving the defendants a sentence of time-served, as well as finding all future defendants, who acted in the same vein, only guilty of love, peace, and respect.

—Richard Marini, Staten Island, NY; from his sentencing statement

One of the basic physical laws first articulated by Isaac Newton in 1687 is that an object in motion stays in motion until acted upon by an opposing force. The same is true about democracy, as many of those in the courtroom today have been witness to that change which has only occurred through opposing forces such as Rosa Parks, Dr. King, and many others who have acted in contradiction to current law.

I stood with my brothers and sisters on march 19th to be such an opposing force, a non-violent force, to the illegal, immoral, violent, unjust wars that continue in our names, which are a continuation of wars past. I stand before the court today with the individual belief that although the court may believe it acted justly, that it’s ruling is allowing for the continuation of the illegal, immoral, violent, and unjust wars for Empire that continue in our name and serves only to preserve the union and keep It’s violent trajectory unchanged.

An older black woman, waiting for her son (in orange jail garb and chains) to be sentenced, was paying close attention to our sentencing statements, at times crying. When we were finished, right before the judge began to pass judgment on her son, I went up to her and wished her good luck. She looked deeply into my eyes and said, “I am so proud of you people.”

in the room were clearly moved. This quality was what the process in court was all about, and should be about, for every defendant, in every court.

—Jay Wenk, Woodstock, NY; from an article he wrote about the trial

When I left Vietnam I pledged to the guys I served with who did not come back that I would speak out against my country whenever my country decided to commit our troops to war based on lies.

—Chuck Heyn, Damascus, PA; from his sentencing statement

The whirlwind of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our Nation until the bright day of Justice emerges.

—Dr. Martin Luther King, “I Have a Dream,” August 28, 1963

Veterans Find Peace by Making Art

by Cari Hachmann

"I live with the war every day," said Daniel Shea of Veterans For Peace and curator of A Tenacity of Hope, an art exhibit at Portland State University. "Everyday it's in my head and I can't erase it, but when I do this [art] I forget about it."

Using art as a path to healing, veterans from World War II to Viet Nam to present day Iraq and Afghanistan displayed their work in conjunction with a four-day Veterans For Peace convention held in August in Portland.

In neat rectangular frames, disturbing and beautiful images and paintings by men and women who once marched into combat and the living hell of war were splashed across the white walls of the Littman Gallery.

Each artist told different stories of combat, but all the veterans shared the common resistance to war.

Bill Bires, an elderly man once drafted into the Korean War, said the art clearly illustrates the uselessness of resorting to violence to solve problems.

"Art gives them the opportunity to tell their story," said Shea, who displayed two, big colorful works in the show. As an escape, a distraction, "the process took me away from things that plagued my mind."

Shea is a Viet Nam veteran and Agent Orange victim. He said he became a war resister after he lost his three-year old son to heart disease, cleft palate, and other abnormalities as a consequence to prior chemical warfare exposure.

Like many returning soldiers, he felt betrayed by the U.S. government. "They sent us to kill or be killed and there was a price to pay for that," he said.

As visitors and locals gazed into the exhibit's images of mayhem contrasted with vibrant colors of blood, bombs exploding, arid landscapes, child soldiers, and guns shooting red flowers, other Veterans For Peace members wandered in from a day of seminars and workshops.

Michael Marceau of Kensington, MD, who was critically injured in a 1970 rocket attack, said he resists war by enlightening students about the "reality of life in the military."

Though he is committed to non-violence, his enemies are the recruiters who lure kids into joining the military with unrealistic education opportunities and false, romanticized visions of war.

"Recruiters are like salesmen," he said, "They tell you everything, but the true costs of war," said Marceau. Like other Veterans For Peace, he advocates "to end these illegal wars."

For the survivors, returning home from war is another hell of its own; whether suffering from physical injuries or post traumatic stress disorder, the path to peace is not an easy one.

Most often, former soldiers find refuge with those who served beside them and other comrades of war, where they

can remember the good things; the people met along the journey, broadening their knowledge of other cultures, art, religion, language, and their strength against such adversity.

The Veterans For Peace advocates say soldiers that will return home from Iraq and Afghanistan should

look forward to being embraced by a community that is willing to hear their story, without judgment.

"There is hope," said Shea. "If we have no hope at all, why resist?" Shea studied Art at PSU and returned for his post-baccalaureate in International Studies and re-

ceived a MA in Fine Arts. He helped form Students for Unity, the Multicultural Center, and PSU's alternative newspaper, the *Rearguard*.

If anyone still believes the impossible can happen, it's Shea and the thousands of war veterans who have all the more reason to resist and bring forth a non-violent revolution for peace.

"The war still lives on in all of us," said David Schott, Viet Nam vet of Baltimore, MD, and Veteran For Peace.

Cari Hachmann is a print journalist and photographer for the Portland Observer and a recent graduate of Portland State University. This article is reprinted with her permission.

...(here comes the chorus)

As they used to say in ancient Babylon,
I'll be seein' ya,
I'll be seein' ya.
Or as they used to say in ol' Abyssinia,
Buddy how you Babble on.

Now I was in 'Nam and Cambodia too, just tryin'
to keep my "Huey" in the air,
We was flyin' and dyin' while the government was
lyin',
Sayin' (rendered in a Nixon voice),
"Cambodia? We've got nobody there."
"Isn't that right Henry...Henry?? DON'T LEAVE
ME HENRY!"

I was a founding member of a Viet Nam Veterans' theatre company in NYC. Our theatre group lasted about 10 years or so and we had real scripts by real vets but America chose to go the Rambo/ Chuck Norris route to ameliorate the feelings brought about by the fact that we had lost to a group of sandal-wearing die-hards who believed in what they were fighting for.

What was weird was, towards the early eighties, HBO and *60 Minutes* came around. Remember how we were welcomed back after the group that sent us took ten years or so to get over their guilt for sending us?

When they said, "Thank you for your service," I would say, "Don't thank me, let's just be sure that it doesn't happen again!" They would smile and nod in agreement. Guess they didn't mean it.

It's been a long road with a lot of actions and demonstrations along the way. I joined the Winter Soldier group when I got off the bus in the Port Authority bus station; they had a table in the hallway. That morphed into the Viet Nam Veterans Against the War which further morphed into the Viet Nam Veterans of America. I wonder how many beer swillin' Jane Fonda Hatin' vets actually know their roots.

Oh well, they don't even know the history of our involvement: Ho Chi Minh's meeting with [Woodrow] Wilson when he went to Paris to form the League Of Nations, the doubts JFK had, the advice to stay out of it that Douglass MacArthur (the biggest commie hater of them all) gave him, and a host of other pertinent facts.

I am likewise appalled by how little these "patriots" in general know about the troops in these latest two boondoggles and what they have been through, where they have seen action, what that action was etc, etc.

I have a couple of tunes regarding these returned troops but I'll save them for some other time.

As a former altar boy, Cub Scout, Boy Scout and all around Roy Rogers Lovin' American I salute you folk for pushing it in their face (in a civil manner, of course) and I am sure you have reflected as well upon the fact that although we were traitors who hated America from 2002 to about 2006, we are now witnessing petitions drawn up and signed by U.S. Governors and Mayors of some U.S. cities calling for an end to this waste. Guess apologies to us who spotted the fiasco early on will be forthcoming.

James Clark
Johnstown, PA



"We are all wounded in some form," said Veterans For Peace artist Daniel Shea. His painting, *Wounded Reflections: a Portrait of Dave Cline*.
Photo by Cari Hachmann

Who died that night?

I had to kill him
I gave him a burst
He was my first
In the moonlight
In the sampan
His life in my hand
Floating by in the water
Time stood still
I mustered up my will
In front of my sight
Eyes fixed on the head
Through the air flew the lead
Red from the head
Flying amongst the moonbeams
Forever in my dreams
Flashers floating on ripples of water
Cascading on rocks of time
Nestling softly in my mind
I wonder who died that night
Was it he, or was it me?

—Ed Barone
199th Light Infantry Brigade
Viet Nam, 1969-70



Juxtaposition by Daniel Shea



An Ink drawing by Salvador Santos

“The Tenacity of Hope”
Veterans Art Exhibit

War that Was, War that Is, War Within

For the men and women that have served in our military, many were conflicted between doing what they were trained to do and personal beliefs in non-violence. Some refused, but most marched on into combat and a living hell.

The good things remembered are our friends who served beside us, the people we met on our journey, what we learned about cultures, their art, their religion, language and their strength against such adversity and devastation.

There is a price for going to war, a price for killing and killed, a contradiction to the mission of preserving the peace.

The journey home is misunderstood
it is not a place but a community
each must find a path to enter
a place to tell our story
without being judged
a place for you
to let us in
hear us
see us
remember us

On these walls is our art and our story, what we saw, what we dream
It has been over forty years since I saw combat but it is with me everyday.
The exhibit is the *resilience* of veterans to survive using art as a path to healing,
the *resistance* of veterans to be silent, to ignore history and a warning to the present
that our future will require not a few warriors but all of us to be committed to nonviolence
itself a *nonviolent revolution*, thus dare to hope, a toast from the chalice of peace

by Artist Daniel Shea, Veteran For Peace



Grim Zone by Tomer Hanuka



Acute Nostalgia by Tinman Edgar



Wounded Reflections: a Portrait of Dave Cline by Daniel Shea