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The War Crimes Times

WarCrimesTimes.org

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Support our troops and our veterans who had the courage to resist. They have stood up to speak (and sing) out against war, war crimes, and mistreatment of troops. They have stood down from deployment in illegal wars. Their stories begin on page 10.

Atrocity and War

by Camillo “Mac” Bica

Most learn about war by watching a Hollywood production or by reading a memoir, novel, or historical account. In many if not most cases, the goal of the filmmaker or the author is to encourage people to see their movie, to buy their book, or more diabolically, to excite patriotic fervor and support for a particular conflict or to encourage enlistment into the military.

The historian may be more diligent in attending to details when reporting events and campaigns during the course of a war, but is oftentimes careful to respect the sacrifices and celebrate the courage of those who served. Consequently, the filmmaker's, the author's, and the historian's portrayal of war is often glamorized, fictionalized and glorified to make war attractive, or at least palatable, and the behavior of the warriors noble and heroic.

In truth, war cannot be understood, rationally or intellectually, by watching a film or by reading a book. To “know” war, you have to experience it, live it, feel it in your gut—the anxiety, fear, frustration, boredom, hopelessness, despair, anger, rage, etc. In truth, warriors exist in a world totally incomprehensible to those who have never had the misfortune of experiencing the horrors of the battlefield.

For the apathetic and for

those who trumpet and champion war's necessity from a safe distance, war is a distraction, bleak, dire, and unpleasant, better left for others and for other peoples' children to fight. For those who oppose war, it is murder declared by incompetent and/or deceitful politicians, to be prosecuted by soldiers who, it is hoped (and expected), would recognize its criminality and courageously suffer the sanctions consequent to refusing to become its instruments of slaughter.

With the recent release of the video at Wikileaks that graphically documents—with less than Xbox clarity and sophistication—an alleged incident of atrocity prosecuted by American troops, all morally sensitive human beings, regardless of their political ideology or position on the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, and the wars in Pakistan, Yemen, etc., are

(See ATROCITY on page 8)

Israeli War Crimes: From the USS *Liberty* to the Humanitarian Flotilla

by James Petras, Ph.D

Introduction: Israeli Crimes on the High Seas

On June 8, 1967, two squadrons of Israeli warplanes bombed, napalmed and machine-gunned the U.S. intelligence-gathering ship, USS *Liberty*, in international waters, killing 34 U.S. sailors and wounding another 172. The assault took place on a sunny afternoon, with the U.S. flag and identifying markers clearly visible. The Israelis targeted the antennae to prevent the crew from broadcasting for help and shot up the lifeboats to ensure no survivors. There were, however, survivors who rigged up an antenna and radioed their distress, a call for help that reached Washington, DC. In

an unprecedented act of betrayal, President Johnson, in close liaison with powerful American Jewish Zionist political backers, covered up the mass murder on the high seas by issuing orders first to recall Mediterranean-based warplanes from rushing to assist their besieged comrades, then threatening to court-martial the survivors who might expose the deliberate nature of the Israeli assault, and finally by repeating the Israeli line that the attack was a matter of mistaken identity, a lie which numerous military leaders later rejected.

Almost to the day, 43 years later, on May 31, 2010, Israeli warships, helicopter gun ships and commandos assaulted a

(See ISRAELI WAR CRIMES on page 9)

In the news...

Tony Blair Escapes Arrest

Tony Blair, at a speaking engagement in April, evaded being served with an indictment for war crimes related to the invasion of Iraq. Extensive security measures and more than 30 security people reportedly prevented members of the Kuala Lumpur War Crimes Commission from reaching the former British PM.

Israeli Commando “Hero”

PressTV <http://presstv.ir/> June 7—An Israeli commando who shot dead several activists in a recent attack on a Gaza-bound international aid convoy may receive a medal of valor, a report says. The *Times Online* reported on Saturday that the nominated Israeli soldier single-handedly killed six campaigners on the Turkish ship, *Mavi Marmara*—one of the six ships of the Freedom Flotilla.

In a June 19 story, the *Jerusalem Post*, referring to the staff

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PARENTS:
Do you know what
your children are
doing in school?

See page 3.

GI suicides:
page 18



Ross Caputi (right):
“Remember Them,
Don’t Martyr Them”
page 13 — NC STOP
TORTURE NOW
page 6 — Combatants
for Peace page 12—
and much more...



The Battle for Justice Heats Up

by Charlotte Dennett

The growing accountability movement got a major shot in the arm recently when it learned



that on April 19, an Argentinian judge sentenced the last of Argentina's dictators, Reynaldo Bignone, age 83, to 25 years in prison. Bignone's crime: kidnapping and torturing 56 victims in a concentration camp during the reign of terror known as the "dirty war" that gripped Argentina from 1976-1983.

This is huge, surpassing the arrest of Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet in his hospital bed back in 1998. (Pinochet died before justice could be done.) The conviction of a former head of state for crimes he committed while in office sends a powerful message to all those suspected war criminals still on the loose, including some of the top leaders of the Bush administration.

George W. Bush, who lied our country into war resulting in the deaths of over 4,000 American troops, heads the list. He, former Vice President Dick Cheney and former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld also authorized waterboarding of prisoners seized in Afghanistan, violating U.S. and international law against torture in the process.

Worse yet, they authorized torture, at least initially, not to get actionable intelligence, but to get forced confessions from detainees about nonexistent links to Al Qaeda, Saddam Hussein, and 9/11 in a horrific attempt to strengthen their non-

existent case for sending troops to Iraq. Evidence abounds that all three are guilty of murder and war crimes.

Don't get me wrong. Barack

Obama's famous mantra, "I prefer to look forward instead of backward" was a palliative signal to war criminals in the previous administration (including Bush and Cheney's architects of tyranny and torture in the Department of Justice, John Yoo and Jay Bybee), that the new president would not push for their prosecution.

Obama's oft-quoted words succeeded, at least during his first year in office, in tamping down his supporters' well-documented desire for criminal prosecutions. But former vice president Dick Cheney, Bush "torture lawyer" John Yoo and Bush's close advisor Karl Rove must have felt a chill when they saw that the number-one wish citizens posted on the website that President-elect Obama created before he entered office was a full-fledged criminal investigation into their misdeeds and those of their boss. Ever since, all three have adopted the classic posture of "the best defense is an offense," with Cheney and his daughter Liz hitting the TV talk shows with a vengeance while Yoo and Rove have used their recently published books to burnish the Bush administration's image with their

lies—no doubt hoping that if repeated enough, the American people will accept their version of events during the years 2000-2008.

Will they succeed? The jury is still out. For the most part, the Tea Party movement of angry middle-class Americans does not appear to be aligned to either Republicans or Democrats, despite Republican fear-mongering efforts to blame the Obama administration for their ills.

The Cheneys' efforts to weaken the Obama administration's Department of Justice by

The battle to bring Bush and his top advisors to justice—for murder, war crimes, warrantless wiretapping, bank fraud, and shredding the Constitution—is far from over. In fact, it is becoming re-invigorated.

attacking DOJ lawyers who defended detainees during the Bush administration actually backfired. John Yoo, now back at Berkeley where he teaches law, has reportedly had to revert to holding his classes in secret because of the unrelenting efforts of protestors who want him prosecuted for war crimes.

Equally unnerving for his fellow co-conspirators, a federal judge recently allowed a lawsuit brought by an American torture victim to go forward against former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. And over 150 lawyers and human rights campaigners meeting in Beirut, Lebanon, chose former U.S. attorney General Ramsey Clark to head an international campaign to investigate Bush-era war crimes, with a commitment to prosecuting and indicting the defendants in the U.S.

As for Karl Rove, he has experienced some severely

embarrassing moments as Code Pink activist Jodie Evans, with her wonderfully symbolic pink handcuffs, has twice attempted a much-publicized citizen's arrest during his book tour, once in Beverly Hills on March 30, again in Las Vegas on April 9.

The first attempt, at a theater frequently used for celebrity events, was notable not just for the attempted arrest, but for the small crowd that came to hear Rove speak. When Al Gore came to speak there, the theater was filled to capacity. But when Rove appeared there, remarked Beverly Hills publicist Ilene Proctor, "not only couldn't he fill the theater, he couldn't even fill the lobby. There were only about 100 people there. At \$25,000 a speaking gig, someone was losing money big-time."

And what, you may wonder, is going on with George W. Bush? He is apparently laying low, perhaps putting the final touches on his own memoir.

The last time I know of his venturing out on a "pre-book" tour was in late October, before a safe, invitation-only audience of well-heeled Canadians at Montreal's posh Queen Elizabeth Hotel. Though throngs of Canadian protestors never got to see him, they succeeded in sending their own message by hurling shoes at the hotel. The fervor of that crowd was unmistakable: they shouted, "Bush: Assassin! Terroriste! Criminel!" and even ended the event by burning him in effigy.

Having followed the ups and downs of the accountability movement over the last few years, and while writing *The People v Bush*, I can safely report

that the battle to bring Bush and his top advisors to justice—for murder, war crimes, warrantless wiretapping, bank fraud, and shredding the Constitution—is far from over. In fact, it is becoming re-invigorated.

We have Cheney, Yoo, and Rove to thank for keeping the battle for justice lively. And at some point, George W. Bush will have to enter the fray to promote his book. I look forward to reminding him of something he said when he let Cheney's top aid, Scooter Libby, go down in flames and into a federal prison for lying to federal investigators about Cheney's role in outing CIA agent Valerie Plame:

"Our entire system of justice," Bush said, "relies on people telling the truth. If a person does not tell the truth, particularly if he serves in government and holds the public trust, he must be held accountable."

President Bush, I couldn't agree more. See you in court.



Charlotte Dennett is an attorney and the author of The People v Bush: One Lawyer's Campaign to Bring the President to Justice and the Nationwide Grassroots Movement She's Encountered Along the Way (Chelsea Green).

This article appeared on May 4 at HuffingtonPost.com

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WCT reader photos (except page 19) by Clare Hanrahan

The War Crimes Times is a project of **Veterans For Peace**

(www.VeteransForPeace.org, a nonprofit, national organization of veterans working together for peace and justice through non-violence). *WCT* provides information on war crimes and war criminals, the need to provide accountability for war crimes, the many costs of war, and the effects of our war culture on our national character. Our authors include journalists, legal experts, and veterans speaking from experience. *WCT* is published quarterly by VFP Chapter 099 (Western North Carolina).



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Maryland becomes first state to regulate military testing in schools

New law protects the privacy of students who take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)

by Pat Elder

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (AP) May 13, 2010 — A first-of-its-kind law bars public high schools in Maryland from automatically sending student scores on a widely used military aptitude test to recruiters, a practice that critics say was giving the armed forces backdoor access to young people without their parents' consent.

About four years ago I answered a telephone hotline for soldiers and a young man with a rural southern twang was on the line. "Yeah, um, I'm with the 101st...Fort Campbell and I got back from Iraq a couple of months ago. It ain't good..."

I was a counselor and the 19-year-old was explaining that he'd just gotten orders for a second tour and he didn't want to go. He asked me what would happen if he went AWOL. I remember the call because he cried. He didn't want to go back because he "did horrible things to people." He said he wasn't cut out for Army life and he should never have joined. We talked for an hour. I asked him why he enlisted in the first place and he explained that all the kids in his senior class in Kentucky were required to take the ASVAB and he started getting calls from all the services immediately after taking the test. The Army recruiter was the most persuasive.

I had heard of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) but I never understood the crucial role it plays in recruiting youth from the schools.

The ASVAB is the military's entrance exam that is given to fresh recruits to determine their aptitude for various military occupations. The test is also promoted in the schools as a "career exploration" tool. Roughly 650,000 U.S. high school students took



the exam in the 2008-2009 school year. The Pentagon says scores for 92% of them were automatically sent to military recruiters. In most cases, students take the test without parental knowledge or consent.

The Army's School Recruiting Program Handbook says the primary purpose of the ASVAB is to provide military recruiters "with a source of leads of high school juniors and seniors qualified through the ASVAB for enlistment into the Active Army and Army Reserve." Schools rarely advertise the tie-in between the ASVAB and

The military uses the four-hour exam to gather a treasure-trove of information to use in a sophisticated psychological recruiting program.

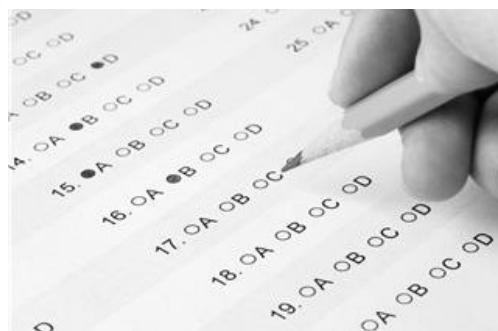
In most cases, students take the test without parental knowledge or consent.

recruiting. School counselors and administrators encourage students to take the test that many claim assists students in matching their abilities with civilian career paths.

About 1,000 schools across the country require entire classes of students to take the test. In other schools the test is strongly encouraged. The military uses the four-hour exam to gather a treasure-trove of information to use in a sophisticated psychological

recruiting program. Students divulge social security numbers, ethnicity, demographic information, and three hours of test results. After the test is administered, military representatives meet with youth at the school to discuss their scores and suggest career paths. Later, recruiters make calls to unsuspecting students, using individualized profiles gathered from test data and other sources.

Federal and state laws strictly monitor the release of student information,



but the military manages to circumvent these laws with the administration of the ASVAB. The Family Educational Rights Protection Act (FERPA), and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) both contain requirements for opt-out notifications in releases of student information. Parents are given the right to stop their child's personal information from being released to third parties, but there are no such requirements in the ASVAB student testing program.

Since the test was first given in the nation's schools in the late 1960's, military regulations have allowed schools to administer the test while precluding results from reaching recruiters. Many school administrators, however, don't realize the option exists and this partially explains why 92% of all students who take the test have their results shipped to the Pentagon.

The U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command identifies several options schools have regarding the administration and release of ASVAB information. These options range from

Option 1, which permits test results and other student information to be released to military recruiters without prior consent, to Option 8, which requires active parental consent to release the ASVAB test results and private information. Inaction on the part of a school will cause USMEPCOM to automatically select Option 1.

Maryland's Law, which takes effect in July, mandates the selection of Option 8 for all students who take the ASVAB, and their parents if they are under 18, will have to decide whether to give the information to the military. The law takes effect in July. One other state, Hawaii, has a similar policy for its schools, but not a law. California's legislature passed a measure similar to Maryland's but it was vetoed by Gov. Schwarzenegger. School districts across the country, including Los Angeles and New York City, have se-



lected Option 8 to protect the privacy of students who take the test.

Some Pentagon insiders claim the school ASVAB program conspires to recruit children who don't belong in the military. The young man from Kentucky is a case in point.

For more on the ASVAB: www.asvabtest.org

Pat Elder serves on the Steering Committee of the National Network Opposing the Militarization of Youth (NNOMY) www.nnomy.org

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(Continued from page 1)

sergeant "hero" as "S" and his commander as "Lt. Col. T", reported: "S. did a remarkable job," T. said. "He stabilized the situation and succeeded in hitting six of the terrorists." Based on preliminary results of its investigation into the navy's takeover of the *Mavi Marmara*, which ended with nine dead passengers and more than 30 wounded, the IDF said on Thursday that the commandos were attacked by a well-trained group of mercenaries, most of whom were found without IDs but with thousands of dollars in their pockets."

ICC Discriminates

On May 27, *Ghana News:Accra Mail* reported:

"the International Criminal Court (ICC) faces a number of challenges. The fact that it has prosecuted only Africans has provoked charges of neocolonialism and racism; its decision to indict certain actors and not others has triggered suspicion of the court's susceptibility to power politics; and its interventions into ongoing armed conflicts have elicited accusations that the ICC is pursuing its own brand of justice at the cost of enflaming war and disregarding the interests of victims."

ICC Outlaws Aggression Despite U.S. Opposition

On June 15, the *Christian Science Monitor* reported: "The United States under the Obama administration has developed an increasingly close working relationship with the International Criminal Court in

The Hague. But that growing engagement with a controversial institution of international law was unable to prevent the ICC from expanding the scope of its work to include the murky crime of "aggression," a move the U.S. had vehemently opposed.

"At the 111-nation ICC's first review conference that wrapped up last week in Kampala, Uganda, delegates decided to expand the international court's purview to include the crime of aggression—a crime that only the U.S. has successfully tried, in the post-World War II tribunals in Nuremberg and Tokyo. State Department officials say the U.S., which is not a signatory to the ICC, was able to mitigate the drawbacks of such an expansion of the court's reach, primarily by

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putting off any prosecution of the newest international crime until at least 2017... One of the main U.S. concerns in seeing 'aggression' added to the ICC's jurisdiction was the impact it could potentially have on U.S. military operations abroad. But [U.S. State Department legal adviser Harold] Koh says the U.S. successfully negotiated the 'aggression' statute's wording so that U.S. forces won't be susceptible to it. 'No U.S. national can be prosecuted for aggression while the U.S. is not a signatory' to the ICC, he says."

Victory: Peace Groups Permanently Shut Down Army Experience Center in Philadelphia

WASHINGTON—June 11—Franklin Mills Mall, Philadelphia, PA—A coalition of thirty peace groups has proven triumphant in their goal of forever shutting down the "Army Experience Center" in a suburban shopping mall in Philadelphia. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* reported today that the Army plans to permanently close the facility. After almost two years of glorifying the "Army experience" and U.S. wars through video and war games, the Army Experience Center at Franklin Mills Malls announced it will shut down on July 31, 2010. The \$13 million, 14,500 square foot Army Experience Center at Franklin Mills Mall boasts dozens of video game computers and X-Box video game consoles with various interactive, military-style shooting games.

Citizen arrested, then freed; Bush keeps walking

On June 8, the *Calgary Herald* reported: "A protester who wanted to arrest former U.S. president George W. Bush for war crimes during his visit here last year will not go to jail after being convicted Monday of obstructing a peace officer. John Pasquale Boncore, 58, was given a conditional discharge....[and] must make a \$1,000 donation to a charity of his choice and pay a \$50 victim fine surcharge as conditions of his probation. [The court] heard Boncore wanted to have Bush arrested as a war criminal. He tried to cross a line of city police officers providing security as the former president spoke at the Telus Convention Centre on March 17, 2009. Boncore told provincial court Judge Manfred DeLong before being sentenced that if he had to pay a price to make his point, "Bring it on!"

When Soldiers Past are Lied to, Future Soldiers Eventually See the Truth



All three pictures on the left were taken of Army medics who were in my unit in Vietnam. All three were dedicated soldiers when they first arrived in Vietnam. When they left Vietnam, they were totally disillusioned with America's dog and pony show. Every single aspect of the Vietnam War was a lie. The French brutalized the Vietnamese people, and when France were defeated, the U.S. simply moved in to take their place. Brutality replaced brutality. The cause of freedom and democracy was the greatest masquerade for colonial murder. It was all bull shit billy. When the rich and the upper class don't go to war, it's all about corporate greed.

The three pictures on the right were taken of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans testifying at The Winter Soldier II Investigation in Silver Spring, Maryland in March 2008. They were bearing witness to U.S. war crimes and human rights abuses in those countries by American soldiers. Their individual testimonies were emotionally gripping. I was mentally exhausted after four days of testimony.

A nation that year after year spends more money on national defense than it does on programs of social uplift is facing spiritual death.

—Martin Luther King Jr.
April 4, 1967

The first war crime committed in any war of aggression by the aggressors is against the truth.

—Michael Parenti

When I left Vietnam in September 1971, American soldiers in my unit were shooting heroin, they were shooting each other, and they were shooting themselves.

Most people in my unit knew the Vietnam War was a waste land of lies. Fast forward 40 years, and the Iraq and Afghanistan soldiers and veterans are starting to come out of their patriotic coma. It's the same coma I came out of when I came back from Vietnam.

The past repeats itself simply because the past was a repetitious lie to begin with. So,

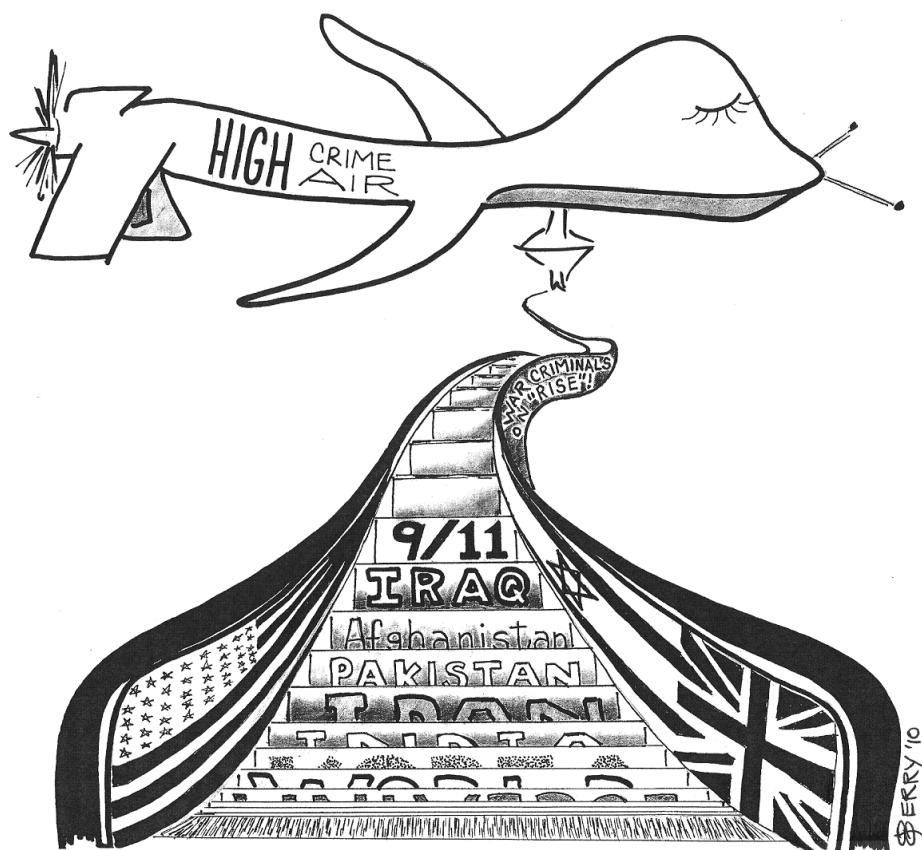
how do you tell an entire generation that the war was a lie?
You don't.

Our government never will. What happens is quite simple. American soldiers and veterans self-destruct. (Just like we did after coming back from Vietnam. I use the words, "coming back," instead of "coming home," on purpose.) And while all of this is going on, the public, who was never personally invested in the war in the first place, moves on to the next distraction. There are thousands of these distractions. The public is never part of the healing process for their warriors, because they can't deal with the truth. Lying is the Most Powerful Weapon in War. 36 Iraq and Afghanistan soldiers have committed suicide at Fort Carson, Colorado since the Middle East War began. The vast majority of Americans do not know this. The vast majority of Americans are comfortably numb. The vast majority of Americans do not know their country is dying.

That's what happens when you hide everything.

—Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
June 2, 2010

(All photographs taken by Mike Hastie)



Place an ad in
The War Crimes Times

Corporations Profit from Permanent War

by Bill Quigley

U.S. law officially proclaims Memorial Day "as a day of prayer for permanent peace."

However, the U.S. is much closer to permanent war than permanent peace. Corporations are profiting from wars and lobbying politicians for more. The U.S., and the rest of the world, cannot afford the rising personal and financial costs of permanent war.

Number One in War

No doubt, the USA is number one in war. This coming year the U.S. will spend 708 billion dollars on war and another \$125 billion for Veterans Affairs—over \$830 billion. In a distant second place is China which spent about \$84 billion on its military in 2008.

The U.S. also leads the world in the sale of lethal weapons to others, selling about one of every three weapons worldwide. The USA's major clients? South Korea, Israel and United Arab Emirates.

Our country has 5 percent of the world's population but accounts for more than 40% of the military spending for the whole world.

Harm

Our nation does not respect our soldiers by engaging in permanent war. War is grinding up our children. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have cost over 5,000 U.S. lives and tens of thousands more lives of people in those countries. Over 20% of those in our military who served in these two wars, 320,000 people, have war-related traumatic brain injuries. Suicide rates are up by 26 percent among 18- to 29-year-old male veterans in the latest Veterans Administration study. Mental health hospitalizations are now the leading cause of hospital admissions for the military, higher than injuries. On any given night, over 100,000 veterans are homeless and living on our nation's streets.

Rising Costs of War

Since 2001, the U.S. has spent over \$6 trillion (a trillion is a million millions) on war and preparations for war. That is about \$20,000 for every woman, man, and child in the U.S. Iraq and Afghanistan alone have cost the U.S. taxpayer over a trillion dollars since 2001.

No End in Sight

In June, Marine General James Cartwright, the Vice-Chair of the military Joint Chiefs of Staff, told the *Army Times* that the U.S. can expect continuing war "for as far as the eye can see."

In the name of this perpetual war against terrorism, the U.S. still jails hundreds without trial in Guantanamo, holds hundreds more in prisons on bases and in secret detention worldwide, tries to avoid constitutional trials for anyone accused of terrorism, admits it is trying to assassinate an American

citizen Muslim cleric in Yemen, and launches deadly drone strikes in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Yemen killing civilians and

suspects whenever we decide.

Who benefits from permanent war?

One support for permanent war is that there are corporations in the U.S. which openly lobby for more and more money to be invested in war. Why? Because they profit enormously from government contracts.

President Dwight Eisenhower, who believed in a strong military, warned the U.S. about just this in his farewell address to the nation in 1961:

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. We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes.

War is Big Business

War is very big business. People know that private companies are doing much more in war. In January 2010, the Congressional Research Service reported that there are at least 55,000 private armed security contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan, and maybe many more—as many as 70,000 in Afghanistan alone.

But much bigger money is available to defense contractors. In 2008 alone, the top ten defense contractors received nearly \$150 billion in federal contracts. These corporations spent millions to lobby for billions more in federal funds and hired ex-military leaders and

ex-officials to help them profit off war.

For example, look at the top three defense contractors, Lockheed Martin, Boeing, and Northrop Grumman. They demonstrate why perpetual war is profitable and part of the reason it continues.



Lockheed Martin

Lockheed Martin is the largest military contractor in the world with 140,000 employees, taking in over \$40 billion annually, over \$35 billion of which comes from the U.S. government. Lockheed Martin boasts that they have increased their dividend payments by more than 10 percent for the seventh consecutive year—perfectly in line with the increase in war spending by the U.S. Its chairman, Robert Stevens, received over \$72 million in compensation over the past three years.

Lockheed's board of directors includes a former Under Secretary of Defense, a former U.S. Air Force Commander of the U.S. Strategic Command, a former Deputy Director of Homeland Security, and a former Supreme Allied Commander of Europe. These board members receive over \$200,000 a year in compensation. Its political action committee gave over a million dollars to federal candidates in 2009, and is consistently one of the top spending PACs in the U.S. They appeal to all members of Congress because they strategically have operations in all fifty states. And, since 1998, Lockheed has spent over \$125 million to lobby Congress.



Northrop Grumman

Northrop Grumman is a \$33 billion company with 120,000 employees. In 2008, it received nearly \$25 billion in federal contracts. Its chairman, Ronald Sugar, received over \$54 million in compensation over the past three years.

Northrop's Board includes a former Admiral of the Navy, a former 20 year member of Congress, a former chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a former commissioner of the Security and Exchange Commission, and a former U.S.

Naval officer. The members of its board of directors received over \$200,000 each in 2009. Its PAC is listed as making over \$700,000 in federal campaign donations in 2009. Since 1998, it has spent over \$147 million lobbying Congress.



Boeing

Boeing has 150,000 employees and took in over \$23 billion in federal contracts in 2008. With revenues of \$68 billion in 2009, its chair, James McNerney, was paid over \$51 million over the past three years. Its board members are paid well over \$200,000 a year. Boeing's directors include a former U.S. Secretary of Commerce, a former White House chief of staff, a former vice chair of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, and a former U.S. Ambassador and U.S. Trade Representative. It hosts the 10th largest political action committee, giving away more than one million dollars to federal candidates in 2009. Since 1998, it has spent \$125 million lobbying Congress.

Time to Terminate the Permanent War

These corporations take billions from the government and profit from our perpetual state of war. They recycle some of that money back into lobbying the same people who gave it to them, and hire ex-military and government officials to help smooth the process. Their leaders make tens of millions off this work.

The trillions of dollars that it costs to wage permanent war are taxing the U.S. economy. Yet where are the voices in Congress, Democratic or Republican, that talk seriously of dramatically reducing our military spending? President Obama and the Democrats are effectively continuing the permanent war policies of the Bush years. It is past time for change.

Remember this Memorial Day that, while thousands have been laid in their graves and hundreds of thousands wounded, private military contractors are prospering and profiting as the business of war booms.

The U.S. should not only remember its dead but work to reverse the profitable permanent war that promises to add more names to the dead and disabled in this country and around the world.

Bill Quigley is Legal Director at the Center for Constitutional Rights and a law professor at Loyola University New Orleans. Quigley77@gmail.com

\$1,000,000,000,000

If you earned a million dollars a year and saved it all, it would take you a million years to save a trillion dollars. All of recorded human history has occurred in a span of time which is less than 1% of a million years.

Take a stack of **The War Crimes Times** to your next protest, party meeting, march, or ice cream social.

Why Human Rights Matter: Confronting Rendition to Torture in North Carolina

by Clare Hanrahan

Despite what our leaders may profess, U.S. directed torture continues and efforts to obtain redress for victims and accountability from perpetrators are met with systematic obstruction. We know we cannot rely on government, at any level, to take the initiative for accountability.

But we must not be bystanders.

Six years have passed since the release of the gruesome photos of torture at Abu Ghraib, and it is well past the deadline President Obama set for closing the prison camps at Guantanamo. Yet this Administration has steadfastly refused to seek accountability for U.S.-sponsored torture—the murderous extent of which is still being revealed—and invokes the “state secrets” privilege to obstruct prosecution when torture victims, some released without charge, seek legal redress.

These issues are never easy to confront. They require us to break through our denial, take in the horror, and hold it in awareness while we organize for action.

In a 2006 report, The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) accused the United States of operating a “clandestine ‘spiderweb’ of disappearances, secret detentions and unlawful inter-state transfers, often encompassing countries notorious for their use of torture. Hundreds of persons have become entrapped in this web—some merely suspected of sympathizing with a presumed terrorist organization.”

In North Carolina, a tenacious grassroots coalition of peace and human rights activists, religious groups, and courageous locals has organized as NC Stop Torture Now (NC-STN). According to the group, “Officials of the Bush Administration used North Carolina as a key part of their secret off-shore torture program.” The “torture taxi” planes were based in Johnston and Lenoir counties. Their pilots and crews work for Aero Contractors, a CIA linked company headquartered at the

Johnston County airport in Smithfield, a town of less than 12,000 persons situated in the Coastal Plain of North Carolina about 30 miles east of Raleigh.

NC Stop Torture Now has been campaigning since 2005 at local, state, and federal levels for an end to the practice of extraordinary rendition to torture and for an investigation of Aero Contractors. They act boldly and deftly to educate the public and state officials. They seek acknowledgment and accountability for the crimes, apology and restitution for torture survivors, and assurance that state and national resources will never again be used to secretly disappear people and torture them, whether they are guilty of crimes or not.

The U.N. Convention against Torture, ratified by the U.S. in 1994, requires in Article III: “No state shall expel, return or extradite a person to another state where there are substantial grounds for believing that he would be in danger of being subjected to torture.” Failure to prosecute violations is considered a breach of international law. North Carolina law requires anyone in charge of a state agency, such as the Global TransPark where Aero maintained a hangar in Kinston, to report possible criminal violations to the State Bureau of Investigation.

NC-STN was pivotal in organizing a public conference, “Weaving a Net of Accountability: Taking on Extraordinary Rendition at the State and Regional Level,” held April 8-9 at Duke University. Speakers came from Ireland, London, New York, Washington, Boston, and from throughout North Carolina.

“It is clear that our public taxpayer-funded airports are systematically being used by the CIA for purposes that may in fact still include extraordinary rendition,” said Christina Cowger, a conference organizer and facilitator with NC-STN. Aero Contractors was founded in 1979 in the wake of the dismantling of Air

America, the CIA airline that participated heavily in the Indo-China wars, she said.

“It was actually the St. Louis folks who woke us up to the fact that we had this CIA operation in our backyard,” Cowger acknowledged. A delegation from St. Louis including longtime human rights activist and war-tax resister Bill Ramsey and his friend, Andrew Wimmer, traveled to North Carolina in November 2005.

The group joined with local members of NC-STN and served a peoples’ indictment to Aero Contractors, charging them with multiple counts of violation of U.S. and international laws and treaties ban-

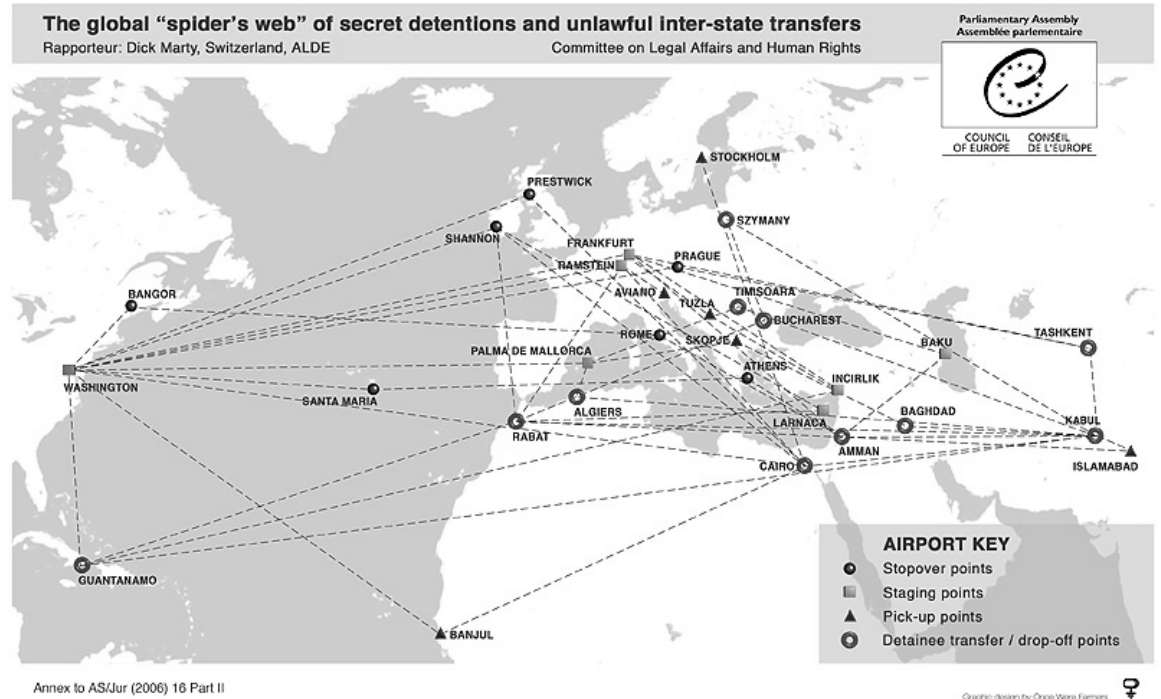


April NC-STN conference at Duke University
(Duke Human Rights Center photo)

journalist Stephen Grey used flight logs from the FAA and Eurocontrol (the FAA’s counterpart in Europe) to piece together the itineraries of the two main rendition planes, the Kinston-based N313P and the smaller Gulfstream, N379P, which was based at the Johnston County airport. Tail numbers have since been changed. A Montana-registered Gulfstream IV aircraft, with tail number N478GS, operated by Centurian Aviation, was based at the Fayetteville Airport, and is suspected of facilitating the extraordinary ren-

serves its 46 member states as “the guardian for human rights, democracy, and respect for the rule of law in Europe,” using as its reference point the European Convention on Human Rights.

Aero Contractors was the aviation “hub” of the CIA’s rendition program, which “flew dozens of people to horrific jails around the globe, using ‘civilian’ aircraft,” according to NC Stop Torture Now. The group has compiled a partial list of twenty-four detainees secretly transported by Aero Contractors for torture by or for the



ning torture by providing pilots and planes for the CIA’s program of extraordinary rendition. The citizen action resulted in 14 arrests—not of the officials who are complicit in rendition to torture, but of the activists who came to seek accountability.

Wimmer was working then with the St. Louis-based Center for Theology and Social Analysis. His research on extraordinary rendition led to Global TransPark, a public-private consortium built by the state of North Carolina with economic development funds.

According to Cowger, UK

dition program, according to Cowger, as an arm of the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), based at Fort Bragg.

“The point is really a simple one,” said Robin Kirk, director of the Human Rights Center at Duke University, in introducing Gavin Simpson, lead investigator with the Council of Europe and conference presenter. “We are trying to do something about human rights abuse, extraordinary rendition, and the torture that came along with it that has its feet in our state...to get around the impunity that seems to be reigning right now with regard to human rights issues.”

The Council of Europe

CIA, citing as a primary source the book *Ghost Plane* by Stephen Grey.

The pickup methodology for the CIA’s torture rendition flights was “alarmingly systematized,” said Simpson, who has followed the gruesome trail of so-called “extraordinary rendition” throughout Europe. “It involved stripping the suspect naked, often roughly beating him around the midriff and the ribs in the process. Men clad in ninja suits, black balaclavas, tight fitting black coats—unidentifiable from one another and without speaking a single word—would then put this person through a process of



Dr. Edward Horgan of Shannon Watch
(Duke Human Rights Center photo)

their operations could not be traced contemporaneously and have been mighty hard to track retrospectively,” Simpson said.

Aero Contractors employed about 80 persons toward the start of the Bush war on terror. Now it’s up to about 130 employees. “We are under no illusion that people like these are the authors of the policy. They

are the foot soldiers,” Cowger asserted. “These people live and work in Johnston County in comfortable middle class houses.”

In May 2010, the Attorney General of Spain requested that a Spanish judge issue arrest warrants for 13 U.S. citizens who helped kidnap and disappear German citizen Khaled el-Masri as part of the Bush Administration’s program of extraordinary rendition. At least three of the U.S. citizens are pilots employed by

not easy. It takes courage. It takes persistence. It takes fortitude.

But we must not be bystanders.

Chuck Fager, director of Quaker House, in Fayetteville, NC, is active with NC-STN in their persistent lobbying efforts before the Johnston County Board of Commissioners. “They are all Republicans and the ones up for re-election are running unopposed,” he said at the Duke conference. “After 14 months or so, we are establishing a relationship with these commissioners...month after month after month we go back. Building these types of connections is very important.”

Fager and I later talked about how difficult it is to face up to the issue of U.S. directed torture. “All the dots connected in my backyard,” he said. “It’s like waking up one morning and realizing you live next to SS headquarters.”

Recalling the June 2006 Quaker conference on torture held in Greensboro, NC, he admitted that listening was “very hard. It made me shake. I couldn’t sleep very well. I moved to a different level... my ability to keep it [torture] far away has been eroded. The levels of denial are really deep.”

Robin Kirk, in her opening remarks at the conference said, “We have to do this work where we live. We have to do this...to show our neighbors and colleagues and school teachers and grocery clerks and businessmen and soldiers, why human rights matter.” Kirk spent years working in Peru and Colombia documenting human rights abuses, and authored several reports for Human Rights Watch.

In his keynote address, Scott Horton, a contributing editor with *Harper’s Magazine*, detailed some of the findings of his investigation of the sudden and violent deaths of three prisoners at Camp Delta—the “extra-constitutional” prison camp at Guantanamo Naval Base. In a March 2010 *Harper’s Magazine* report, Horton wrote of evidence “that suggests the current administration failed to investigate seriously—and may even have continued—a cover-up of the possible homicides of three prisoners at Guantanamo in 2006.”

“When the last prisoner is departed from that area of the American enclave on the

island of Cuba, the book on Guantanamo is going to be far from closed,” Horton told the Duke assembly that drew about 120 people throughout the weekend. “Most of the legacy of Guantanamo remains in

place, untouched, and there is as yet no real basis to assume there will be any kind of accountability,” he said. “Ideas linked to Guantanamo are being woven into the fabric of our national security state. These transformations are going on in the policy background in Washington with surprisingly little attention.”

And the horrid revelations continue.

Stephen Soldz, a co-founder of the Coalition for an Ethical Psychology, which has made international news with its campaign to challenge the participation of leaders in the American Psychological Association in interrogation and torture, provided the Duke conference with insight into the psychology of denial and accountability. Soldz is president-elect of Psychologists for Social Responsibility and co-author of a report just released by Physicians for Human Rights. The report, “Experiments in Torture: Evidence of Human Subject Research and Experimentation in the ‘Enhanced’ Interrogation Program,” he contends, “confirms previous suspicions and provides the first strong evidence that the CIA was indeed engaged in illegal and unethical research on detainees in its custody.”

Steve Watt, senior staff attorney with the ACLU Human Rights Program, spoke of the ongoing legal challenges to the CIA’s extraordinary rendition program. Noting the “significant legal impediments” to obtaining judicial remedy, he said “It is all but certain that a fully-fledged trial of a lawsuit brought by rendition survivors is many,



www.ncstoptorturennow.org

many years away.” With a nod to NC-STN activist Peggy Misch, Watt told the Duke conference “NC Stop Torture Now is one of the most innovative and creative grassroots groups working on torture in this country.”

Just prior to the Duke conference, Dr. Edward Horgan, a former Irish Defence Forces officer and co-founder of Shannon Watch, had his 10-year visa revoked by the U.S. State Department. After much pressure in the Irish press and from U.S. allies, including Veterans for Peace, at the last minute Dr. Horgan, who is also the International Secretary of the Irish Peace and Neutrality Alliance, was allowed travel to the U.S.

Ireland has been a neutral state since its inception, Horgan told the assembly. Over one million U.S. troops have passed through Shannon since 2002. “Three plane loads a day, at least, each bringing about 200 troops—so 500 or 600 armed troops pass through Shannon airport every day of the week, every day of the year, in gross violation of international law on neutrality.”

“Clearly torture is a serious crime. But it is connected with the two wars [Afghanistan and Iraq],” Horgan continued. “By torturing somebody you are removing some of their human rights, albeit very seriously and very grossly. By killing somebody you are removing all of their human rights. You are removing their very existence. Killing or causing the deaths, directly or indirectly, of one million people, and killing 200,000 children, or

(See NC-STN on page 14)

shackling, handcuffing....” Simpson said that the captors would administer sedatives, often via the rectum, and blindfold, earmuff, goggle, and hood the captives. They would place the prisoners in adult diapers, and then put them in jumpsuits or other rudimentary clothing. Finally they were “bundled onto a rendition aircraft, shackled to the ground or a gurney, sometimes given further sedatives so that they wouldn’t experience the flight, and then flown



Torture plane — N379P

to a fate and a destination unknown.”

“Aero Contractors personnel on the aircraft were the ones who actually operated the rendition circuits. Without their personal participation, none of this would have been possible. They were the pilots in command. They were the support crew. They were the persons who held the controls of the aircraft and navigated them to landings at the black sites air [fields] with detainees bound and shackled in the back. Aero personnel were part of the systematic cover-up. For example, the pilots in command knowingly deviated from registered flight plans, willfully therefore violating the regulations of international aviation law and assuring that

Aero Contractors.

Allyson Caison, a Johnston County-based real estate broker, has been involved in NC-STN since its inception. “When in 2005 we got a notice that the folks from St. Louis were coming and were going to tell us what the CIA was doing,” the former PTA president told the assembly, “I went to the meeting to see what was going on.” Caison says she was shocked to find that the people involved with Aero Contractors were “the pillars of our community...very well-enmeshed in society. So in speaking out against them, we are not speaking out against some abstract person; we’re speaking out against our neighbors.”

Confronting these issues is

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The War Crimes Times

Atrocity

(Continued from page 1)

understandably outraged and rightly appalled by such barbarism.

Consequently, in response to this clear violation of human decency and the laws of war, all other concerns and priorities they may have had lessen in importance. The apathetic and the supporters of the war set aside their "patriotic duty" to go shopping and address their concerns regarding Tiger Woods' infidelity. War's opponents, on the other hand, while bolstered in their admirable determination to end all war and make the world a better place in which to live, recognize the importance, the moral and legal imperative, of holding soldiers accountable for their actions in combat.

Confronting the incivility of war and recognizing

the behavior of our troops as criminal provides a welcome, though perhaps unpleasant and regrettable, opportunity for all to publicly reiterate their commitment to the rule of law and to the dictates of their individual and/or collective consciences. With an appropriate air of moral ascendancy, the apathetic, the supporters, and the opponents of war find common ground in dutifully judging and appropriately condemning, however reluctantly, those "depraved" individuals who dare tarnish the reputation of this great nation by violating the laws of God and of man.

To those struggling to survive the next improvised explosive device or suicide bomber, war's negative effects are pervasive and cumulative. Everyday living in a war zone is a netherworld of horror and insanity in which respect for life loses all meaning and "atrocity" becomes a matter of perspective. As an inevitable consequence, participants are dehumanized and desensitized to death and destruction. Judgments of right and wrong—morality—quickly become irrelevant, and brutality and atrocity a primal response to an overwhelming threat of annihilation.

Life amid the violence, death, horror, trauma, anxiety, and fatigue of war erodes our moral being, undoes character, and reduces decent men and women to savages capable of incredible cruelty that would never have been possible before being victimized and sacrificed to war. Consequently, atrocities in such an environment are not isolated aberrant occurrences prosecuted by a few deviant individuals. Rather, they are commonplace, intrinsic to the nature and the reality of war, the inevitable consequence of enduring prolonged

life-threatening and morally untenable conditions, what Robert Jay Lifton describes as "atrocity-producing situations."

Having been indoctrinated by the propaganda of those whose militarism and war-ist agenda requires acceptance of the mythology of the "good war" and the "noble warrior." The uninitiated and unaffected—most civilians and many non-warrior members of the military—fail to realize this truth: that all war is barbarism in which cruelty and brutality—atrocity—is the norm rather than the exception.

Most civilians and many non-warrior members of the military fail to realize: all war is barbarism in which cruelty and brutality—atrocity—is the norm rather than the exception.

During World War II, for example, often cited and celebrated as "the Good War," over 50 million civilians were murdered by both Axis and Allied nations. The American servicemen in the Wikileaks video who so nonchalantly "engaged the target"—slaughtering some 12 human beings—are no different from the pilots and bombardiers from the "Greatest Generation" who, with equal nonchalance, incinerated millions of civilians during the terror bombings of Hamburg, Dresden, Tokyo, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, etc.

Despite the moral depravity of their actions, these individuals were not born killers. Rather they were created to do our bidding, first conscripted or lured into the military with promises of employment, a college education, or U.S. citizenship, then subjected to sophisticated indoctrination techniques of value manipulation, moral desensitization, and psychological conditioning, aimed at destroying/overriding their humanity, their moral aversion to killing, reinforced by the violence and horrors of the battlefield environment. Is it any wonder, then, that warriors become capable of such heinous acts of slaughter as those documented in the Wikileaks video, or during the massacre at My Lai, or the terror bombing of European and Japanese cities?

While supporters and non-supporters of the war discuss and debate the complexities and applicability of "Just War Theory," the Geneva Conventions, and military rules of engagement from the safe and sane environment of their judicial chambers, offices, classrooms, and cocktail parties, warriors desperately struggle to survive and to ensure that

their comrades do, too, in a brutal and insane environment bent upon their destruction.

Should they fail to display the nobility of the mythological warrior, meet your expectations of morally appropriate behavior on the battlefield, or participate, rationally and coherently to your satisfaction, in the philosophical debate regarding morality and war, please be tolerant and understanding, as they have more fundamental and basic concerns driving their actions and occupying their minds.

For the warriors, the mythology has long since crumbled, quickly replaced by the reality of death and destruction; and the esoteric and abstract discussion of the issues of moral philosophy are as distant and as irrelevant as Tiger Woods' infidelity or whether the world becomes a utopian paradise.

Whether you support or oppose the war, or couldn't care less, know that war itself is atrocity. Moreover, if you are truly concerned with justice, America's moral integrity, and the well-being of the troops, know as well that they chose not to be murderers, but patriots, and that they kill, not for profit or empowerment, but for survival.

Finally, while I do not justify or excuse the actions of these individuals, neither do I seek scapegoats in order to absolve myself of culpability and responsibility as a citizen of a democracy in whose name these atrocities are committed. Consequently, if there is to be condemnation and punishment, let it begin with those whose incompetence and desire for wealth and power unnecessarily make war inevitable, whose apathy allows the slaughter to continue, and whose blind allegiance, misguided patriotism, or utopian idealism hamper their ability to understand and appreciate the true reality and nature of war and its tragic and profound effects upon the warrior.

We must see through the mythology, the lies and the deceptions, and understand that all who become tainted by war are victims. Consequently, we must recognize as well, that their culpability must be mitigated and that we all share responsibility and blame for the inevitable atrocities of war.

Camillo "Mac" Bica, Ph.D., is a professor of philosophy at the School of Visual Arts in New York City, a long-time activist for peace and justice, a member of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War, and the coordinator of the Long Island Chapter of Veterans for Peace.

Tracer Rounds



The United States Government, also known as Wall Street, continues on full automatic.

Making a killing, and killing as fast as they can.

There is no separation between the machine gun and the money belt. Everyone is a veteran of war profits.

And when it is all over, the ruling class lie about everything, while American soldiers and countless innocent civilians are bulldozed into the same mass grave.

—Mike Hastie

U.S. Army Medic Vietnam 1970-71
April 24, 2010

THE TRUE COST OF WAR!

War	US Military Deaths	Civilian Deaths
Revolutionary	25,174	(unavailable)
1812	20,000	(unavailable)
Civil War	620,000	50,000
WWI	116,516	6,458,886
WWII	405,399	36,372,900*
Korean	54,246	1,847,240
Vietnam	58,177	2,000,000**
Iraq	4,254	1,366,350
Afghanistan	1,036	32,969
TOTAL	1,304,802	48,128,345

* Number includes the 9,000,000 that died in the Nazi concentration camps.

** The Vietnamese communist government in 1995 estimated that 2,000,000 Vietnamese civilians on both sides died in the war.

Statistical Data is available on request at vfp@veteransforpeace.org



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Israeli war crimes

(Continued from page 1)

convoy of humanitarian ships carrying ten thousand tons of aid to Gaza in international waters. Prior to the aid mission Turkish authorities had examined the passengers and the ship to ensure no weapons were on board. The Israelis nevertheless came on board shooting and clubbing the unarmed passengers, killing up to 19 and wounding dozens.

Despite subsequent Israeli and Zionist claims to the contrary no weapons were found, apart from sticks used by some of the victims attempting to fend off the murderous pre-

assault. The *Financial Times* (June 1) referred to the Israeli assault as a “brazen act of piracy...hurtling into lawlessness” rooted in its “illegal blockage of Gaza.” Turkey’s Prime Minister Recep Erdogan called the Israeli assault an act of “state terrorism” which would have “serious consequences.”

Israel’s attacks on ships flying Turkish, Greek, and Irish flags on the high seas were described by legal experts as an “act of war.” The UN Security Council, NATO, and the Secretary General of the UN demanded Israel cease its aggression, while tens of thousands of demonstrators marched denouncing Israel’s blatant act of state murder and

Mike Ferner, VFP president writes: *Combatants for Peace, an organization of Israeli and Palestinian veterans, knows full well the costs of ongoing warfare in their homeland. They have opened many people's eyes, not only to the horrors of combat, but to a much larger question: the absolute futility of fighting violence with more violence. Here is their statement following the Israeli attack on the flotilla trying to break the blockade of Gaza.*



**Only by joining forces,
will we be able to end
the cycle of violence**

"Combatants for Peace" condemns the aggressive take-over of the international flotilla on the dawn of the 31st of May 2010 and the killings of over 10 activists on the deck. The raid on civilian boats far out of the territorial waters of Israel, in an attempt to silence and prevent a legitimate act of protest and empathy, constitutes an additional step in the reduction of the available space for protest in Israel. The attempt to prevent a demonstration by using violent means is a dangerous one, and reflects the aggressive manner of handling the conflict, regardless of the behavior of some of the flotilla participants.

This is another expression of the belligerent, violent, and oppressive policy which has been used by governments of Israel for over 4 decades and above all, by the current government headed by Benjamin Netanyahu, Ehud Barak and Avigdor Liberman.

"Combatants for Peace," a movement whose main principle is nonviolence, hereby condemns all types of violence and calls for a nonviolent struggle to end the conflict. The events of the past days prove yet again the pointlessness of the Gaza siege—a violent act of collective punishment against a million and a half innocent Gazans which failed to achieve any of its original goals—the Hamas rule was not brought down, the firing of rockets was not stopped, the smuggling of arms via the tunnels has not ceased, and Gilad Shalit has not been brought home. Aside from the siege being oppressive and ineffective, it weakens those who support peace and nonviolence in Israel and Palestine and feeds the cycle of violence and blood which we at "Combatants for Peace" seek to halt.

Taking all of this into account, we call Israel to desist from continuing the choking siege on the Gaza strip and allow people and goods to enter freely. We demand of both sides to stop partaking in the endless cycle of violence and initiate a serious and honest negotiation which brings with it the release of all captives and prisoners on both sides.

In light of the above, many "Combatants for Peace" activists participated in demonstrations in Jerusalem, Haifa, and in the central demonstration opposite the Ministry of Defence in which over a thousand people were present, against the aggressive takeover of the Turkish relief flotilla.



USS *Liberty*, June 8, 1967—34 U.S. sailors killed by Israeli forces in “mistaken identity” attack.

meditated assault planned, directed, and defended by top Israeli leaders and the entire leadership of the major Zionist organizations in the U.S. and elsewhere. The invading Israeli storm troopers systematically destroyed all cameras, videos, and tape recorders that had documented their savage assault in order to subsequently spread their brazen lies about their being subject to armed resistance.

The World Response

Within hours of Israel’s bloody act of piracy, nations, political leaders, human rights organizations, and the vast majority of the international community condemned the Israeli state for its violation of international law. Turkey, Spain, Greece, Denmark, and Austria summoned their Israeli Ambassadors to protest the deadly

wounding of pacifists, humanitarians, and protestors from 60 countries. UN experts demanded that Israeli leaders “must be held criminally re-

The Israeli authorities silenced the activists while their propaganda machine used ploys typical of totalitarian regimes.

sponsible.” Only the Obama regime refused to condemn the Israeli act of state terror, merely expressing “concern and regret.” The Israeli state defended its murderous assault, promised more in the future and insisted on maintaining its blockade of Gaza, even after the U.S. suggested it might be loosened.

The Israeli Defense of Piracy and State Terror

As news of the Israeli massacre slipped out and the inter-

national community reacted with horror and anger, the Israeli government “sought to flood the airwaves with their versions of events...more importantly, the authorities ensured that their narrative gained early dominance by largely silencing the hundreds of activists who were on board during the attack” (*Financial Times*, June 2). The Jewish state held all the prisoners alive, wounded, and dead incommunicado, seized their mobile phones and prohibited any interviews, barring all journalists.

Like most terrorist states, the Jewish state wanted to monopolize the propaganda media. The Israeli propaganda machine via its state-sponsored journalists and news media employed several ploys typical of totalitarian regimes:

1. Israeli storm troopers invading the ship were turned into victims and the humanitarian pacifists were turned

into aggressors. “Israeli Soldiers Met by Well-Planned Lynch” (*Jerusalem Post*, May 31).

2. Israel’s act of piracy in international waters was declared legal by a Professor Sabel of the Hebrew University.

3. The humanitarian organizers were accused of having ties to terrorists according to Deputy Foreign Minister Ayalon, though no evidence was

presented (*Ha’aretz*, May 30). The organizers including the Turkish human rights group accused by Ayalon were cleared by the Turkish intelligence agency, the military, and the Erdogan government, a member of NATO, and for many years (in the past) a collaborator with the Israeli Mossad. The other 600 plus human

(See *Israeli War Crimes* page 17)



Mavi Marmara, May 31, 2010—9 civilians killed, dozens shot as Israeli commandoes met “brutal ambushers.”

In *War and Peace*, Tolstoy explained that the blame for the invasion of Russia in 1812 did not lie with Napoleon, at least not exclusively with him. Instead it was the result of millions of choices made by countless individuals:

...the wish or objection of this or that French corporal to serve a second term appears as much a cause as Napoleon's refusal to withdraw his troops beyond the Vistula and to restore the duchy of Oldenburg; for had he not wished to serve, and had a second, a third, and a thousandth corporal and private also refused, there would have been so many less men in Napoleon's army and the war could not have occurred.

If we are to abolish war as an instrument of national policy, we would go a long way toward that goal if we would encourage soldiers and potential soldiers to examine the social pressures that lead or have led them to the military, to examine their consciences and determine if warfare is consistent with their deeply held values, and to make them aware that they have options other than military service.

But above all, we need to honor those courageous people who did say “NO” to war. They have stood up to fierce pressure within the military. They have endured ostracism from the society in general—our American culture of war, domination, and imperialism. They have lost benefits. Yet they have been true to their consciences and to the values that our nation nominally holds dear.

These people are heroes. They need to be called heroes. We need to appreciate their sacrifices. And as we acknowledge them and celebrate what they have done, we will be creating new role models for the next generation. We can help turn a culture of war into a culture of peace.

SUPPORT OUR TROOPS



Specialist Katherine Jashinski, 24, enlisted in the Army National Guard at age 19. Katherine applied for conscientious objector status in 2004. The Army denied her claim and ordered her to weapons training. In November 2005, she refused, saying “I will never take another person's life.” In May 2006, she pled guilty to refusal to obey an order and was sentenced to 4 months jail and a bad conduct discharge. She was released and discharged in July 2006.



In February 2003, **Marine Landing Specialist L/Cpl Stephen**



Funk, 25, became the first American soldier to publicly refuse deployment to Iraq. He applied for a Conscientious Objector discharge, saying, “There is no way to justify war because you're paying with human lives.” In September 2003, he was court-martialed and sentenced to six months imprisonment and reduction in rank to private. He is currently an active member of Iraq Veterans Against the War in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Artwork on these two pages by Mark Runge (<http://mark4art.com/>)

Army Specialist Marc Hall was placed in the Liberty County (GA) Jail on December 11, 2009 in retaliation for his formal complaint of inadequate mental health services available to him at Fort Stewart, and for speaking out against the continuing policy of Stop-loss—the involuntary extension of a service member's active duty service. In voicing his disagreement with the policy, he recorded an angry and explicit song. (It is important to note that service members do not completely give up their rights to free speech, and certainly not when they exercise that right while off duty and through artistic expression.)

Spc. Hall was sent to the jail after telling his Fort Stewart commander, Captain Cross, that he didn't want to redeploy. The jailing occurred a full five months after Hall wrote a rap song protesting the Stop-loss order that halted his discharge—this was after 3 years and 10 months of honorable active duty service, including 14 months of combat in Iraq.

Hall was charged with 11 counts of “communicating threats” related to the song—charges covered under Article 134 of the Uniform Code of Military Conduct (the “catch all” article). All the alleged violations occurred between last

July and December; yet, during this time, not one warranted warning, counseling, or non-judicial punishment occurred.

Until Spc. Hall took steps to file a complaint with the AIG (Army Investigative General) that he was not receiving proper care for his extreme PTSD, he had faced no charges—he filed his complaint on a Thursday, the next day he was in a county jail. On February 20, Hall wrote of his imprisonment, “A charge that was not a threat before, but all of a sudden became a threat now. I communicated a need for mental evaluation—not a threat.”

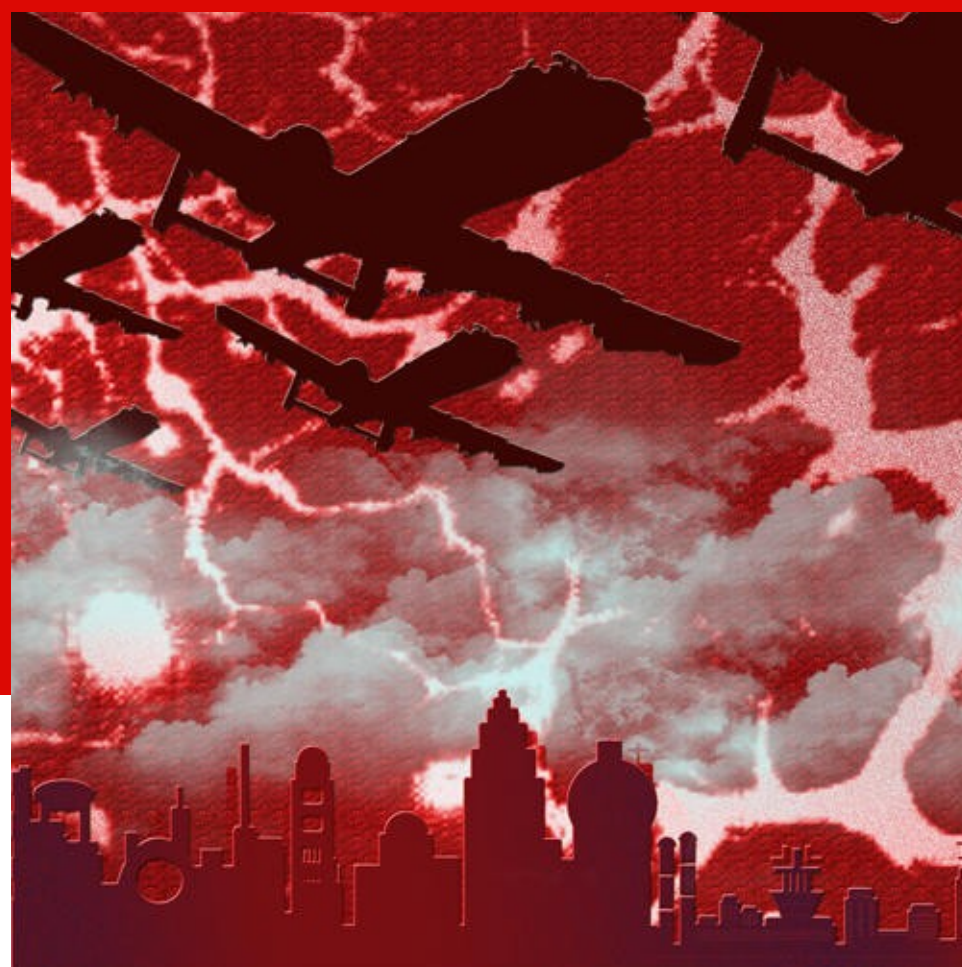
As if that were not enough, the military took the nearly unprecedented step of moving Hall overseas for court martial, instead of putting him on trial in Georgia where the alleged threats occurred and where he had a civilian defense network building. On February 26, Hall was flown to Iraq and



The lowest standards of ethics of which a right-thinking man can possibly conceive is taught to the common soldier whose trade is to shoot his fellow men. In youth he may have learned the command, "Thou shalt not kill," but the ruler takes the boy just as he enters manhood and teaches him that his highest duty is to shoot a bullet through his neighbor's heart—and this, unmoved by passion or feeling or hatred, and without the least regard to right or wrong, but simply because his ruler gives the word.

—Clarence Darrow

Airman Michael Thurman was granted conscientious objector status and given an honorable discharge from the Air Force on June 10th, 2008—after an eight month process, in which he was aided by Courage to Resist. Michael enlisted in the Air Force as a junior in high school, in 2005. As early as Basic Training and his MOS tech school training, he began developing strong concerns around the war in Iraq and all war in general. "In high school I was very interested in a career in aviation...I talked with an Air Force recruiter that came to my high school in my junior year." Michael realized that even though he was not going to be directly responsible for any combat missions, he would still be indirectly aiding the war effort and he began to develop qualms around the role he would play in the war. He left his tech school in May of 2007 and was assigned his permanent duty station at that time. During his time in tech school and basic, Michael began to develop a strong belief in Taoism and to feel a solid connection to all life. "I couldn't take it anymore and I told my supervisor that I didn't agree with any of it [the war in Iraq and Afghanistan]." Shortly after his discussion with his supervisor, Michael began the 8-month process that would end with an Honorable Discharge. As of February, 2009, Michael joined the Courage to Resist organizing collective.



Army Sgt. Kevin Benderman was court-martialed for desertion for declaring himself a conscientious objector after 9 years of service including a tour in Iraq. Imprisoned for 13 months after being convicted of "missing movement" in 2005, Benderman is still appealing, and fighting for an honorable discharge.



Ronnie Tallman, 19-year-old Marine private from Tuba City, Arizona, discharged as a conscientious objector January 2007. Ronnie, a Navajo, realized that his new-found calling as a medicine man made it impossible to deploy to Iraq without spiritually harming himself and his community. "I'm really relieved my voice has been heard. There was a lot of grief and heartache before I was heard."



Never do anything against conscience even if the state demands it.

—Albert Einstein

transferred to Kuwait for pre-trial confinement. This put him out of reach of his civilian legal defense team, friends, and family. It also made it nearly impossible that defense witnesses would be able to appear on his behalf.

On April 17th, 2010—5 months and 6 days after Marc Hall was first placed into the Liberty Count Jail—the U.S. Army announced that Spc. Mark Hall would not be forced to face a general court martial at Camp Liberty, Iraq, as scheduled. Instead, Spc. Hall was discharged immediately.

When asked about the outcome, Specialist Hall's civilian attorney (and president of the National Lawyers Guild), David Gespass, explained, "I believe we would have won the case, even in Iraq. While I'm gratified that the Army finally decided to discharge Marc, I'm appalled at the disregard it has shown for Marc's well-being and fundamental rights for nine months. Whatever lip service the Army gives to its concern for its soldiers, its only real concern is insuring they risk their lives without questioning why. Marc's greatest transgression was asking that question."

Spc. Hall responded by phone from Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, to supporters

nationwide who organized a grassroots campaign on his behalf: "I'm out of the confinement facility! Thank you to everyone for all the efforts everyone made. Hopefully I'll be home very, very soon. I appreciate all of the love and support so many people gave me through my ordeal."

Jeff Paterson of Courage to Resist, an organization dedicated to supporting military objectors, noted, "Spc. Marc Hall pled guilty today to producing a hip-hop song the Army didn't like—in exchange for his freedom. It's utterly outrageous that Army spokespersons continued to slander Marc today. Despite the Army having stacked everything against Marc—including moving the scheduled trial from Ft. Stewart, GA to Iraq—supporters overcame each obstacle in order to provide Marc with a fighting chance for justice. In the end, we won."

Spc. Hall, a member of Iraq Veterans Against the War, also enjoyed the support of the Veterans for Peace organization.

This story, the profiles, and photos on these pages were submitted by Jeff Paterson and Adam Szyper-Seibert, Courage to Resist (June 3, 2010)

Combatants for Peace

Bassam Aramin became involved in the Palestinian struggle as a boy growing up in the ancient city of Hebron. At 17, he was caught planning an attack on Israeli troops, and spent seven years in prison. In 2005, he co-founded **Combatants for Peace**, an organization of former Israeli and Palestinian combatants leading a nonviolent struggle against the occupation. Since then, Bassam has not once picked up a weapon—not even when, two years later, his ten-year-old daughter Abir was gunned down and killed.

From Bassam's Story*: Abir's murder could have led me down the easy path of hatred and vengeance, but for me there was no return from dialogue and nonviolence. After all, it was one Israeli soldier who shot my daughter, but one hundred former Israeli soldiers who built a garden in her name at the school where she was murdered.



Riham Musa is a law student living in Tulkarm in the West Bank. At the age of 15, she was shot in the stomach by an Israeli soldier as she approached a checkpoint armed with a kitchen knife.

From Riham's story: I believe violence breeds violence and there's no choice now for me other than to find another way. When I decided to use violence by taking the knife to the checkpoint, even though I didn't use it, I brought violence upon myself. I now want to use the law and not weapons to fight the enemy. This feels like the right path.

Oren Kalisman, 30, is a physics student at Tel Aviv University. During his time in the Israeli army he was a lieutenant and platoon commander.

From Oren's story: We were surrounded by Palestinians who were fighting very bravely and who I realized, like ourselves 60 years ago, were fighting out of desperation for their very homes. For me this was another turning point and another step towards realizing I no longer believed in what I was doing. At the end of the operation I asked my commanders to find a replacement for me.



Nour Shehadah lives with his wife in Tulkarem in the West Bank. Aged 40, he is now a social worker, but was previously a wanted man in Israel and leader of the local Fatah party.

From Nour's story: ...the more I studied the writings of Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and Nelson Mandela, the more certain I became that this was the only way. I knew that non-violence would work better than violence with Israelis. A lot of people in Tulkarem disagreed and called me a traitor, but I refused to listen....The same day that I opened an office for peace, I was arrested by the IDF again, just as I was leaving to go on an outing with my wife and children. They tied me up, then blindfolded me and interrogated me. I knew this was because nonviolence threatened the army just as much as violence.

Wael Salame lives in Anata, East Jerusalem. In 1990 he was arrested as he crossed into Israel from the West Bank on his way to blow up an Israeli police building. After five years in prison, he turned his back on violence and, through the organization **Combatants for Peace**, chose a path of peace and mutual understanding.

From Wael's story: ...I did agree to attend a meeting of 25 Palestinians and 25 Israeli 'refusniks'. No one knew I could speak Hebrew, so I sat listening to what the Israelis were saying among themselves. After three-and-a-half hours I was convinced there was no normalization in this process. Finally, when I spoke, I said I thought it would take a long time to build trust. I said that I needed to know that these Israeli soldiers were actively working to establish a Palestinian state according to the borders of 1967. They assured me that they were. From then on I became convinced that this group was actively doing something to expose the lies of the Israeli leadership. I have remained active ever since, believing passionately that if Palestinian freedom fighters and former Israeli soldiers can form a group with a common cause, then anyone can.



The "Combatants for Peace" (<http://cfpeace.org/>) movement was started jointly by Palestinians and Israelis, who have taken an active part in the cycle of violence; Israelis as soldiers in the Israeli army (IDF) and Palestinians as part of the violent struggle for Palestinian freedom. After brandishing weapons for so many years, and having seen one another only through weapon sights, they have decided to put down their guns, and to fight for peace.

* read their full stories (and those of many others) at: <http://theforgivenessproject.org.uk/stories/>

Remember Them, Don't Martyr Them

by Ross Caputi



Memorial Day is a day for us to remember the men and women who died in military service. It is also a day when most veterans feel especially proud; however, I am a veteran and for me the opposite is true. I feel like we have gotten away from what Memorial Day is supposed to be about, and instead of it being a day to remember the dead and learn something from their death, it has become a day to wave the flag and not question why they died. On Memorial Day I am treated like a hero, even though I have not done anything heroic, and instead of feeling proud or remembering my friends that never made it back, I think about Iraq and the role I played in the battle of Fallujah. Every handshake and thank you that I receive for my service feels tainted with hypocrisy,

because I know that most Americans do not understand what they are thanking me for, and I know that this misunderstanding is facilitating the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In November of 2004, 300,000 people living in the city of Fallujah were forced to flee their homes as we came to "liberate" them. I remember seeing families fleeing into the desert as we staged for the attack outside their city, and I remember going house-to-house, in *their* houses, and seeing the lives that we forced them to leave behind. We went house-to-house for nearly two weeks as we searched for "terrorists," and in each house there was a trace of the family that had lived there until recently. There was still food in their refrigerators and clothes in their dresser drawers, but we ate their food and we took anything we wanted out of the houses as souvenirs.

Their pictures no longer hung on the walls because the previous week of bombing had shook them loose and they lay on the ground in broken frames and shattered glass. But I picked them up and looked at them, pictures of families and weddings, and I caught a glimpse of the lives that I had helped ruin. I found a few photo albums lying amongst the broken glass and rubble, and as I flipped through the pages I came to know a few families intimately. Through their photos I watched children grow from infants, to teenagers, to young men and women, and I saw photos of family parties, celebrations, and graduation days.

As the battle continued the situation worsened, and after we started taking casualties everything began to spiral out of control. We became increasingly vindictive for every friend that we lost, and we believed in our alleged reasons for being there that much more. We convinced ourselves that democracy and freedom rested on everything we were doing, and that our friends lost their lives in the pursuit of a noble end. Our rage became entangled with a moral crusade, and the results were disastrous. We began bulldozing houses, rather than risking our lives by going inside them. We flattened whole neighborhoods like this. In one house there were two resisters and a young boy bunkered inside. We fired so many grenades into that house that the roof caved in on top of them. The boy was about ten years old. We reduced Fallujah to a pile of rubble, and we left the 300,000 that used to live there with practically nothing to return to. To this day, many of us who were there still maintain the illusion that we had somehow done this for them, for their freedom and liberty—which is precisely what we took away from them.

My friends Travis and Brad were shot and killed in Fallujah. Their deaths were not necessary, nor were they for a noble cause. They died for the sins of our government, like so many Iraqis have, and the worst thing that we could do for their memory is to drape a flag on them and enshrine them in heroism. To remember them in this way would turn them into martyrs, and that is not what Memorial Day should be about. Furthermore, we would be perpetuating a lie that might encourage others to go to war, and then their deaths truly would be for nothing. The truth is that they were good people who died too young, and that we did not make America a safer place or help Iraqis. The truth is that we participated in something terrible, and telling the truth about what we did does not dishonor the memory of the dead.

I feel like a hypocrite on Memorial Day, not because of the way America chooses to remember the men and women who were killed or because of the way America chooses to forget the pain and suffering that we have caused abroad, but because many veterans including myself have allowed this to happen. By choosing to accept praise rather than talking about the suffering we have caused, we are endangering the next generation of service men and women by not giving them a realistic portrayal of what they are getting involved in. I feel like a hypocrite because on past Memorial Days I have not lived up to my responsibilities as a veteran, and I have not done enough to make sure other Americans do not meet the same end as my friends Travis and Brad did.

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

"Howard Zinn's Words Saved My Life"

Ross Caputi gave this talk at the Howard Zinn memorial event at Boston University March 27, 2010.

My name is Ross Caputi and I'm an undergraduate student here at BU. I'm also a member of the BU Anti-War Coalition and I'm an Iraqi War Veteran. In November of 2004 I was in the Battle of Fallujah. Most of you probably know at least something about the Battle of Fallujah. You probably have heard that it was the biggest battle of the war, and you might also know about the large number of refugees and civilian deaths. I'll spare you the gory details. However, I came out of Fallujah feeling like a terrorist.

In the months that followed, I felt a great deal of guilt and confusion, but I was afraid to talk about it, even with the people who were closest to me. I felt like I was crazy for thinking what I was thinking, and that there wasn't anyone who could possibly understand what I was going through. I couldn't say to my friends in my platoon that if victory in Iraq meant doing things like we did in Fallujah, then I wanted to lose. I was afraid that they would call me a traitor, or say that I was sympathizing with terrorists. And for every person in my hometown that would come up to me and shake my hand and thank me for my service, I wanted to scream at them, "You don't understand, you shouldn't be thanking me!" But I held back out of fear of their response. I couldn't tell if I was crazy or if I was the only sane person left on this planet, and for a while I felt completely alone and like many veterans I turned to drugs and alcohol.

I don't know what prompted me to buy a copy of *A People's History of the United States*, but I'm not exaggerating when I say that that book changed my life. I began reading it while I was still in the Marine Corps, and through Professor Zinn's words I heard my own story echoed through out all of America's history. I learned that in every American war the many have suffered for the profit of the few, and that in every American war there were others who felt like I did. Professor Zinn captured the voices of the silenced majority that were completely absent from my grade school history books, and he painted a picture of war that lacked the usual illusion of good fighting against evil.

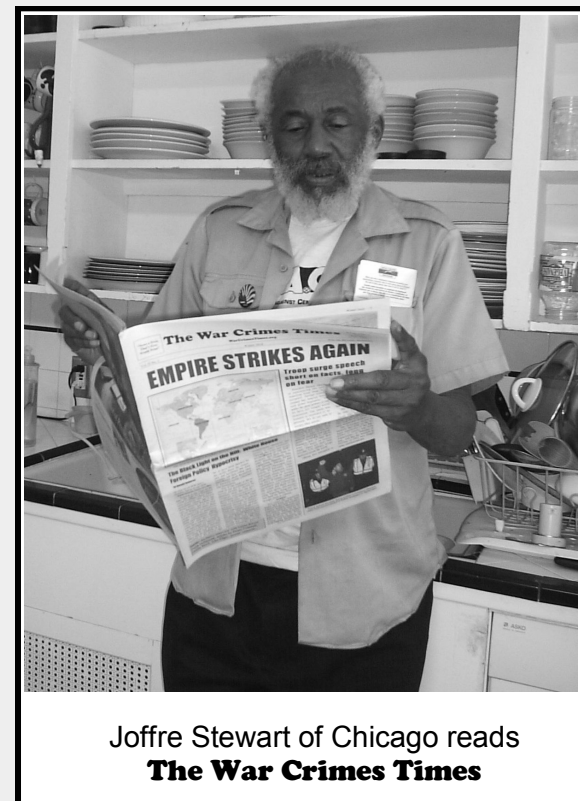
What resonated with me the most was the chapter on the Vietnam War, because the parallels with Fallujah were too strong for me to ignore. Professor Zinn wrote that,

"Large areas of South Vietnam were declared 'free-fire zones,' which meant that all persons remaining within them—civilians, old people, children—were considered an enemy, and bombs were dropped at will. Villages suspected of harboring Viet Cong were subject to 'search and destroy' missions—men of military age in the villages were killed, the homes were burned, the women, children, and old people were sent off to refugee camps."

Fallujah was no different, and Professor Zinn made me realize that what happened to me in Iraq was not unique, and that I'm not crazy for feeling disgusted with having been a part of it. The Iraq and Afghanistan wars are not departures from America's proud history, but instead, are events that follow logically from 234 years of American policy.

Professor Zinn is no longer here with us physically, but as long as there are poor and oppressed people in this world, his memory will be called upon, and until subjugation and injustice become just a memory, Professor Zinn will not be forgotten. He leaves behind him a new generation of resistance, armed with his words and ideas, who will pick up the torch where he left it and strive forward for peace and justice.

Professor Zinn touched many people's lives, but few like he did mine. In a way, he saved my life. And thanks to him, I'll never be on the wrong side of the gun again.



Joffre Stewart of Chicago reads **The War Crimes Times**

Why soldiers get a kick out of killing

by John Horgan

Do some soldiers enjoy killing? If so, why? This question is thrust upon us by the recently released video of U.S. Apache helicopter pilots shooting a Reuters cameraman and his driver in Baghdad in 2007. Mistaking the camera of the Reuters reporter for a weapon, the pilots machine-gunned the reporter and driver and other nearby people.

The most chilling aspect of the video, which was made public by Wikileaks, is the chatter between two pilots, whose names have not been released. As Elizabeth Bumiller of the *New York Times* put it, the soldiers "revel in their kill." "Look at those dead bastards," one pilot says. "Nice," the other replies.

The exchange reminds me of a *Times* story from March 2003, during the U.S. invasion of Baghdad. The reporter quotes Sgt. Eric Schrupf, a Marine sharpshooter, saying, "We had a great day. We killed a lot of people." Noting that his troop killed an Iraqi woman standing near a militant, Schrupf adds, "I'm sorry, but the chick was in the way."

Does the apparent satisfaction—call it the Schrupf effect—that some soldiers take in killing stem primarily from nature or nurture? Nature, claims Richard Wrangham, an anthropologist at Harvard University and an authority on chimpanzees. Wrangham asserts that natural selection embedded in both male humans and chimpanzees—our closest genetic relatives—an innate propensity for "intergroup coalitionary killing," in which members of one group attack members of a rival group. Male humans "enjoy the opportunity" to kill others, Wrangham says, especially if they run little risk of being killed themselves.

Several years ago, geneticists at Victoria University in New Zealand linked violent male aggression to a variant of a gene that encodes for the enzyme monoamine oxidase A,

which regulates the function of neurotransmitters such as dopamine and serotonin. According to the researchers, the so-called "warrior gene" is carried by 56 percent of Maori men, who are renowned for being "fearless warriors," and only 34 percent of Caucasian males.

"The average and healthy individual has such an inner...resistance towards killing...that he will not of his own volition take life if it is possible to turn away..."

At the vital point he becomes a conscientious objector."

But studies of World War II veterans suggest that very few men are innately bellicose. The psychiatrists Roy Swank and Walter Marchand found that 98 percent of soldiers who endured 60 days of continuous combat suffered psychiatric symptoms, either temporary or permanent. The two out of 100 soldiers who seemed unscathed by prolonged combat displayed "aggressive psychopathic personalities," the psychiatrists reported. In other words, combat didn't drive these men crazy because they were crazy to begin with.

Surveys of WWII infantrymen carried out by U.S. Army Brig. Gen. S.L.A. Marshall found that only 15 to 20 percent had fired their weapons in combat, even when ordered to do so. Marshall concluded that most soldiers avoid firing at the enemy because they fear killing as well as being killed. "The average and healthy individual," Marshall contended in his postwar book *Men Against Fire*, "has such an inner and usually unrealized resistance towards killing a fellow man that he will not of his own volition take life if it is possible to turn away from that responsibility...At the vital point he becomes a conscientious objector."

Critics have challenged Marshall's claims, but the U.S. military took them so seriously that it revamped its training to boost firing rates in subsequent

wars, according to Dave Grossman, a former U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel and professor of psychology at West Point. In his 1995 book *On Killing*, Grossman argues that Marshall's results have been corroborated by reports from World War I, the American Civil War, the Napoleonic wars and other conflicts. "The singular lack of enthusiasm for killing one's fellow man has existed throughout military history," Grossman asserts.

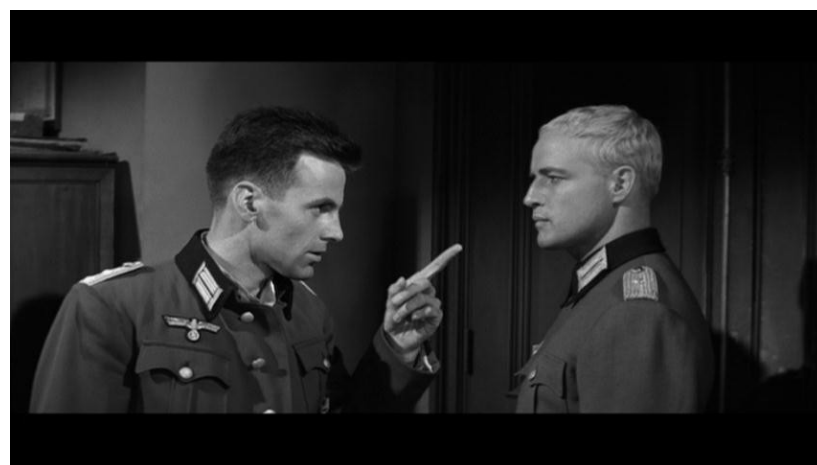
The reluctance of ordinary men to kill can be overcome by intensified training, direct commands from officers, long-range weapons, and propaganda that glorifies the soldier's cause and dehumanizes the enemy. "With the proper conditioning and the proper circumstances, it appears that almost anyone can and will kill," Grossman writes. Many soldiers who kill enemies in battle are initially exhilarated, Grossman says, but later they often feel profound revulsion and remorse, which may transmute into post-traumatic stress disorder and other ailments. Indeed, Grossman believes that the troubles experienced by many combat veterans are evidence of a "powerful, innate human resistance toward killing one's own species."

In other words, the Schrupf effect is usually a product less of nature than of nurture—although "nurture" is an odd term for training that turns ordinary young men into enthusiastic killers.

John Horgan, a former Scientific American staff writer, directs the Center for Science Writings at Stevens Institute of Technology. This article first appeared on the Guest Blog at www.scientificamerican.com.

The militarists say that "fighting is instinctive" and that "you cannot change the real character of men by any intellectual process." If this is true, the case is still not hopeless, as some think, for there are animals and men without this "fighting instinct," that do not kill each other; there is a possibility that those with the "fighting instinct" will succeed in exterminating each other, and permit those without to breed a better race.

—Charles T. Sprading



Don't you know that when you became a soldier you contracted for killing in all its forms?...It doesn't matter what you believe....The German Army is invincible because it is an army that obeys orders. It has no sentimentalists, no moralists, no individualists. You will have no future in it unless you understand that. You may have no future at all if you oppose it....You will be a creative soldier once you get all this thinking knocked out of you!

—Capt. Hardenberg (Maximilian Schell)
to Lt. Christian Diestl (Marlon Brando)
in the film, *The Young Lions*

NC-STN *(Continued from page 7)* causing their deaths, [in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan] is absolutely a gross crime against humanity, regardless of who does it."

"Kidnap, rendition and torture of U.S. enemies is now being replaced with extra-judicial killings and assassinations of U.S. enemies. Collateral damage, including the killing of thousands of innocent foreign civilians, is now acceptable to the U.S.," Horgan said. "Obama has ordered a dramatic increase in the U.S. drone attacks. ... These extrajudicial killings are being passed off as being part of the war on terror, a necessary evil. But killing someone, extra-judicially or otherwise, but unjustifiably, is even a more serious crime than torture."

"I can speak all you want about all the bad things that have happened to myself and others," Bisher al-Rawi told the assembly, speaking on live video from his home in London. Al-Rawi was imprisoned, interrogated, and tortured at two separate CIA facilities in Af-

ghanistan, then transferred, via Aero Contractors, to Guantanamo in 2003 and released without charges in 2007. "Whether beatings, the pains, or the shivering cold, or people screaming because nobody is giving them the medication, or people screaming because they are being beaten up, whatever, I can go on with all of that. But I think, on top of that, we should look to the future, we should look at how we can actually do something positive to build these lives, these lives that have been destroyed... I take this very close to my heart and I have decided this is really my work in life for the time being, until the time when we no longer have to speak about these things. ...I hope that will happen before too long."

But we must not be bystanders.

Clare Hanrahan is a contributing editor to War Crimes Times, a member of VFP Chapter 099, member of the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee, and an organizer with WRL Asheville.

NC Stop Torture Now:
www.ncstoptorturennow.org

"The Guantanamo 'Suicides': A Camp Delta Sergeant Blows the Whistle" — *Harper's Magazine* March, 2010

Shannon Watch:
www.shannonwatch.org

European Union investigation report:
<http://www.statewatch.org/cia/documents/working-doc-no-8-06.pdf>

U.S. War Crimes, Crimes Against Humanity, and "Change"

By Sharon Pavlovich

The brutality with which the U.S. government exercises its war of terror is condemned both by the court of international public opinion and by the principles of international law governing human rights. Wars of aggression in Iraq and Afghanistan and the torture of detainees are clearly defined as war crimes by the UN Declaration of Human Rights, the Geneva Conventions, the Convention against Torture and other treaties to which the United States is a signatory. Under the cover of "national security," other countries in the region are being drawn into the ongoing wars.

The Principles of International Law, recognized in the Charter of the Nuremberg Tribunal and in the Judgment of the Tribunal, provide no defense for war crimes. Similarly, the Convention Against Torture, which defines torture as a war crime, provides that 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.

The prohibition on war crimes is absolute, not relative, meaning that there is no justification for war crimes despite the particular circumstances in their respective countries. U.S. Justice Robert Jackson proclaimed at Nuremberg: "No grievances or policies will justify resort to aggressive war. It is

utterly renounced and condemned as an instrument of policy. The same applies to other war crimes as well. The war crimes of one's opponents are no justification for one's own."

War Criminals Watch exists for one reason: to ensure that prosecutions of high officials of the Bush administration or any subsequent

The Obama administration is condoning the Bush war crimes by not prosecuting the Bush officials.

administration who are guilty of war crimes and/or crimes against humanity take place now. Key officials must be held accountable and prosecuted for the crimes they stand accused, in world public opinion, of having committed. Editorialists may demand action. Even some politicians may call for it. But only an energized and politically active public can make those prosecutions happen. War criminals must be publicly shamed and prevented from occupying powerful or influential positions within our society. As in other cases where authorities have gone beyond U.S. and international law as well as the laws of decency, only a public accounting will restore lawful conduct.

War Criminals Watch calls on people of conscience to publicly scrutinize those whose acts require prosecution. Former Bush officials now have new roles in society: professor, lawyer, corporate manager, etc., etc. Some have moved on into the Obama administration. Students and professors, especially, have an obligation to act, to let the war

criminals know that there will be no safe haven on campuses. It is our responsibility to call them out and to demand that legal proceedings take place and in a timely fashion.

It was thought by many that President Obama would put a stop to the madness, to the wars, to the Bush administration's nightmarish approach to national security. After one year, this is "the change" we have:

- The expansion of the war in Afghanistan with tens of thousands of additional troops as well as an equivalent number of military

contractors. The military strategy is under the direction of Gen. Stanley McChrystal, an expert in "counterinsurgency" in Iraq.

- Drone strikes in Pakistan have continued and increased in numbers and intensity, killing quickly growing numbers of Afghani and Pakistani civilians, including women and children.

- Several of those who have been accused of Bush-era war crimes have continued into the Obama administration—for example, McChrystal, Gates, Petraeus and Fredman, all of whom have been concerned with "national security" issues militarily and domestically.

- Withdrawal from Iraq is fading into the future. And, when and if the troops do go, the military contractors remain.

- \$20.5 billion allocated in the 2009 Department of Defense budget to be spent on recruiting efforts to increase U.S. military forces. Add to this the intangible value of access to high school students provided by the No Child Left Behind Act.

- Obama has insisted on "moving forward" by avoiding the recognition of crimes committed by the government, allowing the worst offenders of the Bush years to avoid prosecution. He has both granted amnesty to the CIA agents involved in torture and offered legal defense if anyone else were to prosecute them.

- On February 19, 2010 the Department of Justice's (DOJ) Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR) issued its report on whether John Yoo and Jay Bybee should be held accountable for their actions associated with their role providing legal cover for torture, indefinite incarceration without trial, rendition, massive spying and other practices. DOJ found that they engaged in "intentional professional misconduct" by ignoring legal precedent and providing poor legal advice. But it did not hold them accountable for the crimes committed under the cover of their "legal" memos. Associate Deputy Attorney General David Margolis then downgraded the report's conclusions to "poor judgment." As a result, two slaps on the wrist are all that have emerged from an investigation into one of the darkest periods of modern U.S. history.

- Obama has proposed "preventive detention": imprisoning people because the government

claims they are likely to engage in violent acts in the future.

- Prisoners are being rendered not only to "black sites" in Afghanistan but possibly to other countries.

- Prisoners are still enduring prolonged isolation, sleep and sensory deprivation and force-feeding. These techniques cause extreme mental anguish and permanent physical damage and they are not permitted under international law. Make no mistake, the U.S. still engages in torture. And we do know that solitary confinement is also taking place on U.S. soil, as in the case of Syed Fahad Hashmi, a Muslim American student held for two and a half years in downtown Manhattan under Special Administrative Measures (SAMS).

- Guantanamo still has not been closed. If it does close, there is talk of moving the remaining prisoners to a jail in Illinois under the same conditions of confinement.

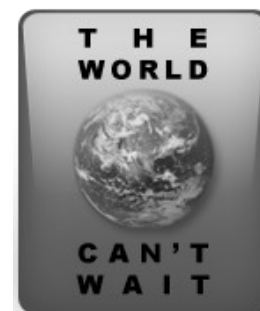
- Prisoners in secret detention centers or "black sites" around the world are not allowed to gain access to courts, lawyers or even to know the charges or evidence against them.

Is this the change we want to see? Is it really okay if Bush policies are carried out by Obama? Have the wars ended? No, they are being expanded. The Obama administration is condoning the Bush war crimes by not prosecuting the Bush officials and by carrying some of them over into the new administration. This makes the Obama officials complicit with the Bush war crimes.

People of conscience must insist on accountability for the actions of U.S. officials, no matter who is president. It is our obligation.

Sharon Pavlovich, a life-long educator, became inspired to join World Can't Wait because of the crimes of our government, particularly torture under the Bush Regime. She has been especially active in World Can't Wait's War Criminal Watch project.

Readers are invited to become fans of the War Criminals Watch page on Facebook.



Birth in a War Zone

The child looks at his mother and smiles
While those nearby look on wondering why
She wanted to give birth at this time
Of screaming soldiers and maddening moments.

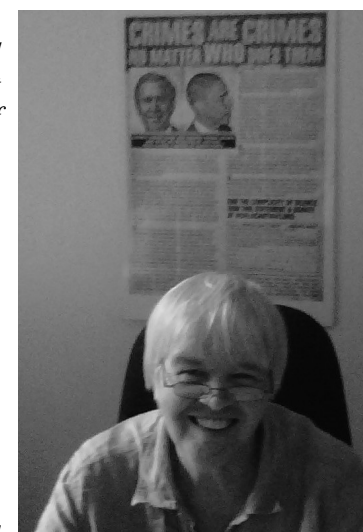
The young mother looks down at the child
Feeling alive once more in a dying world
Of bombs, suicide killings, starvation
Among a terrorized people crying for peace.

The baby will never feel the caress of the
Father who writhed dying a painful passing
One more statistic to add to an occupier's sheet.
At home, one more papa, lover, child, goat herder.

This day brings a short repose as a sign
Of life emerging from painful contractions,
Toiling mother determined that a lover's
Soul will come alive once more in her child.

As the baby man child searches for full breast
Full of warm nourishment to give him growth,
A young mother wonders and sheds a tear,
Knowing this life will one day be torn away too.

—Rachel Bliss



IS WAR Passé? Outmoded? Antiquated? Behind the times? Out of fashion? Archaic? Obsolete?

by Kim Carlyle

An unfortunate characteristic of human nature is our tendency to accept without question certain cultural practices when they attain the status of "institution." But even as a practice is becoming entrenched as an institution, our human culture continues to evolve—sometimes for the better—and so these institutions need to be reevaluated from time to time and, if necessary, challenged, changed, or abandoned.

Slavery, accepted as an institution for millennia, came under serious challenge only a few hundred years ago. It was so deeply ingrained in the American culture that the founders of this nation—even as they declared that all men are created equal and possess the unalienable right to liberty—were incapable of creating an institution of government that didn't contain the institution of slavery. This blatant inconsistency resulted in a seething, ongoing political discourse.

The debaters argued about states' rights, about the intentions of the nation's founders, about technicalities of the Constitution. They quarreled about the expansion of slavery into new territories. Some said slavery was "natural." Others cited scripture to justify the subordination of a whole class of people.

Finally addressing the core question straight out, Abraham Lincoln, among others, stated simply that slavery was immoral: to control another person and benefit from his labor without compensation is just plain wrong.

Contributors to the *War Crimes Times* have argued that wars of aggression violate international law, that targeting civilians and destroying infrastructure are crimes against humanity, that the use of certain weapons constitutes a war crime. We've cited the Constitution, the Geneva Conventions, and the United Nations Charter to make our case. We've examined "rules of engagement." But isn't it time to direct the discourse away from technicalities and address the core question straight out?

Stated simply, war itself is immoral: to kill people—whether in retaliation for a real or perceived harm, in fear of a potential threat, to advance a political agenda, or to clear the way for corporate exploitation—is just plain wrong. It violates a basic ethical rule of human civilized society, expressed in our western culture as "Thou shalt not kill."

But an argument based on ethics will fail to persuade the immoral, the amoral,

the Machiavellians who run this world, and those who blindly march in step that the institution of war has outlived whatever usefulness it may have once had. They need an argument based in worldly pragmatism—a cost vs. benefits analysis.

Societal Costs

War disrupts the social order. Simply sending a family member off to war creates hardship for those who remain. Training and indoctrinating a person for war—turning a decent citizen into an obedient warrior—subverts the cultural values instilled over years of societal and parental acculturation. The stress of war remains long after the veteran returns home, creating problems of readjustment that place a burden on family and community.

Opportunity Costs

The money, manpower, mind power, and manufacturing capability directed toward the business of death and destruction is directed away from addressing the needs for health care, housing, education, infrastructure, and alternative energy. The resources that war devotes to killing and doing harm cannot be used for helping people and doing good. Is this sane?

Environmental Costs

War machines have no pollution controls. Fuel-sucking warplanes and armored vehicles are part of the reason the U.S. military leads the world in use of oil. Chemical and biological agents and radioactive weapons—whether used in battle or just leaking from storage—have destroyed entire ecosystems. Unexploded shells and land mines render once productive land useless. Sunken warships and tankers from last century's wars leak oil into marine ecosystems. As the global population is burgeoning, war is reducing the fruitfulness of the planet. Is this sustainable?

Quantifiable Costs

In the last decade, the U.S. has spent more than a trillion dollars on wars against two nations—neither of which had an air force or a navy and only one had an army, but it was incapable offering more than token resistance. To date, as these wars continue, we have lost more than 6,000 young Americans. An untold number have been permanently disabled and many have returned to commit suicide or suffer debilitating mental and emotional disorders. Worse still is the civilian toll: more than a million have died; several million have suffered injuries and disease; and several million have been uprooted from their homes

and communities. What possible benefits could ever balance out such costs?

Benefits-Consequences of War

The U.S. war industry is the big winner. Suppliers of munitions and mercenaries, weapons and warplanes, contractors and consultants haul in profits by the ton. Jingoistic politicians, playing to a dumbed-down, unquestioning electorate, fare well in the polls and accept generous donations from the war lobby. But these "benefits"—more wealth and power for a very few—are never the stated objectives of war. The purported (and protean) reasons are some notion of maintaining security, obtaining peace, sustaining the American way of life, and even liberating the oppressed.

What we really get is increased enmity from the surviving victims (which the profiteers exploit to launch the next war), a huge increase in national debt, and a psychological need to glorify the dead by perpetuating the culture of war.

Other Considerations

The technology of warfare has increased at an exponential rate while the ascent of mankind has moved at a snail's pace. Just one of Petraeus' soldiers has more destructive capability than a company of Sherman's men. What's more, not only can today's troops *radio* for an *airstrike*, but the killer and the victims can be on different continents.

Additionally, the world has changed. Population has amassed in the cities.

Relative strengths of nations are grossly disparate. Armies no longer fight armies; the enemy is not a nation. We declare war on a tactic or on a transnational, loose knit, paramilitary network of individuals. War is no longer an effective tool.

We have new tools. The disciplines of sociology, psychology, and diplomacy have given us methods of negotiating and reconciling differences peaceably. Progressive activists have developed nonviolent means of action against oppression. And we are beginning to understand that man is not belligerent by nature. Yet, we still see war as necessary, effective, glorious, and even honorable.

Wake Up Call

For an impartial observer, one unaffected by the disease of war (perhaps an intelligent extraterrestrial visitor), it would be a no-brainer to conclude that war is counterproductive, obscenely expensive and destructive, and just plain stupid.

It's time for civilization to take the next big step along the trail blazed by Gandhi, King, Jesus, and an untold number of unsung heroes throughout history who have opposed war and advocated for sanity. It's time to rethink militarism as a way to solve problems. It's time to lay down our swords and shields and study war no more.

And it's time to put those dimwitted troglodytes who promote the institution of war into an appropriate institution.

Can anything be stupider than that a man has the right to kill me because he lives on the other side of a river and his ruler has a quarrel with mine, though I have not quarreled with him?

—Blaise Pascal

Letters

Democratic Socialism

The only way we're ever going to begin winding down the American war machine is to work for a radical (that means root) change in government. The Capitalist monster bids fair to annihilate the world, either by nuclear war or unchecked environment-destroying causes or both. Democratic Socialism advocates for and practices peace and sane environmentalism. Check us out at www.socialistparty-usa.org. See if our principles aren't already yours.

Will Shapira
Roseville, MN

Thanks

Thanks for sharing your important work on the need to make Bush and Cheney accountable for their crimes.

Matthew Rothschild
Editor

The Progressive
Great Job

...I got a stack of your excellent papers at a vets' conference in Ventura, CA in April—and they all disappeared at the May VFP meeting here. I'm going to propose that VFP Chapter 69 in San Francisco buy a stack for \$25 of each issue...I will mail in a subscription for me today. GREAT JOB—BEST ANTI-WAR PAPER I'VE SEEN IN 10 YEARS.

Nadya Williams
San Francisco

(See Nadya's article on page 18. —Ed.)

War is a quarrel between two thieves too cowardly to fight their own battle; therefore they take boys from one village and another village, stick them into uniforms, equip them with guns, and let them loose like wild beasts against each other.

—Thomas Carlyle

Israeli War Crimes

(Continued from page 9)

rights volunteers, included pacifists, parliamentarians, former diplomats, as well as current members of the Israeli parliament.

4. While dozens of human rights people were shot, killed and maimed, Israeli propagandists doctored video releases portraying one of the Israeli assailants on the deck, cutting out the preceding sequence of attack (*Financial Times*, June 2).

5. The Israeli sea and airborne assailants were described as the victims of a “Brutal Ambush at Sea” (*Ynet News*, June 1).

6. The terrorized human rights workers were accused of being a “lynch mob,” attacking the Jewish commandos who were firing automatic rifles wildly across the deck and at cornered victims. The few courageous individuals who fought back to stop the murderous attack were slandered by the Zion-prop, which itself is as monstrous as the crimes they perpetrated.

Once the Israeli propaganda machine started spewing out its gutter lies, the entire leadership of the Zionist Fifth column swung into action ... first and foremost in the United States.

The U.S. Zionist Power Configuration: In Defense of the Massacre

Just as the entire leadership of the 51 principle American Jewish organizations defended every Israeli war crime in the past, from the bombing of the USS *Liberty*, to the Occupation of the West Bank and the blockade of Gaza so too did these most honorable apologists repeat verbatim the lies of the Israeli state regarding the assault of the humanitarian flotilla.

The *Daily Alert* (May 31– June 2), the official public propaganda organ of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, published every scurrilous Israeli state lie, about the Israeli commandos being “lynched” and “attacked,” and the human rights victims being responsible for the death of their comrades... at the hands of Israeli commandos. Not a single deviation, not a single word of criticism. Not even a single mention of even the superficial Israeli critics who faulted the execution, the use of deadly weapons, the assault in international waters, and the public relations fiasco. The vast majority of Israeli Jews and organized Zionists in the U.S. supported the bloody massacre and were opposed

by a small minority who has no access to the mass media. Zionist control over the mass media was once again demonstrated by the reporting through “Israel’s eyes” (*FAIR*, June 1). Essentially the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, CNN, CBS, NBC presented the Israeli commandos attacking the humanitarian boat as being ... “assaulted and beaten” (*Washington Post*, June 1). The *New York Times* (June 1) gave credence to the Israeli claim that its act of piracy on the high seas was legal.

For the U.S. mass media, the problem is not Israeli state terror, but how to manipulate and disarm the outrage of the international community. To that end, the entire Zionist Power configuration has a reliable ally in the Zionized Obama White House and U.S. Congress.

The Obama Response to Israeli State Terror

There is only one basic reason why Israel repeatedly commits crimes against humanity, including the latest assault on the humanitarian flotilla: because it knows that the Zionist Power Configuration, embedded in the U.S. power structure, will ensure government support, in this case the Obama White House.

In the face of the world-wide condemnation of Israel’s crime on the high seas, and calls from the international community for legal action, the Obama regime absolutely refused to criticize Israel. A White House spokesman said, “The United States deeply regrets the loss of life and injuries sustained and is currently working to understand the circumstances surrounding the tragedy” (*AFP* May 31, 2010).

An act of state terrorism does not evoke “regrets”—it normally provokes condemnation and punishment. The power which caused “loss of life and injuries” has a name—Israel; the persons who suffered death and injuries during the Israeli assault have a name—humanitarian volunteers. It was not simply a “loss of life” but a well planned premeditated murder which is openly defended by Prime Minister Netanyahu and his entire Cabinet. The “circumstances” of the murders are clear: Israel assaulted an unarmed ship in international waters, opening fire as they boarded the ship. The Obama regime’s obscene political cover-up of a deliberate criminal act in violation of international law is evident in his description of a serial homicide as a “tragedy.” Premeditated state terror has no resemblance to a tragic noble ruler forced by cir-

cumstances into a criminal act against their closest allies.

Washington, pressed to participate at a UN Security Council meeting, spent 10 hours eliminating all references to Israel’s illegal criminal act, ending in a resolution which merely calls for an “impartial” investigation, with Washington pushing for an Israeli investigatory committee. To the world at large, including the Turkish government, the Obama regime and the U.S. government, by refusing to condemn Israel, are “accomplices to a mass murder.”

To understand why the Obama regime brought shame and infamy to itself in the eyes of the world, one need look at the Zionist composition of the Obama White House and, equally important, the direct power and access that the principle Jewish-Zionist organizations have over the U.S. political system.

In the week preceding Israel’s announced assault on the humanitarian flotilla, (pro-Israel) Jewish leaders met with over a third of U.S. senators to pressure them to pass harsher sanctions on Iran by June. Among the key operatives attending were the Jewish Federation of North America, AIPAC, and the rest of the Israeli Fifth Column (*Jewish Telegraph Agency*, May 26).

The following day a squadron of leaders from the Jewish Federations flew into Washington to meet with top Obama administration officials, to ensure that the White House and Congress did not in any way or form publicly express any criticism of Israel’s settlement policy. No doubt the Zionist apologists for Israeli war crimes extended their agenda to include no public criticism of the Israeli assault on the flotilla.

Rahm Emmanuel, top U.S. Presidential aide, was in Tel Aviv as a guest of top officials of the Israel Defense Force a few days before the IDF launched the assault, no doubt having filled Rahm in on the details. The Israeli-American aide to Obama no doubt assured the war criminals of Washington’s unconditional political and military support for Israel’s acts of aggression.

From within the Obama Administration and without, the aggressive pressure from the 51 principle organizations of the

(See ISRAELI WAR CRIMES on page 19)

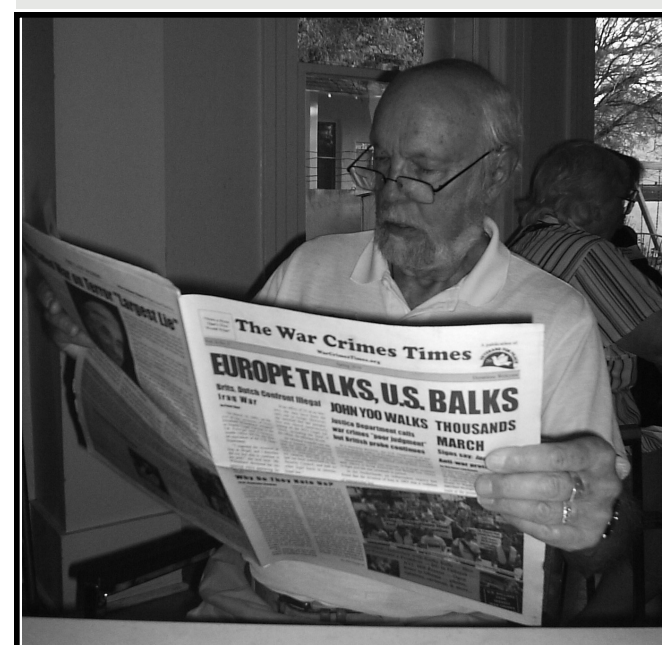
Hopes Rise with News of the Latest Settlement Freeze

This is our hell,
In this sweet,
Envelope of grace
In which we dwell,
Haunted by this crone
And her eternity of sisters,
Each, in her own time,
A discarded tangent to the safe enclosures
Of tribal geometry.
Every soft arc of her face
Has been gouged
By life's erosion.
She hurls her undecipherable decibels
At the dark belly
Of the devouring storm,
While in the background,
Her home burns,
Or is pulverized by indifferent,
Omnivorous machines.
Maybe a lighter or darker skinned
People will move in.
Perhaps taller,
Or shorter.
Finally, stripped of already
Threadbare grief,
She covers her face with delicate fists,
Shrivels up
And blows away,
A spiral of yellow dust,
Only to reemerge on
Some other continent,
Drifting blindly
In and out of fire.

—David Asia

There is a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious, makes you so sick at heart, that you can't take part; you can't even passively take part, and you've got to put your bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon all the apparatus, and you've got to make it stop.

—Mario Savio



Bill Durland of Colorado Springs reads **The War Crimes Times**

Carrying a Backpack of Sorrow... Soldiers on the Edge of Suicide

By Nadya Williams



More of our young soldiers are now killing themselves than are being killed in our wars in the Middle East. The sad statistics are at the end of this article, but the following poem by a 24-year-old former Marine, who slashed his

wrists twice after four years of duty and two tours of combat, tells it all.

You fell off the seat as the handlebars turned sharp left, throwing your body onto the hot coals of Ramadi pavement, intertwining your legs within your bicycle. Lifeless eyes looking to the sky, your neck muscles twitched turning your head directly towards us. Nothing escaped your lips except for the blood in the left corner of your mouth that briefly moistened them until the sand and dust dried them out. The blood trail went behind the stone wall where your body was placed, weighed down by your blue bicycle and we laughed. I used to fall asleep to the pictures and now I can't even bear to get a glimpse.

—excerpted from "The Bicycle"
by Jon Michael Turner

The military "broke me down into a not-good person, wearing a huge mask," Turner told the audience at his poetry reading in San Francisco's Beat Museum, in North Beach. The March 12 event—on the birthday of "Beatnik" literary icon Jack Kerouac—was organized by the venerable Jack Hirschman, San Francisco's 2006 Poet Laureate, and by the local IVAW (Iraq Veterans Against the War). Jon read from his small, self-published book *Eat the Apple* and from several large pages of dark green hand-made paper—the product of The Combat Paper Book Project, where 125 vets, ranging from World War II through Vietnam to Iraq and Afghanistan, shredded their uniforms to make books for their poetry. "Poetry saved my life," Jon told us, more than once.

The Burlington, Vermont native was accompanied by his father and step-mother on a coast to coast series of readings from the little book whose name comes from a play on the word "core." The flyer for the evening reading stated:

"There's a term 'Once a Marine, always a Marine,'" Turner says, ripping his medals off and flinging them to the ground. As the room explodes in applause he adds, "But there's also the expression:

*'Eat the apple, f*ck the corps.
I don't work for you no more!'*

Jon walks with a cane and was physically injured in battle, but only his poetry reveals his invisible wounds, as in these excerpts from "A Night in the Mind of Me—part 1":

The train hits you head on when you hear of another friend whose life was just taken. Pulling his cold lifeless body from the cooler, unzipping the bag and seeing his forehead, caved in like a cereal bowl from the sniper's bullet that touched his brain. His skin was pale and cold.

It becomes difficult to sleep even after being physically drained from patrols, post, overwatches and carrying five hundred

sandbags up eighty feet of stairs after each post cycle.

The psychiatrists still wonder why we drink so heavy when we get home.

We need something to take us away from the gunfire, explosions, sand, nightmares and screams.....

I still can't cry.

The tears build up but no weight is shed.

Anger kicks in and something else becomes broken.

A cabinet

An empty bottle of liquor

A heart

A soul.

People still look away as we submit ourselves to drugs and alcohol to suppress these feelings of loneliness and sadness, leading to self mutilation and self destruction on the gift of a human body. The ditch that we dug starts to cave in.

And from "A Night in the Mind of Me—part 2:"

Laughter pours out from the house as if nothing were the matter, when outside in a chair, underneath a tree, next to the chickens, I sit, engulfed in my own sorrows.....

Resting on the ground is my glass, half filled with water but I don't have enough courage to pick it up and smash it against my skull so that everyone can watch blood pool in the pockets where my collar bones meet my dead weighted shoulders.... Every time I'm up, something pulls me down, whenever I relax, something stresses me out, every time a smile tugs on my heart, an iron fist crushes it, and I sit outside in a chair, underneath a tree, next to the chickens, away from the ones that I love so that my disease won't infect them. Sorrow and self-pity should be detained, thrown into an empty bottle and given to the ocean so that the waves can wash away the pain.

One wonders why this slightly-built, sensitive young man joined the Marines in 2004 at the age of 18 (he was sent first to Haiti at the time of the U.S.-backed February coup that ousted the populist and democratic President Jean-Bertrand Aristide). Jon revealed that he came from a military family whose participation in every American conflict stretches back to the Revolutionary War. His father is clearly too young to have gone to Vietnam, but could have easily been in one or both of the Bushes' wars. Jon's big brother is also a soldier, ironically now in Haiti after the earthquake. Of the American military, Jon now writes in "What May Come":

tap, tap

That's the sound of the man at your door,

I'm sorry but you won't see your son alive anymore,

my name is Uncle Sam and I made your boy a whore.

And, from "Just Thoughts":

I often wonder

if this will be the rest of my life.

Schizophrenic, paranoid, anxious.

That guy that walks around the city center that people steer their children away from.

"Mommy, who's that man walking next to the crazy guy?"

"Oh that's just Uncle Sam sweetheart, he takes the souls from young men so that they have trouble sleeping at night"



Jack Hirschman, 2006 Poet Laureate of San Francisco, with Iraq War vet Jon Michael Turner. (Photo by Nadya Williams)

"It takes the Courage and Strength of a Warrior to ask for Help"—we've all seen the ads, on billboards and buses, with the silhouette of a down-cast soldier against a back drop of the stars and stripes, and a 1-800 Help Line just for vets, provided by the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

But "The Surge" in self-inflicted deaths continues, with our military reporting 350 suicides of active duty personnel in 2009, compared to 340 combat deaths in Afghanistan, and 160 in Iraq during the same year—the highest active duty military suicide numbers since records began to be kept in 1980. And for every death, at least five serving personnel are hospitalized for attempting to take their life, according to the military's own studies.

But these statistics do not include the far larger number of post-active duty veterans who kill themselves after discharge, or, like Jon Michael Turner, who make the attempt. (Vietnam veteran suicides number easily in the tens of thousands.) A CBS study put the current suicide rate among male veterans aged 20 to 24 at four times the national average.

According to CNN, total combat deaths since 2001 (8 plus years) in Afghanistan are now 1,016; since 2003 (7 years) in Iraq 4,390—totaling 5,406 as of March 21, 2010. The Veteran's Administration, however, estimates that 6,400 veterans take their own lives each year—an ever-growing proportion of them from the recent Mid-East wars—with this figure widely disputed as being way too low. Multiply 6,400 by seven or eight years to compare the numbers of our young soldiers that are now killing themselves, to those being killed in our wars and occupations.

The last word belongs to Jon Michael Turner, from "Taught How To Love":

I'm sick of carrying this pain everywhere I go. I'm sick of being thanked for my service. I'd rather have society thank the people that don't believe in war, or thank the people that get arrested for an act of civil disobedience, or thank the people that resist.

Nadya Williams is a free-lance journalist and a former study-tour coordinator for Global Exchange, a San Francisco-based human rights and peace non-profit. She is an active associate member of Veterans for Peace, San Francisco chapter, and is on the national board of the New York-based Vietnam Agent Orange Relief and Responsibility Campaign.

Accountability for torture is about the soul of our country, yet we hear only silence from our leaders

Adapted from a long letter published at MinnPost.com on June 3. The letter was drafted by Chuck Turchick and signed by 22 Minnesota activists.

June was designated Torture Awareness Month by the National Religious Campaign Against Torture and several other human rights organizations. But you didn't hear anything about that from our government. Just as it hides our detention facilities, it hides from the truth and denies our history. No one wants torture on the front pages.

But until we deal with this issue, torture will remain a cancer that eats away at our country. We must increase awareness of what has been done in our names. We should ask our leaders whether they're aware that:

- The statute of limitations applicable to the Federal Torture Statute is eight years. What Maj. Gen. Antonio Taguba called our "systematic regime of torture" began eight years ago.
- Since 9/11, up to 100 detainees have died in our custody from other than battlefield wounds, suicides or natural causes. The precise number is not known because our government has ceased releasing the data.
- Secret places of detention are being discovered to this day. One at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, and another at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, have just recently been revealed.
- The Convention Against Torture, in Article 2, says: "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."
- George W. Bush, when president, advocated greater accountability than President Barack Obama

advocates with respect to torture. On June 26, 2004, the UN's International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, President Bush issued a statement that included the following: "America stands against and will not tolerate torture. We will investigate and prosecute all acts of torture and undertake to prevent other cruel and unusual punishment in all territory under our jurisdiction." In looking forward, Obama has taken a step backward.

- Article 14 of the Convention Against Torture says: "Each State Party shall ensure in its legal system that the victim of an act of torture obtains redress and has an enforceable right to fair and adequate compensation." Yet our Justice Department continually argues in court against such redress, invoking state sovereignty and state secrets doctrines.

- Judges, inspectors general, general counsel of the military branches, Pentagon investigators, and FBI interrogators have all said that we have tortured human beings in our custody.

- The Convention Against Torture, in Article 12, says: "Each State Party shall ensure that its competent authorities proceed to a prompt and impartial investigation, wherever there is reasonable ground to believe that an act of torture has been committed in any territory under its jurisdiction." Yet President Obama wants to investigate only those who exceeded the standards prescribed by the faulty Bush-era Office of Legal Counsel memos.



- Since the Federal Torture Statute was passed in 1994, only one person has ever been charged and convicted under it. And that was for torture committed for the government of Liberia. His name was Chuckie Taylor, he was the son of the President of Liberia, Charles Taylor, and he tortured people as part of that country's Anti-Terrorism Unit. Torture justified as anti-terrorist. Does that sound familiar?

While some government officials say they support those who push for accountability, there is a lack of political will in Washington to deal with the issue. But accountability for torture is literally about the soul of our country; nothing could be more important.

Help break the silence. Join with others including Amnesty International, Women Against Military Madness and Veterans For Peace—see http://www.veteransforpeace.org/ban_torture.vp.html.

Israeli War Crimes

(Continued from page 17)

American Zionists have guaranteed Israeli war criminals immunity from any War Crimes Tribunal, or even serious political condemnation by the UN Security Council. The Zionized White House's tactic is to deflect attention from immediate consequential condemnation let alone sanctions, hoping that over time, aided by the blanket mass media apology in the U.S., the mass indignation and protest overseas will gradually wither away.

Obama and his Zionist cohort are already in a belly crawl mode with Israel. Part of Rahm's mission to Israel was to hand Netanyahu an invitation to the White House, during the week of the slaughter at sea. The only reason Netanyahu did not come to Washington was because he rushed back to Israel to buttress the Foreign Office's defense of the slaughter in the face of world-wide outrage. But in a phone conversation, Obama promised Netanyahu a prompt new invitation—assuring the Jewish statesman that violating international laws and bloodying dozens of humanitarian activists is of no consequence, especially since it insures continued financial support by Obama's Zionist backers.

Like Lyndon Johnson with the cover-up of the USS *Liberty*, Obama's apology of

Israel's war crimes, is the price for ensuring the backing of billionaire Zionist financiers and media moguls, the tens of thousands of pro-Israel Jews and the 51 President of the Major American Jewish Organizations.

In the face of Washington's complicity with Israeli war crimes, the only road is to intensify the world-wide boycott, disinvestment and sanctions campaign against all Israeli products, cultural activities and professional exchanges. Hopefully, the Islamic-led mass protests will find echo in the wider anti-Zionist Christian and Jewish communities—especially, when Israeli apologists for state terror make public appearances.

Even more importantly, each and every Israeli involved in the mass assault should be subject to criminal prosecution wherever they visit. Only by making the Israelis understand that they will pay a high price for their serial homicides and violations of international law will reason possibly enter their political narrative. Only by moving beyond symbolic protests, like recalling diplomats, and taking substantive actions, like breaking relations, will the international community isolate the perpetrator of state terrorism.

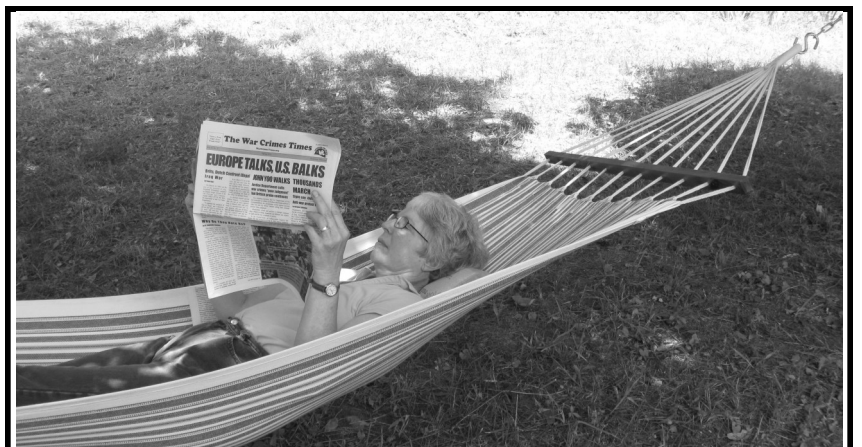
All Americans should send loud and clear to President Obama—NEVER AGAIN.

Otherwise, with the Zionist Power Configuration active 24/7, the Obama regime, true to the Zionist agenda, will once again focus attention on attacking Iran. Israel's action today—with

U.S. complicity—is a prelude of the kind of deadly force it has in store for sabotaging the recent Turkey-Brazil-Iran diplomatic agreement.

This is dedicated to the brave Turkish martyrs on the *Mavi Marmara*, May 31, 2010, and to the 34 murdered American sailors on the USS *Liberty*, June 8, 1967—all victims of an unrepentant criminal state: Israel.

James Petras is the author of more than 62 books published in 29 languages, and over 600 articles in professional journals, including the American Sociological Review, British Journal of Sociology, Social Research, and Journal of Peasant Studies. He has published over 2000 articles in nonprofessional journals such as the New York Times, The Guardian, The Nation, Christian Science Monitor, Foreign Policy, New Left Review, Partisan Review, TempsModerne, Le Monde Diplomatique, and his commentary is widely carried on the internet. His website is lahaine.org/petras/



Susan Carlyle of Barnardville, NC reads **The War Crimes Times**

The business of America is war



Remember those outline maps in your school textbooks filled with products made in the USA? So much of U.S. industry is war-related, so I filled the U.S. outline with Iraqi camouflage I designed after we bombed Fallujah.

—Natasha Mayers mayersnatasha@gmail.com

Natasha Mayers has been called Maine's most committed activist-artist. She is artist-in-residence for Peace Action Maine.

“We need artists to help explain what is happening in this country, to tell the truth and reveal the lies, to be willing to say the emperor has no clothes, to create moral indignation, to envision alternatives, to reinvent language. We need artists to help us come together and share our voices and build community around powerful issues concerning our roles in the world and our planet’s survival. Compassion must be translated into action.”

—NM

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A SOLDIER'S LAMENT

By Milton Shapiro

Why must we fight and why must we die
Isn't there something we hold on high
Something better than a greedy self
Grubbing to gather power and pelf?
A glowing vision of a better world
With love of man by greed unspoiled
With sharing and helping one another
Treating each as sister or brother
With noble deeds a daily thing
And not a cause for wondering.
Oh mankind how long until we learn
That hate and greed breed the same in return?

The single largest failure of the anti-war movement at this point is the lack of outreach to the troops.

—Tim Goodrich

Iraq Veterans Against The War



Alice Ritter of Tucson reads **The War Crimes Times**