

“Exposing the True Costs of War”

The War Crimes Times

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IRAQ—REBRANDED

*‘Tis but thy name that is my enemy... What's in a name?
That which we call a combat troop / By any other name would smell as sweet;*

Coalition Statement

The Iraq Debacle: The Legacy of Seven Years of War

We, the undersigned organizations and individuals, mark the August 31st partial withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq with the following evaluation and recommendations:

* The U.S. occupation of Iraq continues and the reduction of U.S. troops in Iraq can at best be called only a rebranded occupation. While the number of U.S. troops in Iraq will be reduced from a high of 165,000, there will still be 50,000 troops left behind, some 75,000 contractors, five huge “enduring bases” and an Embassy the size of Vatican City.

* The U.S. military’s overthrow of the brutal dictatorship of Saddam Hussein did not lead to a better life for Iraqis—just the opposite. It resulted in the further destruction of basic infrastructure—electricity, water, sewage—that continues to this day. The U.S. dropped more tons of bombs on Iraq than in all of WWII, destroying Iraq’s electrical, water and sewage systems. Iraq’s health care and higher education systems, once the best in the entire region, have been decimated. The U.S. war on Iraq unleashed a wave of violence that has left over one million Iraqis dead and four million displaced, as well as ethnic rivalries that continue to plague the nation. We have seriously wounded millions of Iraqis,



The United States, Israel, and the Failure of the Western Way of War

by Andrew J. Bacevich

“In watching the flow of events over the past decade or so, it is hard to avoid the feeling that something very fundamental has happened in world history.” This sentiment, introducing the essay that made Francis Fukuyama a household name, commands renewed attention today, albeit from a different perspective.

Developments during the 1980s, above all the winding down of the Cold War, had convinced Fukuyama that the “end of history” was at hand. “The triumph of the West, of the Western idea,” he wrote in 1989, “is evident...in the total exhaustion of viable systematic alternatives to Western liberalism.”

Today the West no longer

looks quite so triumphant. Yet events during the first decade of the present century have delivered history to another endpoint of sorts. Although Western liberalism may retain considerable appeal, the Western way of war has run its course.

For Fukuyama, history implied ideological competition, a contest pitting democratic capitalism against fascism and communism. When he wrote his famous essay, that contest was reaching an apparently definitive conclusion.

Yet from start to finish, military might had determined that competition’s course as much as ideology. Throughout much of the twentieth century, great powers had vied with one another to

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What You Will Not Hear About Iraq

by Adil E. Shamoo

Iraq has between 25 and 50 percent unemployment, a dysfunctional parliament, rampant disease, an epidemic of mental illness, and sprawling slums. The killing of innocent people has become part of daily life. What a havoc the United States has wreaked in Iraq.

UN-HABITAT, an agency of the United Nations, recently published a 218-page report entitled *State of the World’s Cities, 2010-2011*. The report is full of statistics on the status of cities around the

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Is the Obama Administration Guilty of a War Crime?



by **Daphne Eviatar**

On August 28, the *New York Times* reported that administration officials are “alarmed” by the military commission case of Omar

Khadr, the Canadian citizen seized as a 15-year-old by U.S. forces in Afghanistan who's now spent a third of his life in the U.S. prison at Guantanamo Bay. Trying an alleged child soldier based largely on confessions he made after being threatened with gang-rape and murder is not the case the Obama administration had hoped to showcase in its first military commission trial.

But the argument in a new paper published on August 31 by Loyola Law School professor David Glazier should give the administration even more cause for alarm. Glazier, an expert on international law and the laws of armed conflict, argues that the military commission trial of Omar Khadr is itself a war crime.

That's because Khadr is charged with crimes that were only defined as war crimes by the Military Commissions Act, first enacted in 2006. Khadr is charged with conspiracy and material support for terrorism for helping his father's friends make and plant improvised explosive devices, and for “murder in violation of the laws of war” for throwing a grenade that killed a U.S. soldier during a firefight started by U.S. forces. All of these acts allegedly occurred in the summer of 2002. Back then, making bombs, planting anti-tank mines, and killing the other side's soldiers who were trying to kill you first didn't violate any rules of war. Because Khadr was not a “privileged” belligerent entitled to the protections of international law, he could be prosecuted in a criminal court in the United States or Afghanistan. He is not, however, a war criminal.

Congress and the defense department have tried to get around this fact. In 2006 and again in 2009, Congress unilaterally re-wrote international law by defining conspiracy and material support for terrorism—which encompasses pretty much anything an enemy force or its supporters might do—as

war crimes. In commentary to the rules, the Department of Defense further defined “murder in violation of the laws of war” to include murder of a U.S. soldier by an “unprivileged belligerent” such as Khadr. But simply stating it doesn't make it true.

Putting a suspect on trial for crimes that did not exist when the acts were committed is a violation of the U.S. Constitution's prohibition on ex post facto laws. It also violates several international treaties, including article 75 of the Additional Geneva Protocol I of 1977, which says that “no one shall be

The trial of Omar Khadr is itself a war crime...he is charged with crimes that were only defined as war crimes four years after he was put in prison. This violates the U.S. Constitution and is a “grave breach” of the Geneva Conventions.

accused or convicted of a criminal offense on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a criminal offense under the national or international law to which he was subject at the time when it was committed...” The U.S. has acknowledged that this accurately states customary international law. Putting Omar Khadr on trial in a military commission for the acts of which he's accused, then, according to Professor Glazier, is itself a violation of the laws of war and a “grave breach” of the Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions. Such crimes can be prosecuted by other countries under the principle of universal jurisdiction. In the United States they're also federal felonies under the War Crimes Act of 1996.

Setting aside the likelihood of any other countries prosecuting the U.S. for war crimes in this situation, it's odd indeed that the Obama administration would choose to pursue this case—indeed, would make this its first war crimes trial—in the Guantanamo Bay military commissions.

There's another reason the U.S. might not want to call attention to the circumstances of this case. In August, the government presented as a witness a member of U.S. Special Forces who described entering the compound

where Khadr was found and ultimately seized in July 2002. The witness, identified as Sergeant Major D, was armed with an N-4 Rifle and a Glock-9mm pistol. The compound had just been shot up by U.S. Apache helicopters and bombarded by two 500-pound bombs. After sensing a grenade and small arms fire coming from an alleyway, he testified, D ran to the alley and shot dead a man he saw with an AK-47 and a grenade. Omar Khadr, meanwhile, was seated on the ground in a dusty light-blue tunic, his back to D. Khadr was not armed, he wasn't holding or aiming any sort of weapon, nor was he threatening any U.S. service member in any way. Yet Sergeant Major D testified that he immediately shot him twice in the back. He then walked over and “thumped him in the eye” to see if he was still alive. He was.

Targeting a civilian not actively participating in hostilities is normally a war crime. Sergeant Major D testified that he shot Khadr because he viewed him as a “hostile” based on his being in the compound, which was permitted by the military's rules of engagement.

The laws of war should doom the military commission prosecution of Omar Khadr. And ultimately, for the U.S. government, that's not a bad thing. After all, if its interpretation of the laws of war were accurate, then the armed civilian CIA agent that accompanied Special Forces on their July 2002 raid could be equally guilty of murder in violation of the laws of war if he killed any of the al Qaeda members who died that day. So could CIA operatives operating remote-controlled drones targeting al Qaeda and Taliban leaders around the world.

Charlie Savage reported in the *Times* that the Obama administration doesn't want to put a stop to the case, such as by pushing a plea bargain, because it would be seen as “improper interference.” But if the case is itself

“improper” or even illegal, then the choice is to stop it now or see a conviction reversed later by a court on appeal. The latter choice might save the administration some immediate embarrassment before the midterm elections; but it will leave Omar Khadr cooped up even longer in a military prison on fictitious crimes. And it will leave a far more embarrassing legacy for the United States to contend with in the long run.

Daphne Eviatar is Senior Associate in Human Rights First's Law and Security Program. She investigates and reports on U.S. national security policies and practices and their human rights implications.

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War Crimes Times provides information on war crimes and war criminals, the need to hold war criminals accountable, the many costs of war, and the effects of our war culture on our national character. 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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If certain acts of violation of treaties are crimes, they are crimes whether the United States does them or whether Germany does them...

—Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson, chief U.S. prosecutor at Nuremberg

Plenty of Guns— Seen any Butter?

by Michael T. McPhearson

Across the country people are hurting from the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. Our nation's economy teeters on the brink of a double dip recession. Unemployment remains close to ten percent with millions more who have simply given up searching for a job, but are not officially counted as part of the unemployment rate. Cities and municipalities around the nation have lost tax revenue forcing officials to close schools and parks, layoff workers, and discontinue or reduce important, sometimes life-saving, services.

Cities are rapidly deteriorating as more and more businesses close and homes are foreclosed. There is no one to take care of these empty buildings, so they stand lifeless and begin to crumble. The nation is in fiscal disorder as we continue to run record deficits and an ever-growing debt. In an effort to curtail expenditures, the President has pledged to freeze spending for everything but the military because national security is a top priority. But national security begins at home and more and more people are feeling insecure every day.

Over 1 trillion dollars spent on the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq is certainly not helping our domestic economic security. The money seems to be at best partially, or at worst wholly, wasted on efforts to continue foreign policy objectives that cannot be accomplished by military force. A political solution is needed to bring stability to Afghanistan, but is made less likely every time U.S. forces kill civilians. Civilian deaths cause more anger and distrust leading to more insurgents. Solutions in Iraq are in the hands of the Iraqis, but continued U.S. troop presence is a point of anger for key sections of the population.



A strong economy, with long-term sustainable growth calls for fiscal responsibility and domestic investment in human needs that will also result in new, sustainable jobs. We must spend money to reorient our economy on a path of environmental sustainability, a healthy population, and global competitiveness.

Military spending is the largest portion of the U.S. federal budget and nearly half the world's total expenditure. In 2008, the world's total military spending was \$1.47 trillion with the U.S. portion at \$711 billion or 48%. U.S. 2010 military budget is \$719 billion with increases to \$739 billion projected.

We cannot continue to allow military spending to dominate our budget and at the same time invest in a bright future. Security and defense is essential. But a new foreign policy—much less reliant on military bases and war, with cooperation and pursuit of solving global environmental and human needs challenges at its center—is the only way to ensure global security and economic growth.

Right now we have a war economy. How is it working for you?

Michael T. McPhearson is past executive director of Veterans For Peace.



Vets Hang Banner on Abandoned Hotel to Protest War Spending

DETROIT, June 26—At 2pm, a group of U.S. military veterans hung a large banner on the abandoned Eddystone Hotel, on Sproat St., between Cass and Park, to protest and reveal the effect of war spending on American cities. Members of Veterans For Peace (VFP), attending the U.S. Social Forum, a gathering of over 8,000 activists from across the U.S., created and erected the 10 x 15-foot sign. Detroit has an unemployment rate of 15 percent and 10,000 abandoned homes on the mayor's demolition list.

Taxpayers in Detroit have sent a total of nearly two billion dollars to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The city's 2011 general fund budget of 1.3 billion dollars contains an estimated deficit of 300 million dollars, even after years of cutbacks in services once assumed to be part of urban life. The budget for Detroit schools has a deficit in the same range.

"Detroit, like so many of our cities, is in crisis," said Mike Ferner, National President of VFP. "This crisis is no different than a five-alarm fire and we should respond the same way. Instead, we watch America's cities literally crumble while we pour thousands of lives and trillions of dollars into wars abroad."

John Amidon, President of VFP Chapter 10, added, "It's absolutely criminal that the people who built the U.S. auto industry have to watch their city collapse around them while they send \$2,000,000,000 to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. This is indeed the purest form of madness and it's coming to a city near you."

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies in the final sense a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed.

—Dwight D. Eisenhower

WCT Interview:

Iraq Vets, Iraqi Refugee, Join on Journey for Peace

These are some excerpts, by selected topic, from an edited transcription of an interview aired on VFP-TV and Radio (Asheville, NC), produced by Veterans for Peace Chapter 099 in Western North Carolina. *War Crimes Times* contributing editor Clare Hanrahan conducted the interview which you can read in its entirety at WarCrimesTimes.org.

It's hard to picture Josh Stieber and Conor Curran participating in the terrorism of military occupation. With their affable and thoughtful manner, and without the camouflage of combat uniforms or the lethal weapons they carried in Iraq, the two would pass easily as college students on any American campus. And their friend, Iraqi refugee Salam Hassan, certainly does not fit the stereotype of a terrorist so often used to stir up enmity against the people in his homeland.

Josh Stieber, 22, who joined the Army after graduation from a private Christian high school in Laytonsville MD, was deployed to Iraq in February 2007. Assigned to Bravo Company 2-16, he worked as a humvee driver, machine gunner, detainee guard, and



radio operator. His unit was involved on the ground in the mission depicted in the WikiLeaks video, "Collateral Murder," which revealed a July 2007 shooting of Iraqi civilians from a U.S. Army combat helicopter. Stieber had earlier refused an order he believed to be wrong and was not sent out on the mission that day. After nearly a year of investigation into the sincerity of his claim by the Army Conscientious Objection Review Board, he was released as a Conscientious Objector in 2009.

Turning Against War

WCT: Josh, I read that there were some orders you refused that kept you from being on the ground during that mission depicted in the WikiLeaks video. Did you face harassment from your company friends or the leaders in your platoon? How about the commanders?

Stieber: My friends were actually decently supportive. Yes, some other people I didn't know as well gave me a hard time. But I think it's important to realize that a lot of that is based off of fear. It just kind of gets hammered into people's heads that if you're not ready to squeeze the trigger when somebody says to, then your life or your friends' lives might be lost. A lot of times you do have to be quick to respond. And I couldn't reconcile what we were doing, but people are so fixed in the mindset that you just have to do what you are told or you are putting other people's lives at risk. So it is definitely understandable that I was viewed, at the very least, as a liability. But the people I was able to sit down and talk to more also felt a lot of the practices we had not only didn't make sense but were also in the long run making us less safe. So the people who were actually willing to talk with me about that were more supportive. But the ones who didn't were operating out of that fear mindset.

WCT: So they were willing to release you after you refused orders. I thought

there were more serious consequence for not following orders.

Stieber: No, it's sort of a gradual thing. First I was a gunner, and I refused some orders, so I got shifted over to being in charge of the radios where they figured I'd be less of a liability. And then when I got back from Iraq and it got to the point again where I said I can't keep doing this. My initial plan was to desert from the military, and then I learned about conscientious objection. After a lot of personal debate I decided to go that route. You have to fill out a lot of paper work and answer a bunch of questions and get interviewed by psychologists and chaplains and investigative officers and all these differ-

ent people and then it is all put in a package and forwarded up the ranks for final approval.

WCT: And did that require you say you oppose all wars? So that someone who said that I oppose this particular war and the particular crimes that are being perpetrated in this war, that would not have been enough for you to get a CO status and be released?

Stieber: Correct. I know there are some people working on trying to make it so it is specific wars. But now the policy is all war.

WCT: Conor, your decision came after you had fulfilled four years in the Marine Corps. What kind of stress, or delayed stress that we see in many soldiers—did you have a period of that?

Curran: Definitely. I got out and was diagnosed with PTSD. I wanted to push myself away and distance myself as far as I could from my previous life in the Marine Corps. I did a lot of partying and did that and tried to start building a nice kind of American dream life. Doing that, my thoughts were still based in a lot of fear and anger and judgment, which they had been before the war, and it led me into bad situations with substance abuse and into war, and I still had these thoughts going on, and now I had a lot of added guilt from the war. So I started just being basically forced into a lot of

processing and figuring out what was going on with myself. Otherwise I'm sure I would have self-destructed. Doing that I reflected upon a lot of experiences that I had during the war and situations I was encountering in my present life.

Religious Disconnect

WCT: ...[Josh,] you were raised in a mainstream, evangelical church—one of those mega churches. Did you find when you made your decision to go into the military, were there any dissenting voices in your church? Folks who said, "Hey, wait a minute, think about this." In terms of your Christianity...where was the disconnect?

Stieber: There was one teacher in the school who gave me a couple of articles to look at to maybe raise a few questions. But I didn't really even pay much consideration to that. I was pretty convinced that I was right, and a lot of other people were really supportive of my decision to enlist. And we were reading books in school—the school I went to was part of the church—with titles like, *The Faith of*

A lot of the practices we had not only didn't make sense but were also in the long run making us less safe

George W. Bush, and things like that. So, yeah, I was very convinced that I was doing the right thing and wasn't really interested in hearing about any other perspectives at the time.

Nationalism & Military Recruitment

WCT: ...[Salam,] with your family still [in Iraq], how is it you can come to sit with us, and live in this country where this war is perpetrated through our acquiescence?

Hassan: You know I should be smarter than being drawn into Nationalism ideas. Living across some line doesn't make you with, or against. Actually, like the Canadians live across the border, but if somebody decided the line should cross in their house, I don't think that half of the family I should hate and half of the family I should love because these are Canadians and those are American.

WCT: So you're more of a global citizen?

Hassan: No. It's not about being a global citizen. It's about nationalism itself. Somebody sitting in the government decided that all Iraqis are our enemies... and then anyone who lives on the line of

Iraq—whoever drew that line...That doesn't make me your enemy. You don't know me, I don't know you. And if we could talk, if I like you, then we are friends, and if I don't, then we are not. That is a different idea than say, anyone who holds this kind of paper or that kind of paper...I should be smarter than that.

WCT: We all should be smarter than that. Certainly, and we're not, because for a large part we're all subjected to propaganda...Josh...after 9/11 when the World Trade Towers were attacked...was that an impetus for you to join the military?

Stieber: Definitely. I grew up right outside D.C. and after 9/11, went down with my family and saw the big hole in the Pentagon wall. Pretty much everyone I trusted said if you want to keep things like that from happening again, and if you want to protect the people you care about, then the best way to do that is to go overseas and potentially kill people there before they come here and get us. And so, yeah, I definitely bought into that paranoia.

WCT: And Conor, how did you come to your decision?

Curran: Well, I came to that by basically going to college and doing a good bit of partying and screwing up my life pretty good and just running out of all the resources I had,

to the point where I had no money for college, or to live, basically. I kind of ruined my chances in America and so I started looking for another way out of the situation I had and I didn't see many choices left for me except to join the military. I started looking at the situation going on today and the war as something that, well, hopefully, it will be a win-win for me. I'll go in and get all these benefits and turn my life around, and maybe the war will bring Democracy to Iraq and all these good things as well. So the motivating factors for me were personal, as I think they were for so many other guys that went in—whether to support families with hard financial situations at home, or get money for college—so many people joined that way. I think actual patriotism and idealism is there and present in these individuals, but it is a few notches down the list of reasons they joined, as it was for me.

WCT: I don't know the situation of the [Iraqi] military in Iraq.

Hassan: In Iraq the military is mandatory.

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Interview

(Continued from page 4)

And so everyone who comes to be 18 and is not in school, they have to go to the military. Even if you go to school, after you finish all your schooling you will go to the military for a minimum of a year and a half.

WCT: Are there serious consequences for young men and women who may feel they cannot, in conscience, join the military?

Hassan: You will get executed.

Lessons from Another Culture

Curran: One experience that really stuck with me during the war was an instance where a man, whose house we were raiding and [we] just basically destroyed his yard and house, served us tea while we were destroying this. When he was serving us tea, there was no kind of fear or anything in him. He was just coming from a place of pure compassion. That kind of planted a seed in me that told me I don't have to always come at things preparing for the worst-case scenario and living in judgments of what I am going to do in this situation or that, or how to deal with certain people. He showed me I could go into situations, even hard ones filled with anger and hate, I could go into these situations with love and compassion and have amazing, transforming effects from doing that. Looking back on that experience and seeing what kind of effect it had on me and trying to practice that in my own life, gave that idea a concrete foundation in my life that acting with compassion and love does have this amazing transforming power. I started doing that and I started feeling this freedom from the one path that I had been taught I had to go down. I now had two paths, and I had freedom. And I started feeling a lot of joy and healing from this path that this Iraqi man gave me.

WCT: So that man had the courage,



Conor Curran, 26, of Perrysburg, Ohio, served two tours in Iraq as a U.S. Marine. He enlisted after running out of money before he could finish college. He reached the rank of Sergeant, and was discharged after four years. His first tour was spent as part of a team clearing roadside bombs between Fallujah and Ramadi.

In the next deployment, he was attached to an infantry company working out of Ramadi. Curran met Stieber when he came through Ohio on a cross-country bicycle tour and stayed with the Curran family. The two veterans teamed up to complete Stieber's "Contagious Love Experiment" tour, and then travelled together on the Journey For Peace.

faced by an armed group of people coming into his home and doing damage, to walk out among you and look you in the eye. That would be quite transforming. What bravery on his part.

WCT: Salam, what is it in that man? How could he do that? Is that a particular quality you have seen in many people in Iraq in the face of this occupation?

Hassan: I would think that it is the tradition itself. For many thousands of years in Iraq people are taught that compassion and hospitality can change a mindset. ...and when you appreciate somebody's presence in your house, no matter what they are doing, it can transform the way they are thinking. I think part of it is that this man, he didn't mean to say, "I'm going to transform this guy to make him nice," but he was acting from the way that he wanted to be, not from what he wants others to be. You can find that in Iraq very easy because Iraq wasn't exposed to the Western ideas...so there were no Western thoughts of Individualism or greed, or this is mine, or materialism.

WCT: So Josh, in your 14 months in Iraq...Can you talk to me about any experiences, moments, or people you encountered that you think made this worthwhile, worth your time.

Stieber: There were a lot of things, but two that really stand out. One thing that really impressed me, I had to stand guard in a tower for multiple hours a day, it was overlooking a highway, and a lot of cars in Iraq are pretty old and it is pretty frequent that they would break down.... but standing there in the tower, almost any time a car would break down there would only be another car or two that passed before someone swerved over to try and help that person out.

The other big thing was the joy of the children in Iraq. We were in a pretty poor part of town and we would see these kids just playing with trash all the time and having fun jumping over sewerage trenches. I just thought back to how I grew up and had all these different toys and grew so bored of them and don't remember having so much fun as these kids did just playing with trash. It helped redirect me toward embracing simplicity, and realizing you don't need anything fancy or expensive to find joy, that a lot of times it is in the simple things and who you are spending time with.

Sanctions

WCT: [Salam,] during the period you were growing up.... you would have struggled through the sanctions that were imposed that... took the culture down from a thriving country of highly literate, cultured people and robbed them of the wherewithal for basic living. Is that correct?

Hassan: It came to the point that people couldn't even afford basic food—no matter how many people were working in the house. ...It destroyed the economic situation of the family. So when the war started 13 years after the sanctions started, that devastated the country. The salary of the soldier was \$5 a month, and it cost, say \$2 for a sandwich.

WCT: Very difficult to survive. Were people able to leave?

Hassan: There were people who made it to Jordan. That is the only country that

Salam Talib Hassan,

a computer specialist, journalist, photographer and translator, has written extensively about the situation on the ground in Iraq. Hassan survived the U.S.-U.N. sanctions and the U.S. occupation that is devastating Iraq. Childhood polio exempted him from compulsory military service. Hassan hosted Stieber and Curran at his Berkeley home during their California stay. The three soon became fast friends, and Hassan joined the tour which brought them to Asheville.



was open to an Iraqi passport. And still today there are only two countries that will give

you a visa to get in.... It's not easy just to go....

WikiLeaks Video / Military Culture

WCT: So Josh, you were talking about the video that was leaked on WikiLeaks and I understand you said that these soldiers there were doing exactly what they were trained to do. They were responding in these circumstances in ways they were systematically trained to do, as you both were trained to, as you said, "Pull that trigger without thinking." I wonder in your training, also, did any of it include conversations about the Nuremberg principles and the duty to refuse illegal orders? Was that part of your training how one would go about doing that? I would think it would be difficult to discern in the spur of the moment what moral, ethical and legal realities there are when you are in the heat of battle. Did you get grounding in Nuremberg?

Stieber: Not that I can remember. I would say that the training went to kind of a blurred line between what is morally responsible and what is not. I think the goal is to just be quick to listen to whatever you are told and the biggest wrong thing you can do is to ask questions. Every once in a while it might get paid lip service, yeah, you don't accept an illegal order, but for the most part, even through training, the lines would get blurred whether it was watching videos of bombs being dropped on Middle Eastern

villages, or people being shot and singing rock and roll music to it, or screaming lines like "Kill them all and let God sort them out." I'd say the training was not things like the Nuremberg principles or the Geneva conventions. It was of getting you used to having that line blurred and used to just responding to what you were told.

Curran: In the Marines we mentioned it, even in boot camp, a little bit. But almost every time that was brought up we would be going through the legalisms for our service and it would always get mentioned with the Military Code of Justice...and instantly get the reminder that there are two articles in the Code of Justice saying you can be court-martialed for disobeying an order from a senior non-commissioned officer, and an article for disobeying a commissioned officer. It was very clear that if we wanted to question these things, and the question we brought up wasn't completely legitimate and well thought out, we would be taken down for it. And I think this instilled this level of fear that just led to non-questioning. I know, after our time in Iraq, and in training they are now instituting, things such as [Iraqis] talking on cell phones or taking pictures were sometimes followed by IED attacks, and they were part of roadside bombing attacks and so even the normal parts of our everyday life, that we take for granted here, became reason for orders to be issued to kill people, often times innocent people. But among the level of the troops, these questionable things for the rest of us, they saw enough of a reason to fear the actions of normal day life for the Iraqi people, so that the questions that should have been brought up weren't. There were enough terrible incidents happening that people were afraid of these incidents, or they were afraid to be wrong about something and of being court-martialed.

Support Our Troops?

WCT: What can the peace movement do to make it easier and to support these soldiers who may be struggling with

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Iraq, Afghanistan Vets Demand Prosecution of Bush War Criminals

At its seventh annual national convention in Austin, Texas, Iraq Veterans Against the War called for the prosecution of senior Bush administration officials for allegedly conspiring to manipulate intelligence in order to justify the U.S. invasion of Iraq.

IVAW alleges that Bush administration officials con-

spired to create the perception that Saddam Hussein presented an imminent threat to the United States in order to bypass an uncooperative U.N. Security Council and secure a congressional Authorization for Use of Military Force against Iraq. The growing body of evidence, including testimony from British offi-

cial in the ongoing Chilcot Inquiry, indicates that Bush officials could be charged with criminal offenses against the United States and violations of international law for making false claims to national self-defense.

Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution vests the power to authorize use of mili-

tary force in the Legislative Branch, not the Executive. In order to do so responsibly the Congress must be provided with accurate and objective intelligence. Bush officials' alleged distortion of the intelligence picture created a climate of fear and uncertainty in which the constitutional power of Congress was subverted.

IVAW further alleges that the Bush administration's alterations to Iraqi laws were made for the intended benefit of U.S. multinational corporations and are illegal under international law. Efforts to pressure Iraqi officials to open up the country's oil industry to foreign investment exacerbated the insurgency and undermined the U.S. military's ostensible mission there.

IVAW finally asserts that senior Bush officials are responsible for the illegal treatment of Iraqi and Afghan officials in U.S. custody and that this treatment was detrimental to the security of American citizens.

Tens and perhaps hundreds of thousands of deaths have resulted from the Bush administration's disastrous invasion and occupation of Iraq.



Millions of Iraqis have been internally displaced and hundreds of thousands are forced to subsist as refugees in neighboring countries. Thousands of American men and women have lost their lives and tens of thousands suffer from wounds sustained while fighting there. Families and communities across the United States are now suffering from veteran suicides, homelessness, substance abuse and domestic violence. The long-term cost of this war, including the provision of VA support for our returning veterans, is estimated to run into the trillions.

It is time for America to hold the officials responsible for this war to account for their decisions. On behalf of the Iraqis and Americans who have sacrificed everything to restore stability to Iraq, IVAW calls for justice.

Resolution in Support of the Prosecution of Senior Bush Administration Officials for War Crimes

Alleging the Bush administration's premeditated manipulation of intelligence to justify the invasion of Iraq;

Understanding that the manufactured public perception of an imminent threat to the United States led to military action that would otherwise have been considered illegal under constitutional and international law;

Affirming that Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution vests the power to authorize hostilities in the Legislative branch, not the Executive, and recognizing that in order to do so responsibly the former must be provided accurate and objective intelligence;

Acknowledging the tens and perhaps hundreds of thousands of deaths that have resulted from the U.S. invasion of Iraq;

Alleging the Bush administration's illegal authorization of torture and coercive interrogation against detainees in Iraq and Afghanistan;

Alleging the Bush administration's self-interested alterations to Iraqi economic, financial and other laws as illegal under international law, which the United States as occupying power is bound to adhere to;

Alleging the Bush administration's support of U.S. oil companies' efforts to gain control over Iraqi oil fields while the country remained under military occupation;

Understanding how these alleged acts fueled the insurgency and resulted in increased casualties on all sides;

Recognizing further how these alleged acts contributed to terrorist recruitment into Al Qaeda, to the detriment of the security of American citizens;

Interpreting the U.S. Attorney General's declination to prosecute former Bush administration officials for these alleged crimes as due to a lack of political resolve stemming from insufficient sustained public pressure;

Understanding that prosecution of these officials is vital and necessary in order to prevent future, more egregious violations of the Constitution and international law, which Bush administration officials allegedly subverted;

IVAW hereby declares its support for the prosecution of senior Bush administration officials as a matter of justice, accountability, and the rule of law.

(INTERVIEW from page 5)

these questions?

Curran: I think that so many soldiers and military personnel over there quickly lose their idealism about war—but no other option and no way out. So just being able to explain their basic rights to them—like Josh and I had no idea what conscientious objector status was for the majority of our time in the service. Just being able to communicate simple ideas like that can make a world of difference to someone struggling with ideas like, “Hey, what I’m seeing going on here isn’t right, but it’s the only path, right?”

WCT: How might we get information like that into the hands of these soldiers who right now might be struggling?

Curran: There are huge organizations that send care packages out to the soldiers in Iraq all the time, saying like “Thank you for your service and here’s some candy, and keep doing the hard fight.” What if peace

groups starting doing the same support outreach that so many more fundamentalist churches are doing. They support the troops with huge amounts of care packages and literature.

What if peace groups started doing that—saying, hey, I appreciate the sacrifice you are willing to make to make the world a better place. But here is some literature. Look at these different paths you can take. There are nonviolent ways to do these things. And here are some candy bars to eat while thinking it over.

It's the System

WCT: [Salam,] you’ve said, rather than taking our judgment out on those individual soldiers, we need to hold the entire system accountable...What are some ideas?

Hassan: From an outsider view, I think we have to reduce the amount of violence in the family itself first. What happens for someone like Conor or Josh, from

the age of 18 they think that to be tough or to be violent, it is the cool thing to do, and you can’t be not violent or hard on yourself or others. That is the hero thing to do. I think that starts from childhood, in the movies, in the cartoon, in every single aspect of life here. Instead of giving them a toy to be peaceful to play with, they give them a gun to play with, and paint balls. The aspect of the whole society is built somehow on the idea that violent people are the heroes. So I think that’s a good start for us to hold the system accountable by fighting back the system. The Military is exactly a company; they want to promote those ideas, which are violent, and how to use a gun. If you asked any child in the U.S. what an M-16 was, he would know what an M-16 was because he learned it from the games, the video games...

Stieber: ...Not only the video games and media...but the way we were educated. I remember in high school learning

(See INTERVIEW on page 8)

Remember Fallujah?

by Ross Caputi

On the eve that the air assault ended and Operation Phantom Fury (the 2nd siege of Fallujah) began, I found myself sitting in a fighting hole about a klick outside of Fallujah. My unit sat there anxiously watching what looked like a fireworks show, as the flashes of everything from 500-pound bombs to 2,000-pound bombs lit Fallujah up like the 4th of July.

At a certain point I saw a spark, and then a cluster of glowing white balls slowly descending in the direction of Fallujah. It was white phosphorous, which I knew could easily melt through an engine block, and as I watched it drifting in the wind I wondered how we could be using such an inaccurate and deadly weapon. I asked the lieutenant closest to me if this was legal, and he replied to me that it was because we were using it as a smoke screen rather than using it offensively.

I had stopped believing what my chain of command told me long before that night, but I convinced myself that I had no choice but to finish my deployment. I told myself that I had only made one mistake, and that was joining the Marine Corps. Everything that happened from the day that I arrived at boot camp until the moment I found myself in a fighting hole sitting outside of Fallujah was not my fault, and that I was a victim of circumstance. But none of that was true, and I am only able to recognize now, six years later, that everyday that I laced my boots up I made a choice. I chose to participate in what I knew in my gut to be wrong, rather than choosing not to participate. There were consequences with either choice, but they *were* choices, and there was only one choice that would have allowed me to leave Iraq without blood on my hands.

My unit was inserted into the center of Fallujah almost a day later at roughly 0400 hours. I was part of Headquarters Platoon because my chain of command hated my unenthusiastic attitude, and they wanted me to be around authority at all times. I became the Captain's radio operator, or rather his mule that carried heavy things for him.

As soon as we stepped off the tracks, the other platoons

quickly cleared the police station and the mayor's complex, and then Headquarters Platoon moved to the roof of the police station to make radio transmissions. I put up our antenna and then passed the headset to the Captain. The police station was tall enough that we could see all of Fallujah. The horizon was just beginning to turn orange, and the city was dimly lit, silent, and eerie. Tan, square houses stretched as far as we could see in all directions, with innumerable minarets poking up out of the dense neighborhoods and pointing to the sky. Fallujah's big blue domed mosque sat only a couple hundred meters away.

The guys in my unit were tired, frustrated, lied to, and afraid...

Our higher-ups made it perfectly clear that dissent would not be tolerated.

It was a recipe for disaster, and some might correctly call it an atrocity-producing situation, because that is exactly what happened next.

The Captain coordinated with different platoons and squads around our position over the radio, until the sun poked its head over the horizon and Morning Prayer sounded over the loud speakers across the city. As soon as the prayer ended gunfire rang out in the distance, and it continued and intensified throughout the day.

Headquarters Platoon moved to the roof of the mayors complex where we quickly found ourselves pinned down by sniper and rocket fire. Within a few hours we took our first casualty; Lieutenant Malcolm was hit by sniper fire. Gunnery Sergeant Ramos suddenly appeared on the scene. Gunnery Sergeant Ramos hated me more than any of my other higher-ups, and as soon as he saw me he ordered me to run across an open field, through sniper fire, to get a box of chow. Two weeks later he said to me, "Hey boy, how did you like it when I made you run for your life to get that box of chow?"



Maybe that will give you some incentive to start doing what you're told."

Rockets and machine gunfire continued throughout the day, and some of the guys in my unit finally got something that they had been taught since boot camp that they should want—a kill.

Around noontime we saw our first group of civilians trying to cross the street with a white flag. We had been told that all civilians had left the city, and when we lifted our heads to look at them, sniper fire began to crack over our heads. Everyone around me immediately jumped to the conclusion that the civilians were working with the insurgents, helping to draw us out from behind our cover. The gunfire continued until the sun went down and Evening Prayer sounded, after which there was total silence.

The first day of the siege was over, and the stage was set for what was to come. The guys in my unit, the low men on the totem pole, were tired, frustrated, lied to, and afraid (whether they admitted it or not). Plus, a new element had been added to the equation—killing.

Some of us believed there were no civilians left in the city, and some of us believed that the civilians were aiding the insurgents. Our higher-ups told us that over 2,000 hardcore insurgents of Zarqawi's army had chosen to stay in the city and fight, that we were all going to make history, and they made it perfectly clear that dissent would not be tolerated. It was a recipe for disaster, and some might correctly call it an atrocity-producing situation, because that is exactly what happened next.

For the next two weeks we went house-to-house searching for bad guys. As soon as Morning Prayer would finish the gunfire would begin, and it did not stop until Evening Prayer finished. I watched good people in my unit become sick in a matter of days. The violence twisted our minds and became a self-fueling fire in itself. Looting became commonplace, and some of us even rifled through the pockets of dead resistance fighters hoping to find cash. A handful of us went around mutilating the bodies of the dead resistance fighters. One guy slit a puppy's throat because he could not stand its crying. At a certain point a friend came running up to me with a smile on his face,

"Caputi, I finally shot someone!" he said to me. The sudden onset of violence affected everyone, even all the way up the chain of command. They were

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Fallujah

(Continued from page 7)

aware that all this was happening, but they let it continue. We began using tactics like bulldozing houses, and “reconnaissance by fire.”

Reconnaissance by fire is when you fire into a house to see if people are inside. If you hear silence after firing, then there is nobody in the house, at least nobody that is alive. If you hear moaning or shouting then there might be resistance fighters in the house, or there might be civilians. At one point we came to a house with two resistance fighters and a little boy inside. I have no idea if there were any attempts made to negotiate or to save that boy’s life in some way, but I watched as we shot grenades into that house until the roof crumbled down on all three of them.

Without even seeing it coming, I joined the long legacy of American soldiers and Marines who unwittingly helped kill innocents to build an empire.

For years I tried to forget Fallujah, and I stopped watching the news and reading the newspaper. When I could no longer stand the people in my home town thanking me for my “service” and treating me like a king for the “sacrifice” that I made, I packed my bags and moved to Italy. But without realizing it I was joining another long standing legacy; this one of soldiers and Marines who committed atrocities and then let the truth slip down the memory hole.

As much as I tried I could never completely put Fallujah out of my mind. It was always there preventing me from looking people in the eye. Years passed, and I eventually gave up and admitted to myself that Fallujah would always be the skeleton in my closet. It would never go away and I could not hide from it. And I was exactly right. Fallujah had not gone away, and it remains one of the most miserable places on this planet.

It was years after the siege when I first learned about the estimated number of civilians killed in the siege (I have heard numbers from 500 to 1,000 depending on the source) and about the number of refugees that the siege created (over 200,000). Only recently have I learned about the health crisis that we caused.

Since the sieges in 2004, Fallujah has seen a spike in infant mortality rates, birth defects, and cancer. Children are being born horribly deformed, or with missing limbs, or mentally retarded, or with scaly skin. There has been one case of a child born with three heads, and another of a child born with one eye in the center of his forehead. The leading research is pointing to depleted uranium weapons as the cause.

It is not easy but today I can admit that I am complicit in all of this, even if I never pulled the trigger. Everyday that I chose to ignore that feeling in my gut telling me that we were doing something wrong, I was complicit. And every day after I got out of the Marine Corps and remained silent, I was complicit. I cannot go on making the same mistakes that I made in the past, and only think about what is good for me. That is why I helped form the Justice for Fallujah Project, and that is why we are organizing the first annual Remember Fallujah Week this year.

Although Americans may choose to forget Fallujah, the rest of the world will not. Fallujah will remain a symbol of occupation and cruelty, and unless we confront it, it will disappear down the memory hole, and the next generation of Americans will never understand what the rest of the world is so angry about.

Ross Caputi, a Marine veteran of the Iraq War (2003-2006), is President of Boston University Anti-War Coalition. Learn more at thefallujahproject.org.



Interview

(Continued from page 6)

about things like the atomic bomb, and learning how, at the very worst, it was strategically debatable, but never that it was morally wrong or anything along those lines. So when things come out like the WikiLeaks video or instances where civilians are being killed—and it’s in the headlines, if you look close enough. I think that reaction, through how we study history, of saying all these people got hurt using the atomic bomb, but it was justified, it slowly gets ingrained. So that you can say, there are cases where it’s acceptable to do that kind of thing. Another thing, if people really want to change things, is really to push for peace education in the schools. The three of us have all spent some time visiting high schools and say, if we want to start handling problems differently we need to change the way we educate our young people.

Final Thoughts

WCT: Salam, you have said that we are not natural enemies and that in different circumstances we would be friends. And we see that right here today. How can we make amends to the Iraqi people?

Hassan: When you say Iraqis, it just means the nationalism again, and American means nationalism again. I personally think they are both just humans. They relate very easy. It’s not Quantum physics or anything. You just put those people together and have a cup of tea, and they will be just fine. There are grudges that are being built by the system makers. They put them next to each other and they say, you hold the gun—and the other one is shot. The environment that is being created is not a friendly environment for dating. It is an environment for killing. I think that as soon as we can stop that approach—one is the victim and one is the killer—we will get closer to this idea that a cup of tea will solve the problem. But twenty years from now, a cup of tea will not solve

the problem. So we need people to relate to this idea to separate themselves from the government as much as possible and try to approach Iraq saying, look, there is a government, and there are the people. Iraqis are so qualified to know that, because they had Saddam for so long. They know that the government is one thing, and they are something else. They can relate to many people like that. Even though the American government sounds so democratic from the outside—they do what people want to happen—but people inside America know that is not true. If we can just break this propaganda, that will help a lot in breaking this cycle

We are all people and we probably have more in common with the people we are told to hate than with the people who are telling us to hate.

of hate....I see these two soldiers, I know their circumstances. The best way to judge anything is to put yourself in the place of the other person. If I was raised in America, and I had my family and everyone saying, go defend your country and go kill everyone, I would hold the gun and go kill

people. But when I get to a certain age...with a full knowledge and conscious position, and I still do that, then I should be held accountable.

Stieber: The three of us are traveling to try and build on this idea that we are people no matter where we have come from. We need to stop listening to our leaders who tell us who we are supposed to hate, and say, “No!” We are all people and we probably have more in common with the people we are told to hate than with the people who are telling us to hate. On our tour we will be joined by some children from Gaza and in our speaking events we connect through Skype to children in Afghanistan to try to show that people are people. To quote a bumper sticker, “What if they threw a war and nobody came?” We hope that by including all these voices and showing our common humanity, that the next time they say who to hate, we will say, “No!” We’ve been told to hate people in the past, and we’ve seen the mistake in that, and we will be less likely to do that in the future.

Clare Hanrahan is a member of VFP Chapter 099, a member of the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee, and an organizer with War Resisters League Asheville.

Iraq Debacle

(Continued from page 1)

creating a lifetime of suffering and economic hardship for them, their communities and the entire nation as it struggles to rebuild. Life expectancy for Iraqis fell from 71 years in 1996 to 67 years in 2007 due to the war and destruction of the healthcare system. The U.S. use of weapons such as depleted uranium and white phosphorous has taken a severe toll, with the cancer rate in Fallujah, for example, now worse than that of Hiroshima.

*** The majority of the refugees and internally displaced persons created by the U.S. intervention have been abandoned.** Of the nearly 4 million refugees, many are now living in increasingly desperate circumstances in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and around the world. As undocumented refugees, most are not allowed to work and are forced to take extremely low paying, illegal jobs (\$3/day) or rely on the UN and charity to survive.

The United Nations refugee agency (UNHCR) has documented a spike in the sex trafficking of Iraqi women.

*** Iraq still does not have a functioning government.** Many months after the March 7 elections, there is still a political vacuum and violence that is killing roughly 300 civilians a month. There is no functioning democracy in place and little sign there will be one in the near future.

*** The Iraq War has left a terrible toll on the U.S. troops.** More than one million American service members have been deployed in the Iraq War effort. Over 4,400 U.S. troops have been killed and tens of thousands severely injured. More than one in four U.S. troops have come home from the Iraq war with health problems that require medical or mental health treatment. PTSD rates in the military have skyrocketed. In 2009, a record number of 245 soldiers committed suicide.

*** The war has drained our treasury.** As of August 2010, U.S. taxpayers have spent over \$750 billion on the Iraq War

effort. Counting the cost of lifetime care of wounded vets and the interest payments on the money we borrowed to pay for this war, the real cost will be in the trillions. This misappropriation of funds has contributed to the economic crises we are experiencing, including the lack of funds for our schools, healthcare, infrastructure and investments in clean, green jobs.

*** The U.S. officials who got us into this disastrous war on the basis of lies have not been held accountable.** Not George Bush, Dick Cheney, Condoleezza Rice, Colin Powell, Karl Rove, Donald Rumsfeld. No one. Neither have the Bush administration lawyers who authorized torture, including Jay Bybee and John Yoo. The “think tanks,” journalists, and pundits who perpetuated the lies have not been fired—most are today cheerleading for the war in Afghanistan.

*** The war has led to the pillaging of Iraqi resources.** The U.S. Department of Defense has been unable to

account for \$8.7 billion of Iraqi oil and gas money meant for humanitarian needs and reconstruction after the 2003 invasion. The invasion has also led to the dismantling of Iraqi government control over the nation's oil. In 2001, Vice President Dick Cheney's energy task force, which included executives of America's largest energy companies, recommended opening up areas of their energy sectors to foreign investment. The resulting Iraq Oil Law has led to the global grab for Iraq's resources.

*** The war has not made us more secure.** The U.S. policy of torture, extraordinary rendition, indefinite detention, violent and deadly raids on civilian homes, gunning down innocent civilians in the streets, and absence of habeas corpus has fueled the fires of hatred and extremism toward Americans. The very presence of our troops in Iraq and other Muslim nations has become a recruiting tool.

Given the above, we, the undersigned individuals and organizations, mark the occasion of this partial troop withdrawal by call-

ing on the Administration and Congress to take the following actions:

*** Withdrawal of all U.S. troops and military contractors from Iraq and the closing of all U.S. bases;**

*** Reparations to help the Iraqis repair their basic infrastructure and increased funds for the millions of internally and externally displaced Iraqis;**

*** Full support for the U.S. troops who suffer from the internal and external wounds of war;**

*** Prosecution of those officials responsible for dragging our country into this disaster;**

*** Transfer of funds from war into resources to rebuild America, with a focus on green jobs.**

*** The lessons of this disastrous intervention should also be an impetus for Congress and the administration to end the war in Afghanistan. It's time to focus on creating real security here at home and rebuilding America.**

The Coalition: * Veterans For Peace * Bay Area Labor Committee for Peace & Justice * CODEPINK: Women for Peace * Community Organizing Center * Courage to Resist * Fellowship of Reconciliation * Global Exchange * Institute for Policy Studies' New Internationalism Project * Iraq Veterans Against the War * Jeannette Rankin Peace Center * Just Foreign Policy * Mid-Missouri Peaceworks * Military Families Speak Out * Pax Christi - USA * Under the Hood * U.S. Labor Against the War * Voices for Creative Nonviolence * Voters for Peace * War Is a Crime

YOU WILL NOT HEAR (Continued from page 1)

world and their demographics. It defines slum dwellers as those living in urban centers without one of the following: durable structures to protect them from climate, sufficient living area, sufficient access to water, access to sanitation facilities, and freedom from eviction.

Almost intentionally hidden in these statistics is one shocking fact about urban Iraqi populations. For the past few decades, prior to the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, the percentage of the urban population living in slums in Iraq hovered just below 20 percent. Today, that percentage has risen to 53 percent: 11 million of the 19 million total urban dwellers. In the past decade, most countries have made progress toward reducing slum dwellers. But Iraq has gone rapidly and dangerously in the opposite direction.

According to the U.S. Census of 2000, 80 percent of the 285 million people living in the United States are urban dwellers. Those living in slums are well below 5 percent. If we translate the Iraqi statistic into the U.S. context, 121 million people in the United States would be living in slums.

If the United States had an unemployment rate of 25-50 percent and 121 million people living in slums, riots would ensue, the military would take over, and democracy would evaporate. So why are people in the United States not concerned and saddened by the conditions in Iraq? Because most people in the United States do not know what happened in Iraq and what is happening there now. Our government, including the current administration, looks

the other way and perpetuates the myth that life has improved in post-invasion Iraq. Our major news media reinforce this message.

I had high hopes that the new administration would tell the truth to its citizens about why we invaded Iraq and what we are doing currently in the country. President Obama promised to move forward and not look to the past. However problematic this refusal to examine the past—particularly for historians—the president should at least inform the U.S. public of the current conditions in Iraq. How else can we expect our government to formulate appropriate policy?

More extensive congressional hearings on Iraq might have allowed us to learn about the myths propagated about Iraq prior to the invasion and the extent of the damage and destruction our invasion brought on Iraq. We would have learned about the tremendous increase in urban poverty and the expansion of city slums. Such facts about the current conditions of Iraq would help U.S. citizens to better understand the impact of the quick U.S. withdraw and what are our moral responsibilities in Iraq should be.

Adil E. Shamoo is a senior analyst at Foreign Policy In Focus, and a professor at the University of Maryland School of Medicine. He writes on ethics and public policy.

Blowing the whistle on a war crime is not a crime

Army intel analyst Bradley Manning faces decades in prison for allegedly leaking a video of a US helicopter attack that killed 11 civilians and wounded two children in Baghdad, Iraq. The Army covered up the evidence and declared the war crime "justified". Now they claim that exposing the massacre is criminal.

Join the international movement to **Free Bradley Manning**

US Army intelligence analyst imprisoned for exposing a war crime.

Bradley Manning Support Network
BradleyManning.org ★ Courage to Resist.org

Afghanistan: a U.S. view

by Sheldon Richman

Thanks to WikiLeaks and heroic leakers inside the military, we now know the U.S. government has killed many more innocent Afghan civilians than we were aware of heretofore. We also know that American military and intelligence personnel roam Afghanistan assassinating suspected bad guys. Sometimes they kill people they later acknowledge weren't bad guys at all.

"Bad guys," like "Taliban," is implicitly defined as anyone who resists the U.S. occupation force and the corrupt puppet government it keeps in power.

What other atrocities are our misleaders and misrepresentatives committing in our name?

Let's get something straight: to be an enemy of American occupation, bombing, and "nation building" is not the same thing as being an enemy of America or its people. It's time Americans understood that.

When you invade another country and people there object, even forcibly, they are not aggressors. You are. To understand this, imagine our being invaded by a foreign military force. Would resistance be aggression?

The U.S. government goes to appalling lengths to deny this truth. It is about to try before a military commission a young Canadian, Omar Ahmed Khadr, who was taken into custody in Afghanistan eight years ago when he was 15 years old. The charge? War crimes, among them "murder in violation of the rules of war," which lawyer Chase Madar calls "a newly minted war crime novel to the history of armed conflict."

Khadr was captured after a four-hour firefight between American forces and so-called militants in the village of Ayub Kheyl near Kabul, during which the Afghans' homes were flattened by 500-pound bombs. One American died later from wounds inflicted by a grenade. Reports conflict, but Khadr was shot several times in the chest and back, then later was found under the rubble, unconscious and seriously wounded—he lost an eye from shrapnel.

Taken to Bagram Airbase, where the U.S. government maintains a prison, Khadr received some medical treatment and was interrogated about his role that day.

When you invade another country and people there object, even forcibly, they are not aggressors. You are.

He was thought to have information about al-Qaeda, since his father was a jihadist and knew Osama bin Laden. Khadr says he was denied pain killers, subjected to what can only be called torture, and forced to do hard work, aggravating his wounds.

It was only after this torture that he said he had helped the militants because America was at war with Islam. Despite Canada's request, Khadr was transferred to the prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where he was again tortured and kept in solitary confinement for long spells.

He claims that because of the torture he gave false confessions, including that he threw a grenade.



Later he said he had no recollection of throwing a grenade and was in fact rendered unconscious by an American-caused explosion.

Unfortunately, the presiding judge has refused to exclude Khadr's statements made under torture and other cruel treatment, such as threats of gang rape. Militarily commissions are as much the travesty of justice that candidate Obama said they were in 2008. But now he's in charge.

Even if Khadr threw the grenade and killed an American, how can that be a war crime? At worst his actions look like self-defense but at any rate, fighters in combat aren't typically charged with murder.

Is the American military to be permitted to go anywhere the politicians wish and expect the people of the invaded countries meekly to accept their fate and pledge allegiance to the United States? Would we receive an invader that way?

The U.S. government and its well-paid military contractors have an agenda in the Middle East and South Central Asia that has nothing to do with the welfare or safety of average Americans.

On the contrary, it is bankrupting them and has made them targets of revenge. There's a simple way to keep American military personnel safe: bring them home.

Obama has shown himself to be worse than his predecessor and the neo-conservative empire enthusiasts. His promises to leave Iraq and Afghanistan are hedged so thick that we can expect the occupations to continue for many years ... all in our name. Despite Obama's words, the death and destruction at America's hands are not nearing an end.

Sheldon Richman is senior fellow at The Future of Freedom Foundation (www.fff.org) and editor of The Freeman magazine.

CIA wants to cover up U.S. war crimes in Yemen

by Paul Woodward

A missile strike on December 17 in Yemen last year that killed 41 people including 21 children and 14 women was most likely the result of a U.S. cruise missile strike—an opening shot in a U.S. military campaign that began without notice and has never been officially confirmed.

Amnesty International says it has obtained photographs apparently showing the remnants of missiles known to be held only by U.S. forces at the site of the air strike against al Qaeda suspects.

"The Yemeni authorities have a duty to ensure public safety and to bring to justice those engaged in attacks that deliberately target members of the public, but when doing so they must abide by international law," said Malcolm Smart, Amnesty International's Director for the Middle East and North Africa Programme. "Enforced disappearances, torture and other ill-treatment, and extrajudicial executions are never

permissible, and the Yemeni authorities must immediately cease these violations."

"It is particularly worrying that states such as Saudi Arabia and the USA are directly or indirectly aiding the Yemeni government in a downward spiral away from previously improving human rights record."

The *Washington Post* now reports that the CIA is likely to have a larger role in President Obama's expanding war in Yemen:

"Proponents of expanding the CIA's role argue that years of flying armed drones over Pakistan have given the agency expertise in identifying targets and delivering pinpoint strikes. The agency's attacks also leave fewer telltale signs.

'You're not going to find bomb parts with USA markings on them,' the senior U.S. official said."

Paul Woodward has run War in Context <http://warincontext.org> since 2002 and can be found at Twitter <http://twitter.com/warincontext>.

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John Heuer of Pittsboro, NC, wrote to us: "Congratulations on another excellent edition of WCT!... I am sending a [generous donation]. I would like a bundle of 90 for local distribution here in the North Carolina Triangle, as well as subscriptions for NC congressmembers and senators who might not yet be receiving WCT.... Again, many thanks for your extraordinary efforts..."

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But thanks to donors like John—and Paul Appell of Altona, IL; James MacKinnon of Asheville, NC; Ed Barone of Brooklyn, NY; Tom Dooley of St. Paul, MN; and others, we're able to keep the bringing you the paper.

Please consider a generous (or a modest) donation. Thanks,

The *War Crimes Times* Team

Change we can't believe in:

Business as Usual in Iraq

by Marjorie Cohn

September 13—Last week, President Obama ceremoniously announced that U.S. combat operations had ended in Iraq. As Democrats face an uphill battle in the upcoming midterm elections, Obama felt he had to make good on his campaign promise to move the fighting from Iraq to Afghanistan. But while he has escalated the killing in Afghanistan, it's business as usual in Iraq.

The United States, with its huge embassy in Baghdad and five large bases throughout Iraq, will continue to pull the strings there. Last week, Vice President Biden delivered a power-sharing plan to the Iraqis, who have been unable to form a government in the six months since the March election resulted in a stalemate. "We think that's better for the future of Iraq," Biden declared. The *New York Times* speculated about whether "the Americans can close the deal." But the United States will continue to do a lot more than simply make suggestions about how Iraqis should share political power.

The timing of Obama's announcement that combat troops are leaving Iraq is based on the status of forces agreement (SOFA) the Bush administration negotiated with the Iraqis in 2008. It calls for U.S. combat troops to leave Iraq by August 31, 2010. The SOFA also requires the Pentagon to withdraw all of its forces by the end of 2011, but this date may be extended.

Obama's speech about withdrawing combat troops from Iraq is an effort to demonstrate compliance with the SOFA as the midterm elections draw near. But events on the ground reveal that he is playing a political version of the old shell game. As Obama proclaimed the redeployment of a Stryker battalion out of Iraq, 3,000 combat troops from the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment redeployed back into Iraq from Fort Hood, Texas. And that cavalry regiment will have plenty of company. The State Department is more than doubling its "security contractors" to 7,000 to make sure U.S. interests are protected. And with them will come 24 Blackhawk helicopters, 50 Mine Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicles and other military equipment.

Fifty thousand U.S. military troops remain in Iraq. Forty-five hundred U.S. special forces troops continue to fight and kill with Iraqi special forces. American troops are still authorized to take preemptive action against any threat they perceive. The policy regarding air

strikes and bombings will remain unchanged. And untold numbers of "civilian contractors"—more accurately called mercenaries—will stay in Iraq, unaccountable for their war crimes.

When Obama spoke to the nation about ending combat operations in Iraq,

When Obama spoke to the nation about ending combat operations in Iraq, he delivered his message with a spin that would make George W. Bush proud.

he delivered his message with a spin that would make George W. Bush proud. Obama renamed the U.S. occupation of Iraq "Operation New Dawn," and talked of the sacrifices we made during "Operation Iraqi Freedom."

But he failed to mention the more than 100,000 dead Iraqis, the untold numbers of wounded Iraqis and the 2 million Iraqis who went into exile. He said nothing about the few hours per day that most Iraqis enjoy electricity. He neglected to note that unions have been outlawed and Iraq's infrastructure is in shambles. And he omitted any reference to the illegality of Bush's war of aggression—in violation of the UN Charter—and Bush's policy of torture and abuse of Iraqis—in violation of the Geneva Conventions.

Obama chose instead to praise his predecessor, saying, "No one could doubt President Bush's...commitment to our security." But foreign occupation of Iraq and mistreatment of prisoners never made us more secure.

Obama also failed to remind us that we went to war based on two lies by the Bush administration: that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction, and that al Qaeda was in bed with Saddam Hussein.

Obama spoke of "credible elections" in Iraq. But "Iraq does not have a functional democracy," said Raed Jarrar, Iraq consultant for American Friends Service Committee and a senior fellow at Peace

Action. "We cannot expect to have a functional democracy from Iraq that was imposed by a foreign occupation," he said on Democracy Now!

"The new Iraqi state is among the most corrupt in the world," journalist Nir Rosen wrote in *Foreign Policy*. "It is only effective at being brutal and providing a minimum level of security. It fails to provide adequate services to its people, millions of whom are barely able to survive. Iraqis are traumatized. Every day there are assassinations with silenced pistols and the small magnetic car bombs known as sticky bombs."

Obama put the cost of the wars at \$3 trillion, an awesome sum that could well be used to provide universal health care, quality education, and improved infrastructure to create jobs in this country.

But he overlooked the cost of treating our disabled veterans, many of



Iraqis also oppose the U.S. occupation.

As I ponder events unfolding in Iraq, and Obama's efforts to explain them to us, I am reminded of the highly decorated Marine Corps General Smedley Butler. Nearly 70 years ago he declared that, "War is a racket." He was referring to the use of Marines in Central America during the early 20th Century to protect U.S. corporations like United Fruit, which were exploiting agricultural resources in that region.

In my view, the Iraq war had a similar purpose—to secure the rich Iraqi oil fields and make them available to corporations that will continue to feed America's petroleum addiction.

In a more honest speech, Obama would have said we successfully removed a leader who was unfriendly to American geopolitical and economic interests and replaced him with people beholden to U.S. money and materiel. U.S. forces have been downsized and rebranded. The "enduring presence posts" (new nomenclature for U.S. bases in Iraq) will ensure that we maintain hegemony in Iraq. Mission accomplished.

Marjorie Cohn is a professor at Thomas Jefferson School of Law and past president of the National Lawyers Guild. The author of *Cowboy Republic: Six Ways the Bush Gang Has Defied the Law*, she is deputy secretary general of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers. See www.marjoriecohn.com.

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the cost of treating disabled vets...**

whom return with traumatic brain injury and post traumatic stress disorder. "There is no question that the Iraq war added substantially to the federal debt," Joseph Stiglitz and Linda Bilmes wrote in the *Washington Post*. "The global financial crisis was due, at least in part, to the war," they added.

Regardless of how Obama tries to spin his message about the disaster the United States has created in Iraq, 60 percent of Americans think the U.S. invasion of Iraq was a mistake, 70 percent believe it wasn't worth sacrificing American lives, and only one quarter feel it made us safer. The majority of

*Editor's note: Estimates vary widely: a 2006 Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health study estimated as many as 654,965 Iraqi dead; in 2007, the British polling firm Opinion Research Business estimated 1.2 million.

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The Endless War and American Society

Is endless war the American way? Why militarism permeates our society

By Jim Turpin

*This article originally appeared on
The Rag Blog (theragblog.blogspot.com)*

Orwell would be proud. The United States is about to begin its tenth year in Afghanistan in an attempt to prove that "endless war" is not only possible, but the accepted norm in American society.

But why has militarism become such an integral part of our political and social lives in this country?

I see three main areas of influence on why we accept the present state of aggressive militarism in this country:

1. The state's use of messaging on "war" and "terrorism."
2. The media's servitude towards aggressive militaristic policy.
3. The social and cultural reinforcement of militarism.

Messaging on war and terrorism, or Why my brain is always scared

G.M. Gilbert, an American psychologist who interviewed Herman Goering at Nuremberg in his Nuremberg Diary quoted Goering as saying:

The words "terror" and "terrorism" are the most politically manipulated words of our time and may be applied to any country, group or individual you wish to bomb, torture, or indefinitely detain.

...the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same in any country.

The human brain is well constructed to deal with danger and fear on an automated and highly developed level. The amygdala is responsible for both fear conditioning and memory consolidation. These combined are the neurological area of the brain to condition and retain fear memories.

In other words, a sweet spot to frighten at will and control the masses.

The use of the phrase "war on terror" is at best a disingenuous means of simultaneously stimulating the fear

response and the use of metaphors that have no real meaning.

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It may also be used by the United States to nimbly point out those who are "state sponsors of terrorism," which presently include Cuba, Iran, Sudan, and Syria. Never mind that we sponsored El Salvadoran death squads or backed the likes of Marcos, Mobutu, Pinochet, or the Shah for decades that led to the torture and death of hundreds of thousands, possibly millions.

The cowardly MSM or How to be a poster child for cognitive dissonance

Does the mainstream media (MSM) really ignore what is happening or change reality to fit government policy?

As Glenn Greenwald, in a recent *Salon* article, so succinctly put it:

A newly released study from students at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government provides the latest evidence of how thoroughly devoted the American establishment

media is to amplifying and serving (rather than checking) government officials. This new study examines how waterboarding has been discussed by America's four largest newspapers over the past 100 years, and finds that the technique, almost invariably, was unequivocally referred to as "torture"—until the U.S. Government began openly using it and insisting that it was not torture... Similarly, American newspapers are highly inclined to refer to waterboarding as "torture" when practiced by other nations, but will suddenly refuse to use the term when it's the U.S. employing that technique.

Greenwald also points out that such MSM outlets as the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and NPR explicitly adopted policies to ban the use of the word "torture" for techniques the U.S. Government had authorized, once government officials announced they



should not be called "torture."

So torture is now "harsh interrogation techniques"?

Is this the terminology used in the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment?

This is the document the United States signed in 1988 and reaffirmed in 1994 that defines torture in Article 1.1 as:

Any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person, information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. It does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions.

Article 2.2 states:

No exceptional circumstances whatsoever, whether a state of war or a threat of war, internal political instability or any other public emergency, may be invoked as a justification of torture.

Orwell was again right: "...the object of torture is torture... the object of power is power."

Cultural and societal acceptance of war Or, 'That's Militainment!'

"Militainment" or entertainment with military themes is ubiquitous in music, television, movies and video games.

It is even everywhere in clothing. Just look around the next time you walk down the street or go to a clothing store. Desert-style camo wear is EVERYWHERE. Women have camo shorts, men wear camo hats, and even babies have camo bibs and jumpers.

Sears ran a line of clothing in 2008 that "signed a deal with the U.S. Army to launch the All American Army Brand's First Infantry Division clothing collection. It marks the first time the U.S. Army has officially licensed its marks and insignias; licensing fees will be used to support military programs for troops and their families.

The president of Sears Apparel said the brand will be prominently featured during the retailer's Fall Forward fashion. The line will also be included in future marketing campaigns, including those slated for the holiday season.

"Over the years, military-inspired clothing has played a distinct role in shaping fashion trends," Mr. Israel said. "We are now able to exclusively offer a line that is pure to the origins of that inspiration." (Military.com 9/3/08)

Recent war video games are international best sellers ("Call of Duty," "Modern Warfare," and "God of War") and are excellent training for future military recruits. At the least, they can be considered realistic "war porn."

The New York Times, the Washington Post and NPR banned the use of the word "torture" for techniques the U.S. Government had authorized.



Happy talk and fluff obscure the reality of war

Sears signed a deal with the U.S. Army to launch the All American Army Brand's First Infantry Division clothing collection. This is the first time the U.S. Army has officially licensed its marks and insignias.

The Army recently had to close a \$12 million recruiting station in Philadelphia with interactive video exhibits, nearly 80 video-gaming stations, a replica command-and-control center, conference rooms, and Black Hawk helicopter and Humvee combat simulators.

It was repeatedly targeted for protests by those who said the Army's use of first-person-shooter video games desensitized visitors to violence and enticed teens into the military.

Anyone over 13 could play games, though the most graphic ones were restricted to those 18 and older.

War movies and TV specials are making a comeback with *The Hurt Locker* (2009), *Inglorious Basterds* (2009), and the HBO special *The Pacific* (2010) which all sell war as the "Band of Brothers" myth to perpetuate heroism and nationalism.

Music sells war, especially the country genre including Toby Keith's lyrics:

Justice will be served/ And the battle will rage/ This big dog will fight when you rattle his cage/ And you'll be sorry that you messed with the U.S. of A./ 'Cause we'll put a boot in your ass/ It's the American Way.

Endless war... It is indeed the "American way."

Jim Turpin is a native of Austin, TX and a member of CodePink Austin. He also volunteers for the GI coffeeshouse Under the Hood Café at Ft. Hood in Killeen, Texas.

Images for this article by Mark Runge (<http://mark4art.com/>)



(photo by Mike Hastie)

When The Truth Becomes Unacceptable

The worst thing I experienced in Vietnam was the lie.
 100% of the Vietnam War was an absolute lie.
 100% of the Iraq War is an absolute lie.
 100% of the Afghanistan War is an absolute lie.
 When an active duty soldier or a veteran puts a gun to his head, and blows his brains out, he is putting a bullet in America's head. (I saw that happen in Vietnam.)
 You kill the lie!
 You kill the conflict that is unbearable.
 Whenever the truth threatens one's belief system, and the lie outweighs your ability to cope, you pull the trigger. Instead of putting the American flag over the casket, they ought to put the American flag in the casket with the body, because they both died.

—Mike Hastie
 U.S. Army Medic
 Vietnam 1970-71
 August 4, 2010

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Slowing the Wheel of War: A Spiritual Struggle

by Chuck Fager

The next Martin Luther King holiday, January 17, 2011, will carry a special weight of meaning. That day will also be the fiftieth anniversary of President Dwight D. Eisenhower's farewell address.

In this address, the retiring president introduced the now-famous phrase "military-industrial complex" (MIC) into the public vocabulary. Here is the nub of what he said:

This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience. The total influence—economic, political, even spiritual—is felt in every city, every Statehouse, every office of the Federal government. We recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. Our toil, resources, and livelihood are all involved; so is the very structure of our society.

In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.

The full speech is still worth pondering. But one phrase here, overlooked in most discussions of the MIC concept, leaped from the page as I reread it.

"The total influence [of the MIC]—economic, political, even spiritual—is felt in every city, every Statehouse, every office of the Federal government."

The military-industrial complex—a spiritual influence.

In my experience, absolutely.

During the half-century since this historic speech, presidents have come and gone; political parties have waxed and waned; there have been times of open war, punctuated by intervals of "peace" and covert conflicts; the economy has seen boom and bust.

Yet through it all, the size and reach of the MIC has steadily grown. The MIC is, among other things, the top consumer of oil and a major source of mostly unregulated toxic pollution. The MIC's reach is more pervasive than ever; it has become so familiar that many people hardly notice it, except in concentrated locations like Fort Bragg and other large military bases. Today, it would be more accurate to call it the Military-Industrial-Political-Academic-Scientific-Think-Tank-Mass-Media-Entertainment-Religious Complex. (The "MIPASTTMMERC"? We'll stick with MIC.)

There's more. Alongside the visible

economic and political aspects of the MIC, a secret, extra-legal set of structures has been constructed that have wreaked havoc across the world and laid the foundation for a police state here. Like the visible parts, the secret structures have grown over time as well; and many of them are based in North Carolina. We have learned many horrifying details about their activities in the past few years. Unfortunately, too many Americans seem bent on forgetting all



like warned of the spiritual influence of the military-industrial complex.

ling detail in his classic study, *They Thought They Were Free*. Calmly yet vividly, Mayer showed how ordinary, virtuous 1930s Germans were seamlessly reduced from citizens to cogs in a totalitarian state.

Among the key features of this malevolent transformation was that for most people, all it entailed was doing nothing. As Mayer put it, "the rest of the 70 million Germans, apart from the million or so who operated the whole machinery of Nazism, had nothing to do except not to interfere."

"Doing nothing" does not mean cowering in a corner, but rather focusing fixedly on daily life: family, job, religion, entertainment, even quiet political hand-wringing—all while being careful "not to interfere."

This gradual accommodation—"doing nothing," being distracted and forgetting the unpleasant disclosures—is facilitated when the MIC sprinkles jobs and money across every state and most counties. It is further reinforced when it is, literally, blessed by God—or, at least, by God's self-proclaimed representatives.

Yes, the MIC's reach definitely includes the "religious" and spiritual.

Let's look at the religious connection briefly. It has several important aspects; we will speak of three.

First is a very direct connection. The Military Religious Freedom Foundation (www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org) has

exposed deep involvement by a kind of crusading fundamentalism in high levels of the military services, an involvement with ominous implications for freedom of religion among service members and for conflicts involving Muslim populations.

Secondly, and more broadly, much of religion, especially the southern white Protestant forms of Christianity, has adopted the conviction that the United States is God's chosen instrument, charged to "rid the world of evil-doers," as a former President declared in 2001. Thus, these churches—some of the largest in the country—not only support but actively advocate for the projection of U.S. military might around the world, regardless of the cost in blood and treasure to people in this country, but especially to foreigners. This is, they are sure, God's work. I have become convinced that this "American War Christianity" is one of the key pillars of U.S. Militarism.

Third, the MIC itself has taken on the character of an autonomous, self-propagating entity. I compare it to a schoolyard merry-go-round, with bars pushed by interests great and small, such that it has developed so much momentum it seems to run by itself. We tend to see this motion as centered in and around Washington's political whirl. But this is a

The whole U.S. militarist enterprise has developed an overarching "spirit," with its own dynamic and momentum... The idea that it is controlled by a handful of policymakers in Washington seems less and less realistic.

restricted view. The hands pushing the bars to such a high and steady pitch are reaching from a much wider area—in truth, all over the country.

I call this image the Wheel of War. It represents the fulfillment, in spades, of President Eisenhower's prophecy of "the disastrous rise of misplaced power."

What is spiritual about this self-spinning wheel? To illustrate this, I turn to the most revealing description that I've found. It is two millennia old and comes from, of all people, the Apostle Paul in the New testament. (Non-religious readers—please bear with me here.) In several passages of his letters, he writes of "powers and principalities," by which he means disembodied spiritual powers that have a concrete impact on the visible

world: "spiritual influence," to repeat Eisenhower's insight.

What does this phrase powers and principalities mean? Consider, as an example, Fayetteville, North Carolina: home to both Quaker House and Fort Bragg, one of the largest U.S. army bases.

In many ways, Fayetteville is no different from any other urban collection of human specimens; among them are saints and sinners, happiness and tragedy. Families start, grow, and sometimes come apart there, as elsewhere. Individuals and groups do the best they can given their circumstances.

All of this is true, but it is not the whole truth. The citizens of Fayetteville and Fort Bragg are also part of larger systems, systems which have their own autonomy, momentum, and identity. Together, they add up to more than the sum of their individual human components. These larger, supra-individual systems and their dynamics make up what we can call the spiritual dimension of the area.

Here is one example: Since I came to Fayetteville in early 2002, through the end of 2009, the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg has had five different commanders. Each of them was a distinct individual with his own personality, style, and abilities. It surprises me as an outsider how quickly they come and go; yet the 82nd, a unit of more than 14,000 troops with 80-plus years of active duty, goes on. As a unit, it maintains its own "personality," its own momentum, its own "spirit."

The 82nd Airborne, I would suggest, "leads" its commanders as much as its commanders "lead" it, if not more. Its "spirit" is more important than any individual.

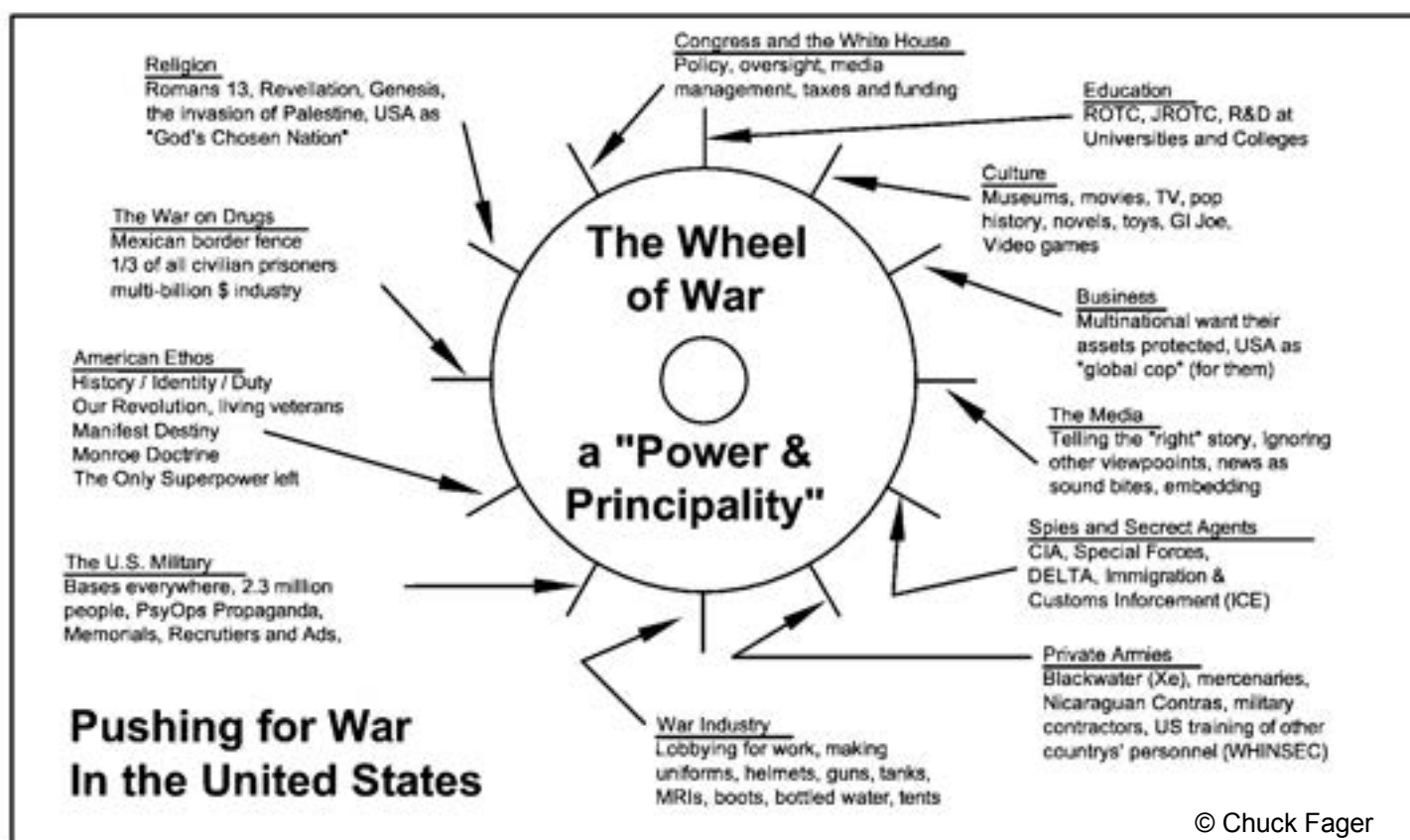
On a much larger scale, it seems clear that the whole U.S. militarist enterprise has developed an overarching "spirit," with its own dynamic and momentum. It

"American War Christianity" is one of the key pillars of U.S. Militarism.

has become an autonomous "power." The idea that it is

controlled by a handful of policymakers in Washington seems less and less realistic. Eisenhower was right; since 1961, ten presidents have occupied the White House. If changing faces in the Oval Office were enough to tame this power, it would have happened. Instead, as they have come and gone, the MIC has kept growing, regardless.

The processes hinted at here are seen in the Bible. These are the "powers" and "principalities" that Paul wrote of in his letter to the new church at Ephesus,



The Wheel of War represents the fulfillment of Eisenhower's prophecy of "the disastrous rise of misplaced power."

chapter 6:12: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

It is easy to vulgarize, mock, or dismiss these ideas as ancient superstition. But one is not required to "believe" in the Bible or supernatural entities to find value in such images. Careful sociological studies could construct secular counterparts for this "powers and principalities" motif. Besides, President Eisenhower, one of the most experienced warrior leaders of the last century, named this "spiritual influence" of the MIC nearly 50 years before I did, and he was no myth-bound sentimentalist.

The concept has also had much useful explanatory value for me as director of Quaker House near Fort Bragg. It helps me to make sense of what our tiny outpost of peace work is up against.

For one thing, take Paul's associated declaration that "we wrestle not against flesh and blood"—that is, mere evil persons. This has been a crucial insight, helping me see past the fixation on individuals that I believe is a great obstacle to adequate understanding and planning for peace work.

This sense is confirmed by personal experience that Fayetteville and Fort Bragg are no more full of irredeemably evil people than is your hometown. All of them are Children of God, even those in desert camouflage uniforms loaded down with deadly weapons.

And yet this city—like our country—is under the heel of the Spirit of War. Fort Bragg is a key cog in the machinery of militarism. The reach is worldwide, but many of the key gears rotate back to

and mesh here in eastern North Carolina. (For that matter, its activities, especially training, extend well into the western end of the state as well.

Behind an outward semblance of ordinary existence, massive projects are hatched here for destruction, torture, propaganda, and deception, combining

The fixation on individuals is a great obstacle to adequate understanding and planning for peace work.

into a vast apparatus animated by this spectral image. Although it is drawn from a two-millennia-old myth, the Spirit of War feels to me as tangible and looming as the huge oak tree at the foot of the Quaker House lawn. It can be heard rumbling through the woods; its priests and acolytes carry out their rituals in the open; its sacrificial victims regularly stare out of the pages of our local paper.

For instance, by the end of 2009, more than 300 soldiers based at Fort Bragg had been killed in Iraq and Afghanistan, and several thousand more were gravely wounded. In addition, dozens more killed themselves or their spouses, and an unknown, but huge number, bear the mental wounds of what they have done in combat.

And what of the Iraqis, Afghanis, and others killed, maimed, or made homeless as these troops carried out their orders? Millions. In cozier precincts, this steadily mounting death toll can be kept at a safe, abstract distance. In Fayetteville, one foregoes that luxury.

In the New Testament, the struggle against these "principalities and powers" is commonly referred to as "spiritual warfare." Early Quakers, in the 1660 letter to Charles II describing their pacifist stance, wrote that "our weapons are spiritual, and not carnal," paraphrasing Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians, Chapter 10:4, "Yet mighty through God,

to the plucking/pulling down of the strongholds of sin and Satan, who is the author of wars, fighting, murder, and plots."

What does this mean? They weren't going to make war against powers and principalities the way one would against a physical army. But they were called to make war. And so, I suggest, are we. There are weapons to be deployed, tactics evaluated, and strategies planned. You don't need to be "religious" to apply these insights.

In thinking about peace strategies, I've learned the most from—paradoxically—the military, especially the classic strategy text, *The Art of War*, by Sun Tzu. It's as old as the Bible, and military thinkers treat it like Scripture. But it's even better in one way: it's much shorter. (Read it free online at www.sonshi.com/learn.html.) Sun Tzu's basic advice is very straightforward: for victory, identify the strengths and weaknesses of yourself and your adversary; then apply your strengths to their weaknesses while defending your own.

What would this mean for peace work? First of all, it means thinking "outside the box" of our preoccupation with the Washington political scene, and taking stock of our unique strengths. Then it involves learning more about the MIC, so we can apply our strengths creatively to maximum effect.

Easy to say, harder to do. But it's been done. There's actually a long history of such creative peace work, though regrettably it's little known among us. Together, these efforts constitute the Wheel of Peace, a practical force that presses in the opposite direction from the Wheel of War and helps slow its momentum.

For a Quaker, these efforts include playing quiet but important parts in shaping the careers of non-Quaker leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr. and the pacifist Emperor of Japan; helping negotiate the release of Nelson Mandela from a South African prison; launching the women's rights struggle from the kitchen of a rural New York farmhouse; quietly helping shape the Law of the Sea treaty; and honoring the sacrifices of martyrs like my friend, Tom Fox, a Quaker peace worker kidnapped and murdered in Iraq in 2006. And other groups have their own heritage of peace work, though most are too little known.

Sure, the Wheel of War is currently much bigger and has enormous momentum. But the record of our nonviolent "spiritual warfare" is nothing to sneeze at. There's much more than we can describe here, and it is spiritually uplifting and encouraging in practical terms to become more familiar with it. And with imagination and the willingness to think "outside the box," we can generate exciting new ways to push the "Wheel of Peace." I believe that such self-education—about our own history and about the MIC—is a major priority for long-term peace witness. And Sun Tzu, that sage worldly warrior, agrees:

If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.

I don't know if the Spirit of War will ever be fully defeated. But our call, like that of those who have gone before, is to keep up our "spiritual warfare." I think even the unsentimental President Eisenhower would understand. And by doing so, we can achieve many victories. We've done it before. Let's renew it, and keep it up.

Chuck Fager is Director of Quaker House, a peace project that has been at work next door to Fort Bragg since 1969. The ideas in this article are expanded in a pamphlet, Study War Some More If You Want To Work For Peace, published by Quaker House. For more information, go to www.quakerhouse.org

Failure of War

(Continued from page 1)

create new, or more effective, instruments of coercion. Military innovation assumed many forms. Most obviously, there were the weapons: dreadnoughts and aircraft carriers, rockets and missiles, poison gas, and atomic bombs—the list is a long one. In their effort to gain an edge, however, nations devoted equal attention to other factors: doctrine and organization, training systems and mobilization schemes, intelligence collection and war plans.

All of this furious activity, whether undertaken by France or Great Britain, Russia or Germany, Japan or the United States, derived from a common belief in the plausibility of victory. Expressed in simplest terms, the Western military tradition could be reduced to this proposition: war remains a viable instrument of statecraft, the accoutrements of modernity serving, if anything, to enhance its utility.

Grand Illusions

That was theory. Reality, above all the two world wars of the last century, told a decidedly different story. Armed conflict in the industrial age reached new heights of lethality and destructiveness. Once begun, wars devoured everything, inflicting staggering material, psychological, and moral damage. Pain vastly exceeded gain. In that regard, the war of 1914-1918 became emblematic: even the winners ended up losers. When fighting eventually stopped, the victors were left not to celebrate but to mourn. As a consequence, well before

Fukuyama penned his essay, faith in war's problem-solving capacity had begun to erode. As early as 1945, among several great powers—thanks to war, now great in name only—that faith disappeared altogether.

Among nations classified as liberal democracies, only two resisted this trend. One was the United States, the sole major belligerent to emerge from the Second World War stronger, richer, and more confident. The second was Israel, created as a direct consequence of the horrors unleashed by that cataclysm. By the 1950s, both countries subscribed to this common conviction: national security (and, arguably, national survival) demanded unambiguous military superiority. In the lexicon of American and Israeli politics, "peace" was a code-word. The essential prerequisite for peace was for any and all adversaries, real or potential, to accept a condition of permanent inferiority. In this regard, the two nations—not yet intimate allies—stood apart from the rest of the Western world.

So even as they professed their devotion to peace, civilian and military elites in the United States and Israel prepared obsessively for war. They saw no contradiction between rhetoric and reality.

Yet belief in the efficacy of military power almost inevitably breeds the temptation to put that power to work. "Peace through strength" easily enough becomes "peace through war." Israel succumbed to this temptation in 1967.

For Israelis, the Six Day War proved a turning point. Plucky David defeated, and then became, Goliath. Even as the United States was flailing about in Vietnam, Israel had evidently succeeded in definitively mastering war.

A quarter-century later, U.S. forces seemingly caught up. In 1991, Operation Desert Storm, George

H.W. Bush's war against Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, showed that American troops like Israeli soldiers knew how to win quickly, cheaply, and humanely. Generals like H. Norman Schwarzkopf persuaded themselves that their brief desert campaign against Iraq had replicated—even eclipsed—the battlefield exploits of such famous Israeli warriors as Moshe Dayan and Yitzhak Rabin. Vietnam faded into irrelevance.

For both Israel and the United States, however, appearances proved deceptive. Apart from fostering grand illusions, the splendid wars of 1967 and 1991 decided little. In both cases, victory turned out to be more apparent

Belief in the efficacy of military power breeds the temptation to put that power to work. "Peace through strength" easily enough becomes "peace through war."

than real. Worse, triumphalism fostered massive future miscalculation.

On the Golan Heights, in Gaza, and throughout the West Bank, proponents of a Greater Israel—disregarding Washington's objections—set out to assert permanent control over territory that Israel had seized. Yet "facts on the ground" created by successive waves of Jewish settlers did little to enhance Israeli security. They succeeded chiefly in shackling Israel to a rapidly growing and resentful Palestinian population that it could neither pacify nor assimilate.

In the Persian Gulf, the benefits reaped by the United States after 1991 likewise turned out to be ephemeral. Saddam Hussein survived and became, in the eyes of successive American administrations, an imminent threat to regional stability. This perception prompted (or provided a pretext for) a radical reorientation of strategy in Washington. No longer content to prevent an unfriendly outside power from controlling the oil-rich Persian Gulf, Washington now sought to dominate the entire Greater Middle East. Hegemony became the aim. Yet the United States proved no more successful than Israel in imposing its writ.

During the 1990s, the Pentagon embarked willy-nilly upon what became its own variant of a settlement policy. Yet U.S. bases dotting the Islamic world and U.S. forces operating in the region proved hardly more welcome than the Israeli settlements dotting the occupied territories and the soldiers of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) assigned to protect them. In both cases, presence provoked (or provided a pretext for) resistance. Just as Palestinians vented their anger at the Zionists in

their midst, radical Islamists targeted Americans whom they regarded as neo-colonial infidels.

Stuck

No one doubted that Israelis (regionally) and Americans (globally) enjoyed unquestioned military dominance. Throughout Israel's near abroad, its tanks, fighter-bombers, and warships operated at will. So, too, did American tanks, fighter-bombers, and warships wherever they were sent.

So what? Events made it increasingly evident that military dominance did not translate into concrete political advantage. Rather than enhancing the prospects for peace, coercion produced ever more complications. No matter how badly battered and beaten, the "terrorists" (a catch-all term applied to anyone resisting Israeli or American authority) weren't intimidated, remained unrepentant, and kept coming back for more.

Israel ran smack into this problem during Operation Peace for Galilee, its 1982 intervention in Lebanon.

U.S. forces encountered it a decade later during Operation Restore Hope, the West's gloriously titled foray into Somalia. Lebanon possessed a puny army; Somalia had none at all. Rather than producing peace or restoring hope, however, both operations ended in frustration, embarrassment, and failure.

And those operations proved but harbingers of worse to come. By the 1980s, the IDF's glory days were past. Rather than lightning strikes deep into the enemy rear, the narrative of Israeli military history became a cheerless recital of dirty wars—unconventional conflicts against irregular forces yielding problematic results. The First Intifada (1987-1993), the Second Intifada (2000-2005), a second Lebanon War (2006), and Operation Cast Lead, the notorious 2008-2009 incursion into Gaza, all conformed to this pattern.

Meanwhile, the differential between Palestinian and Jewish Israeli birth rates emerged as a looming threat—a "demographic bomb," Benjamin Netanyahu called it. Here were new facts on the ground that military forces, unless employed pursuant to a policy of ethnic cleansing, could do little to redress. Even as the IDF tried repeatedly and futilely to bludgeon Hamas and Hezbollah into submission, demographic trends continued to suggest that within a generation a majority of the population within Israel and the occupied territories would be Arab.

Trailing a decade or so behind Israel, the United States military nonetheless succeeded in duplicating the IDF's experience. Moments of glory remained, but they would prove fleeting indeed. After 9/11, Washington's efforts to transform (or "liberate") the

(See FAILURE OF WAR on page 17)



Failure of War

(Continued from page 16)

Greater Middle East kicked into high gear. In Afghanistan and Iraq, George W. Bush's Global War on Terror began impressively enough, as U.S. forces operated with a speed and élan that had once been an Israeli trademark. Thanks to "shock and awe," Kabul fell, followed less than a year and a half later by Baghdad. As one senior Army general explained to Congress in 2004, the Pentagon had war all figured out:

"We are now able to create decision superiority that is enabled by networked systems, new sensors and command and control capabilities that are producing unprecedented near real time situational awareness, increased information availability, and an ability to deliver precision munitions throughout the breadth and depth of the battlespace... Combined, these capabilities of the future networked force will leverage information dominance, speed and precision, and result in decision superiority."

The key phrase in this mass of technoblatner was the one that occurred twice: "decision superiority." At that moment, the officer corps, like the Bush administration, was still convinced that it knew how to win.

Such claims of success, however, proved obscenely premature. Campaigns advertised as being wrapped up in weeks dragged on for years, while American troops struggled with their own intifadas. When it came to achieving decisions that actually stuck, the Pentagon (like the IDF) remained clueless.

Winless

If any overarching conclusion emerges from the Afghan and Iraq Wars (and from their Israeli equivalents), it's this: victory is a chimera. Counting on today's enemy to yield in the face of superior force makes about as much sense as buying lottery tickets to pay the mortgage: you better be really lucky.

Meanwhile, as the U.S. economy went into a tailspin, Americans contemplated their equivalent of Israel's "demographic bomb"—a "fiscal bomb." Ingrained habits of profligacy, both individual and collective, held out the prospect of long-term stagnation: no growth, no jobs, no fun. Out-of-control spending on endless wars exacerbated that threat.

By 2007, the American officer corps itself gave up on victory, although without giving up on war. First in Iraq, then in Afghanistan, priorities shifted. High-ranking generals shelved their expectations of winning—at least

as a Rabin or Schwarzkopf would have understood that term. They sought instead to not lose. In Washington as in U.S. military command posts, the avoidance of outright defeat emerged as the new gold standard of success.

As a consequence, U.S. troops today sally forth from their base camps not to defeat the enemy, but to "protect the people," consistent with the latest doctrinal fashion. Meanwhile, tea-sipping U.S. commanders cut deals with warlords and tribal chieftains in hopes of persuading guerrillas to lay down their arms.

A new conventional wisdom has taken hold, endorsed by everyone from new Afghan War commander General David Petraeus, the most celebrated soldier of this American age, to Barack Obama, commander-in-chief and Nobel Peace Prize laureate. For the conflicts in which the United States finds itself enmeshed, "military solutions" do not exist. As Petraeus himself has emphasized, "we can't kill our way out of" the fix we're in. In this way, he also pronounced a eulogy on the Western conception of warfare of the last two centuries.

No matter how badly battered and beaten, the "terrorists" (anyone resisting Israeli or American authority) weren't intimidated, remained unrepentant, and kept coming back for more.

Counting on today's enemy to yield in the face of superior force makes about as much sense as buying lottery tickets to pay the mortgage: you better be really lucky.

The Unasked Question

What then are the implications of arriving at the end of Western military history?

In his famous essay, Fukuyama cautioned against thinking that the end of ideological history heralded the arrival of global peace and harmony. Peoples and nations, he predicted, would still find plenty to squabble about.

With the end of military history, a similar expectation applies. Politically motivated violence will persist and may in specific instances even retain marginal utility. Yet the prospect of Big Wars solving Big Problems is probably gone for good. Certainly, no one in their right mind, Israeli or American, can believe that a continued resort to force will remedy whatever it is that fuels anti-Israeli or anti-American antagonism throughout much of the Islamic world. To expect



persistence to produce something different or better is moonshine.

It remains to be seen whether Israel and the United States can come to terms with the end of military history. Other nations have long since done so, accommodating themselves to the changing rhythms of international politics. That they do so is evidence not of virtue, but of shrewdness. China, for example, shows little eagerness to disarm. Yet as Beijing expands its reach and influence, it emphasizes trade, investment, and development assistance. Meanwhile, the People's Liberation Army stays home. China has stolen a page from an old American playbook, having become today the preeminent practitioner of "dollar diplomacy."

The collapse of the Western military tradition confronts Israel with limited choices, none of them attractive. Given the history of Judaism and the history of Israel itself, a reluctance of Israeli Jews to entrust their safety and security to the good will of their neighbors or the warm regards of the international community is understandable. In a mere six decades, the Zionist project has produced a vibrant, flourishing state. Why put all that at risk? Although the demographic bomb may be ticking, no one really knows how much time remains on the clock. If Israelis are inclined to continue putting their trust in (American-supplied) Israeli arms while hoping for the best, who can blame them?

In theory, the United States, sharing none of Israel's demographic or geographic constraints and, far more richly endowed, should enjoy far greater freedom of action. Unfortunately, Washington has a vested interest in preserving the status quo, no matter how much

it costs or where it leads. For the military-industrial complex, there are contracts to win and buckets of money to be made. For those who dwell in the bowels of the national security state, there are prerogatives to protect. For elected officials, there are campaign contributors to satisfy. For appointed officials, civilian and military, there are ambitions to be pursued.

And always there is a chattering claque of militarists, calling for jihad and insisting on ever greater exertions, while remaining alert to any hint of backsliding. In Washington, members of this militarist camp, by no means coincidentally including many of the voices that most insistently defend Israeli bellicosity, tacitly collaborate in excluding or marginalizing views that they deem heretical. As a consequence, what passes for debate on matters relating to national security is a sham. Thus are we invited to believe, for example, that General Petraeus's appointment as the umpteenth U.S. commander in Afghanistan constitutes a milestone on the way to ultimate success.

Nearly 20 years ago, a querulous Madeleine Albright demanded to know: "What's the point of having this superb military you're always talking about if we can't use it?" Today, an altogether different question deserves our attention: What's the point of constantly using our superb military if doing so doesn't actually work?

Washington's refusal to pose that question provides a measure of the corruption and dishonesty permeating our politics.

Andrew J. Bacevich is a professor of history and international relations at Boston University. His new book, Washington Rules: America's Path to Permanent War, has just been published.

This article first appeared on TomDispatch on July 29.

Why WikiLeaks Must Be Protected

by John Pilger

On 26 July, WikiLeaks released thousands of secret U.S. military files on the war in Afghanistan. Cover-ups, a secret assassination unit, and the killing of civilians are documented. In file after file, the brutalities echo the colonial past. From Malaya and Vietnam to Bloody Sunday and Basra, little has changed. The difference is that today there is an extraordinary way of knowing how faraway societies are routinely ravaged in our name. WikiLeaks has acquired records of six years of civilian killing for both Afghanistan and Iraq, of which those published in the *Guardian*, *Der Spiegel* and the *New York Times* are a fraction.

There is understandably hysteria on high, with demands that the WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange be "hunted down" and "rendered." In Washington, I interviewed a senior Defense Department official and asked, "Can you give a guarantee that the editors of WikiLeaks and the editor in chief, who is not American, will not be subjected to the kind of manhunt that we read about in the media?" He replied, "It's not my position to give guarantees on anything." He referred me to the "ongoing criminal investigation" of a U.S. soldier, Bradley Manning, an alleged whistleblower. In a nation that claims its constitution protects truth-tellers, the Obama administration is pursuing and prosecuting more whistleblowers than any of its modern predecessors. A Pentagon document states bluntly that U.S. intelligence intends to "fatally marginalize" WikiLeaks. The preferred tactic is smear, with corporate journalists ever ready to play their part.

On 31 July, the American celebrity reporter Christiane Amanpour interviewed Secretary of Defense Robert Gates on the ABC network. She invited Gates to describe to her viewers his "anger" at WikiLeaks. She echoed the Pentagon line that "this leak has blood on its hands," thereby cueing Gates to find WikiLeaks "guilty" of "moral culpability." Such hypocrisy coming from a regime drenched in the blood of the people of Afghanistan and Iraq—as its own files make clear—is apparently not for journalistic enquiry. This is hardly surprising now that a new and fearless form of public accountability, which WikiLeaks represents, threatens not only the war-makers but their apologists.

Their current propaganda is that WikiLeaks is "irresponsible." Earlier this year, before it released the cockpit video of an American Apache gunship killing 19 civilians in Iraq, including journalists and children, WikiLeaks sent people to Baghdad to find the families of the victims in order to prepare them. Prior to the release of last month's Afghan War Logs, WikiLeaks wrote to the White House asking that it identify names that might draw reprisals. There was no reply. More than 15,000 files were withheld and these, says Assange, will not be released until they have been scrutinized "line by line" so that names of those at risk can be deleted.

The pressure on Assange himself seems unrelenting. In his homeland, Australia, the shadow foreign minister, Julie Bishop, has said that if her right-wing coalition wins the general election on 21 August, "appropriate action" will be taken "if an Australian citizen has deliberately undertaken an activity that could put at risk the lives of Australian forces in Afghanistan or undermine our operations in any way." The Australian role in Afghanistan, effectively mercenary in the service of Washington, has produced two striking results: the massacre of five children in a village in Oruzgan province and the overwhelming disapproval of the majority of Australians.



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U.S. intelligence intends to "fatally marginalize" WikiLeaks.



Julian Assange: "hunted down" and "rendered"?

Last May, following the release of the Apache footage, Assange had his Australian passport temporarily confiscated when he returned home. The Labor government in Canberra denies it has received requests from Washington to detain him and spy on the WikiLeaks network. The Cameron government also denies this. They would, wouldn't they? Assange, who came to London last month to work on exposing the war logs, has had to leave Britain hastily for, as he puts it, "safer climes."

On 16 August, the *Guardian*, citing Daniel Ellsberg, described the great Israeli whistleblower Mordechai Vanunu as "the pre-eminent hero of the nuclear age."

Vanunu, who alerted the world to Israel's secret nuclear weapons, was kidnapped by the Israelis and incarcerated for 18 years after he was left unprotected by the *London Sunday Times*, which had published the documents he supplied. In 1983, another heroic whistleblower, Sarah Tisdall, a Foreign Office clerical officer, sent documents to the *Guardian* that disclosed how the Thatcher government planned to spin the arrival of American cruise missiles in Britain. The *Guardian* complied with a court order to hand over the documents, and Tisdall went to prison.

In one sense, the WikiLeaks revelations shame the dominant section of journalism devoted merely to taking down what cynical and malign power tells it. This is state stenography, not journalism. Look on the WikiLeaks site and read a Ministry of Defense document that describes the "threat" of real journalism. And so it should be a threat. Having published skillfully the WikiLeaks expose of a fraudulent war, the *Guardian* should now give its most powerful and unreserved editorial support to the protection of Julian Assange and his colleagues, whose truth-telling is as important as any in my lifetime.

I like Julian Assange's dust-dry wit. When I asked him if it was more difficult to publish secret information in Britain, he replied, "When we look at Official-Secrets-Act-labeled documents we see that they state it is an offense to retain the information and an offense to destroy the information. So the only possible outcome we have is to publish the information."

John Pilger is a world-renowned journalist, author and documentary filmmaker, who began his career in 1958 in his homeland, Australia, before moving to London in the 1960s.

He regards eye-witness as the essence of good journalism. He has been a foreign correspondent and a front-line war reporter, beginning with the Vietnam war in 1967. He is an impassioned critic of foreign military and economic adventures by Western governments.



Censorship reflects a society's lack of confidence in itself. It is a hallmark of an authoritarian regime.

—Potter Stewart, U.S. Supreme Court Justice (1958-81)

When it comes to waterboarding, labels matter

The press's failure to call waterboarding torture impedes honest discussion of the darkest years of the Bush presidency

by Dan Kennedy

On 18 September 1945, barely a month after the Japanese surrender had brought the second world war to a close, a sickening story appeared on page two of the *New York Times*. Headlined "Shanghai Reveals Torture Secrets", the article, by Tillman Durdin, detailed torture techniques used against inmates of the Bridge House, a secret prison run by the Japanese in that Chinese city. The victims included Chinese and American soldiers, who suffered such horrors as lit cigarettes jammed up their nostrils and the use of electric shocks. Durdin continued:

The water treatment was another violent torture the Japanese used in the Bridge House. The American [an unnamed source], explaining it, said his face was covered with a towel, except for the nostrils. Then a guard, using a tea kettle, poured water slowly down the victim's nostrils. If the victim did not swallow he drowned; if he swallowed he became bloated, suffering extreme abdominal pain.

This is waterboarding, and Durdin's report is significant mainly because of his straightforward description of it as torture. Not that anyone would have thought twice about that description back then.

According to a study released recently by the Joan Shorenstein Centre on the Press, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard, the *New York Times* and other major papers invariably referred to waterboarding as torture until the Bush-Cheney administration began using it to extract information from suspected terrorists. After 2002, the word torture all but disappeared from news accounts of waterboarding. As the students who conducted the study observe:

The results of this study demonstrate that there was a sudden, significant, shift in major print media's treatment of waterboarding at the beginning of the 21st century. The media's modern coverage of waterboarding did not begin in earnest until 2004, when the first stories about abuses at Abu Ghraib were released. After this point, articles most often

used words such as 'harsh' or 'coercive' to describe waterboarding or simply gave the practice no treatment, rather than labelling it torture as they had done for the previous seven decades.

How pronounced was the shift? The study found that from the early 1930s until 1999, the *New York Times* characterized waterboarding as torture in 44 of 54 news articles on the subject (81.5%), and the *Los Angeles Times* in 26 of 27 articles (96.3%).

By contrast, from 2002 to 2008, the *NYT* referred to waterboarding as torture in just two of 143 articles (1.4%); the *LA Times*, three of 63 (4.8%); the *Wall Street Journal*, one of 63 (1.6%); and *USA Today*, not at all.

Major papers referred to waterboarding as torture until the Bush-Cheney administration began using it.

Significantly, the study found no reluctance on

the part of newspaper editors to label waterboarding as torture on their opinion pages. The logical conclusion is that news executives decided avoiding the "T" word had become an essential rule of objective news coverage—a rule they dared not violate for fear of being accused of liberal bias.

"This government does not torture people," George W. Bush proclaimed in 2005. And there was little to contradict that statement in the largest American newspapers.

The Shorenstein study, published in April, did not become more widely known until early July, when the media were mainly preoccupied with the upcoming Fourth of July holiday.

New York Times executive editor Bill Keller, speaking through his paper's Media Decoder blog, called the study "somewhat misleading and tendentious," and added that referring to waterboarding as torture would have amounted to "taking sides in a political dispute."

Yet, before Bush and Dick Cheney came along, it wouldn't have occurred to anyone that waterboarding wasn't torture, as the *Times*'s own archives show.

It's not as though we didn't know better. During the last presidential campaign, John McCain, himself a victim of torture during the Vietnam war, unloaded on fellow candidate Rudy Giuliani when the former New York mayor suggested that waterboarding wasn't torture. On another occasion, McCain pointed out, correctly, that waterboarding was among the crimes for which Japanese officers were executed after the second world war.

Does a single word matter? After all, Keller says of waterboarding that "we describe the practice vividly, and we point out that it is denounced by international covenants and human rights advocates as a form of torture."

Keller's justification is similar to that voiced by National Public Radio ombudsman, Alicia Shepard, in an interview last year with her network's *On the Media* program. "Why is it so important to call something torture?" she asked. "You know, when you describe the



technique, I think that sounds like torture to me. Isn't it the job of the news media to put the facts out there, to give as much detailed information and to put it in context?"

I disagree with Keller and Shepard. In doing so, I am contradicting a little voice in my head telling me it's better to describe than to label. But this isn't about the rules of good writing. It's about understanding exactly what took place during the long, dark years of the Bush presidency. We have not even begun to come to terms with what was done in our name during that period. Apologists such as Liz Cheney criticize Barack Obama for being weak because he ended the barbaric practices championed by her father.

Words matter. If our largest newspapers had referred to waterboarding by its proper name, as they did in the decades leading up to the Bush years, we might be having a more honest discussion today about issues such as Guantánamo, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the ongoing fight against terrorism.

Dan Kennedy is an assistant professor of journalism at Northeastern University in Boston, and blogs at Media Nation. This article first appeared in the Guardian.

Photo, "Waterboarding Demonstration," used with permission by Isabel Esterman—isafrancesca—flickr.com/photos/isa_e/.

Will you take action against torture?

The facts (as known to date; many documents remain secret)

1. There is virtual consensus in the international community that waterboarding is torture.
2. Torture is against the law. In a land of laws, lawbreakers are subject to prosecution.
3. George Bush and Dick Cheney, while in office, approved the use of waterboarding which was used on detainees at Guantánamo and elsewhere.

Therefore:

4. Attorney General Eric Holder should prosecute George Bush and Dick Cheney.
5. Please call Eric Holder (202-514-2001). Remind him of the above—he must prosecute those who made the torture policies!
6. Please call the White House (202-456-1111) and tell President Obama to let Attorney General Eric Holder do his job in this regard.
7. See www.nrcat.org for a statement of religious groups supporting an investigation of Bush Administration torture.

—submitted by Stan Becker, Baltimore, MD

Veteran responds to Obama's rebranded occupation

If Truth Were the Coin of the Realm



by Mike Ferner

A veteran's perspective makes it clear that two major points must be made in response to President Obama's announcement regarding combat troops leaving Iraq.

First, there is no such thing as "non-combat troops." It is a contradiction in terms. It is internally inconsistent. It is illogical. It is simply not true.

Ask any of the millions of men and women who went through basic training and they can tell you that every U.S. troop anywhere in the world was indoctrinated and trained in the basics of combat. While in Iraq, the transition from mechanics or communications back to combat-ready soldier takes but an order. "Non-combat troops" is simply the latest in a long line of military euphemisms meant to obscure painful reality.

The second point can best be made by drafting a section of the President's remarks for him. If Veterans For Peace were to do that it would read something like this:

And now, fellow Americans, let us begin a new era of candor and honesty about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Specifically, I'm referring to the true costs of war—something that must be considered if we are to judge whether continued war is worth it.

You have seen that the cost to taxpayers of these wars has exceeded one trillion dollars, nearly all of which has been considered "off budget," appropriated by extraordinary or "supplemental" spending bills. It may be hard to believe that, large though that figure may be, it is but the smaller portion of what we will spend in total.

We are already investing unprecedented amounts in Veterans Administration staff and facilities to try and cope with the millions of men and women who have cycled through a war zone deployment—and of course many have been through multiple deployments.

Our experience thus far tells us to expect literally hundreds of thousands of cases of PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injuries—injuries that are often difficult to diagnose at first and difficult to treat. These are, of

course, in addition to the many thousands of visibly wounded who, at great expense, must go through rehabilitation and a lifetime of support in order to function adequately. Thousands more will require years, perhaps decades, of long-term care because their injuries have left them so broken they require round-the-clock attention.

But since we are initiating an era of candor, we go further—and by that I mean the cost to families, communities and society as a whole. Volumes have literally been written on this point, but let me leave you with a brief example you can easily expand for yourself.

We have already heard of the abnormally high rate of suicides among returning veterans. The real number is undoubtedly higher since some will always remain a mystery. We've heard also of a growing tide of domestic violence that leaves families broken and terrorized.

Beyond the draining medical, psychological and emotional costs to the individuals directly involved, imagine the cost to the communities where this occurs: whole battalions of police, fire, EMT, courts, probation officers, social workers and sadly, prison guards will be needed to deal with the true costs of war. It is uncomfortable to admit, but this is indeed one area of the economy I can guarantee will grow significantly.

Then there is an exponentially greater cost borne by the people of Iraq and Afghanistan—greater in every way: emotionally, economically, in human suffering, in destroyed opportunities, in shattered lives and minds, in hearts that will remain forever broken. We can do precious little to repair much of that kind of damage. But I can tell you this, my fellow Americans, we must at least pay the bill to rebuild the roads, water and sewer plants, hospitals, schools, and residences we have destroyed.

It is not pleasant to describe such things and indeed, these costs will continue to weigh heavily on our nation well into our grandchildren's generation. But we cannot pretend otherwise.

This is the message that should have come from the White House if truth were indeed the coin of the realm. We didn't hear it, but that makes it no less true.

Mike Ferner is national president of Veterans For Peace and Contributing Editor to War Crimes Times.

One who deceives will always find those who allow themselves to be deceived. / Politics have no relation to morals.

—Niccolo Machiavelli



Above (August 31, 2010): "I am announcing that the American combat mission in Iraq has ended."

Below (May 1, 2003): "Major combat operations in Iraq have ended."



— Letters —

Expanding the Definitions of "War" and "War Criminal"

I have an opinion about war crimes and those who commit war crimes: ALL war is a crime.

First, I'd like to expand the definition of "war" to everything that contributes to an unsustainable economy, to the vast gulf between those who have too much and those who struggle to stay alive. To paraphrase Eisenhower, the USA's war economy is grand larceny against the entire planet.

The worst criminals will always seem to be the furthest away from the criminal acts. They will also profit the most from said acts, both directly and indirectly.

In terms of bombs and bullets, it is important to refuse to be the patsy for these criminals. Besides being complicit, a criminal yourself, you will be the ONLY one prosecuted either by the courts—and/or by your own living conscience.

Lest the reader think that the

term "war criminal" only applies to the politicians, generals, "captains of industry" and (yes) soldiers in the field, consider this: Taxpayers are both the field soldier and the senator when they meekly submit to the IRS, literally buying into the war machine that America has become.

Going to a rally, wearing a peace button, and carrying a peace sign do NOT cancel this out.

Pam Allee
Portland, Oregon

Shameful Actions

None of the wars since at least WW2 have been self-defense. The U.S. has killed *millions* of innocent people in Korea, Vietnam, and Iraq.

Those people never attacked the U.S. Not one single Vietnamese, or Iraqi, or Korean ever attacked America.

So why did we kill them? Ask yourself. Why do we kill in Afghanistan today? Did the Taliban attack America?

No Korean, Vietnamese, or

(Continued on page 21)

Iraqi ever attacked the U.S. American aggression was illegal and immoral. It was not Self-Defense.

Ninety percent of those people killed, were noncombatants, even in Iraq it has not changed. Children, elderly, bystanders. The U.S. Congress, the President, and the military command knowingly kill innocent civilians because they regard the lives of U.S. soldiers more valuable.

These are horrific deaths—shot with automatic weapons, artillery, blasted by high explosives, burned to death, buried under buildings, often dying lingering deaths from infection or disease, or starvation. That's what America did, in Iraq.

The reputation and standing of the soldiers, the veterans, and the Congress and the President—as individuals, as well as their institution—comes from the character of their actions, not by wishful thinking. And our actions have been shameful.

Todd Boyle
Kirkland, WA

Impeach Obama

The Central Florida chapter of Veterans for Peace recently introduced a resolution calling for the impeachment of President Obama for the continuation and expansion of war crimes initiated by President George W. Bush. I fully understand the political and social enormity of such an action, but believe impeachment to be warranted if one only looks at facts.

If we truly believe in peace and social justice then we must be consistent with both our praise and our criticisms. And, holding a belief system without actually acting upon it is tantamount to surrender. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the Lutheran theologian who Hitler executed for speaking truth to power, said this: “If you believe in God, and do not act, you are seeking nothing more than ‘cheap grace.’” To know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that this government has committed war crimes, and yet not to act upon that knowledge, is a dereliction of our legal, moral and patriotic duty. We can't pick and choose—we are either for unqualified justice or we do nothing and sanction the continued breaking of international law while those that pursue their activities give a wink and nod and continue to kill innocents, continue to rob the earth of its resources, and continue to economically and morally bankrupt a nation.

My revelatory moment came during the 2008 presidential primaries when candidate Obama responded to a question about the possible prosecution of war crimes committed during the previous administration. His response: “We must look forward, not backward.” At that point I understood that he was already part of a system that selectively chooses who to prosecute, and who to let walk free. For instance, the President continues to use Xe (Blackwater) even after that corporation was found to have broken the law over 300 times (this does not include its mercenary actions in which untold numbers of civilians have

been killed). He continues to keep Guantanamo open, with its sham courts and tainted convictions. He has sanctioned the killing of American citizens without giving them the Constitutional safeguards of due process as outlined in the Constitution. And yes, the President continues to engage in illegal wars, and worse, labels the extraction of some troops from Iraq as the “end of combat operations.” Gee, I feel like I have seen this train coming down the tracks before

When you compromise with evil, you simply end up in Hell. Take note, it makes no difference which political party is pulling the levers of power if their actions are antithetical to justice and equality and personal liberty. If their political agenda does not embrace these intangible human qualities then their moral agenda, however propagandized and filtered for public consumption, has no actual foundation.

I have waited two long years for “change.” And yes, I understand the President inherited a mess from his predecessor, but you do not rid yourself of the mess by continuing the same foreign policies and the same personnel to guide you in a new direction.

The adoption of Central Florida's impeachment resolution would send a resounding message to the Democratic power structure. Of course, they would, no doubt, disparage the resolution as just another statement coming from the “professional Left,” just as they have disparaged labor unions, critical media personalities, and others who question the progressive credentials of the present administration. But I see nothing wrong with a few professional protestors, be they Left, Right, or Center, since the world is obviously plagued by so many professional oppressors.

Jerry Steele
Cameron, MO

President Obama's "To Do" List

Congressman Alan Grayson asked his constituents, “What Should I Tell the President?” I responded:

(1) Call an immediate ceasefire to all U.S. Military involved in the occupations of Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Africa and wherever else U.S. personnel are operating in this bogus U.S. War of Terror.

(2) Begin removing the troops immediately and have all U.S. troops, private contractors, and any other excuses for being there fully out of Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Africa and wherever else U.S. personnel are operating in this bogus U.S. War of Terror within no later than 90 days.

(3) Release all of the torture photos, memos, videos, testimony, etc. related to the Bush-Cheney administration and launch truly independent and transparent investigations into the war crimes of the

— Letters —

Bush-Cheney administration.

(4) Either charge and give a fair and speedy jury trial to any and all prisoners from the U.S. War of Terror held in U.S. custody—or release them with safe passage to wherever they would like to go... and begin the process immediately.

(5) Close any and all prisons such as Guantanamo, Abu Ghraib, Bagram, etc. holding such prisoners and then borrow some of those big bulldozers that Israel uses to destroy the homes of the Palestinians and totally destroy those prisons.

(6) Immediately stop all U.S. funding to the terrorist state Israel and open a truly independent and transparent investigation into the June 8, 1967 Israeli attack on the USS *Liberty* which killed 34 U.S. Sailors and Marines and wounded 171 more...and then prosecute all those guilty, both involved in the Israeli attack and those involved in the U.S. cover-up of the attack.

(7) Remove all U.S. sanctions on Iran and leave them the hell alone.

(8) Bring the U.S. Naval Armadas back from both Costa Rica and the Persian Gulf.

(9) Immediately repeal the Patriot Acts, the 2006 Military Commissions Act, the 2007 John Warner Defense Authorization Act, Presidential Directive 51, and all other un-Constitutional and tyrannical legislation and executive orders...to include all the signing statements written during both the Bush and Obama administrations.

(10) Launch truly independent and transparent investigations into the attacks of 9/11/01, to include answering each and every question posed by the 9/11 victims' families, and investigate the evidence submitted by the over 1,200 Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth. Also investigate the members of the Project for a New American Century and their involvement in the attacks of 9/11/01. Prosecute and hold accountable to the fullest extent of the law all those guilty in the crimes of 9/11/01.

Philip C. Restino, Jr.
Port Orange, FL

Agent Orange Legislation “in the hopper”

Work in certain Congressional offices

has been on-going to craft legislation for a bill on Agent Orange/Dioxin that would, for the first time in our country's history, lend a hand to the estimated three million Vietnamese who suffer today from a decade of chemical warfare during the 1960s. The call for funding will cover four areas: 1) significant assistance to the Vietnamese victims, 2) cleanup of the dioxin-contaminated lands in Vietnam (the ‘hot-spots’), 3) assistance to the children and grandchildren of affected U.S. vets, and 4) addressing the needs of affected Vietnamese-Americans.

Although several million dollars were designated a few years ago to clean up the former Danang base, very little work has been done. The Agent Orange Dialogue Group, started by the Ford Foundation, has called for \$300 million to be given for assistance and clean-up, but, movement has been exceedingly slow – and this amount is pitifully small compared to the need, estimated by some to be 12 billion!

Veterans For Peace has always been involved with the Agent Orange/Dioxin issue due mainly from the devastating effects of the defoliant on American veterans. Tens of thousands have died and been sickened by the dioxin—“the most deadly chemical known to science.” In 2004, then-president of VFP, the beloved David Kline, co-founded the Vietnam Agent Orange Relief and Responsibility Campaign (VAORRC) to support the Vietnamese lawsuit for compensation. That legal effort was dismissed at the Supreme Court level in 2009.

Congressional legislation is now the only recourse.

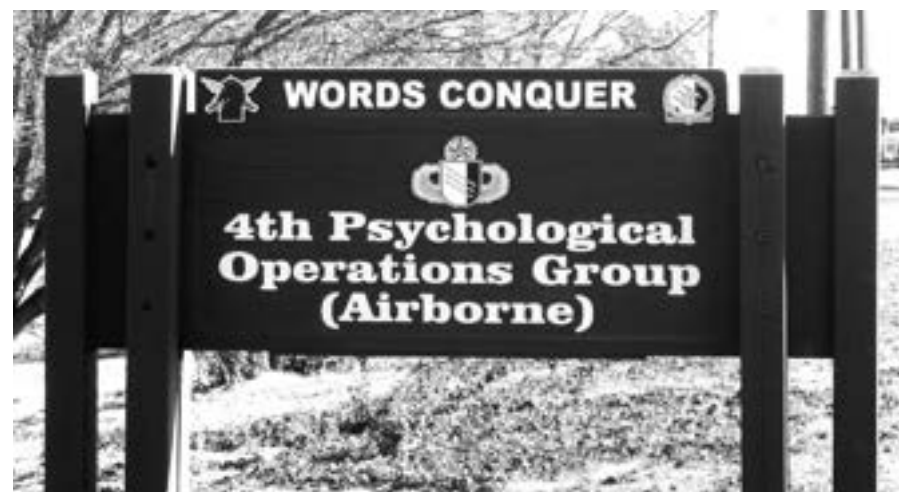
Please sign an on-line “Post Card” to Congress at the Vietnam Agent Orange Relief and Responsibility Campaign Website: www.agentorange-vn.org. Please donate toward this effort at the same site. You can donate on-line (through PayPal) or mail checks payable to “Veterans For Peace/VAORRC” to:

*Vietnam Agent Orange
Relief & Responsibility Campaign
P.O.Box 303 - Prince Station
New York, NY 10012-0006*

For more information please contact us at info@vn-agentorange.org

Nadya Williams
VFP Ch. 69, San Francisco, CA

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The War on Iraq: Five U.S. Presidents, Five British Prime Ministers, Thirty Years of Duplicity, and Counting....

by **Felicity Arbuthnot**

*Out of the mirror they stare,
Imperialism's face And the interna-
tional wrong.*

—W.H. Auden, 1907-1973, writing in 1939

Twenty years ago this August, with a green light from America, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. He had walked into possibly the biggest trap in modern history, unleashing Iraq's two-decade decimation, untold suffering, illegal bombings, and return of diseases previously eradicated in what can also only be described as UN-sponsored infanticide.

The reason for the Kuwait invasion, has been air brushed out of the fact books by Britain and America, and been presented as the irrational and dangerous act of a belligerent tyrant who was a threat to his neighbors. He had, they pointed out piously, attacked, then fought an eight year war with Iran, and exactly two years to the month after the August 20, 1988 ceasefire, invaded Kuwait on August 2, 1990.

It was, of course, not quite that simple. The U.S. engineered the fall of the democratic government of Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh in Iran, resulting from his nationalizing the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, now British Petroleum (BP) in 1953. After two years of economically ravaging sanctions, the U.S. installed Shah Reza Pahlavi (whose savage state police, SAVAK, were trained by General Norman Schwarzkopf Sr., father of General "Stormin' Norman" Schwarzkopf Commander of the 1991 Operation Desert Storm, who famously declared at the time of the ceasefire: "...no one left to kill..."). Under the Shah, oil arrangements satisfactory to the United States were, of course, restored.

Five years later, across the border in Iraq, the British installed monarchy was overthrown and the popular leader of the anti-British uprising, General Abdel Karim Kassem, began nationalizing the country's Western assets. It took the CIA just five more years to bring about his overthrow. They picked the wrong collaborators.

The nascent Ba'ath Party, with Saddam Hussein as Vice President, embarked on nationalizing the oil industry. President Nixon and National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger schemed with Iran to arm the Kurds and weaken the Iraqi government. Iraq was placed on the list of supporters of terrorism.

Interestingly, Saddam, and the Shah quietly came to a U.S.-excluded, mutually beneficial agreement, and aid to the Kurds was cut.

In 1980, the year after the Shah was overthrown, to grass roots Iranian jubilation, President Jimmy Carter announced the "Carter Doctrine" with breath-taking political arrogance, granting the U.S. the unilateral right to intervene in the Persian Gulf region to protect U.S. oil demands.

With (broadly) a U.S. political nod and wink, Iraq invaded Iran with the U.S. aiding both sides in a war where the estimated million lives lost equal those lost in Rwanda and Armenia, in each case cited as a genocide.

Iraq was also perceived as a more

Colonel Oliver North of Iran-Contra infamy, informed Iranian authorities that the U.S. would help Iran overthrow Saddam Hussein.

Subsequently, when Iraq looked vulnerable in America's (arguably) proxy bloodbath, U.S. military hardware and other assistance was ratcheted up. Breathtaking duplicity being the order of the decade, General Norman Schwarzkopf, then head of the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) quietly intervened by re-flagging Kuwaiti tankers with U.S. flags. Thus, if attacked, it would be deemed an attack

siphoning off, claimed Iraq, millions of dollars worth of oil. Iraq wanted—and desperately needed—reparation. Not in dispute is that over the eight years of war, Kuwait had moved its borders northwards into Iraq by some considerable distance, by establishing encroaching settlements. Iraq wanted its territory back. Kuwait and the Gulf states were also manipulating oil prices, to hard-pressed Iraq's disadvantage, with Washington's backing, so claimed Iraq with some justification.

Iraq, additionally, wanted to negotiate to lease two islands, Warbah and Bubiyan, from Kuwait for additional access to the Gulf, which would also have reduced residual tensions with Tehran. Tiny Kuwait, population at the time under two million, "an oil company masquerading as a country," as one commentator remarked, and confident of mighty Washington's backing, refused negotiation as it had in 1975 and 1980.

After two years of attempts to resolve the problems with Kuwait, in late July, 1990, Saddam Hussein met with U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, April Glaspie. With the border tensions mounting, she told him: "I have direct instruction from the President (Bush Sr.) to seek better relations with Iraq." She even expressed the United States apology for a critical article on Iraq by the American Information Agency, designating resultant broadcasted comments: "...cheap and unjust." Adding that: "President Bush...is not going to declare an economic war against Iraq."

She continued: "I admire your extraordinary efforts to rebuild your country. I know you need funds. We understand that and our opinion is that you should have the opportunity to rebuild your country." (How arrogantly, patronizingly kind!) Then: "But we have no opinion on Arab-Arab conflicts, like your border dispute with Kuwait."

Her conversation followed on from a meeting the previous April, between Glaspie and President Saddam, with U.S. Senators Robert Dole, Alan Simpson, Howard Metzenbaum, James McClure and Frank Murkowski, who had traveled to Iraq with President Bush's blessings ostensibly to form better relations and trade relations with Iraq and to assure that President Bush would oppose any suggestion of sanctions on Iraq.

President Saddam commented later to Glaspie that: "There is nothing left for us to buy from America except wheat. Every time we want to buy



secular buffer against fundamentalist tendencies in Iran, under Ayatollah Khomeini. (Ironically, now, Iraq is largely politically dominated by fundamentalist Iranian-backed factions, who came in with the invasion, seemingly due to blind ignorance of the region by the British and Americans, their useless "diplomats," and unemployable "Middle East experts."

Carter won the 2002 Nobel Peace Prize. His Carter Center blurb informs: "President Carter has been committed to peace in the Middle East since his White House days (and) advancing human rights, accountability, and the rule of law," in the region. Devotion is to: "Peace with Justice" and "Waging Peace."

In 1984, President Reagan ordered the sharing of top-secret intelligence with Iraq and Iran. The following year,

on the United States. The U.S. then began bombing Iranian oil platforms.

The scales tipped for Iraq, and in August 1988 the ceasefire was signed—and the (U.S.) Center for Strategic and International Studies immediately began a two-year study on the outcome of a war between the United States and Iraq. The following year, with much of Iraq's youth "stone dead," terribly wounded, or imprisoned in Iran, its Air Force nearly wiped out, and the country financially on its knees, the U.S. renamed its War Plan 1002—dreamt up to counter a Soviet confrontation—to War Plan 1002-90, designating Iraq as the new threat.

Iraq, needing to recoup the billions the war had cost, now addressed the problem of Kuwait's alleged systematic "slant drilling" under the Iraq/Kuwait border, into Iraq's Rumeila oil field,

something they say it is forbidden. I am afraid, one day, you will say 'You are going to make gunpowder out of wheat.'" ¹

The response to the invasion of Kuwait was, of course, an embargo of unique severity (UN Security Council Resolution 661) imposed on Hiroshima Day August 6, 1990.

All overseas assets were frozen, as were oil sales, thus, effectively all imports in a country which imported two thirds of absolutely everything (on advice given by the United Nations via their UN Food and Agriculture Organization). Iraq faced famine. Infant mortality doubled in just four months, by December 1990. Advice to any country when outside consultants counsel relinquishing self-sufficiency: Don't do it. The day before the embargo was imposed, President H.W. Bush stated: "What's emerging is nobody seems to be showing up as willing to accept anything less than total withdrawal from Kuwait of the Iraqi forces, and no puppet regime...Iraq, having committed brutal, naked aggression, ought to get out, and that this concept of their installing some puppet—leaving behind—will not be acceptable...."

Britain's then Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher pitched in: "... I think it is quite different when you have a nation which has violated all rules of United Nations Charter, which has gone in with guns and tanks to take and invade another country, which would have far-reaching consequences if it were left like that for every other country in the world..." (Given America's British-backed bombings; invasions; imposed, useless, corrupt, foreign passport-holding puppet governments, imposed since the Balkans in 1999 alone, irony is redundant.)

Without Congressional approval, Bush ordered forty thousand U.S. troops to "defend Saudi Arabia," despite no sign of any intention by Iraq to attack the Kingdom. Washington lied that Iraq's troops were massing on Saudi's border. They were not.

Entirely forgotten, is that just ten days after the invasion, Saddam Hussein, a staunch supporter of Palestinian rights, announced that Iraq would withdraw from Kuwait, if Israel withdrew from Israeli occupied Palestinian territories. The United States rejected the offer, out of hand. Subsequently Iraq proposed withdrawal without the stipulation relating to Palestine. Washington rejected it as "a complete nonstarter." For Washington, seemingly, war, war, is ever preferable to jaw, jaw. Heaven forbid peace should ever reign, the military-industrial complex's billion dollar munitions bonanza would dry up and the remnants of the U.S. economy with it.

The U.S., having refused all negotiation, then dispatched an extra three

hundred and sixty thousand troops to the Gulf. At the end of November, the UN Security Council passed UNSCR 678, threatening force if Iraq did not withdraw by January 15th—Iraq having offered to withdraw, albeit with conditions on August 12th, and without conditions a short time later.

In Geneva, on January 9, 1991, then Secretary of State James Baker (a "diplomat" who stated: "We will reduce Iraq to a pre-industrial age.") met Iraq's Foreign Minister, Tareq Aziz, with a letter from Bush Sr. promising the destruction of Iraq if Iraq had not withdrawn from Kuwait by January 15. Tareq Aziz stated he would not deliver the letter.

On January 17, the forty-two-day assault on Iraq began, as is now well documented, deliberately destroying all infrastructure necessary to sustain soci-

overnight. The U.S. ground assault, however, almost could be. It started on February 23. Three days later, when the Iraqi troops did withdraw, both troops and civilians were strafed mercilessly from both ends of the road to Basra, resulting in a massacre—"a turkey shoot" as described by the forces of General Norman Schwarzkopf, a seemingly psychologically disturbed individual.

The ceasefire was finally agreed by America on February 28, five months and sixteen days of decimation after Saddam Hussein had first offered to withdraw.

Two days later, the U.S. killed thousands more heading from the south towards Baghdad, in another enormous war crime for which no one has ever faced trial.

In Afghanistan's invasion and ongo-

rights, they have their right to their nationhood, they have the right to their territorial integrity. He has been rightly branded as an aggressor, contrary to international law, and it is not a question of taunting, it is a question of earning the condemnation of the world and the appropriate action which follows." The "Iron Lady" Thatcher, was as subservient to Bush Sr. as her slippery successor Blair was to Clinton and baby Bush.

On August 21, Thatcher opined: "I think it is as well to remind ourselves how this whole position started. It started because Saddam Hussein substituted the rule of force for the rule of law and invaded an independent country and that cannot be allowed to stand."

This August 2010, with an estimated three million dead in Iraq, as the bell now tolls ever louder for Iran, and with the near identical sleights of hand and word being played out, as were against Iraq—farcical, were it not so sinisterly demented—Iran is (says the U.S. and UK) hell-bent on making "weapons of mass destruction."

Remember them? The weapons the crazies are still searching for in Iraq? The ones Iraq accounted for not having in 11,800 pages, delivered to the UN in December 2002, and stolen by the U.S. mission to the UN?

With the substitution of "the rule of force" for "the rule of law" seemingly imminent, are there governments, statesmen and women, world bodies and institutions, unions—is there enough people power to halt the juggernaut on the Armageddon highway?

With the United Nations, as ever, either complicit or asleep at the wheel, can "We the people" finally "...save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" and the equivalent unimaginable horrors of multiple Hiroshimas and Nagasakis?

Sanctions 1991-2003

This is a war against the children of Iraq on two fronts: bombing...And the most ruthless embargo in modern history. According to Unicef, the United Nations Children's Fund, the death rate of children under five is more than 4,000 a month—that is 4,000 more than would have died before sanctions. That is half a million children dead in eight years. If this statistic is difficult to grasp, consider, on the day you read this, up to 200 Iraqi children may die needlessly.

—John Pilger, "Squeezed to Death," *The Guardian*, March 2000

Lesley Stahl: ***We have heard that a half million children have died. I mean, that's more children than died in Hiroshima. And, you know, is the price worth it?***

U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Madeleine Albright: ***I think this is a very hard choice, but the price—we think the price is worth it.***

—60 Minutes (May 1996)

ety, including the deliberate targeting of all water purification facilities, with an exact timeline of how long it would take Iraq's complex water system "to fully degrade" issued to all NATO Command Headquarters.² Somewhere in Iraq's ashes lay all the painstakingly crafted legal treaties, conventions, and principles on war crimes and treatment of civilians in conflict, never to surface again, as far as the U.S. and UK were concerned, arguably now officially signed up to "rogue state" status.

On February 21, the USSR stated that Iraq had agreed to a complete withdrawal, without conditions. The United States rejected the agreement unless Iraq left by mid-day on February 23rd. Interestingly, on the rare occasions the U.S. and UK moot a withdrawal, the public is told, ad nauseum, that this is a complicated process which takes time and cannot be achieved

ing massacres by the occupiers, a daily gate-crashing more resembling the towering illegality of the occupation of Iraq, we hear more of Margaret Thatcher's now-laughable lauding of the values and integrity of the U.S. and UK: "The West is dealing with a person who, without warning, has gone into the territory of another state with tanks, aircraft, and guns, has fought and taken that state against international law, against the will of that state, and has set up a puppet regime. That is the act of an aggressor which must be stopped. While a person who will take such action on one state will take it against another state if he is not stopped."

"President Saddam Hussein and Iraq are aggressors. They have invaded another country, they have taken it by force—that is not the way we do things in this world. Other countries have

Footnotes and sources

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Felicity Arbuthnot lives in London. She has written and broadcast widely on Iraq, one of the few journalists to cover Iraq extensively even in the mid-1990's during the sanctions. She with Denis Halliday was senior researcher for John Pilger's Award winning documentary: Paying the Price—Killing the Children of Iraq.

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no such thing as a good shot

the morning news says today Mumbai is hot
30 killed, more injured, that is clear
the shot heard round the world is every shot

the neighbor's kid's a sniper who will spot
our cats in his crosshairs, far or near
how can I tell my own backyard from what is not?

in Vietnam we saw the bodies in their slots
as we ate our dinners we shed our tears
the shot heard round the world is every shot

the tsunami's wreckage became our own rot
every hour the body count we'd hear
how can I tell my own backyard from what is not?

in Iraq they hid the dead that we'd forgot
but still the silence makes it more severe
the shot heard round the world is every shot

now to begin again what is never forgot
destroy each gun, each bomb or tank, each spear
the shot heard round the world is every shot
how can I tell my own backyard from what is not?

—Christina Starobin, 11/27/08

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Jack Cohen-Joppa of *The Nuclear Resister* reads **The War Crimes Times**