

CAPITALISM VERSUS DEMOCRACY | ERIC RUDER
MAD, PASSIONATE LOVE. AND VIOLENCE | REBECCA SOLNIT
COOKIES WITH CHRISTIANITY | BILL BERKOWITZ

MARCH 2012

ColdType

WRITING WORTH READING

ISSUE 64

**WHY IS THE WEST SO INTENT ON REPEATING
ITS MILITARY DISASTERS IN IRAQ AND LIBYA?**

THE ROAD TO WAR

Essays by

- DAVID EDWARDS
- DIANA JOHNSTONE
- PHILIP GIRALDI
- STUART LITTLEWOOD
- WILLIAM BLUM
- BARRY LANDO
- DAVID SWANSON

**BLAIR'S LEGACY – TWO OPINIONS:
JOHN PILGER AND TREVOR GRUNDY**





ColdType

MARCH 2012 / ISSUE 64

EDITOR'S NOTE

This month, ColdType introduces a new feature: **This World** in which we invite readers to send photographs that capture a slice of the world in which we live.

Our first This World photo on Page 46 is by acclaimed Detroit street photographer **Bruce Giffin** and it encapsulates the tragedy that has befallen Motor City over the past few years – the inner city economy becoming so bad that even the pawnshops are closing their doors.

If you've got a photo that says something about the world in which we live, please send it to: editor@coldtype.net

Photographs may be landscape or portrait format, in black and white or colour, and should be 240dpi jpegs.

Please include a brief description of the image and the name and email address of the photographer.

Tony Sutton, Editor

Editor@coldtype.net

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Resolutions of mass destruction

David Edwards looks at the way Western attitudes to war in the Middle East are shaped by distortion and propaganda in the mainstream media

It has been said that compassion is “the only beauty that truly pleases” (Aryasura, “The Marvelous Companion,” Dharma Publishing, 1983, p.305). While beauty ordinarily provokes the fiery itch of desire or the sullen shadow of envy, compassion is cooling, blissful, inspiring awe and wonder. It implies an ability to stand outside our own needs as observers, to perceive the suffering of others as of equal or greater importance. But like all forms of beauty, compassion can be faked and exploited.

On February 4, Western politicians and journalists responded with outrage to the Russian and Chinese vetoing of a UN security council resolution calling for Syrian president Bashar Assad to step down as part of a “political transition”. UK foreign secretary, William Hague, said:

“More than 2,000 people have died since Russia and China vetoed the last draft resolution in October 2011. How many more need to die before Russia and China allow the UN security council to act?”

“Those opposing UN security council action will have to account to the Syrian people for their actions, which do nothing to help bring an end to the violence that is ravaging the country. The United Kingdom will continue to support the people of Syria and the Arab League to find an end to the violence and allow a Syrian-led political transition.”

The corporate media took the same view.



A leading article in the *Independent* commented: “Hillary Clinton described the vetoing of the UN resolution as a “travesty”. She is right. But this cannot be the international community’s last word.”

Curiously, while Hague talked of the West’s determination “to find an end to the violence”, and the media railed against the Russians and Chinese for failing to seek the same, almost no-one noticed that the resolution had itself subordinated the possibility of a ceasefire to the demand for regime change.

The draft resolution did call “for an immediate end to all violence”. But it specifically demanded “that the Syrian government... withdraw all Syrian military and armed forces from cities and towns, and return them to their original home barracks”.

This one-sided demand that only Syrian government forces should withdraw from the streets closely resembled the Machiavelian device built into UN Resolution 1973 on Libya, passed on March 17, 2011.

This also called for “the immediate establishment of a cease-fire” supported by “a ban on all flights” in Libyan airspace. But crucially, the determination was added “to

Like all forms of beauty, compassion can be faked and exploited

As ever, violence for which the West shares responsibility has been met with indifference and quickly forgotten

take all necessary measures... to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, including Benghazi...”

This clearly had nothing to do with the mere banning of flights. Indeed, the authorisation to protect civilians by “all necessary means” transformed Nato planes from neutral monitors of Libyan airspace into a ground-attack air force for “rebel” fighters.

Far from bringing an end to the violence, UN Resolution 1973 unleashed overwhelming Western force in pursuit of regime change, in a war that was fought to the bitter end. To ensure the right outcome, Western and other powers supplied special forces and weapons, simply ignoring the resolution’s call for “strict implementation of the arms embargo” and “excluding a foreign occupation force of any form on any part of Libyan territory”. In short, the resolution resulted in a massive escalation in violence. Seumas Milne noted in the *Guardian*:

“When it began, the death toll was 1,000 to 2,000. By the time Muammar Gaddafi was captured and lynched seven months later, it was estimated at more than 10 times that figure. The legacy of foreign intervention in Libya has also been mass ethnic cleansing, torture and detention without trial, continuing armed conflict, and a western-orchestrated administration so unaccountable it resisted revealing its members’ names.”

The *New York Times* also reported: “The country that witnessed the Arab world’s most sweeping revolution [sic] is foundering” with a government “whose authority extends no further than its offices” and where “militias are proving to be the scourge of the revolution’s aftermath”.

Militia violence is rife – Human Rights Watch (HRW) estimates 250 separate militias in the city of Misrata alone. Peter Bouckaert, the emergencies director at HRW, said: “People are turning up dead in detention at an alarming rate. If this was happening under any Arab dictatorship, there would be an outcry.”

On January 26, Doctors Without Borders/

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) announced its decision “to suspend its operations in detention centers in Misrata”. Detainees “are being tortured and denied urgent medical care”:

“MSF doctors had been increasingly confronted with patients who suffered injuries caused by torture during interrogation sessions... In total, MSF treated 115 people who had torture-related wounds... Since January, several of the patients returned to interrogation centers were again tortured.”

MSF general director Christopher Stokes commented: “Our role is to provide medical care to war casualties and sick detainees, not to repeatedly treat the same patients between torture sessions.”

As ever, violence for which the West shares responsibility has been met with indifference and quickly forgotten. According to the media database Lexis-Nexis, Stokes’ comments were mentioned once in half a dozen newspapers on January 27, with no follow up. Ironically, Bouckaert’s comments on the absent “outcry” have themselves been ignored.

As a result, the post-war disaster in Libya has given journalists little pause for thought on the merits of the West’s latest “humanitarian intervention” in Syria. Facts have to be recognised as real and important to have an impact.

“Further Measures”

Returning to the vetoed UN resolution, the one-sided demand that Syrian government forces withdraw, but not anti-government fighters, was combined with the demand that the Syrian government “facilitate a Syrian-led political transition to a democratic, plural political system” – regime change by any other name – “in an environment free from violence, fear, intimidation and extremism”. The draft text promised “to review implementation of this resolution within 21 days and, in the event of non-compliance, to consider further measures”.

The trap was clear enough – Syrian forces would have been ordered back to barracks. If the fighters had continued fighting and government forces had responded, this would have constituted “non-compliance”, opening the way for “further measures”, including foreign intervention leading to regime change. This would have given Syrian fighters every motivation to continue the violence in hopes of triggering the kind of Western intervention that destroyed Gaddafi and that they have been openly seeking.

None of this should come as a surprise. For the West, a peaceful solution in Libya (as in Iraq) was perceived as an obstacle to the actual goal, regime change. Milne observed last August: “If stopping the killing had been the real aim, Nato states would have backed a ceasefire and a negotiated settlement, rather than repeatedly vetoing both. Instead, UN Resolution 1973 “has since been used as Nato’s fig leaf to justify the onslaught against Gaddafi and deliver regime change from the air”.

Consider, then, that we have strong evidence that the vetoed resolution on Syria would have escalated violence in pursuit of regime change (an illegal aspiration under international law). We have the clear example of Libya, from just last year, of very similar machinations producing regime change, a ten times increase in violence, and massive post-war chaos and violence.

If this isn’t enough to question the “black and white” portrayal of the Russian and Chinese veto as a “travesty”, we can consider the filmed testimony of former Nato chief, General Wesley Clark, when he recalled a conversation with a Pentagon general in 2001, a few weeks after the September 11 attacks:

“He reached over on his desk. He picked up a piece of paper. And he said, “I just got this down from upstairs” – meaning the Secretary of Defense’s office – “today.” And he said, “This is a memo that describes how we’re going to take out seven countries in five years, starting with Iraq, and then Syria,

Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and, finishing off, Iran.”

Clark added: “They wanted us to destabilize the Middle East, turn it upside down, make it under our control.”

He recounted a conversation he had had in 1991 with Paul Wolfowitz, then US Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, who told Clark: “we’ve got about 5 or 10 years to clean up those old Soviet regimes – Syria, Iran, Iraq – before the next great superpower comes on to challenge us”.

In response, Clark said he asked himself: “The purpose of the military is to start wars and change governments? It’s not to deter conflicts?”

Clark’s conclusion will be blindingly obvious to future historians, if not to contemporary journalists: “[T]here are always interests. The truth about the Middle East is, had there been no oil there, it would be like Africa. Nobody is threatening to intervene in Africa. The problem is the opposite. We keep asking for people to intervene and stop [violence]. There’s no question that the presence of petroleum throughout the region has sparked great power involvement.”

It is hard to imagine Clark being dismissed as a crazed conspiracy theorist lacking “insider” knowledge – he was Nato chief, after all. But his account has been ignored – talk of a hidden agenda of realpolitik challenges the Manichean view of the world that makes “humanitarian intervention” possible. We can find only one mention of Clark’s comments in all UK national newspapers – by Clark himself in an article for the *Times* in 2003 (Clark, “Iraq: Why it was the wrong war on the wrong enemy for the wrong reasons,” the *Times*, October 23, 2003).

In light of the above facts and arguments, it is interesting to consider the comments of UN secretary-general, Ban Ki-moon, who condemned the Russian and Chinese veto as “disastrous for the Syrian people”. The failure to agree on collective action, he said,

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General Wesley Clark said he asked himself: “The purpose of the military is to start wars and change governments? It’s not to deter conflicts?”

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had “encouraged the Syrian government to step up its war on its own people”.

But honest analysis suggests serious room for doubt – the vetoed resolution might itself have been disastrous for the Syrian people. With these words, the UN secretary-general told us much about his own position. Indeed, the near-unanimity in outrage that has characterised so much commentary, despite obvious holes in the reasoning, is symptomatic of a widespread conformity that defers to “pragmatic” considerations rather than to common sense.

It is interesting, also, to consider in more detail the response of the corporate press.

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Moral hypocrisy

On February 6, a cry of moral outrage arose from that collection of selfless humanitarians otherwise known as the *Times* newspaper. Responding to fighting in the Syrian city of Homs, which has included government shelling of civilian areas variously reported to have claimed scores or hundreds of lives, a *Times* leading article observed:

“Pensioners, the sick, women, children – none was spared as the military took revenge on the centre of opposition to the Assad dictatorship.” (Leading article, “Moral Blindness; Russia and China acted for self-serving motives in vetoing the Security Council’s condemnation of the bloodshed in Syria,” the *Times*, February 6, 2012)

The leader pulled no punches in describing “the carnage the regime’s minders have tried to hide: corpses with their eyes gouged out, their skulls crushed, their faces burnt off.”

The editors fumed: “Russia’s moral bankruptcy and China’s self-serving blindness have been denounced from the Gulf to Morocco...”

The denunciations are mostly offered by people drowning in hypocrisy. The *Times* concluded that, “no veto can, in the end, save [the Syrian government] from the fury of a nation so humiliatingly brutalised”.

Syrian government violence is real and

horrific, but not a word in the article commented on the armed fighters in Syria that are reported to have killed many hundreds of Syrian troops and police. Unable to perceive the Western interests described by former Nato chief Wesley Clark, the *Times* was able to identify cynical self-interest elsewhere: “Russia is determined, above all, to protect its naval presence in Syria, thwart Western interests in the region and shield a regime that now owes it an existential debt.”

Compare the *Times*’ response to Israel’s far more destructive Operation Cast Lead offensive in the Gaza strip between December 27, 2008 and January 18, 2009. The Israeli human rights group B’Tselem reported:

“The magnitude of the harm to the population was unprecedented: 1,385 Palestinians were killed, 762 of whom did not take part in the hostilities. Of these, 318 were minors under age 18. More than 5,300 Palestinians were wounded, of them over 350 seriously so. Israel also caused enormous damage to residential dwellings, industrial buildings, agriculture and infrastructure for electricity, sanitation, water, and health, which was on the verge of collapse prior to the operation. According to UN figures, Israel destroyed more than 3,500 residential dwellings and 20,000 people were left homeless.”

Three Israeli civilians and six Israeli soldiers were killed by Palestinian fire.

In a leader, the *Times* sternly rejected the subsequent Goldstone Report – a mission established by the UN to investigate war crimes during the crisis. Goldstone found that crimes had been committed by both sides. Understandably, the report focused heavily on the “disproportionate use of force” by the Israelis in its “deliberate targeting” of Palestinian civilians. Despite the casualty figures, the *Times* found this absurd because “there is no equivalence between the actions of Israel in self-defence and those of Hamas in seeking to destroy it”.

Describing the offensive as merely an “incursion” (the Syrian government’s attacks in Homs are a “massacre” for the *Times*) the

editors wrote of Israel: "It had no choice but to respond to [Palestinian] provocations." (Leading article, "The Gaza Trap; The Goldstone report is biased and Europeans on the UN Human Rights Council should reject it rather than abstaining," the *Times*, October 16, 2009)

Despite the obvious scale of the carnage, the *Times* claimed: "Israel adheres to standards higher than those of its enemies."

A recent leader in the *Independent* expressed similar revulsion at Russia and China's veto: "the violence in Homs in recent days – with fears of a full-scale military assault to come – is a direct result of their unforgivable self-interest". It added: "Moscow has abandoned the Syrian people to the depredations of a regime that is daily becoming more murderous."

As we have seen, the reality could be close to the reverse – the proposed resolution might have inflicted far worse violence on the Syrian people. It might have abandoned the Syrian people to the depredations of the West. As for the "unforgivable self-interest" noted by the *Independent*, do we really believe – after Iraq and Libya – that US-UK interests are less self-centred?

Again, by contrast, two weeks into Israel's Operation Cast Lead offensive, an *Independent* leader commented on January 10, 2009: "Israel's invasion of Gaza seemed depressingly far from an endgame last night, despite the encouraging signs from the UN Security Council. Although the Security Council produced a ceasefire resolution, it was fatally undermined by the American abstention."

The US's undermining of UN action was not widely condemned as a "travesty" at the time – how Hillary Clinton described the vetoing of the UN resolution on Syria, with the *Independent's* approval. Instead, the *Independent* noted of Operation Cast Lead:

"A good deal of nonsense has been spoken this past week regarding Israel's military operation. The most egregious contribution has come from a senior Catholic

cardinal, who has compared the Gaza Strip to a "concentration camp". The comparison is entirely spurious...

"Moreover, the idea being pushed by some propagandists in the West that the Israeli state is deliberately setting out to kill innocent Palestinians is just as offensive and wrong. The Israel administration's priority in this operation is to defend its citizens from rocket attacks by Hamas."

Arming Bahrain – A William Hague tragi-comedy

Happily, not all of the *Independent's* coverage is as crass and biased as this. UK foreign secretary William Hague commented on the Russian and Chinese veto: "More than 2,000 people have died since Russia and China vetoed the last draft resolution in October 2011. How many more need to die before Russia and China allow the UN security council to act?"

Tragi-comically, two days later, the *Independent* reported: "Two Cabinet ministers will be challenged today over fears that British-made weapons have been used to suppress dissidents in Bahrain and Egypt."

"Vince Cable, the Business Secretary, and William Hague, the Foreign Secretary, are to be tackled by MPs over arms sales worth more than £12m to Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Egypt in just three months."

The article continued: "Between July and September 2011, Britain sold weapons worth £2.2m to Bahrain, of which £1.3m was specifically for military use. It included gun silencers, naval guns and weapons sights."

"At least 35 people died as the Gulf state's monarchy crushed the so-called Pearl Revolution last year. It called in help from its ally, Saudi Arabia, which sent troops and armored vehicles across the causeway linking the countries."

"Over the same period £8.9m-worth of arms were sold to Saudi Arabia, of which £4.5m was for military use. It included parts for combat aircraft, for army vehicles and

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Moscow was misled over Libya. The UN did not authorise the regime change that the West achieved by transforming UN Resolution 1973 into a weapon of mass destruction
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for machine guns.

“As well as the suspicion that the UK could have indirectly helped to put down the Bahraini uprising, MPs will also raise concerns over Saudi Arabia’s human rights record.”

Unfortunately, US and UK journalists almost never join the evidential dots for and against Hague and Cable’s claimed enthusiasm for “humanitarian intervention”. Hence this comment in a *Guardian* leader: “Does Russia really want to be the global protector of tyrants who turn their guns on their own people simply in order to get one back against the west after the overthrow of a worthless leader like Gaddafi?... Russia has put itself on the wrong side of the argument.”

The West’s extraordinary history of supporting tyrants – including Suharto, Somoza, Trujillo, Armas, Pinochet, Diem, Amin, Saddam Hussein, Gaddafi, Saleh, Mubarak, and many others – makes this laughable. So, too, does the travesty of the US’s long history of vetoing UN resolutions intended to protect the Palestinians and others.

The *Guardian* added: “There is a case, of an extremely limited sort, to be made for some of Russia’s obstructionism over Syria. Moscow has decided it was misled by the west over Libya. It is therefore determined not to help sanction any sort of repetition over Syria (even though the vetoed UN motion explicitly renounced regime change and the use of force).”

Moscow has “decided” nothing – it was misled over Libya. The UN did not authorise the regime change that the West achieved by transforming UN Resolution 1973 into a weapon of mass destruction.

Analysis of the wording of the failed UN resolution on Syria also makes a nonsense of the *Guardian*’s assurances on the West having “renounced regime change and the use of force” – “further measures” would have been sought after 21 days in the event of “non-compliance”.

The BBC’s Paul Wood, a safe pair of hands

reporting from Homs, Syria, commented: “In the first hour or so, we heard a lot of gunfire from rebel fighters of the Free Syria Army. It was a futile gesture – Kalashnikovs against artillery.”

In October 2004, reporting from Iraq’s third city, Fallujah, the same Paul Wood referred to the “so-called ‘resistance fighters’” of Fallujah. (Wood, BBC1, 13:00 News, October 22, 2004)

In 2004, Fallujah faced a rather more formidable foe than does Homs. It was subjected to all-out assault by 3rd Battalion/1st US Marines, 3rd Battalion/5th Marines, the US Army’s 2nd Battalion/7th Cavalry, the 1st Battalion/8th Marines, 1st Battalion/3rd Marines, and the Army’s 2nd Battalion/2nd Infantry, totalling 10,500 heavily armed troops. Some 2,000 Iraqi soldiers joined the attack. These were supported by massive air support, as well as Marine and Army artillery battalions. The 850-strong 1st battalion of the British Black Watch regiment was tasked to help encircle the city.

This was more than shelling; it was a major, World War II-style offensive on residential areas.

On November 30, 2004, the UN’s Integrated Regional Information Network described the results: “Approximately 70 per cent of the houses and shops were destroyed in the city and those still standing are riddled with bullets.” (“Fallujah still needs more supplies despite aid arrival,” www.irinnews.org, November 30, 2004)

In January 2005, an Iraqi doctor, Ali Fadhil, reported of the city: “It was completely devastated, destruction everywhere. It looked like a city of ghosts. Falluja used to be a modern city; now there was nothing. We spent the day going through the rubble that had been the centre of the city; I didn’t see a single building that was functioning.”

The Red Cross estimated 800 civilian deaths by November 16. Dramatic increases in infant mortality, cancer and leukaemia have also since been reported.

Paul Wood commented from Homs:

“The UN abandoned us,’ one Homs resident told me. ‘Who’s going to help us now, who’s going to help us now?’

“People said that to me over and over; that they felt abandoned, alone.

“After the failure of the vote in the UN Security Council at the weekend, they have lost hope that the outside world will help.

“They expect the worst from a regime they fear can now act without restraint.”

We can recall nothing comparable from Wood in November 2004 as Fallujah was being devastated by the US-UK attack. Then, it would have been politically incorrect for a BBC journalist to suggest that Iraqi civilians “felt abandoned”, that they had “lost hope that the outside world will help”. After all, the BBC portrayed US and UK forces attacking Iraq as liberators. How could the people require saving from the troops sent to “save” them? As Wood himself said in December 2005:

“The coalition came to Iraq in the first place to bring democracy and human rights.” (Paul Wood, BBC1, News at Ten, December 22, 2005)

Ironically, like other media that dismissed highly credible scientific analyses of the death toll in Iraq – published in one of the world’s most respected medical journals, the *Lancet* – the BBC has been reporting hundreds of deaths in Homs based on anecdotal evidence and highly questionable sources. Robert Dreyfuss comments in the *Nation* magazine:

“The killings in Syria are ugly, but no doubt wildly exaggerated. Nearly all, repeat all, of the information about the violence in Syria is coming from a handful of exiled Syrian opposition groups backed by Saudi Arabia, Qatar and various Western powers. Did 200 people really die in Homs this past weekend, conveniently just on the eve of the UNSC debate [on the resolution]? Who knows? The only source for the fishy information, though ubiquitously quoted in the *New York Times*, the wire services, the network news and elsewhere, are the suspect

Syrian opposition groups, who have axes galore to grind.”

A key source for BBC reporting has long been the British-based Syrian Observatory of Human Rights. Aisling Byrne writes in the *Asian Times*: “Of the three main sources for all data on numbers of protesters killed and numbers of people attending demonstrations – the pillars of the narrative – all are part of the “regime change” alliance. The Syrian Observatory of Human Rights, in particular, is reportedly funded through a Dubai-based fund with pooled (and therefore deniable) Western-Gulf money.... What appears to be a nondescript British-based organization, the Observatory has been pivotal in sustaining the narrative of the mass killing of thousands of peaceful protesters using inflated figures, “facts”, and often exaggerated claims of “massacres” and even recently “genocide”.”

In an interview with ABC News, the Syrian Observatory’s Dr Mousab Azzawi gave an idea of the dispassionate tone of the analysis: “In two words, this is a genocide.”

Just as deep media scepticism in response to the peer-reviewed *Lancet* studies on Iraq was near-universal, so blind faith in the claims of Syrian “activist groups” has become the accepted norm. A *Telegraph* leader even combined the two biases to paint the preferred picture: “Over the weekend, the Syrian government carried out the most savage reprisals against its opponents since the recent uprising began. More than 200 people are thought to have been killed by artillery, tanks and mortars in Homs. That figure compares with the worst daily spikes in violence in Iraq in 2006 and 2007. And the death total in Syria over the past 11 months – more than 5,600, according to UN estimates – is well above that over the same period for its still troubled eastern neighbour.”

That is true, if we accept unsubstantiated reports from “activists” in Syria. And if we ignore the *Lancet*’s science in favour of figures supplied by the obviously flawed and

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Just as deep media scepticism in response to the peer-reviewed *Lancet* studies on Iraq was near-universal, so blind faith in the claims of Syrian “activist groups” has become the accepted norm

Why did the West prioritise regime change over peace in Libya, at such horrific cost? And why is it doing so now in Syria

incomplete Iraq Body Count.

On the BBC's Newsnight programme, high-profile anchor Jeremy Paxman opened the programme with: "We don't know precisely how many people have been killed by the Syrian army as President Assad tries to murder those who oppose his dictatorship. But we do know that they include children. All this while China and Russia provide a form of diplomatic protection." (Newsnight, February 6, 2012)

Has Paxman ever accused Bush, Blair, Obama, Cameron or their armies of trying "to murder" their opponents? And Paxman's opening question to Alexander Nekrasov, former Kremlin advisor: "Are you comfortable having the blood of Syrians on your hands?"

Imagine Paxman asking something comparable of a high-ranking British or American politician. But in fact Paxman could pose a similar question to Hague, Cameron and Obama: Why did the West prioritise regime change over peace in Libya, at such horrific cost? And why is it doing so now in Syria?

Paxman's Newsnight colleague, Mark Urban, commented helpfully: "the US, UK, and France have emphasised that their approach on Syria has been motivated by humanitarian compassion and the desire to see a transition to democracy, rather than a desire to strike a blow against Iran by toppling its close friend President Assad".

Wesley Clark's revelations, the facts, and simple common sense, suggest that genuine answers will not be found in the 'humanitarian compassion' of a Western political system notoriously in thrall to corporate interests. **CT**

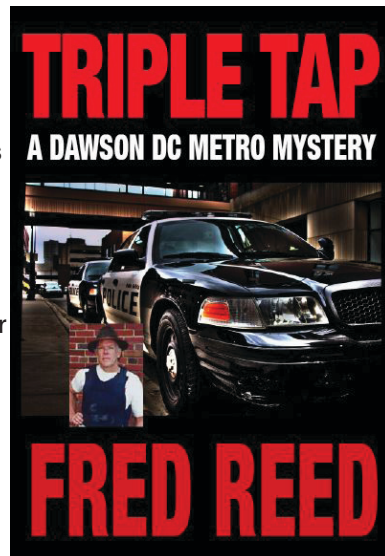
David Edwards is co-editor of Media Lens, the London (UK) media watchdog – www.medialens.org – His latest book, co-authored with co-editor David Cromwell is "Newspeak In The 20th Century", Published by Pluto Press. John Pilger wrote of it, "Not since Orwell and Chomsky has perceived reality been so skilfully revealed in the cause of truth."

NEW FROM FRED REED

Tired of stories of sensitive detectives who drink white wine, whose authors have never been inside a police car? Ex-Marine Fred Reed spent eight years as police reporter for the *Washington (DC) Times*, in the bad places in the bad hours, and it shows. His protagonist, Robert Dawson, is, as Dawson puts it himself, "an ashen-souled news weasel for the *Washington Herald*. I don't kid myself about what I do. Reporters are lower than winos, but don't have to carry paper bags. I never liked carrying things." On the night when Chiflado Gomez puts two Remington 870 rounds into the chest of young police officer Corrigan, you immediately get the feel of real police work. The murder isn't what it seems.

TRIPLE TAP A Dawson DC Metro Mystery

Available from Amazon.com \$2.99



http://www.amazon.com/Triple-Dawson-Metro-Mysteries-ebook/dp/B007956J00/ref=sr_1_2?s=digital-text&ie=UTF8&qid=1329926735&sr=1-2

The road to Damascus – and on to Armageddon

Diana Johnstone discusses the conflicting realities of ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ and why we should beware the diplomacy of the United Nations

What if pollsters put this question to citizens of the USA and the European Union: “Which is more important, ensuring disgruntled Islamists freedom to overthrow the secular regime in Syria, or avoiding World War Three?” I’ll bet that there might be a majority for avoiding World War III. But of course, the question is never framed like that.

That would be a “realistic” question, and we Westerners from the heights of our moral superiority have no time for vulgar “realism” in foreign policy (except the eccentric Ron Paul, crying out in the wilderness of Republican primaries).

Because, in the minds of our political ruling class, the United States has the power to “make reality”, we need pay no attention to the remnants of whatever reality we didn’t invent ourselves.

Our artificial reality is coming into collision with the reality perceived by most or at least much of the rest of the world. The tenants of these conflicting views of reality are armed to the teeth, including with nuclear weapons capable of leaving the planet to insects.

Theoretically, there is a way to deal with this dangerous situation, which has the potential of leading to World War. It is called diplomacy. People capable of grasping unfamiliar ideas and understanding viewpoints other than their own, examine the issues underlying conflict and use their intelligence to work



out solutions that may not be ideal but will at least prevent things from getting worse.

There was even an organizational structure created for this: the United Nations.

But the United States has decided that as sole superpower it doesn’t really need to stoop to diplomacy to get what it wants, and the United Nations has been turned into the instrument of US policy. The clearest evidence of this was the failure of the UN Security Council to block the NATO powers’ abuse of the ambiguous and contested Responsibility to Protect (“R2P”) doctrine to overthrow the Libyan government by force.

Early this year, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon rejoiced that: “The world has embraced the Responsibility to Protect – not because it is easy, but because it is right. We therefore have a moral responsibility to push ahead.” Morality trumps the basic UN principle of national sovereignty. Ban Ki-moon suggests that pushing ahead with R2P is no less than the “next test of our common humanity”, and announces: “That test is here – in Syria.”

So, the Secretary General of the UN considers the “moral responsibility” of R2P his main guideline to the crisis in Syria.

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In the minds of our political ruling class, the United States has the power to “make reality”, we need pay no attention to the remnants of whatever reality we didn’t invent ourselves

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The happy ending comes when Hillary Clinton can shout gleefully, “We came, we saw, he died!”
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In case there was any doubt, the Libyan example demonstrated what that means.

A country whose rulers do not belong to the Western club made up of NATO countries, Israel, the emirs of the Gulf states and the ruling family of Saudi Arabia, is wracked by opposition demonstrations and armed rebellion, with the mix of the two making it difficult to sort out which is which. Western mainstream media hasten to tell the story according to a standard template:

The ruler of the country is a “dictator”. Therefore, the rebels want to get rid of him simply in order to enjoy Western-style democracy. Therefore, the people must all be on the side of the rebels. Therefore, when the armed forces proceed to repress the armed rebellion, what is happening is that “the dictator is killing his own people”. Therefore, it is the Responsibility 2 Protect of the international community (i.e. NATO) to help the rebels in order to destroy the country’s armed forces and get rid of (or kill) the dictator.

The happy ending comes when Hillary Clinton can shout gleefully, “We came, we saw, he died!” Thereupon, the country sinks into chaos, as armed bands rove, prisoners are tortured, women are put in their place, salaries are unpaid, education and social welfare are neglected, but oil is pumped and the West is encouraged by its success to go on to liberate another country.

That at least was the Libyan model.

Except that in the case of Syria, things are more complicated. Unlike Libya, Syria has a fairly strong army. Unlike Libya, Syria has a few significant friends in the world. Unlike Libya, Syria is next door to Israel. And above all, the diversity of religious communities within Syria is much greater and more potentially explosive than the tribal divisions of Libya. The notion that “the people” of Syria are unanimously united in the desire for instant regime change is even more preposterous.

Electoral democracy is a game played on the basis of a social contract, a general consensus to accept the rule that whoever gets the most votes gets to run the country. But

there are societies where that consensus simply does not exist, where distrust is too great between different sectors of the population. That could very well be the case in Syria, where certain minorities, including notably the Christians and Alawites, have reason to fear a Sunni majority that could be led by Islamists who make no secret of their hostility to other religions. Still, perhaps the time has come to overcome that distrust and build an electoral democracy with safeguards for minorities. However, the one sure way to set back such a move toward democracy is a civil war, which is certain to revive and exacerbate hatred and distrust between communities.

In January, Aisling Byrne called attention to results of a public opinion poll funded by no less than the Qatar Foundation, which cannot be suspected of working for the Assad regime, given the Qatar royal family’s lead position in favor of overthrowing that regime. The key finding was that “while most Arabs outside Syria feel the president should resign, attitudes in the country are different. Some 55% of Syrians want Assad to stay, motivated by fear of civil war – a specter that is not theoretical as it is for those who live outside Syria’s borders. What is less good news for the Assad regime is that the poll also found that half the Syrians who accept him staying in power believe he must usher in free elections in the near future.”

This indicates a very complex situation. Syrians want free elections, but they prefer to have Assad stay in power to organize them. This being the case, the Russian diplomatic efforts to try to urge the Assad regime to speed up its reforms appear to be roughly in harmony with Syrian public opinion.

While the Russians are urging President Assad to speed up reforms, the West is ordering him to stop the violence (that is, order his armed forces to give up) and resign. Neither of these exhortations is likely to be obeyed. The Russians would almost certainly like to stop the escalation of violence, for their own good reasons, but that does not mean they have the power to do so. Their attempts to

broker a compromise, decried and sabotaged by Western support to the opposition, merely put them in line to be blamed for the bloodshed they want to avoid. In a deepening civil war situation, the regime, any regime, is most likely to figure it has to restore order before doing anything else. And restoring order, under these circumstances, means more violence, not less.

The order to “stop killing your own people” implies a situation in which the dictator, like an ogre in a fairy tale, is busily devouring passive innocents. He should stop, and then all the people would peacefully go about their business while awaiting the free elections that will bring the blessings of harmony and human rights. In reality, if the armed forces withdraw from areas where there are armed rebels, that means turning those areas over to the rebels.

And who are these rebels? We simply do not know. Someone who may know better than we do is Osama bin Laden’s successor as head of al Qaeda, Ayman al-Zawahiri, who is seen on a video urging Muslims in Turkey and neighboring Arab states to back the Syrian rebels. With uncontrolled armed groups fighting for control, the insistent Western demand that “Assad must step down” is not really even a call for “regime change”. It is a call for regime self-destruction.

As in Libya, the country would de facto be turned over to rival armed groups, with those groups that are being armed covertly by NATO via Turkey and Qatar having an advantage in hardware. However, the likely result would be a multi-sided civil war much more horrific than the chaos in Libya, thanks to the country’s multiple religious differences. But for the West, however chaotic, regime self-destruction would have the immediate advantage of depriving Iran of its potential ally on the eve of an Israeli attack. With both Iraq and Syria neutralized by internal religious conflict, the strangulation of Iran would be that much easier – or so the Western strategists obviously assume.

At least initially, the drive to destroy the

Assad regime relies on subversion rather than outright military attack as in Libya. A combination of drastic economic sanctions and support to armed rebels, including fighters from outside, notably Libya (whoever they are), reportedly already helped by special forces from the UK and Qatar, is expected to so weaken the country that the Assad regime will collapse. But a third weapon in this assault is propaganda, carried on by the mainstream media, by now accustomed to reporting events according to the pattern: evil dictator killing his own people. Some of the propaganda must be true, some of it is false, but all of it is selective. The victims are all victims of the regime, never of the rebels. The many Syrians who fear the rebels more than the present government are of course ignored by the mainstream media, although their protests can be found on the internet. A particular oddity of this Syrian crisis is the way the West, so proud of its “Judeo-Christian” heritage, is actively favoring the total elimination of the ancient Christian communities in the Middle East. The cries of protest that Syrian Christians rely for protection on the secular government of Assad, in which Christians participate, and that they and other minorities such as the Alawites may be forced to flee if the West gets its way, fall on deaf ears.

The story line of dictators killing their own people is intended primarily to justify harsh Western measures against Syria. As in Bosnia, the media are arousing public indignation to force the US government to do what it is in fact already doing: arm Muslim rebels, all in the name of “protecting civilians”.

Last December, US National Security Advisor Tom Donilon said that the “end of the Assad regime would constitute Iran’s greatest setback in the region yet – a strategic blow that will further shift the balance of power in the region against Iran”. The “protection of civilians” is not the only concern on the minds of US officials. They do think of such things as the balance of power, in between their prayer breakfasts and human rights speeches.

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The many Syrians who fear the rebels more than the present government are of course ignored by the mainstream media

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American pundits have interiorized their double standards, so Russia's comparatively modest arms deliveries to Syria can be denounced as cynical support to dictatorship, whereas gigantic US arms sales to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States are never seen as relevant
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However, concern with the balance of power is a luxury denied less virtuous powers such as Russia and China. Surely the shift in the balance of power in the region cannot be limited to a single country, Iran. It is meant to increase the power of Israel, of course, but also the United States and NATO. And to decrease the influence of Russia. Thrusting Syria into helpless chaos is part of the war against Iran, but it is also implicitly part of a drive to reduce the influence of Russia and, eventually, China. In short, the current campaign against Syria, is clearly in preparation for an eventual future war against Iran, but also, obscurely, a form of long term aggression against Russia and China.

The recent Russian and Chinese veto in the Security Council was a polite attempt to put a brake on this process. The cause of the veto was the determination of the West to push through a resolution that would have demanded withdrawal of Syrian government forces from contested areas without taking into consideration the presence of armed rebel groups poised to take over. Where the Western resolution called on the Assad regime to “withdraw all Syrian military and armed forces from cities and towns, and return them to their original home barracks”, the Russians wished to add: “in conjunction with the end of attacks by armed groups against State institutions and quarters and towns.” The purpose was to prevent armed groups from taking advantage of the vacuum to occupy evacuated areas (as had happened in similar circumstances in Yugoslavia during the 1990s). Western refusal to rein in armed rebels was followed by the Russian and Chinese veto on February 4.

The veto unleashed a torrent of insults from the Western self-styled “humanitarians”. In an obvious attempt to foster division between the two recalcitrant powers, US spokespersons stressed that the main villain was Russia, guilty of friendship with the Assad regime. Russia is currently the target of an extraordinary propaganda campaign centered on demonizing Vladimir Putin as he

faces a lively campaign for election as President. A prominent *New York Times* columnist attributed Russian support to Syria to an alleged similarity between Putin and Assad. As we saw in Yugoslavia, a leader elected in free multi-party elections is a “dictator” when his policies displease the West. The pathetically alcoholic Yeltsin was a Western favorite despite shooting at his parliament. The reason was obvious: he was weak and easily manipulated. The reason the West hates Putin is equally and symmetrically obvious: he seems determined to defend his country's interests against Western pressure.

American pundits and cartoonists have totally interiorized their double standards, so that Russia's comparatively modest arms deliveries to Syria can be denounced as cynical support to dictatorship, whereas gigantic US arms sales to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States are never seen as relevant to the autocratic nature of those regimes (at most they may be criticized on the totally fictitious grounds of being a threat to Israel). To be “democratic”, Russia is supposed to cooperate in its own subservience to Washington, as the United States pursues construction of a missile shield which would theoretically give it a first-strike nuclear capability against Russia, arms Georgia for a return war against Russia over South Ossetia, and continues to encircle Russia with military bases and hostile alliances.

Western politicians and media are not yet fighting World War III, but they are talking themselves into it. And their actions speak even louder than words... notably to those who are able to understand where those actions are leading. Such as the Russians. The West's collective delusion of grandeur, the illusion of the power to “make reality”, has a momentum that is leading the world toward major catastrophe. And what can stop it?

A meteor from outer space, perhaps? **CT**

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The world turned upside down

Iran the aggressor? That's not the way it appears to **Philip Giraldi**

When the British Army of Lord Cornwallis boarded its ships to depart from Yorktown after being defeated by the Continental Army and the French under the command of General George Washington, a regimental band supposedly played an old ballad called "The World Turned Upside Down." The music was intended to convey that the established order had been inverted by the American victory, with the king of England's writ soon to be replaced by a union of states that eventually evolved into a constitutional republic.

There has been considerable press coverage during the past month that makes one think of a world turned upside down. Washington is unnaturally consumed with the Iranian Problem. Talk shows resonate over the question of what to do about Tehran's nuclear program.

There is a whole smorgasbord of things that Iran might do that are forbidden, including even having the knowledge of how to build a bomb. The negative press and commentary are being spun into a *casus belli*, something called the Iranian Threat writ large.

The message is clear: even though Iran has a minuscule defense budget, has never attacked anyone, and is essentially a Third World country, it is nevertheless a global menace that must be dealt with by military



means if all else fails. Oh yes, and brave little Israel will do the job if President Obama doesn't have what it takes.

The only problem with all of the above is that the United States intelligence community confirms that Iran does not have a nuclear device and has not made the political decision to build one. Even Israeli intelligence agrees. So if you want a war, what do you do when that happens? You shift your narrative and develop a new way of defining the threat. Israel and its friends have consequently initiated a major offensive both back at home and in the United States to heighten the impression that Iran poses a genuine threat to Israel, the United States, and even to world peace in general. And make no mistake about what it entails: this is a major disinformation strategy that involves diplomatic, intelligence, and media resources.

The new narrative goes roughly as follows: Iran is developing a nuclear weapon and is close to having one in spite of what the intelligence people think. The weapon will inevitably be used directly by Iran or even given to terrorists to threaten Israel, Europe, and even the United States using

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ballistic missiles that are currently being developed. Because Iran is concealing or defensively “hardening” its new nuclear facilities, the window is closing on a military option to destroy the program. Iran is also planning to attack Jewish and American targets worldwide, including inside the United States, so a military attack is doubly essential to deter it from sponsoring such terrorist activity.

But there has been pushback within the US government, particularly from the Pentagon and the CIA, with voices calling for calm. The Obama administration also does not want a war with Iran at this time, even though it has done precious little to prevent one.

It has sent Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Martin Dempsey and Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta to Israel to warn the government of Benjamin Netanyahu that the United States will not support an uncoordinated military action by Israel. But Israel has refused the demand to provide advance warning of an attack and has defended its right to take action against the perceived Iranian threat.

This does not sit well in Washington, but there is little that the White House can do in an election year, since any attempt to pressure Tel Aviv will result in an avalanche of criticism from Congress and the media.

Israel has been working hard to make a case through the *New York Times* and other media that retaliation by Iran really wouldn't be so bad. The Netanyahu government has been circulating a memo that apparently details how Israel would easily counter Tehran's reaction, also implying that the United States and its assets in the Persian Gulf would suffer little damage.

The memo additionally makes the point that an attack on Iran would be perceived well by Iran's Arab neighbors, leading to improved relations between Israel and all interested parties.

Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Moshe Ya'alon also hyped the damage that Israel

could inflict, saying that Israel would be able to attack all of Iran's nuclear facilities, a statement that the Pentagon regards as whimsical.

But describing an Israeli attack on Iran as both potentially decisive and a benefit to everyone except Iran is apparently not enough. It has also been necessary to introduce other threats that will be deterred by the action. That is why the Israeli government and its usual cheering section in the media have been working up the story that Iran is planning terrorist actions inside the United States.

This came to the fore in the press coverage of intelligence and defense community testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations committee last month in which Sen. Dianne Feinstein burred enthusiastically as Persian perfidy was laid out for all the world to see. “Iran ... willing to attack on US soil, US intelligence report finds” read a headline for an article on the front page of the *Washington Post* on the following day. But paragraph three of the same article began with “US officials said they have seen no intelligence to indicate that Iran is actively plotting attacks on US soil.”

The article then went on to cite the alleged Iranian-Mexican drug dealer plot to kill the Saudi ambassador in Washington – which outside the government has been widely regarded as a fabrication – as possible evidence that “some Iranian officials ... are now more willing to conduct an attack in the United States.”

When it comes to Iran as seen by official Washington, it is not necessarily what they do but what they might be thinking of doing.

The Israeli embassy in Washington then moved to drive something like the same message home, sending a memo around to Jewish groups indicating that “the threat on our sites around the world will increase.”

This was picked up by ABC News and other national media after the allegedly confidential document was conveniently leaked.

Overall, Tel Aviv’s disinformation program appears to be doing quite well, thanks to an obliging media and a receptive Congress.

But the real kicker was an op-ed by neo-con-lite David Ignatius of the *Washington Post*, in Europe traveling with Panetta, in which he spelled out the steps the White House was taking to stop Israel from starting a war with Iran.

Oddly, or perhaps not, the article included the following referring to possible US abstention from the conflict: “Administration officials caution that Tehran shouldn’t misunderstand: The United States has a 60-year commitment to Israeli security, and if Israel’s population centers were hit, the United States could feel obligated to come to Israel’s defense.”

Ignatius is unusually well-plugged in to White House and Pentagon circles, so what he says should be regarded as reliable. If his “could” should be understood as meaning “would,” his comment basically means that if Israel starts a war, even without warning

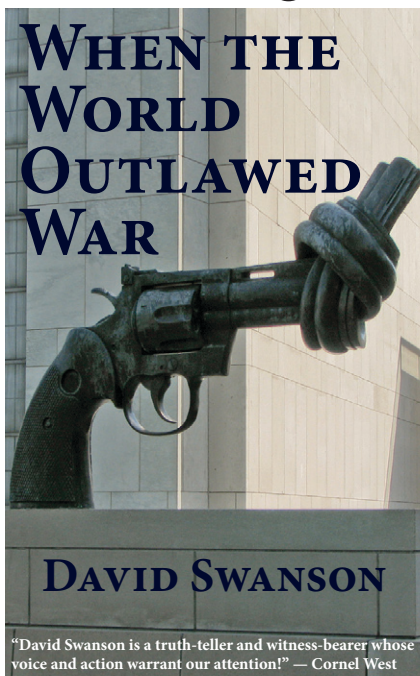
Washington that it is coming, an Iranian reaction that hits civilian targets in Israel, either deliberately or not, would require a US response because America is pledged to “defend” Israel no matter what and no matter who started the fighting.

As Israel is physically a small country and Iranian missiles cannot hit targets with pinpoint accuracy, it is hard to imagine any Iranian response that would not strike civilian targets. If the US response would be automatic, that means that the White House has effectively turned over its foreign policy to Israel’s kleptocratic leadership. The world has turned upside down. **CT**

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Philip Giraldi is the executive director of the Council for the National Interest and a recognized authority on international security and counterterrorism issues. He is a former CIA counter-terrorism specialist and military intelligence officer who served eighteen years overseas in Turkey, Italy, Germany, and Spain.

Imagine if War Were Illegal — It Is!



In January 1929 the U.S. Senate ratified by a vote of 85 to 1 a treaty that is still on the books, still upheld by most of the world, still listed on the U.S. State Department’s website — a treaty that under Article VI of the U.S. Constitution is the “supreme law of the land.”

This treaty, the Kellogg-Briand Pact, bans all war. Bad wars and “good wars,” aggressive wars and “humanitarian wars” -- they are all illegal, having been legally abolished like duelling, blood feuds, and slavery before them.

The wisdom of the War Outlawry movement of the 1920s is revived in a new book by David Swanson. The full plan to outlaw war has never been followed through on. We have a duty to carry the campaign forward.

“Swanson has done it again. This is a masterful account of how Americans and people around the world worked to abolish war as a legitimate act of state policy and won. Swanson’s account of the successful work of those who came before us to insist that war be outlawed compels us today to rethink the cost and morality of cynical or weary inaction in the face of our repeated resort to military threats and warfare to achieve policy goals.” — Jeff Clements, Author of *Corporations Are Not People*.

davidswanson.org/outlawry

Ten questions William Hague won't answer

Stuart Littlewood on the extraordinary – but not out of character – antics of Britain's foreign secretary

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Most of us remember only too well how the Iraq sanctions devastated that country's economy and resulted in widespread hunger and disease among Iraqi people
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In an interview with *The Daily Telegraph* Britain's Foreign Secretary, William Hague, claims that Iran is threatening to spark a nuclear arms race in the Middle East which could be more dangerous than the original East-West Cold War <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iran/9089995/Iran-risks-nuclear-Cold-War.html>.

"It is a crisis coming down the tracks," he says. "Because they are clearly continuing their nuclear weapons programme... If they obtain nuclear weapons capability, then I think other nations across the Middle East will want to develop nuclear weapons."

"And so, the most serious round of nuclear proliferation since nuclear weapons were invented would have begun with all the de-stabilising effects in the Middle East."

"We are very clear to all concerned that we are not advocating military action," he assures us. "We support a twin-track strategy of sanctions and pressure and negotiations on the other hand. We are not favouring the idea of anybody attacking Iran at the moment."

But, says Mr Hague, "all options must remain on the table."

That same day Prime Minister David Cameron and French President Sarkozy signed a "landmark agreement" committing their two countries to a shared programme of civil nuclear power and setting



out a shared long term vision of safe, secure, sustainable and affordable energy.

"We are working together... to stop a nuclear weapon in the hands of Iran," said Cameron. "As two great civil nuclear nations, we will combine our expertise to strengthen industrial partnership, improve nuclear safety and create jobs at home. The deals signed today will create more than 1500 jobs in the UK but they are just the beginning. My goal is clear. I want the vast majority of the content of our new nuclear plants to be constructed, manufactured and engineered by British companies. And we will choose the partners and technologies to maximise the economic benefits to the UK."

Such such freedom of action or benefits must not be enjoyed by Iran, of course.

Three weeks earlier Mr Hague was clamouring for an "unprecedented" package of measures including an oil embargo and financial sanctions "to increase the peaceful, legitimate pressure on the Iranian government". It's tempting to add "as punishment for their peaceful and (so far) legitimate civil nuclear activities". Such measures are no doubt intended to bring ruin and terror in a way that bombing couldn't.

Most of us remember only too well how the Iraq sanctions devastated that country's economy and resulted in widespread hunger and disease among Iraqi people. John Pilger reported in the *Guardian*, March 4, 2000 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/theguardian/2000/mar/04/weekend7.weekend9> : "This is a war against the children of Iraq on two fronts: bombing, which in the last year cost the British taxpayer £60 million. And the most ruthless embargo in modern history. According to Unicef, the United Nations Children's Fund, the death rate of children under five is more than 4,000 a month – that is 4,000 more than would have died before sanctions. That is half a million children dead in eight years. If this statistic is difficult to grasp, consider, on the day you read this, up to 200 Iraqi children may die needlessly."

With this evil still quite fresh in people's minds Hague successfully obtained his "unprecedented" measures, meaning worse than those taken against Iraq presumably, to inflict on Iranian women and children.

.....
"A mad dog too dangerous to bother"?

There are a number of issues raised by Hague's extraordinary antics.

Why does he say the Iranians "are clearly continuing their nuclear weapons programme" when there's no proof?

Why does he say "Iran is threatening to spark a nuclear arms race" when Israel has already de-stabilised the region with its nuclear arsenal?

And even if Iran really does have a weapons programme his claim that the present situation is "the most serious round of nuclear proliferation since nuclear weapons were invented" is rubbish. The BBC reported recently <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-11709428> that back in 2009 the IAEA expressed concern about Israel's nuclear capabilities and called on it to join the Non-Proliferation Treaty, open its nuclear facilities to inspection and

place them under comprehensive IAEA safeguards. "Israel refuses to join the NPT or allow inspections. It is reckoned to have up to 400 warheads but refuses to confirm or deny this."

Actually, Israel is the third or fourth largest nuclear force in the world and the only one in the Middle East. But our brave politicians dare not even whisper this fact let alone criticize it. According to a 2006/7 report by the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission most unofficial estimates put Israel's nuclear arsenal in the hundreds, possibly larger than the British stockpile. "Israel... has an unsafeguarded plutonium production reactor and reprocessing capability and possibly some uranium enrichment capability, along with various other uranium-processing facilities."

It is the only state in the region that is not a party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (Iran is). It has signed but not ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. As regards biological and chemical weapons, Israel has not signed the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. It has signed but not ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Israel just doesn't care. Who can forget that much-quoted remark by former Israeli Defense Minister, General Moshe Dayan: "Israel must be like a mad dog, too dangerous to bother"?

And is anyone surprised at reports that European cities are targeted?

Against this background it is difficult to understand how Hague's aggressive escalation against Iran is in the British national interest – or anyone's interest except Israel's. Do the British people want it? If Mr Hague's purpose is to help preserve the imbalance of power in the Middle East so that a rogue regime, Israel, remains the dominant military force, he must be called on to explain the wisdom of it.

Hague and Cameron both voted enthusiastically for the Iraq war, and we know the consequence in lives and irreversible damage to the country, its heritage, its social

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The pair's support for Israel and its Zionist ambitions is such that no sane world would allow them anywhere near the levers of international power
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fabric and infrastructure and its survivors... and of course to Britain's reputation. We want no repetition, surely.

William Hague, according to the *Jewish Chronicle*, told David Cameron when he became Conservative party leader in 2005 that a deep understanding of the Middle East would be crucial if he wished to be taken seriously as a statesman... "because you can't understand it without the history. That's been one of the failings sometimes with the Western governments."

The pair's support for Israel and its Zionist ambitions is such that no sane world would allow them anywhere near the levers of international power. Besides, Hague seems to have jettisoned his history. In March 1951 the Iranian Majlis and Senate voted to nationalise Anglo-Iranian Oil, in which the British government had a majority interest and which had controlled Iran's oil industry since 1913 under terms that were disadvantageous to Iran. Dr Mohammad Mossadeq, the newly elected prime minister, carried out his government's wish to cancel Anglo-Iranian's oil concession, which was not due to expire for another 42 years, and take over its assets.

In a speech in June 1951 (M. Fateh, Panjah Sal-e Naft-e Iran, p. 525) he explained: "The Iranian state prefers to take over the production of petroleum itself. The company should do nothing else but return its property to the rightful owners. The nationalization law provides that 25% of the net profits on oil be set aside to meet all the legitimate claims of the company for compensation..."

"It has been asserted abroad that Iran intends to expel the foreign oil experts from the country and then shut down oil installations. Not only is this allegation absurd; it is utter invention..."

Considering Britain paid Iran only 16% of the profits during the inter-war years and treated Iranian oil workers abominably, while profiting hugely herself, these were generous terms.

Faced with nationalisation the British government went mad and imposed a

blockade and vicious sanctions, quickly bringing Iran to its knees. Mossadeq, popular and highly regarded, was removed in a coup by MI5 and the CIA, imprisoned for 3 years then put under house arrest until his death. The Iranians were condemned to suffer the re-imposition of the hated Shah and his secret police for another 25 years. The Islamist Revolution of 1979 was the inevitable consequence.

And Iran has not forgotten...

Perhaps Mr Hague, before pressing the 'History Repeat' button too many times, should pause to reflect and answer just ten questions...

(1) Have we so easily forgotten the cruel and devastating effect of economic sanctions on civil society, especially children?

(2) Would the Foreign Secretary kindly explain the reasons for his hostility towards Iran?

(3) What concrete proof is there of Iran's military application of nuclear technology?

(4) Why is he not more concerned about Israel's nuclear arsenal, the threat it poses to the region and beyond, and the mental attitude of the Israeli regime?

(5) Why is he not seeking sanctions against Israel for its refusal to sign up to the NPT or engage constructively on the issue of its nuclear and other WMD?

(6) How many times has a British foreign secretary visited Tehran in the 32 years since the Islamic Revolution?

(7) Did Mr Hague make an effort to go and talk before embarking on his punitive sanctions programme?

(8) Britain's conduct towards the Iranians in 1951-53 when a previous Conservative government, in cahoots with the USA, snuffed out Iran's democracy and reinstated a cruel dictatorship, was largely responsible for bringing about the Islamic Revolution and setting the pattern of future relationships. Is it not shameful that this Conservative government is spoiling for another fight? Shouldn't the Foreign Office focus on exerting influence through trade and co-

operation?

(9) Iran's present administration, like others, may not be to our liking but nor was Dr Mossadeq's democracy 60 years ago. Similarly the Israel-leaning administrations of the US and Britain are not much to the liking of the rest of the world. In any event, what threat is Iran to Britain? And why is Mr Hague leading the charge?

(10) By pulling our people out of Tehran and kicking Iran's people out of London Mr Hague has shut the door on diplomacy. How can he now communicate effectively with a nation he seems determined to goad into becoming an implacable enemy?

On this last point I hear that Baroness Ashton, the EU's 'foreign minister', is handling contact with Iran on behalf of the United States, Britain, France, Russia, China and Germany. So much for Hague's talk of

negotiations alongside sanctions. While playing the role of chief bully, he has shut himself out of any direct conversation. As for Ashton, she hasn't made the slightest impact on the crisis in Palestine, even with the clout of 500 million citizens behind her, so is anyone holding their breath?

Most of those questions were put to Mr Hague through my MP Henry Bellingham (who happens to be one of Hague's junior ministers) two-and-a-half months ago and repeated early January, but Mr Hague isn't replying.

Until he does, the Foreign Secretary ought to be made to stand in the parliamentary 'naughty corner'. **CT**

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Stuart Littlewood's book 'Radio Free Palestine' can now be read on the internet by visiting www.radiofreepalestine.org.uk

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While playing the role of chief bully, Hague has shut himself out of any direct conversation

A great catastrophe, followed by years of illness, poverty and injustice can overwhelm and crush the human spirit, or can enable ordinary people to discover that they are extraordinary.



For almost 30 years, some of the poorest people on earth, sick, on the edge of hunger, with no allies or political influence, have been fighting for their lives against a multinational corporation that has it all – wealth, power, influence, lawyers, lobbyists and PR people, the ear of presidents and prime ministers - it can buy its way out of and into anything it likes.

The 'nothing people' have nothing. Their efforts to obtain medical care and justice in the courts are opposed and obstructed in every possible way by the corporation that gassed their families then poisoned their drinking water. Yet they don't give up.

From this poorest of communities has come a flowering of art, political wit, law and medicine. They have opened two free award-winning clinics, out of horror bringing healing to 40,000 people, pioneering work that will help others all over the world.

Their tireless, peaceful struggle for justice is a legend and this story will not end until we enter and become part of it.

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The Grand Ayatollah of nuclear menace

In January, Iran wasn't considered a nuclear threat by Israeli and US officials. What caused the change of mind?, asks **William Blum**

.....
In the real, non-propaganda world – is USrael actually fearful of an attack from a nuclear-armed Iran?
.....

As we all know only too well, the United States and Israel would hate to see Iran possessing nuclear weapons. Being “the only nuclear power in the Middle East” is a great card for Israel to have in its hand. But – in the real, non-propaganda world – is USrael actually fearful of an attack from a nuclear-armed Iran? In case you’ve forgotten ...

In 2007, in a closed discussion, Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni said that in her opinion “Iranian nuclear weapons do not pose an existential threat to Israel.” She “also criticized the exaggerated use that [Israeli] Prime Minister Ehud Olmert is making of the issue of the Iranian bomb, claiming that he is attempting to rally the public around him by playing on its most basic fears.”

2009: “A senior Israeli official in Washington” asserted that “Iran would be unlikely to use its missiles in an attack [against Israel] because of the certainty of retaliation.”

In 2010 the *Sunday Times* of London (January 10) reported that Brigadier-General Uzi Eilam, war hero, pillar of the Israeli defense establishment, and former director-general of Israel’s Atomic Energy Commission, “believes it will probably take Iran seven years to make nuclear weapons.”

Early in January, US Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta told a television audience: “Are they [Iran] trying to develop a nuclear weapon? No, but we know that they’re trying to de-



velop a nuclear capability.”

A week later we could read in the *New York Times* (January 15) that “three leading Israeli security experts – the Mossad chief, Tamir Pardo, a former Mossad chief, Efraim Halevy, and a former military chief of staff, Dan Halutz – all recently declared that a nuclear Iran would not pose an existential threat to Israel.”

Then, a few days afterward, Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak, in an interview with Israeli Army Radio (January 18), had this exchange:

Question: Is it Israel’s judgment that Iran has not yet decided to turn its nuclear potential into weapons of mass destruction?

Barak: People ask whether Iran is determined to break out from the control [inspection] regime right now ... in an attempt to obtain nuclear weapons or an operable installation as quickly as possible. Apparently that is not the case.

Lastly, we have the US Director of National Intelligence, James Clapper, in a report to Congress: “We do not know, however, if Iran will eventually decide to build nuclear weapons. ... There are “certain things [the Iranians] have not done” that would be necessary to build a warhead.

Admissions like the above – and there are others – are never put into headlines by the American mass media; indeed, only very lightly reported at all; and sometimes distorted – On the Public Broadcasting System (PBS News Hour, January 9), the non-commercial network much beloved by American liberals, the Panetta quote above was reported as: “But we know that they’re trying to develop a nuclear capability, and that’s what concerns us.” Flagrantly omitted were the preceding words: “Are they trying to develop a nuclear weapon? No ...”

One of Israel’s leading military historians, Martin van Creveld, was interviewed by *Playboy* magazine in June 2007:

Playboy: Can the World live with a nuclear Iran?

Van Creveld: The US has lived with a nuclear Soviet Union and a nuclear China, so why not a nuclear Iran? I’ve researched how the US opposed nuclear proliferation in the past, and each time a country was about to proliferate, the US expressed its opposition in terms of why this other country was very dangerous and didn’t deserve to have nuclear weapons. Americans believe they’re the only people who deserve to have nuclear weapons, because they are good and democratic and they like Mother and apple pie and the flag. But Americans are the only ones who have used them. ... We are in no danger at all of having an Iranian nuclear weapon dropped on us. We cannot say so too openly, however, because we have a history of using any threat in order to get weapons ... thanks to the Iranian threat, we are getting weapons from the US and Germany.”

And throughout these years, regularly, Israeli and American officials have been assuring us that Iran is World Nuclear Threat Number One, that we can’t relax our guard against them, that there should be no limit to the ultra-tough sanctions we impose upon the Iranian people and their government. Repeated murder and attempted murder of Iraqi nuclear scientists, sabotage of Iranian nuclear equipment with computer viruses, the sale of

faulty parts and raw materials, unexplained plane crashes, explosions at Iranian facilities ... Who can be behind this but USrael? How do we know? It’s called “plain common sense”. Or do you think it was Costa Rica? Or perhaps South Africa? Or maybe Thailand?

Defense Secretary Panetta recently commented on one of the assassinations of an Iranian scientist. He put it succinctly: “That’s not what the United States does.”

Does anyone know Leon Panetta’s email address? I’d like to send him my list of United States assassination plots. More than 50 foreign leaders were targeted over the years, many successfully.

Not long ago, Iraq and Iran were regarded by USrael as the most significant threats to Israeli Middle-East hegemony. Thus was born the myth of Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction, and the United States proceeded to turn Iraq into a basket case. That left Iran, and thus was born the myth of the Iranian Nuclear Threat. As it began to sink in that Iran was not really that much of a nuclear threat, or that this “threat” was becoming too difficult to sell to the rest of the world, USrael decided that, at a minimum, it wanted regime change. The next step may be to block Iran’s lifeline – oil sales using the Strait of Hormuz. Ergo, the recent US and EU naval buildup near the Persian Gulf, an act of war trying to goad Iran into firing the first shot. If Iran tries to counter this blockade it could be the signal for another US Basket Case, the fourth in a decade, with the devastated people of Libya and Afghanistan, along with Iraq, currently enjoying America’s unique gift of freedom and democracy.

On January 11, the *Washington Post* reported: “In addition to influencing Iranian leaders directly, [a US intelligence official] says another option here is that [sanctions] will create hate and discontent at the street level so that the Iranian leaders realize that they need to change their ways.”

How utterly charming, these tactics and goals for the 21st century by the leader of “The Free World”. (Is that expression still used?)

The neo-conservative thinking (and Barack

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.....

Obama can be regarded as often being a fellow traveler of such) is even more charming than that. Listen to Danielle Pletka, vice president for foreign and defense policy studies at America's most prominent neo-con think tank, American Enterprise Institute:

“The biggest problem for the United States is not Iran getting a nuclear weapon and testing it, it's Iran getting a nuclear weapon and not using it. Because the second that they have one and they don't do anything bad, all of the naysayers are going to come back and say, ‘See, we told you Iran is a responsible power. We told you Iran wasn't getting nuclear weapons in order to use them immediately.’ ... And they will eventually define Iran with nuclear weapons as not a problem. “

What are we to make of that and all the other quotations above? I think it gets back to my opening statement: Being “the only nuclear power in the Middle East” is a great card for Israel to have in its hand. Is USrael willing to go to war to hold on to that card?

.....
Please tell me again ... What is the war in Afghanistan about?

With the US war in Iraq supposedly having reached a good conclusion (or halfway decent ... or better than nothing ... or let's get the hell out of here while some of us are still in one piece and there are some Iraqis we haven't yet killed), the best and the brightest in our government and media turn their thoughts to what to do about Afghanistan. It appears that no one seems to remember, if they ever knew, that Afghanistan was not really about 9-11 or fighting terrorists (except the many the US has created by its invasion and occupation), but was about pipelines.

President Obama declared in August 2009: “But we must never forget this is not a war of choice. This is a war of necessity. Those who attacked America on 9/11 are plotting to do so again. If left unchecked, the Taliban insurgency will mean an even larger safe haven from which al Qaeda would plot to kill more Americans.”

Never mind that out of the tens of thousands of people the United States and its NATO front have killed in Afghanistan not one has been identified as having had anything to do with the events of September 11, 2001.

Never mind that the “plotting to attack America” in 2001 was devised in Germany and Spain and the United States more than in Afghanistan. Why hasn't the United States bombed those countries?

Indeed, what actually was needed to plot to buy airline tickets and take flying lessons in the United States? A room with some chairs? What does “an even larger safe haven” mean? A larger room with more chairs? Perhaps a blackboard? Terrorists intent upon attacking the United States can meet almost anywhere, with Afghanistan probably being one of the worst places for them, given the American occupation.

The only “necessity” that drew the United States to Afghanistan was the desire to establish a military presence in this land that is next door to the Caspian Sea region of Central Asia – which reportedly contains the second largest reserves of petroleum and natural gas in the world – and build oil and gas pipelines from that region running through Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is well situated for oil and gas pipelines to serve much of south Asia, pipelines that can bypass those not-yet Washington clients, Iran and Russia. If only the Taliban would not attack the lines. Here's Richard Boucher, US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs, in 2007: “One of our goals is to stabilize Afghanistan, so it can become a conduit and a hub between South and Central Asia so that energy can flow to the south.”

Since the 1980s all kinds of pipelines have been planned for the area, only to be delayed or canceled by one military, financial or political problem or another. For example, the so-called TAPI pipeline (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India) had strong support from Washington, which was eager to block

a competing pipeline that would bring gas to Pakistan and India from Iran. TAPI goes back to the late 1990s, when the Taliban government held talks with the California-based oil company Unocal Corporation.

These talks were conducted with the full knowledge of the Clinton administration, and were undeterred by the extreme repression of Taliban society. Taliban officials even made trips to the United States for discussions. Testifying before the House Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific on February 12, 1998, Unocal representative John Maresca discussed the importance of the pipeline project and the increasing difficulties in dealing with the Taliban:

“The region’s total oil reserves may well reach more than 60 billion barrels of oil. Some estimates are as high as 200 billion barrels ... From the outset, we have made it clear that construction of the pipeline we have proposed across Afghanistan could not begin until a recognized government is in place that has the confidence of governments, leaders, and our company.”

When those talks stalled in July, 2001 the Bush administration threatened the Taliban with military reprisals if the government did not go along with American demands. The talks finally broke down for good the following month, a month before 9-11.

The United States has been serious indeed about the Caspian Sea and Persian Gulf oil and gas areas. Through one war or another beginning with the Gulf War of 1990-1, the US has managed to establish military bases in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan.

The war against the Taliban can’t be “won” short of killing everyone in Afghanistan. The United States may well try again to negotiate some form of pipeline security with the Taliban, then get out, and declare “victory”. Barack Obama can surely deliver an eloquent victory speech from his teleprompter. It might even include the words “freedom” and “democracy”, but certainly not “pipeline”.

.....
**Love me, love me, love me, I’m a Liberal
 (Thank you, Phil Ochs. We miss you.)**

Angela Davis, star of the 1960s, like most members of the Communist Party, was/is no more radical than the average American liberal. Here she is recently addressing Occupy Wall Street: “When I said that we need a third party, a radical party, I was projecting toward the future. We cannot allow a Republican to take office. ... Don’t we remember what it was like when Bush was president?”

Yes, Angela, we remember that time well. How can we forget it since Bush, by all important standards, is still in the White House? Waging perpetual war, relentless surveillance of the citizenry, kissing the corporate ass, police brutality? ... What’s changed? Except for the worse. Where’s our single-payer national health insurance? Nothing even close. Where’s our affordable university education? Still the most backward in the “developed” world. Where’s our legalized marijuana – I mean really legalized? If you think that’s changed, you must be stoned. Where’s our abortion on demand? What does your guy Barack think about that? Are the indispensable labor unions being rescued from oblivion? Ha! The ultra-important minimum wage? Inflation adjusted, equal to the mid-1950s.

Has the American threat to the environment and the world environmental movement ceased? Tell that to a dedicated activist-internationalist. Has the 50-year-old embargo against Cuba finally ended? It has not, and I can still not go there legally. The police-state War on Terror at home? Scarcely a month goes by without the FBI entrapping some young “terrorists”. Are more Banksters and Wall Street Society-Screwers (except for the harmless insider-traders) being imprisoned? Name one. Or war criminals, mass murderers, and torturers with names like ... Oh, I don’t know, let’s see ... maybe like Cheney or Bush or Rumsfeld or Wolfowitz or someone with a crazy name like Condoleezza? All walking completely free, all celebrated. **CT**

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**Through one war
 or another, the
 US has managed
 to establish
 military bases
 in Saudi Arabia,
 Kuwait, Bahrain,
 Qatar, Oman,
 Afghanistan,
 Pakistan,
 Uzbekistan,
 Tajikistan,
 Kyrgyzstan, and
 Kazakhstan**

.....
William Blum
is the author of:
*“Killing Hope: US
 Military and CIA
 Interventions Since
 World War 2”;*
*“Rogue State: A
 Guide to the World’s
 Only Superpower”;*
*“West-Bloc
 Dissident: A Cold
 War Memoir”;*
*“Freeing the World
 to Death: Essays
 on the American
 Empire.” Signed
 copies may be
 purchased at
www.killinghope.org*

The Iran crisis: Only half the story

Barry Lando recalls Israel's clandestine path to the nuclear weapons and finds it remarkably similar to that now being taken by Iran

.....
For decades
Shimon Peres
repeatedly lied to
American officials
about Israel's
nuclear intentions,
claiming that Israel
was working on a
small reactor for
peaceful purposes
.....

*Yesterday upon the stair
I met a man who wasn't there
He wasn't there again today
Oh, how I wish he'd go away*
— William Hughes Mearns, 1899

One of the most uncommented on ironies today is that Israel is threatening military action to prevent Iran from continuing the same clandestine route to nuclear weapons that Israel took; just as Israeli planes destroyed nuclear reactors in Syria and Iraq to prevent those countries from following Israel's lead.

A parallel irony: President Obama champions an economic embargo to force Iran to back off its nuclear program. Yet, for more than half a century one American president after another declined to sound any alarms over Israel's secret drive for nukes. Indeed, US leaders refused to even officially acknowledge the foreboding intelligence about Israel's intentions that American analysts were providing. That flimflam continues to this day.

Perhaps the most incisive chronicle of this official deception is "The Samson Option," written in 1991 by investigative reporter Seymour Hersh. Most of the following is drawn from that book.

The charade began in the early 1950's during the Eisenhower administration. Worried about Israel's survival in the face of massive



Arab opposition, and unable to get assurances from Eisenhower that the new Zionist state would be protected by America's nuclear umbrella, Israeli Prime Minister David Ben Gurion set out clandestinely to provide Israel with its own nuclear weapons.

The secret facility would be constructed at Dimona in the Negev desert. The mammoth project would be off the books, paid for by wealthy Jews from around the world. France would also play a key but secret role, engineering a sophisticated reprocessing plant deep under the reactor at Dimona.

The Israeli leader who oversaw the clandestine program was Shimon Peres. These days, as President of Israel, Peres talks darkly of Iran's nuclear deception. For decades however, he repeatedly lied to American officials about Israel's nuclear intentions, claiming that Israel was working on a small reactor for peaceful purposes.

It was impossible however to hide the massive new construction from America's high-flying U2 spy plane. In late 1958 or early 1959, CIA photo intelligence experts, spotted what looked almost certainly to be a nuclear reactor being built at Dimona. They rushed the raw images to the White

House, expecting urgent demands from the Oval Office for more information. This was, after all, a development that could initiate a disastrous nuclear arms race in the Middle East.

But there was absolutely no follow-up from the White House. As one of the analysts later told Seymour Hersh “Nobody came back to me, ever, on Israel.” Though the analysts continued regular reporting on Dimona, there were no requests for high-level briefings. “ ‘Thank you,’ and ‘this isn’t going to be disseminated is it?’ It was that attitude.”

“By the end of 1959,” writes Hersh, “the two analysts had no doubts that Israel was going for the bomb. They also had no doubts that President Eisenhower and his advisers were determined to look the other way.”

The reason was evident: Eisenhower publicly was a strong advocate of the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT). If he was formally to “know” of Israel’s nuclear program, he would be obliged to react – against Israel. Which, in the US could mean serious political consequences.

It was only in December 1960, that the Eisenhower administration, nearing its end, leaked word about Dimona and France’s involvement to the *New York Times*. The administration hoped that, without having to make any official accusations itself, it could oblige the Israeli government to sign the NPT.

But Ben Gurion flatly denied the *Times* report. He assured American officials – as well as the Israeli Knesset – that the Dimona reactor was completely benign. French officials guaranteed that any plutonium produced at Dimona would be returned to France for safekeeping (another lie).

The Eisenhower administration, however, had no stomach to take on Israel and its American lobby. Despite the reports of CIA analysts, Ben Gurion’s denials went unchallenged. That hypocrisy would remain official America’s policy – even as US presidents decried the attempts of countries like

India, North Korea, Pakistan, Libya and Iraq to themselves develop the bomb.

Even John Kennedy, who also felt strongly about nuclear proliferation, was forced for domestic political reasons to back off his demand for full-scale inspections of Dimona by the U.N.’s IAEA. Instead he agreed to a charade: inspections would be carried out only by Americans, who would be required to announce their visits well ahead of time, with the full agreement of Israel. No spot checks were allowed. The inspectors also were never shown some of the key intelligence that CIA analysts had gathered on Dimona.

In April 1963, when Kennedy asked Shimon Peres point blank about Israel’s nuclear intentions, Peres replied with the prevarication that remains to this day: “I can tell you forthrightly that we will not introduce atomic weapons in to the region. We certainly won’t be the first to do so. We have no interest in that. On the contrary, our interest is in de-escalating the armament tension, even in total disarmament.”

Five years later, however, in 1968, Dimona began producing four or five warheads a year. But when Lyndon Johnson received a CIA report of that fact, he ordered CIA director Richard Helms to bury the estimate. No one else was to be informed, not even Secretary of State Dean Rusk nor Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara.

Later, though Israel was still refusing to sign the non-proliferation treaty, Johnson agreed to supply that country with high-performance F-4 Fighters capable of carrying a nuclear weapon on a one-way mission to Moscow.

Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger came to power in 1969, with an even more sympathetic attitude towards Israel. Its nuclear ambitions, they felt, were fully justified. They had only contempt for the NPT. As Kissinger’s deputy Morton Halperin later told Hersh, “Henry believed that it was good to spread nuclear weapons around the world... He felt it inevitable that most ma-

.....
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.....
When Egyptian President Sadat claimed that Israel had developed nuclear weapons, Shimon Peres again categorically denied the charges. He accused Sadat of “gathering information of his own making”
.....

.....
jor powers would get nukes and better for the United States to be on the inside helping them, than on the outside futilely fighting the process.”

In fact, Israel’s real nuclear intentions were hair-raising: They would target their nukes not on Egypt or Syria, but the Soviet Union. And they would make sure that Moscow understood that. The calculation was that Egypt and Syria would never dare launch a war against Israel without the support of the Soviets, at the time their principal ally and arms provider. But if the men in the Kremlin realized they might face nuclear immolation themselves, they would never permit their Arab clients to drive Israel into the sea.

Indeed, that calculation may have worked in 1973. According to Hersh, after Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack overwhelming Israel’s defenses, an alarmed Golda Meir gave the order to prepare the nukes for imminent use. Alerted to Israel’s action, the Soviets immediately cautioned the Egyptians to back off. At the same time, Nixon and Kissinger – informed by the Israelis themselves of the nuclear deployment – agreed to a massive emergency airlift to replace Israel’s depleted arms and ammunition.

But even after those near-cataclysmic events, Kissinger kept the lid on the entire matter. And when Egyptian President Sadat claimed that Israel had developed nuclear weapons, Shimon Peres again categorically denied the charges. He accused Sadat of “gathering information of his own making”.

And so it went with the administration of Jimmy Carter. On September 21, 1979, when an American spy satellite picked up a brilliant double flash over the South Indian Ocean, some American analysts concluded that it was the product of a nuclear explosion – a test conducted jointly by Israel and South Africa’s apartheid regime.

Once again, the discovery presented the White House with a terrible dilemma, Pres-

ident Carter was also brandishing the banner of non proliferation. If he were obliged to formally recognize Israel’s nuclear status, and didn’t seek tough sanctions against the Jewish state, he would be roundly criticized as a hypocrite. But, as always, punishing Israel could also mean serious domestic political trouble.

Once again, the administration shielded the Oval Office from the truth. Wrote Hersh, “it was important that an American president not know what there was to know.”

But then, in 1986 the London *Sunday Times* published an extraordinary account of Dimona. It was based on extensive interviews and pictures furnished by Mordecai Vanunu, a 31-year-old Moroccan Jew who had been working inside Dimona. He claimed that Israel’s nuclear stockpile totaled more than 200 warheads.

Even before the report was published, Israeli’s leaders discovered Vanunu’s apostasy. He was enticed by a female Mossad agent to fly to Rome for a few days; then was drugged, kidnapped and returned to Israel to stand trial. He was ultimately sentenced to eighteen years in a maximum security prison, spending eleven of those years in solitary confinement. Even today, in Israel he is still being harassed, forbidden from speaking with any foreigners, reporters, or attempting to leave the country.

American intelligence experts were floored by the *Sunday Times* account and the evident sophistication of Israel’s clandestine program. Officially, however Washington still went along with the fiction that Israel was not a nuclear state.

Yet again in 1991, Israel made use of its stockpile, deploying missile launchers armed with nuclear weapons facing Iraq: a terrible warning of retaliation to Saddam Hussein if he were to fill the Scud missiles he was firing at Israel with chemical weapons. He never did.

‘Which makes our case!’ defenders of Israel’s nuclear program will exclaim. Faced with the implacable Arab hostility, Israel

was obliged to get the bomb. And thank God they did.

The problem is that other embattled regimes, make the same argument. Since the days of the Shah, for instance, Iran's leaders, feeling threatened first by the Soviet Union, then after 1979, by the United States, have pushed for nuclear weapons. And not without reason. To this day, the American president – not to mention rabid Republican primary candidates – openly discuss the option of attacking Iran.

But wait, we are assured, Israel is different – an ally, not governed by crazies like Mahmoud Ahmadinejad who have sworn to wipe Israel from the map.

Not to defend the tyrants running Iran, but many experts convincingly dispute that Ahmadinejad actually threatened nuclear annihilation of Israel. In addition, the Zionist state has had its own share of crazies who have long advocated using force to create a "Greater Israel." Ariel Sharon, for instance, who precipitated a bloody invasion of Lebanon in 1982 in a futile attempt to wipe out the PLO. He also openly talked about overthrowing King Hussein to turn Jordan by force into a Palestinian State.

Officially, however, Washington and Is-

rael continue the ridiculous pretence that Israel has no nuclear weapons. To this day, Israel reporters can only write about their country's nuclear capacity if they cite foreign publications as the source. And in the US, Washington's official silence seems curiously contagious: how often, in the current flurry of media reports about the threat from Iran is there any mention of Israel's own nuclear arsenal?

The bottom line is this – whatever your view about Iran or Israel's right to nuclear weapons – how can statesmen or reporters or anyone seriously discuss the current crisis over Iran when a key part of the dispute is officially hidden from view? How can the US and Israel deal with proposals for a nuclear free Middle East when they still refuse officially to acknowledge that the region is not nuclear free – and hasn't been for the past fifty years? **CT**

Barry Lando, a Canadian, currently living in Paris, is a former producer with 60 Minutes, author of "Web of Deceit-the History of Western Complicity in Iraq from Churchill to Kennedy to G.W. Bush". He is writing a novel, "The Watchman's File", about Israel's most ferociously guarded secret.

.....
Many experts convincingly dispute that Ahmadinejad actually threatened nuclear annihilation of Israel

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Ten reasons why we should attack Iran

If it wasn't so true, David Swanson's satirical tale would be hilarious

.....
Either we bomb Iran and it swears its eternal love to us or, if necessary, we occupy Iran to liberate it like its neighbor
.....

1. Iran has threatened to fight back if attacked, and that's a war crime. War crimes must be punished.

2. My television says Iran has nukes. I'm sure it's true this time. Just like with North Korea. I'm sure they're next. We only bomb places that really truly have nukes and are in the Axis of Evil. Except Iraq, which was different.

3. Iraq didn't go so badly. Considering how lousy its government is, the place is better off with so many people having left or died. Really, that one couldn't have worked out better if we'd planned it.

4. When we threaten to cut off Iran's oil, Iran threatens to cut off Iran's oil, which is absolutely intolerable. What would we do without that oil? And what good is buying it if they want to sell it?

5. Iran was secretly behind 9-11. I read it online. And if it wasn't, that's worse. Iran hasn't attacked another nation in centuries, which means its next attack is guaranteed to be coming very soon.

6. Iranians are religious nuts, unlike Israelis and Americans. Most Israelis don't want to attack Iran, but the Holy Israeli government does. To oppose that decision would be to sin against God.

7. Iranians are so stupid that when we murder their scientists they try to hire a car dealer in Texas to hire a drug gang in Mexico to murder a Saudi ambassador in



Washington, and then they don't do it – just to make us look bad for catching them.

7. b. Oh, and stupid people should be bombed. They're not civilized.

8. War is good for the US economy, and the Iranian economy too. Troops stationed in Iran would buy stuff. And women who survived the war would have more rights. Like in Virginia. We owe Iranians this after that little mishap in 1953.

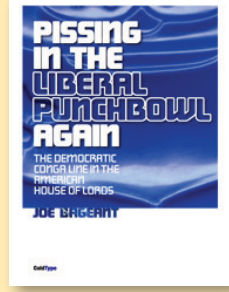
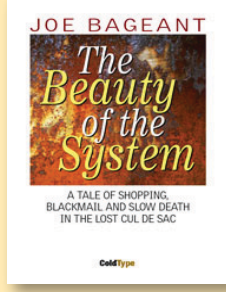
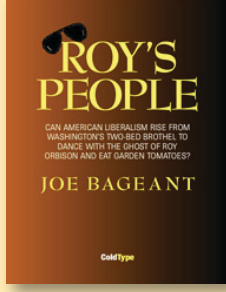
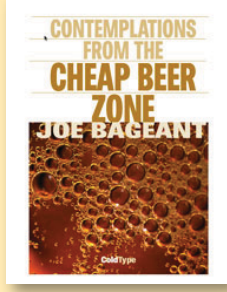
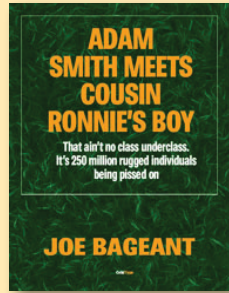
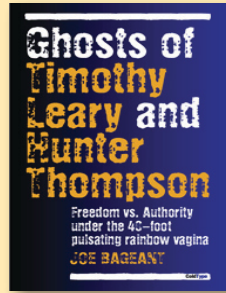
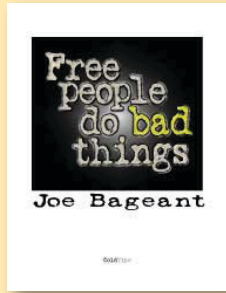
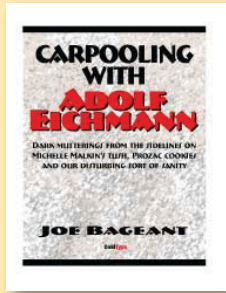
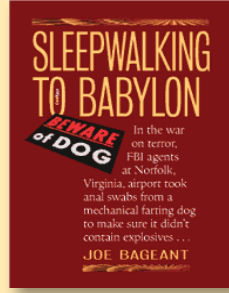
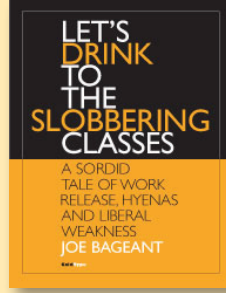
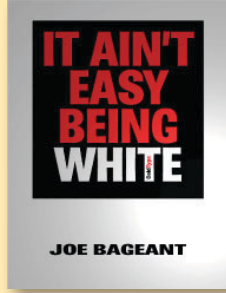
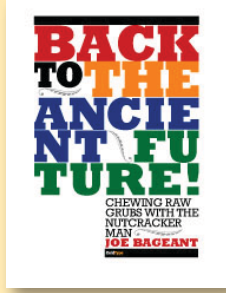
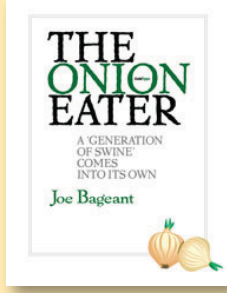
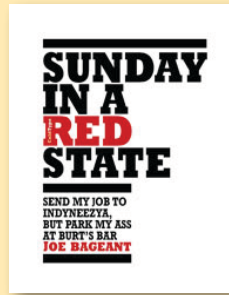
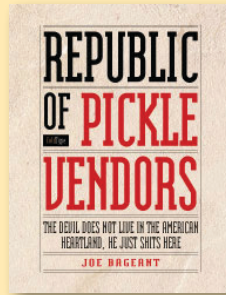
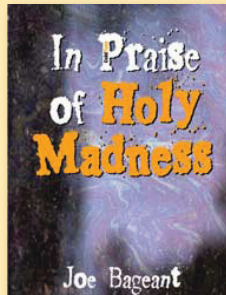
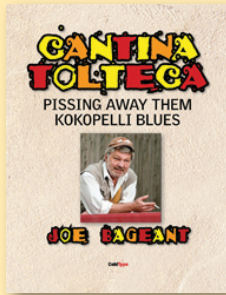
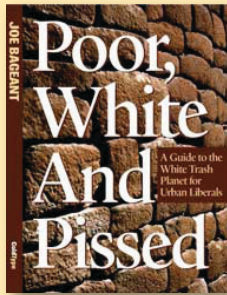
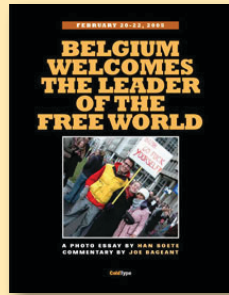
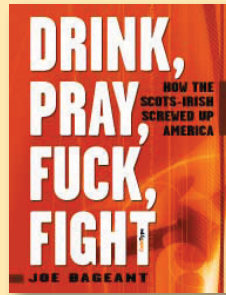
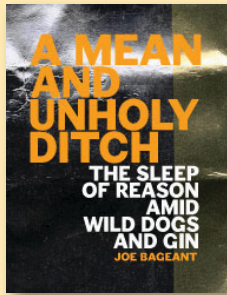
9. This is the only way to unite the region. Either we bomb Iran and it swears its eternal love to us or, if necessary, we occupy Iran to liberate it like its neighbors. Which shouldn't take long. Look how well Afghanistan is going already.

10. They won't give our drone back. Enough said. **CT**

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Capitalism versus democracy

Repression is Capitalism's biggest weapon against "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness", writes **Eric Ruder**

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In Chicago, it's a violation of the law, for example, for two people to carry a banner or sound amplification device that wasn't described in a permit application filed months ahead of time
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The crack of the police baton, the whiff of tear gas and the spectacle of mass arrest became all too familiar in city after city this fall and winter.

This was the response of the authorities to the rise of the Occupy movement and its challenge to the wealth and political privileges of the 1 percent. Occupy's tactics of choice were peaceful encampments and mass marches, supposedly guaranteed by the First Amendment right to free speech and peaceful assembly.

But in a matter of weeks, city officials from coast to coast had sent out police in riot gear, with zip-tie handcuffs dangling from their military-issue body armor, to harass and arrest Occupy protesters, and drive them from the streets.

Under the guise of concerns about "public health and safety," mayor after mayor ordered police to tear down encampments – a curious justification after the years of cuts to public hospitals, heating subsidies and homeless shelters that have actually endangered "public health and safety" for millions of Americans.

The total number of arrests of Occupy activists now stands at 6,475 and counting.

The treatment of the Occupy movement by elected officials and law enforcement sends an unmistakable message: Sure, you have the right to free speech, but once you

try to use it, we will do all we can to stop you.

Part of this assault has involved elected officials – most of them members of the Democratic Party, which claims to stand for the rights of working people – bending the laws to ensure they can crack down on demonstrators at will.

In Chicago, where the NATO military alliance and G8 club of powerful governments is due to meet in a joint summit in May, Mayor Rahm Emanuel went the furthest – under the proposals he drove through the City Council, it's a violation of the law, for example, for two people to carry a banner or sound amplification device that wasn't described in a permit application filed months ahead of time.

On New Year's Eve, Barack Obama signed the National Defense Authorization Act, giving him the power to detain US citizens indefinitely, without charges. This was a new milestone in the assault on civil liberties inaugurated by George W. Bush's "war on terror," but continued under the Democratic Obama administration.

During this same period, the federal government disbursed more than \$34 billion in grants to help transform local police departments into small armies, equipped with military-grade hardware. Under the guise of equipping themselves for "terror scenarios," even sleepy towns like Fargo, N.D.,

have acquired armored personnel carriers, assault rifles and Kevlar helmets. Montgomery County, Texas, now deploys a \$300,000 pilotless surveillance drone, just like the ones the US military uses in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

No one seriously considers Fargo a target for “terrorists,” begging the question of why cities with budget crises would want to bear the enormous expense of acquiring and maintaining such arsenals.

The answer is that the emergence of a powerful social movement at a time of social crisis is precisely the “threat” for which they have been preparing.

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Shaming critics

Politicians invariably use every opportunity to thank “our men and women in uniform” for protecting “the freedoms” that we hold dear. How many times has this kind of rhetoric been used to shame critics of war?

But the irony is that US military deployments abroad have always been accompanied by a restriction of civil liberties at home, as the federal government prepares to meet popular mobilizations against their war aims – and the necessary budget cuts to fund military spending – with arrest, infiltration and imprisonment of “the trouble-makers.”

During the First World War, the socialist Eugene V. Debs was imprisoned for his impassioned antiwar speeches. During the Second World War, the federal government passed legislation, like the Smith Act, aimed at radicals. During the Vietnam War, the FBI spied on, infiltrated and sowed dissension within the ranks of the American antiwar, civil rights and Black Power movements.

In fact, throughout American history, the promise of “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” contained in the Declaration of Independence has never been offered willingly, but rather surrendered grudgingly. From the very beginning, the “Founding

Fathers” feared the “rule of the mob” and sought to restrict the vote to men – and only men – of property like themselves, who could be trusted to exercise good judgment.

During the American Revolution, John Adams warned against “attempting to alter the qualifications of voters. There will be no end of it ... Women will demand a vote. Lads from 12 to 21 will think their rights not enough attended to, and every man, who has not a farthing, will demand an equal voice with any other in all acts of state. It tends to confound and destroy all distinctions, and prostrate all ranks, to one common level.”

Another “Founding Father,” Alexander Hamilton, agreed with the problem. “All communities divide themselves into the few and the many,” he wrote. “The first are the rich and well-born, the other the mass of the people.” Hamilton’s solution: Since the “turbulent” property-less masses “seldom judge or determine right,” the wealthy must be given “a distinct, permanent share in the government.”

This aversion to full democracy wasn’t unique to America’s self-professed democrats. “Universal suffrage would be fatal for all purposes for which government exists,” wrote 19th century British historian and Whig politician Lord Macaulay, and was “utterly incompatible with the existence of civilization.”

But why would the leaders of the world’s democratic governments have qualms about democracy? After all, if there’s one thing that politicians in the industrialized world talk about all the time, it’s the centrality of democracy – at least when they’re lecturing governments in other parts of the world about how they should behave.

To make sense of this seeming contradiction, it’s necessary to look at the historical circumstances that accompanied the growth of democratic forms of government.

The feudal order that dominated in Europe before capitalism was ruled by mon-

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The American capitalist class has refined the means by which it uses its immense wealth to finance campaigns, and lobby and otherwise buy politicians – to make sure that the right to vote never threatens in any fundamental sense their own power and privileges
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archs whose right to govern was supposedly ordained by God. But with the growth of trade, the rise of cities and the early development of industry, a growing class of merchants found that its economic clout, though substantial, was hindered by its lack of political influence. In particular, patchworks of fiefdoms and kingdoms posed a constant challenge to the free flow of goods – in the form of taxes, local currencies and other barriers to trade.

But the rising bourgeoisie that dominated these new forms of commerce was still a minority in society. In order to wrest political influence from the feudal monarchs who were acting as a brake on developments that were necessary to fully establish capitalism, the bourgeoisie therefore had to mobilize the lower classes to fight with them against the old order.

The capitalist class drew behind them workers, peasants and small shopkeepers under the banner of “liberty, equality and fraternity,” to cite the rallying cry of the French Revolution of 1789. But at the same time, the wealth of the bourgeoisie derived from exploiting other groups, and so mobilizing the lower classes had to be done carefully – so as not to pose a threat to the bourgeoisie’s own position of privilege.

The promise of democracy thus served to unite and motivate a cross-class alliance of capitalists, peasants, artisans and the urban poor, but the radical implications of equality and liberty had to be carefully managed.

Therefore, in addition to limiting the promise of universal rights by extending them only to wealthy men of property, the guarantee of equal rights in the abstract was accompanied by the fact of massive inequality in wealth – and the scale of this inequality has only increased over time.

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Capitalist decisions

Today, this means that the bulk of decisions that govern our economic lives – how long we work, under what conditions, at what

wages and to what ends – are made by capitalists outside of any democratic process.

Thus, bourgeois democracy has always really been more “bourgeois” than “democratic.” That’s why Karl Marx and Frederick Engels wrote in the “Communist Manifesto” that “the bourgeoisie has at last, since the establishment of modern industry and of the world market, conquered for itself, in the modern representative state, exclusive political sway” – and that “the executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.”

It has required massive and heroic struggles by the downtrodden – by women, by African Americans and by the poor – to remove formal barriers to equality. Meanwhile, the American capitalist class has refined the means by which it uses its immense wealth to finance campaigns, and lobby and otherwise buy politicians – to make sure that the right to vote never threatens in any fundamental sense their own power and privileges.

That’s why there’s never enough money to rebuild crumbling schools or end hunger and homelessness, but there’s always hundreds of billions of dollars to bail out the bankers or fund the Pentagon.

And it’s why the same politicians who wax lyrical about freedom, democracy and equal rights feel no shame about changing laws and using repression to shred civil liberties. At the very moment that people might put their rights to use in order to demand real change, the political guardians of the system are trying to deny them.

But the fact also remains that no matter how monstrous a form repression takes, eventually people fight back – from Egypt to Wisconsin to Wall Street to Anytown, USA.

CT

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Eric Ruder is on the editorial board of the International Socialist Review. This commentary was originally published at www.socialistworker.org

Mad, passionate love. And violence

Rebecca Solnit looks at false reporting, state violence and the stirrings of revolution that have been spawned by the Occupy movement

When you fall in love, it's all about what you have in common, and you can hardly imagine that there are differences, let alone that you will quarrel over them, or weep about them, or be torn apart by them – or if all goes well, struggle, learn, and bond more strongly because of, rather than despite, them.

The Occupy movement had its glorious honeymoon when old and young, liberal and radical, comfortable and desperate, homeless and tenured all found that what they had in common was so compelling the differences hardly seemed to matter. Until they did.

Revolutions are always like this: at first all men are brothers and anything is possible, and then, if you're lucky, the romance of that heady moment ripens into a relationship, instead of a breakup, an abusive marriage, or a murder-suicide. Occupy had its golden age, when those who never before imagined living side-by-side with homeless people found themselves in adjoining tents in public squares. All sorts of other equalizing forces were present, not least the police brutality that battered the privileged the way that inner-city kids are used to being battered all the time. Part of what we had in common was what we were against: the current economy and the principle of insatiable greed that made it

run, as well as the emotional and economic privatization that accompanied it.

This is a system that damages people, and its devastation was on display as never before in the early months of Occupy and related phenomena like the “We are the 99%” website. When it was people facing foreclosure, or who'd lost their jobs, or were thrashing around under avalanches of college or medical debt, they weren't hard to accept as us, and not them.

And then came the people who'd been damaged far more, the psychologically fragile, the marginal, and the homeless – some of them endlessly needy and with a huge capacity for disruption. People who had come to fight the power found themselves staying on to figure out available mental-health resources, while others who had wanted to experience a democratic society on a grand scale found themselves trying to solve sanitation problems.

And then there was the violence.

The faces of violence

The most important direct violence Occupy faced was, of course, from the state, in the form of the police using maximum sub-lethal force on sleepers in tents, mothers with children, unarmed pedestrians, young women already penned up, unresisting seated students, poets, profes-

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**The police clubbed
Wall Street's
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across the
United States**
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sors, pregnant women, wheelchair-bound occupiers, and octogenarians. It has been a sustained campaign of police brutality from Wall Street to Washington State the likes of which we haven't seen in 40 years.

On the part of activists, there were also a few notable incidents of violence in the hundreds of camps, especially violence against women. The mainstream media seemed to think this damned the Occupy movement, though it made the camps, at worst, a whole lot like the rest of the planet, which, in case you hadn't noticed, seethes with violence against women. But these were isolated incidents.

That old line of songster Woody Guthrie is always handy in situations like this: "Some will rob you with a six-gun, some with a fountain pen." The police have been going after occupiers with projectile weapons, clubs, and tear gas, sending some of them to the hospital and leaving more than a few others traumatized and fearful. That's the six-gun here.

But it all began with the fountain pens, slashing through peoples' lives, through national and international economies, through the global markets. These were wielded by the banksters, the "vampire squid," the deregulators in D.C., the men – and with the rarest of exceptions they were men – who stole the world.

That's what Occupy came together to oppose, the grandest violence by scale, the least obvious by impact. No one on Wall Street ever had to get his suit besmirched by carrying out a foreclosure eviction himself. Cities provided that service for free to the banks (thereby further impoverishing themselves as they created new paupers out of old taxpayers).

And the police clubbed their opponents for them, over and over, everywhere across the United States.

The grand thieves invented ever more ingenious methods, including those sliced and diced derivatives, to crush the hopes

and livelihoods of the many. This is the terrible violence that Occupy was formed to oppose. Don't ever lose sight of that.

.....
Oakland's beautiful nonviolence

Now that we're done remembering the major violence, let's talk about Occupy Oakland. A great deal of fuss has been made about two incidents in which mostly young people affiliated with Occupy Oakland damaged some property and raised some hell.

The mainstream media and some far-away pundits weighed in on those Bay Area incidents as though they determined the meaning and future of the transnational Occupy phenomenon. Perhaps some of them even hoped, consciously or otherwise, that harped on enough these might divide or destroy the movement. So it's important to recall that the initial impact of Occupy Oakland was the very opposite of violent, stunningly so, in ways that were intentionally suppressed.

Occupy Oakland began in early October as a vibrant, multiracial gathering. A camp was built at Oscar Grant/Frank Ogasawara Plaza, and thousands received much-needed meals and healthcare for free from well-organized volunteers. Sometimes called the Oakland Commune, it was consciously descended from some of the finer aspects of an earlier movement born in Oakland, the Black Panthers, whose free breakfast programs should perhaps be as well-remembered and more admired than their macho posturing.

A compelling and generous-spirited General Assembly took place nightly and then biweekly in which the most important things on Earth were discussed by wildly different participants. Once, for instance, I was in a breakout discussion group that included Native American, white, Latino, and able-bodied and disabled Occupiers, and in which I was likely the eldest participant; another time, a bunch of peacenik

grandmothers dominated my group.

This country is segregated in so many terrible ways – and then it wasn't for those glorious weeks when civil society awoke and fell in love with itself. Everyone showed up; everyone talked to everyone else; and in little tastes, in fleeting moments, the old divides no longer divided us and we felt like we could imagine ourselves as one society. This was the dream of the promised land – this land, that is, without its bitter divides. Honey never tasted sweeter, and power never felt better.

Now here's something astonishing: While the camp was in existence, crime went down 19% in Oakland, a statistic the city was careful to conceal. "It may be counter to our statement that the Occupy movement is negatively impacting crime in Oakland," the police chief wrote to the mayor in an email that local news station KTVU later obtained and released to little fanfare. Pay attention: Occupy was so powerful a force for nonviolence that it was already solving Oakland's chronic crime and violence problems just by giving people hope and meals and solidarity and conversation.

The police attacking the camp knew what the rest of us didn't: Occupy was abating crime, including violent crime, in this gritty, crime-ridden city. "You gotta give them hope," said an elected official across the bay once upon a time – a city supervisor named Harvey Milk. Occupy was hope we gave ourselves, the dream come true. The city did its best to take the hope away violently at 5 a.m. on October 25th. The sleepers were assaulted; their belongings confiscated and trashed. Then, Occupy Oakland rose again. Many thousands of nonviolent marchers shut down the Port of Oakland in a stunning display of popular power on November 2nd.

That night, some kids did the smashy-smashy stuff that everyone gets really excited about. (They even spray-painted

"smashy" on a Rite Aid drugstore in giant letters.) When we talk about people who spray-paint and break windows and start bonfires in the street and shove people and scream and run around, making a demonstration into something way too much like the punk rock shows of my youth, let's keep one thing in mind: they didn't send anyone to the hospital, drive any seniors from their homes, spread despair and debt among the young, snatch food and medicine from the desperate, or destroy the global economy.

That said, they are still a problem. They are the bait the police take and the media go to town with. They create a situation a whole lot of us don't like and that drives away many who might otherwise participate or sympathize. They are, that is, incredibly bad for a movement, and represent a form of segregation by intimidation.

But don't confuse the pro-vandalism Occupiers with the vampire squid or the up-armored robocops who have gone after us almost everywhere. Though their means are deeply flawed, their ends are not so different than yours. There's no question that they should improve their tactics or maybe just act tactically, let alone strategically, and there's no question that a lot of other people should stop being so apocalyptic about it.

Those who advocate for nonviolence at Occupy should remember that nonviolence is at best a great spirit of love and generosity, not a prissy enforcement squad. After all, the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., who gets invoked all the time when such issues come up, didn't go around saying grumpy things about Malcolm X and the Black Panthers.

Violence against the truth

Of course, a lot of people responding to these incidents in Oakland are actually responding to fictional versions of them. In

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such cases, you could even say that some journalists were doing violence against the truth of what happened in Oakland on November 2nd and January 28th.

The *San Francisco Chronicle*, for example, reported on the day's events this way:

"Among the most violent incidents that occurred Saturday night was in front of the YMCA at 23rd Street and Broadway. Police corralled protesters in front of the building and several dozen protesters stormed into the Y, apparently to escape from the police, city officials and protesters said. Protesters damaged a door and a few fixtures, and frightened those inside the gym working out, said Robert Wilkins, president of the YMCA of the East Bay."

Wilkins was apparently not in the building, and first-person testimony recounts that a YMCA staff member welcomed the surrounded and battered protesters, and once inside, some were so terrified they pretended to work out on exercise machines to blend in.

I wrote this to the journalists who described the incident so peculiarly: "What was violent about [activists] fleeing police engaging in wholesale arrests and aggressive behavior? Even the YMCA official who complains about it adds, 'The damage appears pretty minimal.' And you call it violence? That's sloppy."

The reporter who responded apologized for what she called her "poor word choice" and said the piece was meant to convey police violence as well.

When the police are violent against activists, journalists tend to frame it as though there were violence in some vaguely unascrivable sense that implicates the clobbered as well as the clobberers. In, for example, the build-up to the 2004 Republican National Convention in New York City, the mainstream media kept portraying the right of the people peaceably to assemble as tantamount to terrorism and describing all the terrible things that the government or the media

themselves speculated we might want to do (but never did).

Some of this was based on the fiction of tremendous activist violence in Seattle in 1999 that the *New York Times* in particular devoted itself to promulgating. That the police smashed up nonviolent demonstrators and constitutional rights pretty badly in both Seattle and New York didn't excite them nearly as much. Don't forget that before the obsession with violence arose, the smearing of Occupy was focused on the idea that people weren't washing very much, and before that the framework for marginalization was that Occupy had "no demands." There's always something.

Keep in mind as well that Oakland's police department is on the brink of federal receivership for not having made real amends for old and well-documented problems of violence, corruption, and mismanagement, and that it was the police department, not the Occupy Oakland demonstrators, which used tear gas, clubs, smoke grenades, and rubber bullets on January 28th. It's true that a small group vandalized City Hall after the considerable police violence, but that's hardly what the plans were at the outset of the day.

The action on January 28th that resulted in 400 arrests and a media conflagration was called Move-In Day. There was a handmade patchwork banner that proclaimed "Another Oakland Is Possible" and a children's contingent with pennants, balloons, and strollers. Occupy Oakland was seeking to take over an abandoned building so that it could reestablish the community, the food programs, and the medical clinic it had set up last fall. It may not have been well planned or well executed, but it was idealistic.

Despite this, many people who had no firsthand contact with Occupy Oakland inveighed against it or even against the whole Occupy movement. If only that intensity of fury were to be directed at the root cause of it all, the colossal economic

violence that surrounds us.

All of which is to say, for anyone who hadn't noticed, that the honeymoon is over.

Now for the real work

The honeymoon is, of course, the period when you're so in love you don't notice differences that will eventually have to be worked out one way or another. Most relationships begin as though you were coasting downhill. Then come the flatlands, followed by the hills where you're going to have to pedal hard, if you don't just abandon the bike.

Occupy might just be the name we've put on a great groundswell of popular outrage and a rebirth of civil society too deep, too broad, to be a movement. A movement is an ocean wave: this is the whole tide turning from Cairo to Moscow to Athens to Santiago to Chicago.

Nevertheless, the American swell in this tide involves a delicate alliance between liberals and radicals, people who want to reform the government and campaign for particular gains, and people who wish the government didn't exist and mostly want to work outside the system.

If the radicals should frighten the liberals as little as possible, surely the liberals have an equal obligation to get fiercer and more willing to confront – and to remember that nonviolence, even in its purest form, is not the same as being nice.

Surely the only possible answer to the tired question of where Occupy should go from here (as though a few public figures got to decide) is: everywhere. I keep being asked what Occupy should do next, but it's already doing it. It is everywhere.

In many cities, outside the limelight, people are still occupying public space in tents and holding General Assemblies. February 20th, for instance, was a national day of Occupy solidarity with prisoners; Occupiers are organizing on many fronts and planning for May Day, and a great

many foreclosure defenses from Nashville to San Francisco have kept people in their homes and made banks renegotiate. Campus activism is reinvigorated, and creative and fierce discussions about college costs and student debt are underway, as is a deeper conversation about economics and ethics that rejects conventional wisdom about what is fair and possible.

Occupy is one catalyst or facet of the populist will you can see in a host of recent victories. The campaign against corporate personhood seems to be gaining momentum. A popular environmental campaign made President Obama reject the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline from Canada, despite immense Republican and corporate pressure. In response to widespread outrage, the Susan B. Komen Foundation reversed its decision to defund cancer detection at Planned Parenthood. Online campaigns have forced Apple to address its hideous labor issues, and the ever-heroic Coalition of Immokalee Workers at last brought Trader Joes into line with its fair wages for farmworkers campaign.

These genuine gains come thanks to relatively modest exercises of popular power. They should act as reminders that we do have power and that its exercise can be popular. Some of last fall's exhilarating conversations have faltered, but the great conversation that is civil society awake and arisen hasn't stopped.

What happens now depends on vigorous participation, including yours, in thinking aloud together about who we are, what we want, and how we get there, and then acting upon it. Go occupy the possibilities and don't stop pedaling. And remember, it started with mad, passionate love.

CT

Rebecca Solnit is the author of 13 (or so) books, including A Paradise Built in Hell: The Extraordinary Communities that Arise in Disaster and Hope in the Dark. She lives in and occupies from San Francisco.

Surely the only possible answer to the tired question of where Occupy should go from here is: everywhere

The imaginary world of economists

Who gets the cash when workers get a pay rise? **John Kozy** has the answer

.....
The landlords and vendors got the money; the workers were not better off, and those in the community who were not employed by the apparel factory were decidedly worse off
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In the 1980s, manufacturers of apparel began offshoring their production to underdeveloped countries, one of which was Bangladesh. Economists endorse this practice; they have a model that justifies it.

Offshoring production to underdeveloped nations gives needy people jobs, increases their incomes, reduces poverty, and expands their nations' GNPs. It also enables people in developed nations to purchase products produced offshore at lower prices enabling them to consume a wider range of things. As a result, everyone everywhere is better off.

Convinced? Most economists are, but it hasn't worked that way. Everyone everywhere is not better off – as the whole world now knows. Why?

In the latter part of the 80s or early part of the 90s, a large retailer (I don't remember which one) thought it would be a good idea to bring an employee of a factory in Bangladesh to America to see how the clothing the factory was producing was being marketed to Americans.

So a Bengali woman was selected to represent her factory and brought to America. This idea didn't work out well. The woman not only saw how the products were being marketed but how much they cost and she was infuriated.

She knew what she and her coworkers

were being paid, about two percent of the price of the garments. She did not remain silent and was quickly sent back to Bangladesh.

Here is the gist of her story:

She said she and her coworkers were not financially better off after being hired by the factory. Yes, the wages were better than those that could have been earned before, but they weren't much benefit. Why? Because when the paychecks began to arrive, the local landlords and vendors increased prices on everything, so just as before, all of their incomes went to pay for basic necessities.

The landlords and vendors got the money; the workers were not better off, and those in the community who were not employed by the apparel factory were decidedly worse off. In fact, it quickly became apparent that the workers were working for nothing. They did the work; the landlords and vendors got the pay. But, of course, the country's GNP was better, which is all that matters to economists who still claim that Bangladesh's economy is improving.

And although Americans were able to buy the apparel more cheaply than they could have before the manufacturing was offshored, the American apparel workers who lost their jobs are decidedly not better off.

Two conclusions follow from this sce-

nario: employment alone is not a sufficient condition for prosperity; full employment can exist in an enslaved society alongside abject poverty, and an increasing GNP does not mean that an economy is getting better. Remember these the next time the unemployment rate and GNP numbers are cited. Those numbers mean nothing.

More than thirty years have now passed and nothing has changed in Bangladesh. Most Bengalis still continue to live on subsistence farming in rural villages. Despite a dramatic increase in foreign investment, a high poverty rate prevails. Observers attribute it to the rising prices of essentials. The economic model described above just does not work, not in Bangladesh or anywhere else.

Explaining why reveals what's wrong with economics and why current economic practices, which have not essentially improved mankind's lot over the last two and a half centuries, won't ever improve it.

Economists build models by what they call "abstraction." But it's really subtraction. They look at a real world situation and subtract from it the characteristics they deem unessential.

The result is a bare bones description consisting of what economists deem economically essential. Everything that is discarded (not taken into consideration in the model) is called an "externality." So the models only work when the externalities that were in effect before the models are implemented do not change afterward.

For instance, had the Bengali landlords and vendors not raised their prices after the factory was opened, the employees would have been better off. But the greed of the vendors and landlords was not taken into consideration by the model.

The realm of economic models can be likened to the realm of Platonic Forms or Ideas. Both realms are static and unchanging throughout all time. Unfortunately the real world, as Heraclitus knew, is not static – change is ever-present, "No man ever steps

in the same river twice." Since externalities are excluded from all economic models and can be expected to change after any model is implemented, all economic models necessarily fail. Economists are frauds and economics amounts to nothing but an apologetics of greed. The world that economists model is imaginary, not real.

Don't believe that what I have described takes place only in the underdeveloped world; it takes place everywhere a profit driven economy exists.

I well remember working in Washington, D.C. as a staffer for a US Senator. One year, a pay raise was scheduled to take effect the coming January. Shortly after Thanksgiving Day, prices began rising in all the area's stores. The workers who received the raise were no better off in January that they were in October. The raise was siphoned into the pockets of vendors.

Free market economic conditions create a situation in which vendors always prevail. In the end, they get all the money. The economy's business is business and it is protected by the legal system. Because prices cannot be controlled in a free market economy, vendors can always set them high enough to get all the money.

Economists call it inflation, and the only way it can be controlled is by reducing the amount of money available for the taking. Reducing the amount of money available for the taking reduces wage levels and keeps workers poor. The business cycle is an excuse business uses to take back any gains workers have acquired. The American financial industry bribed the Congress to amend the Bankruptcy code in 2005 even though no financial institution was in any danger of collapse because of consumer bankruptcy filings. In 2008, the same financial industry brought down the world's economy, began foreclosing on people's houses, and forced thousands into bankruptcy. After reading this article, do you believe that both revising the bankruptcy code and the financial collapse were coincidental? The whole point

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**Entry-level
manufacturing jobs
are paying half
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of a free market economy is to take back all the money paid to employees so that the rich get richer and the poor stay poor. What happened in Bangladesh happens everywhere all of the time. Humanity is enslaved by these economic practices but the enslavement is carefully and continuously hidden. Workers, those whose efforts keep the society functioning and produce all of its wealth, are mere fodder – farm fodder, factory fodder, and when necessary, cannon fodder.

As a result, most of the new jobs being created are in the lower-wage sectors of the economy – hospital orderlies and nursing aides, secretaries and temporary workers, retail and restaurant.

Meanwhile, millions of Americans remain working only because they've agreed to cuts in wages and benefits. Others are settling for jobs that pay less than the jobs they've lost.

Entry-level manufacturing jobs are paying half what entry-level manufacturing jobs paid six years ago.

Other people are falling out of the middle class because they've lost their jobs, and many have also lost their homes. Almost one in three families with a mortgage is now underwater, holding their breath against imminent foreclosure.

The percent of Americans in poverty is its highest in two decades, and more of us are impoverished than at any time in the last fifty years. A recent analysis of federal data by the *New York Times* showed the number of children receiving subsidized

lunches rose to 21 million in the last school year, up from 18 million in 2006-2007. Nearly a dozen states experienced increases of 25 percent or more."

In America, just as in Bangladesh, the vendors have emptied the people's pockets. All economic models can be rendered ineffective by how the actions of people change externalities. Governments try to restrain such uncontrolled changes by enacting regulations, but conceiving of effective regulations that cover all eventualities and that cannot be gamed is impossible. All market economies motivated by profit are founded on unfairness as should be easily seen. In any financial transaction between two parties motivated by profit, one party wins and the other party loses, because it is mathematically impossible for both parties to profit at the same time. One person's profit is another person's loss. So if bettering the human condition is an economic goal, no economy motivated by profit will succeed in doing it. Unless people stand up for humanity, most humans will always be slaves. People should honestly be asked whether this is the world they want to live in. No economist, apparently, has the courage to stand up and ask. Why is that? If you know a working economist, please ask her/him! **CT**

.....
John Kozy is a retired professor of philosophy and logic who writes on social, political, and economic issues. His on-line pieces can be found on <http://www.jkozy.com/> and he can be emailed from that site's homepage.

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On the road to nowhere

There's a new war on the horizon, writes **Danny Schechter**

From Military Resistance: "At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation's ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke."

Frederick Douglass, 1852

Oil prices are rocketing. Iranian warships are moving into the Mediterranean to shadow the US warships already there. Propaganda news is growing with rumors of Al Qaeda links with Iran, and then there's the less speculative news about real links between the terror groups and the armed opposition in Syria.

As *Rolling Stone's* Matt Taibbi puts it, the smell of war is in the air and on the air, "You can just feel it: many of the same newspapers and TV stations we saw leading the charge in the Bush years have gone back to the attic and are dusting off their war pom-poms."

CLG adds: "Officials in key parts of the Obama administration are increasingly convinced that sanctions will not deter Tehran from pursuing its [alleged] nuclear program, and believe that the US will be left with no option but to launch an attack on Iran or watch Israel do so."

The timing now seems to be for war in October, just before the next Presidential election. Does that mean that the White

House believes that war fever will generate more support for an embattled Commander in Chief?

Orwell was right in his classic 1984: "The object of the war is not to make or prevent conquests of territory, but to keep the structure of society intact."

Here in the "homeland," the FBI busts a "terrorist" on his way, we are told, to blow up the Congress. Turns out he was supplied with phony weapons by the FBI itself, a specialist in entrapment. The G-Men supposedly became suspicious when they heard that this young Moroccan, living illegally in Virginia, told someone who told someone that the war on terror was a war on Muslims. That's probably a majority view in the Middle East, but to them it was menacing and proof of evil intent.

After their puppet "suspect" was in custody, they reassured one and all that the Congress was never at risk. (Nor, now, is the FBI's next appropriation!)

What a relief! Congress has survived to fight another day in its own war – a partisan war without end. For the most part, the political logjam and stalemate continues and not just because of warring ideologies. Unseen and only rarely commented upon by pundits who know how to cover political horse races but not political skullduggery is the role that big money plays behind the scenes. That is kept out of sight and out of mind.

.....
Unseen and only rarely commented upon by pundits who know how to cover political horse races but not political skullduggery is the role that big money plays behind the scenes

.....
The liberal media is in large part in cahoots with the right wing message points, avoiding any structural analysis, while pushing for mild “reforms” unlikely to reform anything
.....

Bill Moyers and Michael Winship write: “Watching what’s happening to our democracy is like watching the cruise ship Costa Concordia founder and sink slowly into the sea off the coast of Italy, as the passengers, shorn of life vests, scramble for safety as best they can, while the captain trips and falls conveniently into a waiting life boat.

“We are drowning here, with gaping holes torn into the hull of the ship of state from charges detonated by the owners and manipulators of capital. Their wealth has become a demonic force in politics. Nothing can stop them. Not the law, which has been written to accommodate them. Not scrutiny – they have no shame. Not a decent respect for the welfare of others – the people without means, their safety net shredded, left helpless before events beyond their control.”

Yes, “we are downing here.”

But is not just money that is the problem, but those one percenters who are manipulating it as a weapon to drive our democracy into the dumper.

Charles Pierce names and shames them in the pages of *Esquire*, writing about the “the undeniable fact that, over the course of a decade, a bunch of cheats, thieves, and suited mountebanks stole most of the national economy and then wrecked whatever was left of it. But what’s most extraordinary about the whole thing is that, after they swindled their swindles and heisted their heists, and got paid off by the rest of us for having looted our national economy, they all kept doing the same things they were doing before. These included extravagant bonuses and, of course, continued crimes of capital that ought to be capital crimes.”

Wow!

On the same day. I read Joe Nocera in the *New York Times* saying it’s not important to punish the banks. So clearly the liberal media is in large part in cahoots with the right wing message points, avoiding any structural analysis, while pushing for mild “reforms” unlikely to reform anything.

One consequence of our corporate news system, according to Richard Flanders in the *Atlantic* is that Americans are being steered into becoming even more conservative.

“Even with the president’s approval rating showing signs of life and the Republicans busily bashing themselves over the head – “one is a practicing polygamist and he’s not even the Mormon,” retired Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor recently quipped about her party’s two front runners – America continues to track right, according to polling data released by the Gallop Organization this week,” he writes.

“Americans at this political moment are significantly more likely to identify as conservative than as liberal: conservatives outnumber liberals by nearly two to one. Forty percent identify as conservative, 36 percent as moderate, and 21 percent liberal.”

Most upsetting is that the people who suffering the most are stuck in the Alice in Wonderland world of conservative ideology.

This study concludes. “The ongoing economic crisis only appears to have deepened America’s conservative drift – a trend which is most pronounced in its least well off, least educated, most blue collar, most economically hard-hit states.

.....
Dumbing-down machine

The public becomes dumber in part because our media is a dumbing-down machine. No wonder alternative voices are brushed to the margins by our not so free press. This past week, I was interviewed by RT and Al-Jazeera, but none of the US TV news networks I used to work for will have me on. It’s not a personal thing: I am not alone.

Yes, MSNBC has added two progressive hosts, but in the morning, on weekends, when viewing is lowest. Fox, meanwhile, dumped Judge Napolitano and his sometime sensible and outspoken libertarian show. Can’t have that, can we?

It’s time for Occupy Wall Street to add media reform to its emerging agenda. The

media war is as real as any other, and unless we fight that one, we will lose all the others. Politics is a war of ideas, of different narratives in collision.

It's not enough to chant, "We are the 99%." We have to explain who rules America and how to change it.

One way to do it is educate the country about how many of the same interests that own the banks own the media.

Perhaps that's why most media outlets are not reporting that unemployment increased this month and that underemployment is up to 19%

Writes Rex Nutting on Market Watch: "Everyone knows that the Great Recession has inflicted tremendous damage to the lives and fortunes of millions of Americans. But what you may not know is that most of the suffering is still to come.

"We're not even halfway done with this mess."

A mess it is, a "mistake" it isn't. That's why activists can't give up

If there was ever a time for progressives to unite around some coherent 10-point plan that can be used to reach potential supporters and broaden the movement for change, this is it. The aspiration should be to build a coalition that can win, to "occupy the mainstream." Sadly, here as in Greece where the economic crisis is at a boiling point, a headline in the *Financial Times* sums up a key obstacle to fighting back:

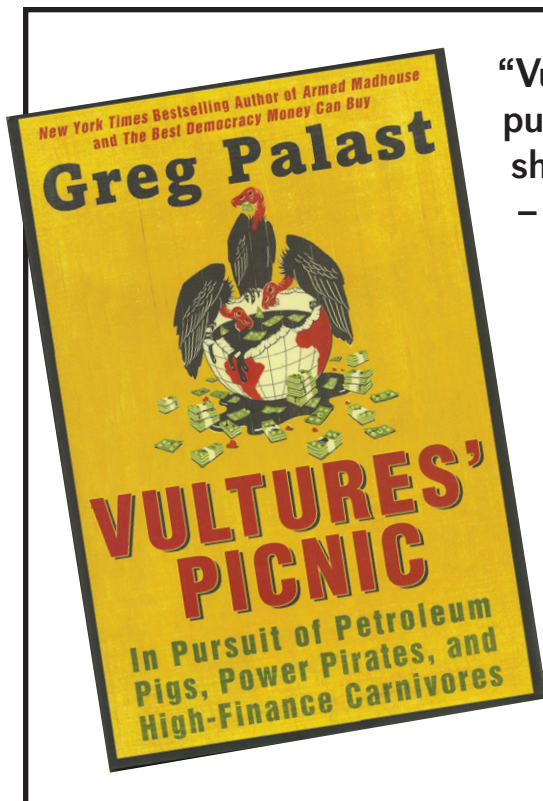
"Greek Left Has Most Support But is Fragmented"

What say you, unions, churches, minorities, students, workers, activists, feminists and occupiers? Do we work together or lose apart? Assuming that the GOP self-destructs, do we really think that more 'Bama can make the difference that needs making?

CT

News Dissector Danny Schechter's blog is now at NewsDissector.Net. Danny made the film *Plunder* (*Plunderthecrimeofourtime*) on the financial crisis as a crime story.

.....
Educate the country about how many of the same interests that own the banks own the media



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 – Nomi Prins, former MD, Goldman Sachs

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ONE PICTURE ...

This World

You know society is in trouble when the pawn shops close . . . Sam's Loan on Michigan Ave. and Wabash in Detroit was started in the early 1940s.

Photo: Bruce Giffin

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This World is a new feature in ColdType in which we invite readers to send photographs that capture a slice of the world in which we live. Please send photographs, which should be 240dpi (jpeg format, black/white or colour) to: editor@coldtype.net



Cookies with Christianity

Bill Berkowitz tells how the Christian Right is moving into a school near you

Since the US Supreme Court's 1962 decision banning prayer in the public school classrooms, conservative evangelical Christians have been at war with public education. Many conservatives point to that decision as the harbinger of America's moral decline. During this period, the Christian Right ran stealth school board candidates and took control of the decision-making process in numerous school districts.

Now, it appears the movement has found another way of imposing its religious views in the public schools; through thinly disguised afterschool Bible study programs.

Most parents with elementary and junior high school-age children are too busy focusing on the nuts and bolts of day-to-day life to get deeply involved with everything going on behind schoolhouse doors.

In January 2009, Katherine Stewart, a novelist, journalist and mother, learned that her children's school in Santa Barbara, California, had added a Bible-study class to its list of afterschool programs. The afterschool group was called, innocuously enough, the "Good News Club."

Curious as to what this "Good News Club" was about, Stewart investigated and discovered that it was part of a nationwide effort sponsored by a conservative evangelical organization called the Child Evangelism Fellowship, a group aiming to "take back"

America's public schools. Backing this effort, she found, are three long-term Christian Right-founded and funded legal enterprises: the Alliance Defense Fund, the Liberty Counsel and the American Center for Law and Justice.

Stewart didn't stop at merely being surprised by the agenda of the "Good News Club". She explains in the introduction to her new book, "The Good News Club: The Christian Right's Stealth Assault on America's Children" (Public Affairs, January 2012), that doing the research for the book took her to "dozens of cities and towns across the country ... [where she] found religion-driven programs and initiatives inserting themselves into public school systems with unprecedented force and unexpected consequences."

The Good News Clubs is a nationally based effort "coordinated and given strategic direction by extremely well financed groups whose leaders write the scripts that are followed in classrooms, playgrounds, and courtrooms from New York to California," Stewart writes.

Religious-based after school programs burgeoned after the Good News Club v. Milford Central School (a K-12 school in upstate New York) Supreme Court decision in 2001. Justice Clarence Thomas, writing for the 6-3 majority, "laid out a philosophy that essentially destroyed the postwar consensus on

.....
Christian Right organizations and their leaders have railed against teachers' unions, opposed tax increases to improve public education, and have even gone so far as to encourage Christian parents to withdraw their children from the public schools

.....
Good News Clubs were a product of the Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF), set up by J.I. Overholtzer, a man who “dreamed of an army of child evangelists encircling the globe”
.....

the separation of church and school,” Stewart reports. Religion was now redefined “as nothing more than speech from a religious viewpoint.”

The Supreme Court’s decision essentially made it seem as if the Good News Club’s sponsoring organization, the Child Evangelism Fellowship, was not a fundamentalist Christian organization which claimed that salvation was only available to those who believed Jesus is their savior, but rather just another group offering a religious viewpoint. The decision essentially allowed religious organizations access to the same public school facilities as other non-sectarian groups.

“Unfortunately, the Supreme Court upheld the right of CEF to meet in public schools at the end of the school day,” Rob Boston, Senior Policy Analyst with Americans United said in an email to me. “In some parts of the country, the group is very active and creates the impression that it is a school-sanctioned extended day-care program.”

.....
Good News Clubs take hold

Stewart found “student athletic programs turned into vehicles for religious recruiting”; “services [taking place] at dozens of the hundreds of school facilities that double as taxpayer-financed houses of worship”; and “children ... [who] have been subject to proselytizing in classrooms and school yards.” She met with “school board officials” who are “rewriting textbook standards to conform to their religious agendas,” talked with many of “the people promoting and attending ‘Bible Study’ courses that turned out to be programs of sectarian indoctrination,” and she “sat in on training sessions with instructors for the Good News Club, which now operates in nearly 3,500 public elementary schools around the country.”

One parent described to Stewart how members of a newly-formed Good News Club in an elementary school in Seattle, Washington, “came in like a bunch of gangbusters.”

“They started putting a Statement of Faith

in kids’ mailboxes. They distributed flyers. They were doing everything they could to have as big a presence on campus as possible.” The Club’s three-foot-high signage made sure to note that candy and cookies would be available.

Stewart cites numerous examples of the impact of Good News Clubs in the public schools, instigating culture clashes between children with different faiths and from different ethnic backgrounds. In many cases, she writes, young children who cannot yet read are fooled into thinking the Bible sessions are official school activities.

Good News Clubs were set up by the Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF), a worldwide organization founded 75 years ago in Warrenton, Missouri, by J.I. Overholtzer, a man who, according to the CEF website, “dreamed of an army of child evangelists encircling the globe.”

The website claims that Overholtzer’s dream “has largely become reality.” The ministry is embedded in 175 nations and “reach[es] over 10 million children in face-to-face ministry annually.” In addition to the Good News Clubs, the ministry runs the Truth Chasers Club, Camp Good News, Military Children’s Ministries, Ministry to Children of Prisoners, and Wonderzone.com, a site that “allows trained counselors to disciple children in a real-time, interactive environment.”

Stewart’s most eye-opening experience came while attending CEF’s May 2010, triennial National Convention, held at the Shocco Springs Baptist Convention Center in Talladega, Alabama.

The vast majority of the 450 or so attendees were affiliated with CEF, including senior officials, staff, regional leaders, and heads of CEF’s youth, military and prison ministries. Stewart points out that, “We’re going to kick in the doors of every public school in the country!” is a phrase she keeps hearing.

“This is an old organization with ties to well known evangelical mission groups,” Rachel Tabachnick said in an email interview.

“But CEF has mastered stealth evangelism of children, one of the goals for infiltrating society from the grass roots up, instead of top down.”

Tabachnick, an independent researcher, writer and speaker on issues pertaining to the impact of the Religious Right on policy and politics in areas including education, economics, environment, and foreign policy, added, “CEF is a good example of how stealth evangelism” operates successfully in hundreds of communities across the country.

As anyone who witnessed the recent Focus on the Family-sponsored television commercial during a Denver Broncos football game – which used young children to explain what the Bible verse John 3:16 (one of Bronco quarterback Tim Tebow’s favorite Biblical verses) is about – understands that children are frequently used by conservative evangelical leaders as tools to spread the “Good News.” So it should not be surprising that children aged from four to fourteen are seen as fertile recruiting ground.

The Child Evangelism Fellowship “targets very young children,” Americans United’s Rob Boston said. “The group has even produced a ‘wordless book’ for children who are too young to read.”

“Religious nationalism has now become part of American political theater, and we

take notice of it mostly during election campaigns,” Stewart writes. “When it shows up in our backyard, in our schools and local communities, we reach instinctively for our First Amendment, interpreting the whole matter in terms of whose rights are being respected and whose feelings are being hurt. The most important issue before us, however, is not just a question of the rights and feelings of individuals.

“The fact is that there is a movement in our midst that rejects the values of inclusivity and diversity, a movement that seeks to undermine the foundations of modern secular democracy. It has set its sights on destroying the system of public education – and it is succeeding. Unless we confront that fact directly, we may well keep our rights but lose the system of education that has long served as the silent pillar of our democracy.”

Boston added: “In light of the Supreme Court ruling, parents need to be diligent. They should not assume that any group operating in a public school is secular. The hard-core proselytizers are out there, often finding homes in public schools.” **CT**

Bill Berkowitz is an independent researcher and writer who has been studying conservative organizations in the US for many years.

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Children aged from four to fourteen are seen as fertile recruiting ground
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Another angle on illegals

Fred Reed has a morality tale for angry Americans

.....
The Maras are savage, sadistic, and live by robbing migrants of the money they have saved to pay the coyote, the guys who sneak illegals across the border
.....

You could get the idea, listening to many Americans, that illegal immigrants are brown sludge, the lazy and shiftless, the least intelligent of their countries, those unable or unwilling to make a living at home, who therefore go to the US to live on welfare. A certain paucity of logic informs much of this. If they come to live on welfare, how do they take the jobs of Americans, a crime of which they are regularly accused? But I note this only in passing. I do not mean to suggest that logic or knowledge have a place in politics.

The fact is that the illegals come to work, and do, well and hard, which is why conservative patriotic businessmen block attempts to restrict immigration.

Which would be easy to do. Again, they come to work. Don't hire them, and they won't come. Illegals don't take jobs from Americans. Americans give them the jobs.

But, whatever you think of the Latin hordes, it may be interesting to know a little about them. Let's wing it.

Consider a Mexican of 20 living in the slums of, say, Tegucigalpa with his wife and two small children. The local economy is a disaster. He can barely feed his kids, much less send them to school. "Barely feed them" is not a concept many Americans understand. It means that

their stomachs hurt, that their physical development is threatened, that they cry and ask for food. Any parent who doesn't do anything possible to feed them, to include robbing banks, is irresponsible. Ask yourself what you would do.

So Pablo and Maria talk it over, and decide that the only way out is for him to go to the US, work, send money home and, just possibly, eventually bring the family to America. There are good reasons why Americans might not approve his plan. But from Pablo's point of view, watching his kids starve, it is the only plan.

Getting from Honduras to San Francisco or South Carolina is dangerous, very dangerous. Crossing the Guat border means braving the Mexican police, who are brutal and corrupt.

.....
Riding the roofs

Typically the migrants go north through Mexico by riding on the roofs of cargo trains. It is not for the weak. On the trains they are subject to attacks by gangs, for example Mara Salvatrucha, products of Reagan's romantic meddling of El Salvador. The "Mara" is from "marabunta," a swarm of army ants. The Maras are savage, sadistic, and live by robbing migrants of the money they have saved to pay the coyote, the guys who sneak illegals across

the border. Once in the US the coyote will likely put you in a van and take you to some city, perhaps having you walk around checkpoints on the highway.

I would much rather do a tour on the ground in Afghanistan than try this. It is safer. In Afghanistan you eat, do not have to drink from filthy pools beside the tracks, and do not spend nights on top of a box car in jeans and tee-shirt during a sleet storm. Call the migrants anything you like, but leave out “gutless.”

Women also make this trip, for the same reason: to send money home for their kids. Don’t, please, tell me about oppressed co-eds at Dartmouth.

So Pablo, perhaps months later, gets to Laredo. Let us say that he started out with \$2000 US, which is roughly what a coyote costs, and has managed not to be robbed of it. If he has it, it was probably put together by his extended family by forgoing shoes, food, what have you.

He now finds himself in a city that preys on people like Pablo. He has little idea what he is doing. Twenty years in a slum in Tegucigalpa doesn’t make you wise in the ways of the Mexican-American frontier. The police will rob him, perhaps torturing him to find out where he has stashed the money, if indeed he has any, and send him back to Honduras. Nasty gangs will do the same, except for deporting him. Migrants drown trying to swim the Rio Bravo.

Several ways exist of crossing into the US. You can find a desert crossing poorly guarded and hope not to be killed by rattlesnakes or get lost and die of thirst.

In the Mexican press I have read of tunnels through which 150 illegals pass per night. At \$2k each, that’s \$300,000 a night in a great tax bracket. Or a coyote can get you across and, if he doesn’t just take your money and disappear, he may put you into a van, and off you go. Bingo.

Once away from the border, things get easier for Pablo. He may work a few days to get the bus fare to Raleigh-Durham,

where he has a friend. With the friend’s help, he gets a job in construction.

Here the American national hypocrisy works to his advantage. The construction firm, of course, knows perfectly well that Pablo is undocumented. Companies love illegals. It means that they can pay him dirt, no benefits, no Social Security, and he can’t complain without getting deported. In any contest between money and patriotism, money wins. American immigration officials catch just enough Pablos to keep the rest intimidated, but not enough to reduce the supply of cheap labor. It is a sweetheart deal for businessmen.

Pablo may or may not be a model uncitizen, may drink too much, may use drugs, or go into crime. Or he may not. He is very likely to send money, substantial amounts of it, back to Tegucigalpa. In Jalisco, where I live in Mexico, remittances from migrants are a crucial part of the economy.

Pablo also is not unlikely to begin planning to bring his family to the US. Family values. Putting his life on the line for his children. The work ethic. All that.

Is massive immigration good for the US? I doubt it. Are all the illegals wonderful people? No. In the long run will there be a happy ending? I don’t know; to date there hasn’t been.

Yet men and women who will claw and save for a coyote, and ride that godawful train, at dead serious risk of being raped, robbed, tortured and beaten into medical curiosities left beside the tracks, who will cross into a hostile country whose language they do not know, and live in constant fear of being caught, all to feed their families and just maybe give them a better life in a better place – I think they deserve other than utter contempt. **CT**

Fred Reed has worked on staff for Army Times, The Washingtonian, Soldier of Fortune, Federal Computer Week, and The Washington Times. His web site is www.fredoneverything.net

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Several ways exist of crossing into the US. You can find a desert crossing poorly guarded and hope not to be killed by rattlesnakes or get lost and die of thirst

Dawn of the drones

John W. Whitehead on the realisation of the Total Surveillance State

.....
With this single piece of legislation, Congress is opening the floodgates to an entirely new era of surveillance, one in which no person is safe from the prying eyes of the government
.....

“To be governed is to be watched, inspected, spied upon, directed, law-driven, numbered, regulated, enrolled, indoctrinated, preached at, controlled, checked, estimated, valued, censured, commanded, by creatures who have neither the right nor the wisdom nor the virtue to do so. It is, under pretext of public utility, and in the name of the general interest, to be placed under contribution, drilled, fleeced, exploited, monopolized, extorted from, squeezed, hoaxed, robbed; then, at the slightest resistance, the first word of complaint, to be repressed, fined, vilified, harassed, hunted down, abused, clubbed, disarmed, bound, choked, imprisoned, judged, condemned, shot, deported, sacrificed, sold, betrayed; and to crown all, mocked, ridiculed, derided, outraged, dishonoured. That is government; that is its justice; that is its morality.” – Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, 19th century French philosopher

Imagine a robot hovering overhead as you go about your day, driving to and from work, heading to the grocery store, or stopping by a friend’s house. The robot records your every movement with a surveillance camera and streams the information to a government command center. If you make a wrong move, or even appear to be doing something suspicious, the police will respond quickly and you’ll soon be under arrest. Even if you don’t do anything

suspicious, the information of your whereabouts, including what stores and offices you visit, what political rallies you attend, and what people you meet will be recorded, saved and easily accessed at a later date. It is a frightening thought, but you don’t have to imagine this scenario. We are only a few years away from the realization of this total surveillance society.

Congress has just passed a bill, the FAA Reauthorization Act, mandating that the Federal Aviation Administration create a comprehensive program for the integration of drone technology into the US national air space by 2015.

The FAA predicts that there will be 30,000 drones crisscrossing the skies of America by 2020, all part of an industry that could be worth hundreds of millions of dollars per year.

This mandate is yet another example of the political power of the military-industrial complex, Congress’s disdain for the privacy of American citizens, and the rampant growth of government.

With this single piece of legislation, Congress is opening the floodgates to an entirely new era of surveillance, one in which no person is safe from the prying eyes of the government. This may prove to be the final nail in the Fourth Amendment’s coffin.

Attempts to integrate drone technology into the national air space were underway

long before Congress put its stamp of approval on the FAA Reauthorization Act. In fact, the FAA authorized 313 certificates for drone operation in 2011, 295 of which were still active at the end of the year, although the agency refuses to say which organizations received the certificates and for what purposes they were used.

However, we do know that the FAA had already approved drones for use by the Department of Homeland Security, US Customs and Border Patrol (which uses the drones to conduct surveillance and counternarcotics missions), and certain state and local law enforcement operations. For example, in June 2011, a family of cattle farmers accused of stealing some cows were spied on with a Predator drone before being apprehended by police.

The fact that drones – pilotless, remote controlled aircraft that have been used extensively in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan to assassinate suspected terrorists, as well as innocent civilians – are coming home to roost (and fly) in domestic airspace should come as no surprise to those who have been paying attention.

The US government has a history of commandeering military technology for use against Americans. We saw this happen with tear gas, tasers, sound cannons and assault vehicles, all of which were first used on the battlefield before being deployed against civilians at home.

Thus, while 83% of Americans approve of the use of drones abroad, and 65% approve of using drones to assassinate suspected terrorists abroad, even if they are American citizens, it remains to be seen how those same Americans will feel when they are the ones in the sights of the drones. Needless to say, they won't have to wait too long to find out.

While there are undoubtedly legitimate uses for drone technology, such as locating missing persons, there is no legitimate reason for the government to collect a constant

stream of information on the whereabouts of Americans. However, if this drone program is implemented in the way that Congress intends, we will have drones armed with “less-lethal” weaponry, including bean bag guns and tasers, flying over political demonstrations, sporting events, and concert arenas. Eventually, these drones will be armed with the lethal weaponry that is currently being used overseas in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The power of these machines is not to be underestimated. Many are equipped with cameras that provide a live video feed, as well as heat sensors and radar. Some are capable of peering at figures from 20,000 feet up and 25 miles away.

They can also keep track of 65 persons of interest at once. Some drones are capable of hijacking wi-fi networks and intercepting electronic communications such as text messages. The Army is currently developing drones with facial recognition software, as well as drones that can complete a target-and-kill mission without any human instruction or interaction. They are the ultimate killing and spying machines.

In addition to the privacy concerns, the safety of drone technology has been called into question. There have been a handful of high-profile crashes involving American drones abroad, including in Iran, the island nation of Seychelles, and most recently in Somalia.

The Iranian government claimed they brought down the drone flying in their territory via a computer hack. This is two years after Iraqis were able to hack into the live feed of a few drones using “\$26 off-the-shelf software.” Mind you, back in October 2011, the US military admitted that their drone fleet had been infected by a ‘mysterious virus.’ The faultiness of the drone technology and the fact that amateur hackers can access the controls and camera feeds are reason enough to ground these devices indefinitely.

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The US government has a history of commandeering military technology for use against Americans. We saw this happen with tear gas, tasers, sound cannons and assault vehicles

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While most Americans are unaware of the electronic concentration camp which is slowly enveloping our society, a select few groups are working to push back against government control

Unfortunately, with the wars abroad winding down, America has become the new battleground in the war on terror, to the delight and profit of the military-industrial complex.

In fact, with companies like Boeing and Lockheed Martin making their influence felt among members of Congress (Boeing spent over \$12 million lobbying in 2011, and Lockheed spent over \$11 million), you can be sure that their technologies will continue to be purchased by the government, even when there is no need for them.

Thus, in the same way that our domestic police forces are now armed with mini-tanks and grenade launchers taken from the military's armory, it was simply a matter of time before drone technology made its way back home.

While most Americans are unaware of the electronic concentration camp which is slowly enveloping our society, a select few groups are working to push back against government control.

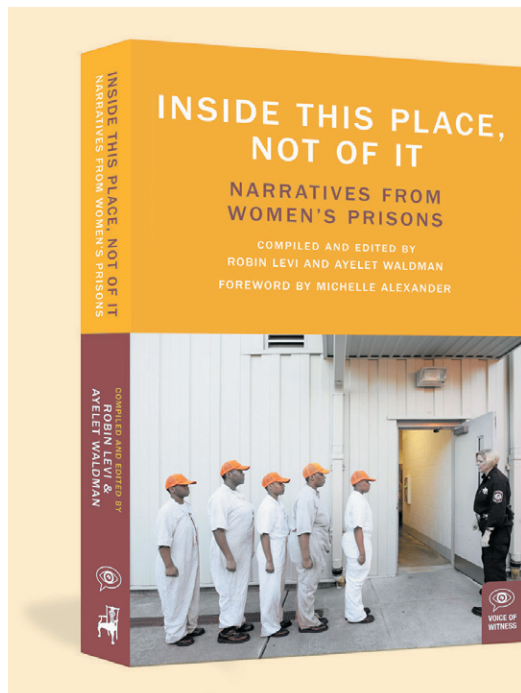
The Electronic Frontier Foundation has filed a lawsuit against the FAA, demanding the records of the drone certificates which

the FAA has issued to various agencies, but it is unlikely that the implementation of this technology can be stopped. Based upon the government's positions on wiretapping, GPS tracking devices, and Internet tracking technologies, it is also unlikely that our elected officials will do anything to protect the American people from the prying eye of the American government.

We can sit around waiting for some member of Congress with a conscience or some judge concerned about the coming tyranny to push back against the drone empire from within.

However, until the American people succeed in raising their collective voices against this technological tyranny, the powers that be will continue on the path to total control, and the condition of our civil liberties will become more dire every day. **CT**

John W. Whitehead is a constitutional attorney and founder and president of The Rutherford Institute. His new book "The Freedom Wars" (TRI Press) is available online at www.amazon.com. He can be contacted at johnw@rutherford.org



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Kicking down the world's door

Tom Engelhardt tells how drones, special operations forces and the US navy plan to end national sovereignty as we know it

Make no mistake: we're entering a new world of military planning. Admittedly, the latest proposed Pentagon budget manages to preserve just about every costly toy-cum-boondoggle from the good old days when MiGs still roamed the skies, including an uncut nuclear arsenal. Eternally over-budget items like the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, cherished by their services and well-lobbied congressional representatives, aren't leaving the scene any time soon, though delays or cuts in purchase orders are planned.

All this should reassure us that, despite the talk of massive cuts, the US military will continue to be the profligate, inefficient, and remarkably ineffective institution we've come to know and squander our treasure on. Still, the cuts that matter are already in the works, the ones that will change the American way of war. They may mean little in monetary terms – the Pentagon budget is actually slated to increase through 2017 – but in imperial terms they will make a difference. A new way of preserving the embattled idea of an American planet is coming into focus and one thing is clear: in the name of Washington's needs, it will offer a direct challenge to national sovereignty.

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Heading offshore

The Marines began huge amphibious ex-

ercises – dubbed Bold Alligator 2012 – off the East coast of the US last month, but no matter what they do, they are going to have fewer boots on the ground in the future, and there's going to be less ground to have them on.

The same is true for the Army (even if a cut of 100,000 troops will still leave the combined forces of the two services larger than they were on September 11, 2001). Less troops, less full-frontal missions, no full-scale invasions, no more counterinsurgency: that's the order of the day.

Just this month, in fact, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta suggested that the schedule for the drawdown of combat boots in Afghanistan might be speeded up by more than a year. Consider it a sign of the Times.

Like the F-35, American mega-bases, essentially well-fortified American towns plunked down in a strange land, like our latest "embassies" the size of lordly citadels, aren't going away soon. After all, in base terms, we're already hunkered down in the Greater Middle East in an impressive way. Even in post-withdrawal Iraq, the Pentagon is negotiating for a new long-term defense agreement that might include getting a little of its former base space back, and it continues to build in Afghanistan. Meanwhile, Washington has typically signaled in recent years that it's ready to fight to the last Japa-

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Even in post-withdrawal Iraq, the Pentagon is negotiating for a new long-term defense agreement that might include getting a little of its former base space back

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The US now has drone bases across the planet, 60 at last count. Increasingly, the long-range reach of its drone program means that those robotic planes can penetrate just about any nation's air space
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nese prime minister not to lose a single base among the three dozen it has on the Japanese island of Okinawa.

But here's the thing: even if the US military is dragging its old habits, weaponry, and global-basing ideas behind it, it's still heading offshore. There will be no more land wars on the Eurasian continent. Instead, greater emphasis will be placed on the Navy, the Air Force, and a policy "pivot" to face China in southern Asia where the American military position can be strengthened without more giant bases or monster embassies.

For Washington, "offshore" means the world's boundary-less waters and skies, but also, more metaphorically, it means being repositioned off the coast of national sovereignty and all its knotty problems.

This change, on its way for years, will officially rebrand the planet as an American free-fire zone, unchaining Washington from the limits that national borders once imposed. New ways to cross borders and new technology for doing it without permission are clearly in the planning stages, and US forces are being reconfigured accordingly.

Think of the raid that killed Osama bin Laden as a harbinger of and model for what's to come. It was an operation enveloped in a cloak of secrecy.

There was no consultation with the "ally" on whose territory the raid was to occur. It involved combat by an elite special operations unit backed by drones and other high-tech weaponry and supported by the CIA. A national boundary was crossed without either permission or any declaration of hostilities.

The object was that elusive creature "terrorism," the perfect global will-o'-the-wisp around which to plan an offshore future.

All the elements of this emerging formula for retaining planetary dominance have received plenty of publicity, but the degree to which they combine to assault traditional concepts of national sovereignty has been given little attention.

Since November 2002, when a Hellfire missile from a CIA-operated Predator drone turned a car with six alleged al-Qaeda operatives in Yemen into ash, robotic aircraft have led the way in this border-crossing, air-space penetrating assault.

The US now has drone bases across the planet, 60 at last count. Increasingly, the long-range reach of its drone program means that those robotic planes can penetrate just about any nation's air space. It matters little whether that country houses them itself. Take Pakistan, which just forced the CIA to remove its drones from Shamsi Air Base.

Nonetheless, CIA drone strikes in that country's tribal borderlands continue, assumedly from bases in Afghanistan, and recently President Obama offered a full-throated public defense of them. (That there have been fewer of them lately has been a political decision of the Obama administration, not of the Pakistanis.)

Drones themselves are distinctly fallible, crash-prone machines. (Just last month, for instance, an advanced Israeli drone capable of hitting Iran went down on a test flight, a surveillance drone – assumedly American – crashed in a Somali refugee camp, and a report surfaced that some US drones in Afghanistan can't fly in that country's summer heat.)

Still, they are, relatively speaking, cheap to produce. They can fly long distances across almost any border with no danger whatsoever to their human pilots and are capable of staying aloft for extended periods of time. They allow for surveillance and strikes anywhere. By their nature, they are border-busting creatures. It's no mistake then that they are winners in the latest Pentagon budgeting battles or, as a headline at *Wired* magazine's Danger Room blog summed matters up, "Humans Lose, Robots Win in New Defense Budget."

And keep in mind that when drones are capable of taking off from and landing on aircraft carrier decks, they will quite literally

be offshore with respect to all borders, but capable of crossing any. (The Navy's latest plans include a future drone that will land itself on those decks without a human pilot at any controls.)

War has always been the most human and inhuman of activities. Now, it seems, its inhuman aspect is quite literally on the rise. With the US military working to roboticize the future battlefield, the American way of war is destined to be imbued with Terminator-style terror.

Already American drones regularly cross borders with mayhem in mind in Pakistan, Somalia, and Yemen. Because of a drone downed in Iran, we know that they have also been flying surveillance missions in that country's airspace as – for the State Department – they are in Iraq. Washington is undoubtedly planning for far more of the same.

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American War Enters the Shadows

Along with those skies filled with increasing numbers of drones goes a rise in US special operations forces. They, too, are almost by definition boundary-busting outfits. Once upon a time, an American president had his own "private army" – the CIA. Now, in a sense, he has his own private military. Formerly modest-sized units of elite special operations forces have grown into a force of 60,000, a secret military cocooned in the military, which is slated for further expansion. According to Nick Turse, in 2011 special operations units were in 120 nations, almost two-thirds of the countries on Earth.

By their nature, special operations forces work in the shadows: as hunter-killer teams, night raiders, and border-crossers. They function in close conjunction with drones and, as the regular Army slowly withdraws from its giant garrisons in places like Europe, they are preparing to operate in a new world of stripped-down bases called "lily pads" – think frogs jumping across a pond to their prey. No longer will the Pentagon be

building American towns with all the amenities of home, but forward-deployed, minimalist outposts near likely global hotspots, like Camp Lemonnier in the North African nation of Djibouti.

Increasingly, American war itself will enter those shadows, where crossings of every sort of border, domestic as well as foreign, are likely to take place with little accountability to anyone, except the president and the national security complex.

In those shadows, our secret forces are already melding into one another. A striking sign of this was the appointment as CIA director of a general who, in Iraq and Afghanistan, had relied heavily on special forces hunter-killer teams and night raiders, as well as drones, to do the job.

Undoubtedly the most highly praised general of our American moment, General David Petraeus has himself slipped into the shadows where he is presiding over covert civilian forces working ever more regularly in tandem with special operations teams and sharing drone assignments with the military.

And don't forget the Navy, which couldn't be more offshore to begin with. It already operates 11 aircraft carrier task forces (none of which are to be cut – thanks to a decision reportedly made by the president).

These are, effectively, major American bases – massively armed small American towns – at sea. To these, the Navy is adding smaller "bases." Right now, for instance, it's retrofitting an old amphibious transport docking ship bound for the Persian Gulf either as a Navy Seal commando "mothership" or (depending on which Pentagon spokesperson you listen to) as a "lily pad" for counter-mine Sikorsky MH-53 helicopters and patrol craft. Whichever it may be, it will just be a stopgap until the Navy can build new "Afloat Forward Staging Bases" from scratch.

Futuristic weaponry now in the planning stages could add to the military's border-crossing capabilities. Take the Army's Ad-

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With the US military working to roboticize the future battlefield, the American way of war is destined to be imbued with Terminator-style terror

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vanced Hypersonic Weapon or DARPA's Falcon Hypersonic Technology Vehicle 2, both of which are intended, someday, to hit targets anywhere on Earth with massive conventional explosives in less than an hour.

From lily pads to aircraft carriers, advanced drones to special operations teams, it's offshore and into the shadows for US military policy. While the United States is economically in decline, it remains the sole military superpower on the planet. No other country pours anywhere near as much money into its military and its national security establishment or is likely to do so in the foreseeable future. It's clear enough that Washington is hoping to offset any economic decline with newly reconfigured military might. As in the old TV show, the US has gun, will travel.

Onshore, American power in the twenty-first century proved a disaster. Offshore, with Washington in control of the global

seas and skies, with its ability to kick down the world's doors and strike just about anywhere without a by-your-leave or thank-you-ma'am, it hopes for better. As the early attempts to put this program into operation from Pakistan to Yemen have indicated, however, be careful what you wish for: it sometimes comes home to bite you.

[Note: I couldn't have written this piece without the superb reportage of TomDispatch Associate Editor Nick Turse on bases, drones, and special operations forces. **CT**

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Tom Engelhardt, co-founder of the American Empire Project and the author of The American Way of War: How Bush's Wars Became Obama's as well as The End of Victory Culture, runs the Nation Institute's TomDispatch.com. His latest book, The United States of Fear (Haymarket Books), has just been published.



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Divine injustice

George Monbiot on drones, state terrorism and the threat to democracy

The ancient Greeks, unlike the Jews or the Christians, invested their gods with human failings. Divine judgement, they believed, was neither flawless nor dispassionate; it was warped by lust, vengeance and self-interest. In the hands of Zeus, the thunderbolt was both an instrument of justice and a weapon of jealousy and revenge.

Those now dispensing judgement from on high are not gods, though they must feel like it. The people striking mortals down with drones are doubtless as capable as anyone else of self-deception, denial and cognitive illusions. More so perhaps, as the eminent fictions of the Bush years and the growing delusions of the current president suggest.

Barack Obama began his State of the Union address by claiming that the troops who had fought the Iraq war had “made the United States safer and more respected around the world.” Like Bush, like the gods, he has begun to create the world he wants to inhabit.

These power-damaged people have been granted the chance to fulfil one of humankind’s abiding fantasies: to vapourise their enemies, as if with a curse or a prayer, effortlessly and from a safe distance. That these powers are already being abused is suggested by the mendacity of those who are deploying them. The CIA, running the undeclared and unacknowledged drone war in Pakistan, insists that there have been no recent civilian

casualties. So does Obama’s chief counter-terrorism adviser, John Brennan. It is a blatant whitewash.

As a report last year by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism showed, of some 2,300 people killed by US drone strikes in Pakistan from 2004 until August 2011, between 392 and 781 appear to have been civilians; 175 were children.

In the period about which the CIA and Brennan made their claims, at least 45 civilians have been killed. As soon as an agency claims “we never make mistakes”, you know that it has lost its moorings, as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn suggested in his story of that title. Feeling no obligation to apologise or explain, count bodies or answer for its crimes, it becomes a danger to humanity.

It may be true, as the US air force says, that because a drone can circle and study a target for hours before it strikes, its missiles are less likely to kill civilians than those launched from a piloted plane. (The USAF has yet to explain how it reconciles this with its boast that drones “greatly shorten decision time”). But it must also be true that the easier and less risky a deployment is, the more likely it is to happen.

This danger is acknowledged in a remarkably candid assessment published by the UK’s ministry of defence, which also deploys drones, and has also used them to kill civilians. It maintains that the undeclared air war

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in Pakistan and Yemen “is totally a function of the existence of an unmanned capability – it is unlikely a similar scale of force would be used if this capability were not available.” Citing Carl von Clausewitz, it warns that the brutality of war seldom escalates to its absolute form partly because of the risk faced by one’s own forces. Without risk, there’s less restraint. The unmanned craft allow governments can fight a coward’s war, a god’s war, harming only the unnamed.

The danger is likely to escalate as drone warfare becomes more automated and the lines of accountability less clear. Last week the US navy unveiled a drone that can land on an aircraft carrier without even a remote pilot. The *Los Angeles Times* warned that “it could usher in an era when death and destruction can be dealt by machines operating semi-independently.”

The British assessment suggests that within a few years drones assisted by artificial intelligence could make their own decisions about whom to kill and whom to spare. Sorry sir, computer says yes.

“Some would say one man’s freedom fighter is another man’s terrorist,” George HW Bush opined when he was vice-president. “I reject this notion. The philosophical differences are stark and fundamental.” Perhaps they are; but no US administration has convincingly defined them or consistently recog-

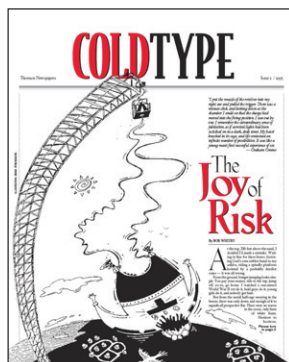
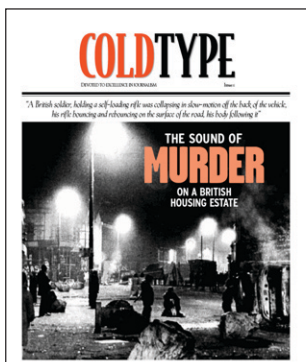
nised them. In Latin America, south east Asia, Africa and the Middle East successive presidents have thwarted freedom and assisted state terrorism.

Drones grant governments new opportunities to snuff out opposition of any kind, terrorist or democrat. The US might already be making use of them.

In October last year, a 16-year-old called Tariq Aziz was travelling through North Waziristan in Pakistan with his 12-year-old cousin, Waheed Khan. Their car was hit by a missile from a US drone(. As always, their deaths made them guilty: if we killed them, they must be terrorists. But they weren’t. Tariq was about to start work with the human rights group Reprieve, taking pictures of the aftermath of drone strikes. A mistake? Possibly. But it is also possible that he was murdered out of self-interest. If you have such powers, if you are not held to account by Congress, the media or the American people, why not use them?

The danger to democracy, not just in Pakistan but one day perhaps everywhere, should be evident. Yet, as fatalistic as the ancient Greeks, we drift into this with scarcely a murmur of debate, leaving the gods to decide. **CT**

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 George Monbiot’s latest book is “Bring On The Apocalypse”. This piece first appeared in London’s Guardian newspaper.



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Three wars in Iraq

Jeff Nygaard looks back at a recent war most of us seem to have forgotten

“The US is finally drawing down its military presence from Iraq, but why stop there? Why not reduce or outright remove our military presence from the entire Persian Gulf? The US has been waging war in the Gulf for more than two and a half decades, since it took up arms against Iran in the closing stages of the Iran-Iraq war. The human and environmental costs have been catastrophic. The presumptive gains of what has amounted to one long war have proven elusive at best. More often than not, the justifications for war have been either ill-conceived or manufactured. The Persian Gulf today is hardly stable or secure. But permanent war, and our militarization of the Gulf, isn’t so much a reflection of regional instability as it is the cause.”

– **Toby C. Jones**, writing in *The Atlantic Magazine*, December 2011, in an article entitled “Don’t Stop at Iraq: Why the US Should Withdraw From the Entire Persian Gulf.”

When we think about the US withdrawal of troops from Iraq, it would be good to think about all three of the wars that are part of this discussion: The Mythical War, the Propaganda War, and the Real War. Two of these wars are nothing but illusion and, not surprisingly, are the ones that

are discussed in public. The Real War is the only one that is not discussed in public.

The end of the Mythical War in Iraq

The Mythical War is the one that everyone was talking about as the year 2011 wound down. That is, the “War in Iraq,” the one that we are told has recently “ended.” I say it’s mythical because the US has not been at “war” with Iraq for years. What we have grown accustomed to calling a “war” – a word typically used to refer to hostilities between nations or states – pretty much ended with the fall of Baghdad on April 9th, 2003, three weeks after the US launched its invasion.

Since that time what has been going on in Iraq would more accurately be called a military occupation. Yet if we search major newspapers for the last half of 2011 for the phrase “occupation of Iraq” we find but 26 articles that include those words. The phrase “war in Iraq,” in contrast, yields 1,781 articles. Propaganda needs dictate the terminology: It’s difficult to “sell” a military occupation to the population who must fund it and supply the soldiers. It’s far easier to “sell” a war – at least, a “defensive” war – to those same people.

It was on October 22nd that Secretary of State Hillary Clinton alerted the world the US “will have a robust continuing pres-

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Much of what this ongoing contingent of military, intelligence, and “diplomatic” staff will be doing in Iraq will remain virtually unknown in the US
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ence throughout the region, which is proof of our ongoing commitment to Iraq and to the future of that region which holds such promise and should be freed from outside interference...” (Yes, the Secretary really did say that the country that the US invaded and then occupied for eight years should be “free from outside interference.”)

What needs to be noted here is the fact that even within Iraq the US presence will remain large as we proceed in the year 2012. As the *New York Times* reported on Dec 19, “the United States will continue to play a role in Iraq.

The largest American Embassy in the world is located here, and in the wake of the military departure it is doubling in size – to roughly 16,000 people, most of them contractors. Under the authority of the ambassador will be fewer than 200 military personnel, to guard the embassy and oversee the sale of weapons to the Iraqi government.”

The *Guardian* on October 25th elaborated on this presence: “There are an estimated 400 arms deals between Baghdad and Washington, worth \$10 billion, with an additional 110 deals, worth \$900 million, reportedly pending.

Many of these, as part of the deal, require US trainers, who would be working through the Office of Security Co-operation in the embassy.

Bloomberg News reported that this ‘newly established office will have a core staff of 160 civilians and uniformed military alongside 750 civilian contractors overseeing Pentagon assistance programmes, including military training. They will be guarded, fed and housed by 3,500 additional contract personnel’, working in 10 offices around the country.”

In addition to the world’s largest embassy, the *Guardian* notes that “there are also consulates in Basra, Mosul and Kirkuk, which have been allocated more than 1,000 staff each. Crucially, all these US staff, including military and security contractors, will have

diplomatic immunity.”

US diplomatic outposts – complete with their immunity from Iraqi law – are often home to undercover C.I.A. operatives. While rarely officially acknowledged, the use of embassies as cover for espionage and covert activities is an open secret. Note the casual reference in a December 26th *New York Times* story on Pakistan: “Pakistan is also restricting visas to dozens of other embassy personnel, from spies to aid workers.” Earlier this month the Lebanese press reported that “10 officers, registered as diplomats at the US Embassy, served as CIA agents for three years in Lebanon.”

It’s also telling in this regard that the current head of the C.I.A., General David Petraeus, formerly held the post of commanding general of the occupying forces in Iraq.

Much of what this ongoing contingent of military, intelligence, and “diplomatic” staff will be doing in Iraq will remain virtually unknown in the US. Within Iraq and the region, however, such things will likely be better known, and will continue to generate outrage and resistance despite the myth of US “withdrawal” from Iraq.

So the eight-year-long phenomenon known as the “Iraq War” was mythical in two senses. In the first sense, it was not even a war, but an occupation. So the myth of a “war” was created to justify the ongoing occupation mobilization and its immense costs. In the second sense, the various rationales used to justify the occupation – officially, the “war” – were all based on the myth of a “defense” against 1. Attack by Weapons of Mass Destruction, or 2. Attack by terrorists, or 3. Human rights abuses by a ruthless dictator. The ideas that make these myths seem real to so many people are promoted by another kind of war, a war of Propaganda, to which we now turn our attention.

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The Propaganda War

The so-called war in Iraq was seen, and by

many will forever be seen, as a part of the Global War on Terror. This makes sense for those who believe the myth that the goal of US military involvement in Iraq was to make the US “safe.” This same myth – of US violence being deployed in the service of “safety” – has been deployed and will continue to be deployed to justify other uses of violence by the United States. The creation and maintenance of this mythology depends on the belief in a Global War on Terror, or what I call the Propaganda War. That is, to the extent that it is a “war” at all, it is a war created largely for the purpose of Propaganda.

The Global War on Terror is not a new phenomenon. Ronald Reagan spoke repeatedly about the “scourge of international terrorism” during his time as President. But until the end of the so-called Cold War with the Soviet Union, the fear of terror was not the most useful fear for Propaganda purposes; it was the fear of Communism.

After there was no Soviet Union, for much of the 1990s, US planners for the first time in four decades were without an official Great Fear.

Since there was no longer any plausible threat to The World’s Only Superpower, there was even talk of a “Peace Dividend,” a popular phrase which referred to the economic benefits that would come about as a result of the demilitarization that so many expected to see.

After the demise of the Evil Empire, US planners pointed to other things to fear. For example, Richard Nixon had declared a “War on Drugs” in the 1970s, and that was still going on.

But neither the fear of drugs nor any other fear appeared to be sufficient to mobilize the vast military resources needed to protect “US interests” in what was now a global empire.

As a result, according to a 2005 report by the World Council of Churches, “There was a reduction in [global] military spending at the end of the Cold War and the total down-

ward trend culminated in 1998.” For a few years the US military budget also declined, at least until it started to creep up again at the end of the decade.

Then came the attacks of September 11, 2001.

Suddenly there was a new threat that seemed credible to almost everyone. After all, “they” had attacked us! Because “they” hate us! US planners had a choice. One choice was to define the issue as a violation of law and pursue the perpetrators as criminals. The second choice was to declare war. Despite the fact that most of the world favored the law-enforcement approach the US chose war.

The fateful choice to declare war ensured that the dynamic of the Cold War would not be consigned to history – as many people desired – but instead would be reborn as a Global War on Terror.

The original Cold War, put in place after World War II, was “the transformative process that ended in the ultimate demise of the New Deal state with its emphasis on social spending and ushered in the militarist ‘National Security State,’” in the words of historian James M. Carter.

This rebirth of the Cold War was openly discussed by US planners, if not often among the general population. Writing in 2002 for the US Army War College journal *Parameters*, retired Colonel David Jablonsky, professor of national security affairs at the College, wrote:

“Because of the terrorist attacks [of Sept. 11 2001], the institutional form of the US government is changing as America sorts out its grand strategic functions in a rapidly changing world. This should come as no surprise. The same process occurred at the beginning of the Cold War when the United States enlarged its definition of national security. . .

“The new threat assures the continued existence if not growth of the national security state and will certainly cause increased centralization and intrusiveness of the US

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Until the end of the so-called Cold War with the Soviet Union, the fear of terror was not the most useful fear for Propaganda purposes; it was the fear of Communism

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The effect, if not the intent, of declaring a Global War on Terror is to convince the domestic population that we need an endless war to beat back an endless threat
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government. . . Above all, [the Cold War] is a reminder of the importance of patience, perseverance, and endurance in the face of protracted conflict without the prospect of clear victory.”

Jablonsky then goes on to stress the importance of “a mix of US preponderance and cooperative security that will allow a more effective integration of foreign and domestic national security issues emphasizing minimization of both cost and risk – all necessary to sustain US public support for another grand strategic vision of a protracted twilight struggle.”

The Colonel’s prophetic words from 2002 may require a bit of decoding. “US preponderance” means maintaining an Imperial-sized military. “Cooperative security” means retaining the power to invoke whatever ad-hoc “coalitions of the willing” may be needed. For the foreseeable future it looks like this will be NATO. And when Jablonsky refers to “a protracted twilight struggle,” he is referring to a new Cold War.

Key to our current discussion is an understanding of what is “necessary to sustain US public support” for another few decades of militarism.

Gore Vidal pointed out, in reference to the first Cold War, that the program of the National Security State required US planners to “mobilize the entire American society to fight the terrible specter of communism.”

Now the terrible specter is terrorism, which provides the irrational, barbaric, cunning enemy without which the National Security State cannot exist. An enemy with whom we cannot negotiate. An enemy who can be held at bay only with overwhelming violence. An enemy who may be lurking among “us.” An enemy whose cunning is such that we need a near-limitless capacity to conduct covert operations, up to and including imprisonment and execution without trial of anyone suspected of being one of “them.”

Does such an enemy actually exist? It doesn’t really matter. Yale professor John

Lewis Gaddis, known as “the dean of Cold War historians,” was referring to Cold War US policy toward the USSR when he wrote that it “has been the product, not so much of what the Russians have done, or of what has happened elsewhere in the world, but of internal forces operating within the United States.”

Now, as then, the regeneration of the National Security State depends less on the actual threat than it does on the perception of threat, which is a function of Propaganda on many levels. The effect, if not the intent, of declaring a Global War on Terror is to convince the domestic population that we need an endless war to beat back an endless threat. And it is in this sense that the Global War on Terror is a Propaganda War. But there is one more war – a real war – yet to consider.

.....
The Real War

When I was just out of high school I was struggling to understand inequality. How is it that some countries, like my own, are fantastically wealthy while others are fantastically poor?

Flailing around looking for answers, I ran across the work of a man named Andre Gunder Frank. This led me to explore what was called “Dependency Theory,” and later on I learned about something called “World Systems Analysis.” I started paying attention to the work of people like Immanuel Wallerstein, Samir Amin, and others.

Dependency theory is based on a few key concepts. One is that there are two sets of nation-states in the world. One set is dominant, and is composed of the rich states, often represented by the members of the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Then there are the dependent states, which are the poorer countries, largely in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. A second concept is that the richer countries are stronger than the poorer countries. A third concept is that both sets

of states are embedded in a system which, for the most part, serves the interests of the rich states.

Professor Vincent Ferraro of Mount Holyoke College, speaking about the development of world systems analysis (which grew out of dependency theory), says that this approach “argued that the poverty [in the world system] was a direct consequence of the evolution of the international political economy into a fairly rigid division of labor which favored the rich and penalized the poor.”

“Dependency theory,” says Ferraro, “attempts to explain the present underdeveloped state of many nations in the world by examining the patterns of interactions among nations and by arguing that inequality among nations is an intrinsic part of those interactions.”

He goes on to say that: “[D]ependency models rest upon the assumption that economic and political power are heavily concentrated and centralized in the industrialized countries. . . . If this assumption is valid, then any distinction between economic and political power is spurious: governments will take whatever steps are necessary to protect private economic interests, such as those held by multinational corporations.”

This willingness to take “whatever steps are necessary” is the driving force behind The Real War, which is the war that is needed to maintain the unjust and unequal system that “favors the rich and penalizes the poor.”

.....
Enforcing the Rules

The Real War would probably be better understood as a number of warlike behaviors – seemingly unconnected unless they are said to be a part of a “Cold War” or a “Global War on Terror,” or some other Propaganda construct. The idea of governments taking “whatever steps are necessary” to “protect their interests” explains – in fact, makes inevitable – the numerous deployments,

threats, and attacks on other nations that are necessary to maintain something that may be called, to use shorthand, the US Empire. In the sterile bureaucratic language of the Department of Defense, “the United States must maintain its ability to project power in areas in which our access and freedom to operate are challenged.”

In an Imperial system, such as the one currently (sort of) headed by the United States, there must be a clear understanding of who gives the orders and who takes them. In such a system, the biggest threat to the Order-Givers is insubordination, as it may “challenge” the “freedom to operate” of the bosses. And the thread that ties together all of the wars waged or supported by the United States in recent decades – from Grenada to Nicaragua to Iraq to Afghanistan – is the threat of a nation breaking out of a “World Order” that serves the interests of the United States.

In order to understand the basic dynamic of the Imperial system all one really needs to understand is one word and one phrase. The word is “defense,” and the phrase is “US interests.” The US, as a global power, has “interests” all over the globe, and must commit serious resources to “defending” those interests against any nation that seems as if it might threaten them. As the Pentagon’s Quadrennial Defense Review of 2001 put it, “The defense strategy [of the United States] rests on the assumption that US forces have the ability to project power worldwide.”

As an example, hearken back to 2009, when an Associated Press ran a news story about the threat posed by another country’s defense. At that time, the nation of Iran had test-fired some missiles, with an Iranian spokesperson noting that “Iranian missiles are able to target any place that threatens Iran.” The Associated Press report on this event bore the headline, “Iran Tests Advanced Missiles, Raising More Concern.” The “concern” arises in part, according to the AP, from the fact that “US military bases

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This willingness to take “whatever steps are necessary” is the driving force behind The Real War, the war that is needed to maintain the unjust and unequal system that “favors the rich and penalizes the poor”

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in the Middle East” would now be “within striking distance” of Iranian missiles.

This story only makes sense if we understand why there are US military bases in the Middle East to begin with.

They are there to “defend” some very important “US interests” in the region. Iran’s efforts to deter attack threatens to undermine “the system” in the region. US leaders fear an independent and powerful Iran, as it may lead a movement away from the Imperial system and toward a more independent, regional system.

Iraq under Saddam Hussein was posing a similar threat, which goes a lot further in explaining the US attack on that country than all the talk of WMD or terrorism.

Now, just a few weeks after the United States “withdrew” from Iraq, the *Seattle Times* reports President Obama’s plans to “reshape the armed forces after a decade of

war” by “refocusing Pentagon spending to counter dangers from China and Iran.” And thus are the seeds of the next war planted. We don’t really know if those seeds of Imperial War will wither in the ground or grow into more attacks and more occupations. That script has not been written.

It’s urgent that we work to stop whatever war is being conducted in our name, whether it be a Mythical War in Iraq or a Propaganda War Against Terror. But if we want to address the root cause of war in the modern era – maybe any era – we would do well to challenge the dynamic of the Real War, and that is the dynamic of an ongoing Imperial War for control of the world’s wealth. **CT**

.....
Jeff Nygaard is a writer and activist in Minneapolis, Minnesota who publishes a free email newsletter called Nygaard Notes, found at www.nygaardnotes.org

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Cold, cold heart

Stranded in Bahrain, **Kathy Kelly** thinks about the children freezing to death in the mountains of Afghanistan

It's Valentine's Day as I write this, and opening the little cartoon on the Google page brings up a sentimental animation with Tony Bennett singing "Why can't I free your doubtful mind and melt your cold, cold heart."

Here in Dubai, where I'm awaiting a visa to visit Afghanistan, the weather is already warm and humid. But my bags are packed with sweaters because Kabul is still reeling from the coldest winter on record. Two weeks ago, eight children under age five froze to death there in one of the sprawling refugee camps inhabited by so many who have fled from the battles in other provinces.

Since January 15, at least 23 children under five have frozen to death in the camps.

And just over a week ago, eight young shepherds, all but one under 14 years of age, lit a fire for warmth on the snowy Afghan mountainside in Kapisa Province where they were helping support their families by grazing sheep.

French troops saw the fire, and acted on faulty information, and the boys were killed in two successive NATO airstrikes. The usual denunciations from local authorities, and Western apologies, followed. (*Trend News*, February 10, 2012).

So I'm thinking about warmth, and who we share it with and who we don't.

This is an unexpected trip for me. I had first planned to spend this week at home in Chicago, and then, rather suddenly, agreed to join a group of informal human rights observers traveling to Bahrain for the one year anniversary of their brutally repressed "February 17th Revolution". Bahraini authorities declined to issue me a visa, and so I asked the Afghan Youth Peace Volunteers if I could change my plans and spend the coming week with them.

My friends tell me that the apartment where I'm headed has been without electricity for several days in a row.

Winter vacation

The pipes have frozen, so there will be no running water. But in spite of the cold, it's an especially good time to visit them because twelve of them will be there, on winter vacation from school, including two 14-year-old boys I couldn't meet during my last visit who spent much of the last year away from the others, back home in Bamiyan province, in their mountain villages, supporting their families.

One father left the family to find work elsewhere and is now living in Iran. My young friend doesn't hear from his father much, but I wonder what he must think as war threatens to move there.

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If you fire enough
bullets where
there are children
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them
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The mother launders clothes to help make ends meet, but with one weak arm due to a history of polio, she can't earn enough for the family's food. Her son is an excellent student, but she's had to ask him to give up school and start adult work full time. Older members of the Afghan Youth Peace Volunteers have worked hard finding him odd jobs in various shops, hoping to put off the day when he will have to start full time work as a shepherd.

I've just, by coincidence, read the story of another young man, training for work in the mountains: the article reaches me from friends I have just left in Colorado Springs, and begins: "Pfc. Josh Harris pulled the charging handle of a grenade launcher on Thursday, leaned back and peered through the sights. His orders were clear. "All right," said Spc. Michael Breton, moments earlier.

"There is an ice cream truck out there. So shoot it." Pressing down with his thumbs, the MK-19 – a machine gun equipped with grenades instead of bullets – launched four training grenades 300 meters down a Fort Carson range." (www.gazette.com/articles/gis-133359-through-peered.html)

.....
Killing civilians

This is last-minute training before shipping out with the Fort's 4th Brigade Combat Team. "By March," the reporter continues, "he'll likely be watching grenades sail into the hillsides of eastern Afghanistan."

Everyone knows that these attacks will kill civilians – will kill children. If you fire enough bullets where there are children you're going to hit them.

A few days back filmmaker John McHugh described his twelve day stint embedded in the US' "Operation Mace" in Afghanistan's Nuristan province:

"Over the course of my stay on Mace, I witnessed the truly awesome firepower that the US military brings to a fight. Be-

tween their helicopters and jets they had dropped 19 bombs, fired two Hellfire missiles, 205 rockets, 500 rounds of 20 millimeter, and 210 rounds of 30-millimetre cannon. They also discharged 3,750 rounds of 50 caliber machine gun ammunition.

And yet, only once, could they confirm that they had killed a single Taliban fighter." McHugh wrote this for Mid-east-based broadcaster Al Jazeera ("The Winter War," February 9, 2012). Would a Western media outlet have bothered covering the story?

It's hard to fathom the vast indifference of Western observers to what their militaries are doing in Afghanistan – to the lives lost, the futures broken, the families and friendships and loves torn apart – all of which will occur in the next country we collectively agree to demolish, and the next.

Our apathy surely makes it easier for military and political elites to wage multiple wars. They count on us to look out at a world that we have been told is barbaric and feral, addled (unlike ours) with terrifying fundamentalism driving them (unlike us) to incessant violence.

We lull ourselves into a comforting delusion that we're waging humanitarian wars, and then wonder why people aren't more grateful. Thinking of ourselves as exceptionally noble, we're lost in denial masked as civilizing virtue as we hum along with Tony Bennett's puzzled lyrics:

*"I tried so hard my dear to show that
you're my only dream*

*Yet you're afraid each thing I do is just
some evil scheme.*

*A memory from your lonesome past keeps
us so far apart.*

*Why can't I free your doubtful mind, and
melt your cold, cold heart?"* **CT**

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Kathy Kelly (Kathy@vcnv.org) co-coordinates *Voices for Creative Nonviolence* (www.vcnv.org)

But the soldiers are still there

Edward S. Herman finds little enlightenment, but plenty of propaganda, in Steven Pinker's "long and pretentious" newest tome

Steven Pinker's new book, *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*, is a propaganda wind-fall for the leaders and supporters of the US imperial state, currently engaged in multiple wars, with over 800 military bases across the globe, asserting and using the right to kill untried "terrorists" any place on earth, and still operating a torture gulag abroad and a record-breaking and abusive prison system at home.

It is not surprising that the *New York Times* greeted the book so warmly, with a flattering front-page Sunday book review by the philosopher Peter Singer, who called Pinker's tome "supremely important" and a "masterly achievement" (October 9, 2011), along with other positive responses to Pinker's book. It reminds me of the welcome given Claire Sterling's *The Terror Network* in 1981, a book that fit so well the Reagan administration's attempt to demonize the Soviet Union, with the Soviets allegedly behind the world's terrorists (who included Nelson Mandela and his ANC as well as any other resistance movement in the Third World). Sterling's book was an intellectual disaster and fraud (see the critique in my *Real Terror Network*), but it was lauded by Reagan era officials and very respectfully treated in the mainstream media.

Pinker works the same track as Sterling. He swallows whole the old "containment"

**The Better Angels of Our Nature:
Why Violence Has Declined**
STEVEN PINKER
Viking (\$40)

model in which US policy from 1945 was designed to limit the expansionism of the Soviets and China ("The Cold War was the product of the determination of the United States to contain this movement [of the two great Communist powers] at something close to its boundaries at the end of World War II."), and even the huge Vietnam war death toll was, for Pinker, a result of the "fanatical" unwillingness of the Vietnamese to surrender to superior force! ("The three deadliest postwar conflicts were fueled by Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese communist regimes that had a fanatical dedication to outlasting their opponents.") This is pretty crude apologetics for aggression and mass killing.

There is a major problem for Pinker in the brute facts of a massive postwar global expansion of the United States, its immense military budget, all those bases, NATO's steady enlargement and its taking on of "out of area" responsibilities, all despite the disappearance of the main power allegedly needing containment (the Soviet Union).

In three major books during the past

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decade (*Blowback, Sorrows of Empire*, and *Nemesis*) analyst Chalmers Johnson has featured at length our “continuous military buildup since World War II and 737 military bases we maintain in other people’s countries”; the fact that “blowback,” including events like 9/11, is a response to imperial expansion and violence; and that “more than in most past empires, a well-entrenched military lies at the heart of our imperial adventures.”

Pinker deals with Chalmers Johnson and his ilk by the application of the “preferential method” of research, which is his *modus operandi* across the board. That is, he never mentions Johnson, and never addresses his facts and arguments. He also never cites Andrew Bacevich, another outstanding and experienced analyst who gives a lot of weight to the power of the military-industrial complex (MIC), its costliness and blowback consequences, and its threat to a democratic order. There is a string of other quality analysts on militarism, old and new, who Pinker avoids, including Gordon Adams, Richard Kaufman, Nick Turse, Thomas Carroll, William Blum, Robert Higgs, Ivan Eland, Winslow Wheeler, Miriam Pemberton, Frida Berrigan, William Hartung and Catherine Lutz. None of these names appear in Pinker’s fairly detailed index.

Pinker prefers James Sheehan, whose theme in *Where Have All the Soldiers Gone: The Transformation of Modern Europe* is that Europeans have changed their very conception of the state, and made the state “no longer the proprietor of military force” but rather “a provisioner of social security and material well-being” (Pinker’s summary). But the soldiers are still there, NATO is still expanding and it and Modern Europe are contributing soldiers to the Afghan war and were heavily involved in warfare in Libya and elsewhere. Furthermore, Europe’s social security systems have been under attack for years, and the well-being of ordinary citizens seems to be a declining objective of Europe’s leaders, as well as those in

the United States.

But for Pinker, Sheehan’s theme, even if misleading, is worth stressing, as it is an excellent substitute for discussing the growth and power of the MIC. Books like Johnson’s which tell us that the institutional forces related to the MIC overwhelm the “better angels,” are unacceptable to Pinker, so he ignores them and won’t debate the issues at stake.

As Chalmers Johnson himself says, when facts are too indigestible “ideological thought kicks in.” It does with Pinker. In one section of his book titled “Recent Biological Evolution?” (pp. 611-622), Pinker raises the possibility that the alleged trends in declines in violence that he purports to document have been products of the natural selection for less violent traits among specific populations of the human species, concentrated in recent centuries in geographic regions defined (roughly) as Western Europe and the United States – that is to say, those parts of the world where the “civilizing processes” of strong central states, liberal democracy, capitalism, open markets, trade, literacy, the Enlightenment, human rights activism, and the like, have come to dominate, so that peace is taking over because of the strengthening of the “better angel” elements of human nature.

Oddly and curiously, although Pinker clearly is friendly to this notion of a limited natural selection taking place among certain advantaged parts of the human population in the geographic regions just mentioned, he concludes this section of his book by dismissing it on the basis, not that he doesn’t believe it, but that in the final analysis, he doesn’t need it!

“Since it is indisputable,” he writes, “that cultural and social inputs can adjust the settings of our better angels (such as self-control and empathy) and thereby control our violent inclinations, we have the means to explain all the declines of violence without invoking recent biological evolution. At least for the time being, we have no need for

that hypothesis.” (pp. 621-622)

This line of argument has other amusing features. Pinker says that “another historic upheaval in the landscape of 20th century values was a resistance by the populations of the democratic nations to their leaders plans for war,” and he spends a fair amount of space describing the growth of peace movement activism in the 1960s and in advance of the war on Iraq. Contradictorily, elsewhere in his book he blames the 1960s movements for their “decivilizing” impact, perhaps inadvertently acknowledging that these protesters were trying to stop Pinker-approved – i.e., own-country – wars. Pinker notes that in the 1960s the peace movement helped elect Nixon, who “shifted the country’s war plans from a military victory to a face-saving withdrawal (though not before another twenty thousand Americans and a million Vietnamese had died in the fighting).”

This is his evidence on the anti-violence effectiveness of those peace movements. Note also that the million Vietnamese “died in the fighting.” Apparently there were no Vietnamese civilians killed by direct assault rather than fighting in battles, and elsewhere in this book Pinker is explicit that “at least 800,000 civilians *died in battle*” (p. 267, italics added; referencing Rudolph Rummel’s estimate of 843,000 civilian battle deaths, n. 184, p. 711).

But in the end, despite that great triumph in getting the peace-driven Nixon into office, Pinker fails to explain why the elites were then, and still remain, little influenced by the masses marching in the streets, who are displaying the growth in spirit of the “better angels.” Why must the masses even march in the streets? Why must the elites continue to engage in military buildups and serious violence, at heavy economic cost, when according to his preferred expert James Sheehan the state is abandoning military force and focusing on the material well-being of the public? If institutional forces are not the explanation why don’t the “better angels”

trickle up to the leadership?

Actually, as noted earlier Pinker does explain that the United States has been “containing” the big bad states, and he claims that in recent years we have only engaged in little wars, largely against the Uncivilized. In Iraq, “the interstate phase was quick, [and] most of the deaths in Iraq were caused by intercommunal violence,” obviously not our fault, and death counts are usually inflated by biased folks like the veteran analysts who produced two consecutive estimates of “excess mortality” rates in Iraq for the British medical journal *The Lancet* in 2004 and 2006.

Furthermore, although the top leaders (inexplicably) may still not be reluctant to go to war, in the lower ranks a new civilian-loving ethos has taken over: Pinker spends considerable space on the new Marine Code of Honor catechism, the Ethical Marine Warrior, whose principle is that the Marines must protect not only themselves and allies but “All Others.” Pinker says that even if this is only “an aspiration” it is a great innovation (which is not true: Army Codes have long been full of rules regularly ignored). He takes this claim of the new aspirational morality at face value, with further stories and quotes from Marines on their devotion to “all others.” Needless to say, Haditha and Falluja do not show up in Pinker’s index.

Back in the 18th century, Dr. Samuel Johnson said that “When I take up the end of the web, and find it pack-thread, I do not expect, by looking further, to find embroidery.” As the illustrations here strongly suggest, readers of Pinker’s long and pretentious work will not find enlightenment there. **CT**

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Needless to say,
Haditha and Falluja
do not show up in
Pinker’s index

Shoccer

Philip Kraske and his buddies sit in a bar and figure out how to make soccer appeal to a North American audience

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Probably the best part was when everybody started arguing with the Japanese (Chinese?) ref, who ended up doing a Nazi salute with a red card
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Three of us guys – Steve Smith, Fuzzy Millich, and me – tried to watch a soccer game last week. Fuzzy and I were pretty oh-my-god when Steve suggested it. I mean, soccer: twenty-odd guys running around a football field dying to use their hands. And the two or three goals that actually get made happen when you’re in the john pissing out whatever’s keeping you awake.

But what the hell. Steve had just got back from this incentive trip to London and had watched a World Cup game between England and France, which he says is a big rivalry there, like the Packers against the Vikes on Thanksgiving Day. Thing is, it was a lot better than he’d expected, what with the shouting and songs and this beer they have that rocks you down to your scrotum. (They were watching the game in a “pub.”)

Also this really nice guy leaned over from the next table and explained a few of the finer points to Steve and the other sales reps. Max-interesting, he said. Anyways, last Friday when it was like minus 7 outside, he spread out the beer and bratties, shooed his kids upstairs, turned on a game between Saudi Arabia and Sweden, and we gave it our best shot.

And I mean that: our best shot. Fuzz and I chucked attitude right overboard – minds open as a new turnpike. Steve pointed out a few things, like how one strategy is to just hail-Mary the ball to the other end of the field and hope for the best, and another is to work it

down the sidelines and at the last second boot it into The Area, which is like The Crease, but bigger, and hope for a header.

Fine and well, interesting as those things go. But hell, in forty minutes of play, what happened? Not a damn thing. No goals, no good fights – not so much as a leggy cheerleader. Probably the best part was when everybody started arguing with the Japanese (Chinese?) ref, who ended up doing a Nazi salute with a red card, which got everybody even more stirred up since, as Steve explained, it means you’re out of the game and nobody’s coming in to replace you – a little steep, if you ask me.

“I swear to the ever-lovin’ motherfucker himself,” said Fuzzy. “Other countries, man, it’s no wonder they need straightening out. No, no, I don’t care – they do. Look at that: five guys from Saudi Arabia, all with some education, guys who’ve been around the block a few times – and what do they do? They argue with a ref who can’t speak Saud.”

“They do that in Europe, too,” said Steve. “The ref always has to be a guy from another country. That way he won’t understand anybody.”

“Would you guys get a life? Those aren’t even Saudi Arabian players, most likely,” I said. Sometimes you just gotta be assertive, like Frank Sweldge, my hero, says. “Those are Argentinos or Malaysians – half of them, anyways. Saudis don’t play soccer themselves, they contract it all out.”

“The hell!” cried Fuzzy incredulously.

“Yeah, on their oil rigs I hear it’s all Americans and Kuwaitis and cheap-labor Mexicanotypes,” said Steve. “Can’t find a Saudi for love or money.”

“Till it comes time to cash in the crude, of course,” Fuzzy sneered.

I slipped them a fast one: “Anyways, it’s against Islam to kick a leather ball ‘cause it could be like their great-great-grandmother or somebody, reincarnated.”

Steve’s beer stopped in mid-upswing. “Oh. Jeez.” And this when Steve runs like twenty convenience stores, for God’s sake.

Fuzz didn’t even get that far – just stuffed more brattie in his yapper. I didn’t blow the whistle on them, since as Frank Sweldge once said, silence is the better part of valor.

Steve was pretty embarrassed about the soccer thing by then, of course, and flipped over to Sport-MegaLuso TV. I’d never seen it before, but Steve has a dish that can pick up Mars. And hey, it was great! Okay, the announcer was Spanish or something south-of-the-borderly, but these two guys were kickboxing, and hey, that is some very wicked stuff. Hell, it’s not like a sport has to be American for us to like it or anything. In the fourth round, the one guy knocked the other cold with – no shit – the inside of his ankle. On the replay you could see his bare foot behind the other guy’s head – which I thought was like pretty fucking incredible.

But that’s not my point here. The point of all this is that the next day, by some incredible coincidence, we were in Rolf’s Drinkery – down on Chestnut? – sipping brew ‘cause it was still doing like minus-60 wind-chill every night out there for a while, and what shows up on the big screen? Some Brit sports magazine show, and they were talking about that soccer game that we’d seen – Saudi Arabia-Sweden? Good thing we’d dropped it, turns out: the final score was 1-0.

First, the reporter showed the same one goal from three different camera angles. Fair enough. But then – get this – they showed what was almost a goal! No, that’s not a mis-

print. The news report showed a good half-dozen missed shots. Nothing happening was in the game’s highlights! We just couldn’t fucking believe it.

“Well, the guy’s gotta make up a 60-second report – producer’s counting on it. The hell else is he gonna do?” Steve said lamely. He still felt bad about boring Fuzzy and me.

“Those people have a problem big-time,” said Frank Sweldge. He’s a marketing exec for a video-game company, and just like kickass basic 24-7. “That sport can’t compete, not in today’s market anyways. I wouldn’t give it five more seasons to run.”

Thao “Tommy” Chung spoke up: “My dad loves soccer. He watches a game just about every day after lunch.” But you gotta give Tommy a little leeway here, seeing as how his father had been a Laotian Army colonel (ret.) around the fall of Saigon. He’d led his village all the way to Thailand, and only half of the 1200 people made it out alive. Tommy’s dad likes things quiet.

Gib Henderson: “Know what they oughta do there, see, is widen the goals a few feet.”

“A few yards, more like – shit!” said Fuzzy, and Steve stuffed his face in the suds real fast.

And that’s how the whole thing got started. We’re all pulling down brew and all of a sudden the ideas just start jumping out like welder’s sparks. Till Don “Shally” Shalishavilli said, “Hey! Why don’t we write this stuff down and send it to the NSL or whatever they have?”

“With all due respect, Shally: their country, their deal. Leave ‘em be,” said Ferd Gaarslund, who’s always trying to be “an influence,” which he figures he’s entitled to because he buys the *New York Times* Sunday edition every week. Brainy, you know. He can kiss my netherworlds.

“Tell the Japanese and the Germans, Ferd,” said Frank Sweldge, the marketing exec. “International stuff, that’s like my old Jag: great when it works.” Another piledriver that I personally thought was like max-fucking awesome. I guess that’s the kind of wisdom you pick up outguessing the markets all day.

So, without further to-do, here’s our list:

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In the fourth round, the one guy knocked the other cold with – no shit – the inside of his ankle

.....
Point is, put six women and a lake on the field, and the US soccer market is going to grow like mosquitoes in a junkyard tire. Who knows? With the right seed money, you might even end up with a North Atlantic Soccer Organization
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1) Put two balls on the field. This was Frank's idea, and it just kicks ass. We calculated that every game would average between twenty and thirty goals, and you know what that means: Showtime! Also, the goalkeeper would have to be blocking shots all game long, which would really boost his productivity. Frank immediately recognized that the novelty alone would guarantee success. "What other sport plays with two balls at once? Or two pucks or two bocce balls?" He added that this configuration would play hell on the TV coverage – no question there – but said this could be solved in highly creative ways.

2) Permit one player besides the goalkeeper to use his hands. Mike "Tankers" Tanakaki's idea. This would really give soccer a new dimension. The only thing is that the hand-player can't go into The Area. He has to stay outside, like playing high post in basketball. And each hand-player would be designated by a jersey number over eighty, like wide receivers.

3) Give the players some type of helmet and body protection. Chalk this one up to Rolf. Not only would this allow players to block and hit, like in football, but, much more important, it would keep players from falling down so often and gripping their knees because they got a wittle booboo. Steve, Fuzzy, and I just went ballistic at that stuff. It gives a really max-downside image of their country, and God knows we have enough of those.

4) Make a rule that at least three women from each team have to be on the field at any one time. Tim "Z" Zark (he started saying two women) had this idea at the same time as Bill Rodriguez (half the team); so both of them have to get some credit. Frank added that you could branch that into all kinds of merchandising, like team thongs and bras, training-camp reality shows and photo ops for the team webpage. (Talk about vision – wow.)

5) Put a small pond in the middle of the field. Who else but Frank? His idea was to put a pond 30 feet square at the center of the field.

Not deep – call it waist-high. Kevin ("Podge") Podzuweit pointed out that it would be impossible to kick a ball in a pond, but Frank, with a marketing exec's cunning, pushed right back at that one: when a ball falls into the pond, he said, everybody can use their hands. Or maybe only the women would be allowed in to duke it out for the ball. You'd want to really focus-group that one for family issues first.

Whatever. Point is, put six women and a lake on the field, and the US soccer market is going to grow like mosquitoes in a junkyard tire. Who knows? With the right seed money, you might even end up with a North Atlantic Soccer Organization. Talk about win-win! International stuff is great when it works, just like the master said.

Well, those are the ideas of twelve good men at Rolf's Drinkery in North Hoot, Minnesota. We had other ideas – tons – like putting Velcro on the ball and on players' shoes (Frank), or permitting the goalkeeper to move an XL goal along a rail (Alan "Porky" Peltier), or just reducing the field to half its length (Bill Feltowski), but these didn't quite tickle our tube socks, and didn't include women.

To be exciting or not to be exciting, that is the question. Frank, the marketing exec, said it best: "In today's global market, you gotta be exciting." Also, we want to emphasize that we totally respect others' culture and that only they can manage this issue as they think best. If they don't even want to call this "soccer" anymore, we fully understand and would like to suggest this name: "shoccer," a combination of "showtime" and "soccer." (Frank again – Jesus.) All of us at Rolf's pledge to give the new sport a full-frontal open-minder, bratties and the works, once the changes come on line. Seriously.

Now if somebody can get me the address of the NSL or whatever they have, I'll shoot this right off.

CT

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Philip Kraske's is an American author living in Madrid, Spain. His latest book, "Flight in February", is now available from Amazon.com

Lies killed the Colonel

Stan Winer looks at the strange circumstances surrounding the flight of Moammar Gaddafi and his gruesome death at the hands of rebel fighters

Dawn revealed an extraordinary sight in the Libyan coastal city of Sirte on the morning of 20 October 2011 – “extraordinary” that is if you disregard the fact that nothing could have been ordinary in a once beautiful city that now lay in ruins after weeks of continuous bombing and shelling by Nato and its surrogate rebel forces. Stiff resistance by loyalist snipers together with a clear lack of coordination and divisions among rebel forces at the front had effectively halted the rebel advance.

The rebel force, little more than an assembly of armed street hooligans, was rife with internecine disputes, untrained in tactics, and adept only at firing their weapons into the air and praising Allah, when not actually shooting each other. Although loyalist forces were encircled in a residential area of about 700 square yards, about 150 loyalist army snipers supported by armed civilian volunteers were directing accurate fire at the rebels from surrounding buildings. In an illustration of how fiercely defended the loyalist position was, it took the anti-Gaddafi rebels a full two days to capture a single residential building as the Nato-backed rebels continued taking heavy casualties.

Nothing short of a tactical nuclear weapon would have been able to dislodge the firmly entrenched loyalist resistance, and that would have entailed unacceptable civilian casualties or “collateral damage” as the military fondly

refers to it. In sum, the rebels were unable to capture Colonel Moammar Gaddafi or defeat remnants of the Libyan Army and its high command. The battle of Sirte was at stalemate, preventing Libya’s new leaders from declaring full victory in the eight-month civil war and causing significant military and political embarrassment to Nato.

But now, on this fateful morning, white flags are flying at multiple locations across District Two of the besieged and devastated town, signifying at least a temporary unarmed truce. In the preceding days loyalist commanders and tribal elders, with the knowledge of rebel commanders, had been negotiating a safe passage for their forces and families from Gaddafi’s tribe, who make up the majority of Sirte’s population, to leave the battered and besieged city.

The only precondition for this to happen, according to rebel commander Touhami Zayani of the El-Farouk brigade leading the attack on Sirte, was for loyalists to lay down their arms. Since nobody could move freely or safely around the embattled city, the negotiations would have been conducted mainly by satellite phone, meaning that Nato intelligence, through its electronic surveillance and communications interception systems, would have been fully aware of the negotiations and the truce terms under discussion.

According to Gaddafi’s son Saif al-Islam, as quoted on the official resistance website Lib-

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Commanders and tribal elders had been negotiating a safe passage for their forces and families from Gaddafi’s tribe to leave the battered and besieged city

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A South African member of the escort told how he and other private security personnel had been given the impression that Nato “wanted Gaddafi out of Libya”, as part of a negotiated peace deal; but it became clear that Gaddafi had been set up as a target for assassination
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ya SOS, the last time he contacted his father a few hours before the convoy was attacked, his father assured him he had received assurances “from Americans” allowing him safe passage out of Sirte to the south of Libya without prosecution or bombing. We may never know for certain what exactly happened next, but the official version released by Nato from its operational base in Naples the following day reads as follows:

“At approximately 08h30 local time (GMT+2) on Thursday 20 October 2011, NATO aircraft struck 11 pro-Qadhafi military vehicles which were part of a larger group of approximately 75 vehicles maneuvering in the vicinity of Sirte. These armed vehicles were leaving Sirte at high speed and were attempting to force their way around the outskirts of the city. The vehicles were carrying a substantial amount of weapons and ammunition posing a significant threat to the local civilian population.

“The convoy was engaged by a NATO aircraft to reduce the threat. Initially, only one vehicle was destroyed, which disrupted the convoy and resulted in many vehicles dispersing and changing direction.

“After the disruption, a group of approximately 20 vehicles continued at great speed to proceed in a southerly direction, due west of Sirte, and continuing to pose a significant threat. NATO engaged these vehicles with another air asset. The post strike assessment revealed that approximately 10 pro-Qadhafi vehicles were destroyed or damaged.

“At the time of the strike, NATO did not know that Qadhafi was in the convoy. NATO’s intervention was conducted solely to reduce the threat towards the civilian population, as required to do under our UN mandate. As a matter of policy, NATO does not target individuals.

“We later learned from open sources and Allied intelligence that Qadhafi was in the convoy and that the strike likely contributed to his capture.

“NATO does not divulge specific information on national assets involved in operations.”

That’s the official version. The unofficial version, less bland and based on information less widely circulated at the time, is somewhat more revealing. A total of 50 private security personnel, including 19 South Africans, had been recruited to travel to Libya to neutrally escort Colonel Gaddafi and his entourage from Sirte to southern Libya or over the border to Niger. On arrival in Libya the contract personnel – some would say mercenaries – travelled by road from Tripoli in a column of about 25 vehicles to rendezvous with Gaddafi and his entourage at a location in Sirte, without once being stopped or questioned at rebel roadblocks or security checkpoints.

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Peace deal

A South African member of the escort, in interviews with the South African Afrikaans language newspaper *Rapport* on 22 and 29 October, described how he and other private security personnel forming the escort had been given the impression that Nato “wanted Gaddafi out of Libya”, as part of a negotiated peace deal; but as things turned out, it became clear to him that Gaddafi had been set up as a target for assassination.

The neutral and unarmed convoy had assembled at the rendezvous point during the night of 19/20 October, but as dawn broke the vehicles came under Nato air attack. This was not a sustained attack but more in the nature of a warning shot across the bows, to remind the convoy commanders they were under constant surveillance. The Canadian commander of Nato operations Lieutenant-General Charles Bouchard later admitted Nato’s concern that the departing loyalist force from Sirte would “join with the remnants of forces from Bani Walid and move into another desert area”, meaning apparently an area not earlier agreed upon in the truce conditions.

About 20 minutes after Nato’s aerial warning shot, the convoy commanders decided to take advantage in the lull of Nato air activity and make a run for it – only to again come

under fire at a traffic roundabout on the outskirts of the city. As Bouchard later described it, this attack was designed to break the convoy into “manageable chunks”. And so it did: the convoy split up with vehicles heading in separate directions before coming under a third and final air attack.

The vehicles in which Gaddafi and his closest advisors were travelling headed straight into the arms of the waiting rebel Misrata brigade. Human Rights Watch visited the site where Muammar Gaddafi was captured, and there it found the remains of at least 95 people who had died that day. The vast majority had apparently died in the fighting and Nato strikes prior to Gaddafi’s capture, but between six and ten of the dead appeared to have been executed at the site with gunshot wounds to the head and body. Some of the bodies were burnt beyond recognition.

Nato never did explain why only about 25 damaged or burnt-out convoy vehicles were found at the sites of the attacks, whereas earlier Nato had publicly claimed the existence of 75 vehicles in the convoy. But then Nato never has been noted for accuracy or for setting the record straight.

Astonishingly, according one of the private security personnel who survived the attack, the rebel forces regarded captured members of the escort amicably as “allies”. All the surviving contract personnel were released immediately after the ambush while one of the escort party who had been wounded in the ambush was swiftly transported to Cairo for medical attention. Significantly, this was at a time when real or perceived “mercenaries” elsewhere were ruthlessly being hunted down and slaughtered by rebel forces.

“Protecting secrets”

National Transitional Council (NTC) spokesman Ibrahim Betamal, in an interview with the GlobalPost website after Gaddafi was executed, said Gaddafi had been “shot by one of his own snipers. He died from these wounds. They killed him to protect secrets ...

I believe this sniper was placed with Gaddafi to kill him if he was captured.” NTC leader Mustafa Abdel-Jali, addressing world media, repeated more or less the same claim that Gaddafi had been killed by his own people. Abdel-Jamal’s version differed only to the extent that Gaddafi had been killed “during the clashes with his supporters while arresting him.” The NTC had “formed a committee to investigate how Gaddafi was killed,” Abdel-Jali informed the world media. This so-called committee never did materialize.

There was neither examination of ballistic and forensic evidence nor any identification of objective eyewitnesses. Gaddafi’s body was buried at a secret location somewhere in the desert, and many unanswered questions remain buried with him to this day. But one fact is indisputable: the colonel was sadistically tortured before being killed. Cell phone videos taken by bragging rebels at the scene, and which soon found their way onto GlobalPost, clearly showed a blood bespattered Gaddafi, barely alive, being sodomised with a stick or knife by his captors. Then he was wounded at close range with a gunshot to the stomach, and died some time later of a gunshot to the head.

The mainstream media, while exultantly parroting the official version that Gaddafi had been killed “by his own supporters while attempting to escape”, was careful not to mention anything about an unarmed truce, about torture by sodomy, or about the convoy travelling in broad daylight whereas it is obvious a planned bid to escape would of necessity have been carried out under cover of darkness to avoid detection. Nor was there any photographic or other convincing evidence of the convoy having being “armed” as claimed falsely by Nato and dutifully regurgitated by the media.

None of the media queried how 50 foreign contract security personnel traveling in convoy from Tripoli had managed to avoid being challenged at roadblocks and security checkpoints along the way, and then cross the frontline at Sirte and openly assemble in

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Almost everything reported hysterically by the mainstream Western media about the Libyan civil war has been proved wrong
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a free-fire zone subject to continuous Nato air and satellite surveillance. The fact that these issues are not public knowledge says a lot about the mainstream media.

Nor did the mainstream media ever bother to remind anyone that a white flag is meant to signify to everyone concerned that a truce is called and an approaching party is unarmed, as prescribed in the Geneva and Hague protocols of international humanitarian law, which prohibit the killing or injuring of persons outside of combat and doing so constitutes a major war crime.

Almost everything reported hysterically by the mainstream Western media about the Libyan civil war has been proved wrong, in particular the media myth emanating from NTC sources that opposition to Gaddafi was a peaceful movement when “10,000 opposition protestors were killed in Benghazi by Gaddafi’s government.”

The reality, as established independently by Amnesty International, was that the rebellion, far from being a peaceful movement, had been armed from the very first day of the uprising; and 10,000 people had not been killed in Benghazi by Gaddafi’s government but 110 killed on both sides prior to NATO’s intervention on the pretext of “protecting civilians”.

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“Demented terrorist”

There are a few other things about Gaddafi that are either studiously avoided or grossly distorted by a Western media long obsessed with demonizing the colonel – their favourite pejoratives being “tyrant”, “despot”, “ruthless dictator”, “demented terrorist”, “embezzler” and so on. They purposefully ignore what this despised “tyrant” really gave to Libya. He had inherited the poorest country in the world and turned it into one of the richest in Africa, providing the country with the highest Human Development Index on the continent. He provided Libyans with free electricity, with literacy and free ed-

ucation, and paid for university grants. Ten percent of Libyan students studied abroad, paid for by the Libyan state, board and lodging included. He granted gender equality to Libyan women; gave every newly married couple US\$50,000 to set up home; paid for half their first car; provided interest-free bank loans; provided free medical assistance; built the world’s most advanced water supply and irrigation system; and provided farmers with land, seeds, tools and instruction.

Gaddafi helped free Africans from foreign domination, exploitation, imperialism, colonialism and racism; he supported generously the cause of pan-Africanism through funding of the Organisation of African Unity; he financed Africa’s first communications satellite, the Regional African Satellite Communication Organization (RASCOCOM) satellite, thus freeing Africans from exorbitant payments to western communications monopolies; he approved equitable foreign loan agreements so that Africans could be freed from paying excessive interest to foreign banks; he paid annual revenue from oil directly into the bank accounts of ordinary Libyan citizens.

That’s what the tyrant Gaddafi did for Libya and for Africa. It did not endear him to the West nor to Islamic fundamentalists and some of the Arab world’s more autocratic and ideologically backward reactionaries.

In the meantime, and until America, Britain and France declassify secret intelligence documents detailing the sequence of events leading up to and including the assassination of Colonel Gaddafi – and they are unlikely to do so in the foreseeable future – we will never know the full circumstances of the “tyrant’s” capture, torture and execution. **CT**

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Stan Winer is a South African-based writer, researcher and journalist specializing in media monitoring and international military-political affairs. More of his work is available online at www.truth-hertz.net

Time to recognise Blair's criminality

Gareth Peirce's new book reveals shocking truths about the brutal actions of the former British PM, writes **John Pilger**

In the Kabuki theater of British parliamentary politics, great crimes do not happen and criminals go free. It is theatre after all; the pirouettes matter, not actions taken at remove in distance and culture from their consequences. It is a secure arrangement guarded by cast and critics alike. The farewell speech of one of the most artful, Tony Blair, had "a sense of moral conviction running through it," effused the television presenter Jon Snow, as if Blair's appeal to Kabuki devotees was mystical. That he was a war criminal was irrelevant.

The suppression of Blair's criminality and that of his administrations is described in Gareth Peirce's "Dispatches from the Dark Side: On Torture and the Death of Justice," published in paperback last month by Verso. Peirce is Britain's most distinguished human rights lawyer; her pursuit of infamous miscarriages of justice and justice for the victims of state crimes, such as torture and rendition, is unsurpassed. What is unusual about this accounting of what she calls the "moral and legal pandemonium" in the wake of 9/11 is that, in drawing on the memoirs of Blair and Alistair Campbell, Cabinet minutes and MI6 files, she applies the rule of law to them.

Advocates such as Peirce, Phil Shiner and Clive Stafford-Smith have ensured the indictment of dominant powers is no lon-

ger a taboo. Israel, America's hit man, is now widely recognized as the world's most lawless state. The likes of Donald Rumsfeld now avoid countries where the law reaches beyond borders, as do George W. Bush and Blair.

Deploying sinecures of "peacemaking" and "development" that allow him to replenish the fortune accumulated since leaving Downing Street, Blair's jackdaw travels are concentrated on the Gulf sheikhdoms, the US, Israel and safe havens like the small African nation of Rwanda. Since 2007, Blair has made seven visits to Rwanda, where he has access to a private jet supplied by President Paul Kagame. Kagame's regime, whose opponents have been silenced brutally on trumped-up charges, is "innovative" and a "leader" in Africa, said Blair.

Blair shock

Peirce's book achieves the impossible on Blair: it shocks. In tracing the "unjustifiable theses, unrestrained belligerence, falsification and willful illegality" that led to the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, she identifies Blair's assault on Muslims as both criminal and racist. "Human beings presumed to hold [Islamist] views were to be disabled by any means possible, and permanently ... in Blair's language a 'virus' to be 'eliminated' and requiring 'a myriad of interventions

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Blair's jackdaw travels are concentrated on the Gulf sheikhdoms, the US, Israel and safe havens like the small African nation of Rwanda

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In one stricken village, Bibi Mahru, I witnessed the aftermath of a single Mk82 “precision” bomb’s obliteration of two families, including eight children
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[sic] deep into the affairs of other nations.” Whole societies were reduced to “splashes of colour” on a canvas upon which Labour’s Napoleon would “re-order the world.”

The very concept of war was wrenched from its dictionary meaning and became “our values versus theirs.”

The actual perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks, mostly Saudis trained to fly in America, were all but forgotten. Instead, the “splashes of colour” were made blood red – first in Afghanistan, land of the poorest of the poor. No Afghans were members of al-Qaeda; on the contrary, there was mutual resentment.

No matter. Once the bombing began on 7 October 2001, tens of thousands of Afghans were punished with starvation as the World Food Program withdrew aid on the cusp of winter.

In one stricken village, Bibi Mahru, I witnessed the aftermath of a single Mk82 “precision” bomb’s obliteration of two families, including eight children.

“TB [Tony Blair],” wrote Alistair Campbell, “said they had to know that we would hurt them if they don’t yield up OBL [Osama bin Laden].”

The cartoon figure of Campbell was already at work on concocting another threat in Iraq. This “yielded up,” according to the MIT Center for International Studies, between 800,000 and 1.3 million deaths: figures that exceed the Fordham University estimate of deaths in the genocide in Rwanda.

And yet, wrote Peirce, “the threads of emails, internal government communiqués reveal no dissent.” Interrogation that included torture was on “the express instructions ... of government ministers.”

On 10 January 2002, Foreign Secretary Jack Straw emailed his colleagues that sending British citizens to Guantanamo Bay was “the best way to meet our counter terrorism objective.”

He rejected “the only alternative of repatriation to the United Kingdom.” (Later appointed “Justice Secretary,” Straw sup-

pressed incriminating Cabinet minutes in defiance of the Information Commissioner). On 6 February 2002, Home Secretary David Blunkett noted that he was in “no hurry to see any individuals returned to the UK [from Guantanamo].”

Three days later, Foreign Office Minister Ben Bradshaw wrote, “We need to all that we can to avoid the detainees being repatriated to the UK.” Not one of the people to whom they refer had been charged with anything; most had been sold as bounties to the Americans by Afghan warlords. Peirce describes how Foreign Office officials, prior to an inspection of Guantanamo Bay, “verified” that British prisoners were being “treated humanely” when the opposite was true.

Immersed in its misadventure and lies, listening only to their leader’s crooned “sincerity,” the Labour government consulted no one who spoke the truth.

Peirce cites one of the most reliable sources, Conflicts Forum, run by the former British intelligence officer Alastair Crooke, who argued that to “isolate and demonise [Islamic] groups that have support on the ground, the perception is reinforced that the west only understands the language of military strength.”

In willfully denying this truth, Blair, Campbell, and their echoes planted the roots of the 7/7 attacks in London.

Today, another Afghanistan and Iraq beckon in Syria and Iran, perhaps even a world war. Once again, voices such as Crooke’s attempt to explain to a media salivating for “intervention” in Syria that the civil war in that country requires skilled, patient negotiation, not the provocations of the British SAS (Special Air Service) and the familiar, bought-and-paid-for exiles who ride in Anglo-America’s Trojan Horse. **CT**

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John Pilger recently received the top prize in the annual awards, presented in London, of the British Grierson Trust for his documentary films

The land where Tony Blair is a hero

Trevor Grundy tells why people want to name a future Chinese-built airport after the disgraced British leader

Ten years after the end of a war which left Sierra Leone, a once-promising West African country, economically bankrupt and morally drained, Anthony Charles Lynton Blair, aka Tony Blair, stays on as 'local hero' in the minds and lives of most Sierra Leoneans.

"He's my hero," the general manager of the Sierra Leone News Agency, Augustus Kamara, told me at the end of a Government/Commonwealth Secretariat-sponsored Media and Development in a Post-Conflict Sierra Leone Forum held at Freetown in January.

Amazement must have registered on my face.

"I named my third child after Tony Blair who was Prime Minister of Britain in 2000," he said while showing a group of journalists around his offices in downtown Freetown.

"That man had the courage to defy the world and send nearly 1,000 British to my country. The British and UN peacekeepers – 17,000 in all – disarmed tens of thousands of rebels and ended a terrible war that has ruined everything."

He said: "I never saw people getting their hands and legs chopped up by rebels but it happened only six miles from this office." He peered out of the window towards a nearby Anglican church and thousands of brightly clad people passing by, many of them school age children. "Today, you

can see amputees everywhere you go. But things are starting to improve. Look outside – children going to school, people look better fed, they have more confidence. We have to put the past behind us and begin again and Tony Blair helped us do that."

And ... "When we get a new Chinese-built airport in Sierra Leone, I want it to be called The Tony Blair International Airport. I will lobby for that."

In a country almost full of Muslims with rich Arabic-sounding first names how did his son's peers react, I asked.

"My third son was born in May 2001. When I read Tony Blair's book "My Journey," I saw that he was also born in May (1953) so we gave him all of the great man's names – Anthony Charles Lynton Blair ... Kamara. My son is now 11 years old and he's very proud of his name. Sometimes people call me 'Tony Blair' in the street. I like that very much."

I said: "I think Tony Blair's more popular in your country than he is in mine (England)."

Mr Kamara, a veteran journalist who lived through the worst days Sierra Leone's blood diamonds war, which left so many dead and even more suffering today from undiagnosed and unhealed post-traumatic stress disorders, looked at me as if I'd landed from another planet.

Those of a certain age in Sierra Leone

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"When we get a new Chinese-built airport in Sierra Leone, I want it to be called The Tony Blair International Airport. I will lobby for that."

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Dozens of young men on crutches, somehow smiling and laughing idolize soccer star David Beckham, who bothered to fly to Freetown and hold a series of soccer clinics for people without arms and legs
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2012, remember Tony Blair as a man of principle and courage who dared defy his critics by sending soldiers into Freetown in 2000 whose military expertise and daring scared away drug and alcohol-fuelled teenage gangs whose trademark action was to cut the hands, arms, feet and legs off civilians.

Walk along the magnificent beaches outside the capital and see what I saw.

Dozens of young men on crutches, somehow smiling and laughing, ambitious young soccer players who not only admire Tony Blair but who idolize soccer star David Beckham, who bothered to fly to Freetown and hold a series of soccer clinics for people without arms and legs who love the Beautiful Game.

“Tony Blair ... David Beckham ... Wayne Rooney ... Man U... we love them all,” said one man in his twenties. He had no feet and was swinging himself along on crutches with a group of friends, the same age, the same problem.

Blair’s political courage and Britain’s military expertise restored security to Sierra Leone. What’s needed now is a mood of national confidence and realistic plans to revitalise the economy.

Unemployment and widespread corruption hold back development in this diamonds and other minerals rich nation of just under six million people – about 50 per cent of them under the age of 15.

And one of Sierra Leone’s most urgent problems lies untouched – how to heal as many as 500,000 men, women and children suffering from post-traumatic stress disorders which include widespread drug and alcohol abuse, an inability to sleep or work ... maybe even to love or show affection.

That matter was raised at the Media and Development Conference when a delegate from the Commonwealth Journalists Association (CJA) asked how the Commonwealth could help – possibly by sending in trained psychiatric doctors and nurses on a voluntary basis: Sierra Leone has only one trained psychiatrist.

The well-respected Dr Julius Spencer, a former Minister of Information and one of the country’s leading newspaper proprietors, rose and replied:

“Post traumatic stress disorder?”

“We don’t recognize the problem. We don’t think post-traumatic stress disorders exist. When someone’s behaving abnormally we say – Oh, he’s just mad. We laugh at him. We taunt them on the streets. They throw stones at them. If you look at some of the people roaming the streets, you can easily recognize the signs.

“There’s one guy in my area where I live who always dresses like a soldier. He will take a stick, carve it like a weapon and hangs it on his shoulder and then you look and see he’s wearing ... what do you call them ... a sort of bullet-proof jacket and he stands on the same spot every day, not moving. That guy was obviously a combatant or had some experience with combatants that made him lose his mind.”

He added: “Sierra Leone today is very prone to violence. Some who were combatants knew you could get what you wanted by violent means during the war. People still think you can get anything you want by violence. And there has been a collapse of culture and our religious beliefs. We don’t tell stories to our children any more. They contained moral lessons, how to behave properly. Now, they’re left on their own to watch television and movies. Blue movies are shown at 2a.m. in those small video halls up and down the country. Children don’t go to school and they go instead and watch these films. There’s no regulation. There’s no control.”

With great sadness in his voice and with words that deeply moved conference delegates, who included the Botswana-born Deputy Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, Mmasekgoa Masire-Mwamba, and the Commonwealth Acting Director of Communications and Public Affairs, Kenya-born Manoah Esipisu, he said:

“As soon as a war breaks out, or ends, in

Africa some British journalist has written a book about it. When it comes to telling the full horror of what happened to Sierra Leone from 1991 to 2002 we keep quiet. I have kept quiet. It's time Sierra Leoneans told their own story.”

During my brief stay in Freetown, I was hosted by the Chinese-managed Bintumani Hotel which had the headquarters of rebels during the war. A strange, unhappy, disturbing, atmosphere pervaded despite the Chinese decorations (and food) and a TV set that seemed to be on 24 hours a day during the Africa Cup Football Competition that was taking place.

Buildings, like us, have memories.

On the last day I had lunch with a friend from The Gambia. During the meal a woman in her 40s or 50s came to our table and yelled at me. I was stunned. What had I said, what had I done to cause offence?

She was hauled away by hotel guards and a policeman and pushed – roughly – into the hotel garden and then told to get away from the building. Guards with guns shouted in

Krio that she was mad.

Later, my Gambian colleague explained what had happened.

The woman had been told we were journalists. And she had been telling us, in a terrible state of emotion in a language I did not understand, that a long time ago in the mid-1990s she had brought her children to this place. They had been taken away. She never saw them again.

“Where are they? Help me find them?”, she had pleaded to us before being taken away.

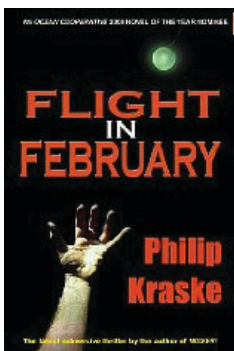
I finished my beer and ate my rice and chicken and remembered what Dr Spencer said the day before: “We throw stones at them . . . we taunt them . . . we say that they are mad. Traumatic stress disorder. We don't admit it exists.”

CT

Trevor Grundy is the author of “Memoir Of A Fascist Childhood.” He spent many years working as a journalist in Africa and now lives in Kent, England, where he works as an author, broadcaster and researcher

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She was hauled away by hotel guards and a policeman and pushed – roughly – into the hotel garden and then told to get away from the building

“Kraske’s command of plot, dialog and character is staggering. Whatever he puts his pen to, whether essay or fiction, makes for a great read” – ColdType



FLIGHT IN FEBRUARY

Did drug-trafficker Marcus Strenk escape from Minnesota’s maximum-security prison during a blizzard – or die trying? Deputy Marshal Henry Scott believes that Strenk found a way past the highly sophisticated security system and made it to freedom. But the search Scott puts into gear is quickly spiked by Alec Barkley, the very FBI agent who had put Strenk in jail – spiked, that is, until Strenk’s cheery note from outside arrives at the prison. Barkley puts every available agent on the manhunt. Henry Scott meanwhile examines Barkley’s earlier espionage operation against Strenk’s Mexican connections – and ends up stepping through the looking glass. (Read the first chapter at <http://www.philipkraske.com/index.php?id=63>)

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Why an Israeli boycott is just

Ramzy Baroud Israeli misinformation, name-calling and intimidation is no longer working, writes **Ramzy Baroud**

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The issue is not about hummus, chocolate bars or Dead Sea vacations. It is about civil society taking full responsibility for its own action (or lack of). The issue is not exactly about Israeli products either, but rather about how even a seemingly innocent decision like buying Israeli dates may enable the continued subjugation of the Palestinian people.

Because the global Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement (BDS) highlights this, the reaction it often generates is charged and vehement. Many also react to the BDS because it actually works. Israeli supporters have every right to be concerned that their carefully customized discourse on Israel's infallibility (juxtaposed with Palestinian depravity) – which has been promoted for decades in various media and political outlets in the US and Western countries – is now simply falling apart.

The recent University of Pennsylvania BDS conference, organized by student group, PennBDS, was the latest example to illustrate both the effectiveness of the global movement and also of the real worry felt by supporters of Israel in the United States. Knowing fully that facing BDS allegations head on would most likely be unsuccessful, they organized around misinformation, name-calling and intimidation.

However, the tired strategy is no longer bearing fruit.

Israel's Zionist supporters made every attempt to galvanize the Jewish community in Philadelphia into targeting the conference that called for Israel to be held accountable for its military occupation, racial discrimination and flagrant violations of international law.

One of those angered by the conference is Ruben Gur, a professor of psychiatry at the university. In an article published in the *Daily Pennsylvanian*, he likened the conference organizers to Nazis. "A relevant precedent for such a movement is the groups organized by the Nazis in the 1930s to boycott, divest and sanction Jews and their businesses," he wrote, perhaps knowing fully the historical inaccuracy of his statement.

Penn President Amy Gutmann and Trustees Chair David L. Cohen insisted that allowing PennBDS to organize was merely a moral duty aimed at "protecting speech we may not like" (a strangely balanced statement, to say the least).

"The University has repeatedly, consistently and forcefully expressed our adamant opposition to this agenda. Simply stated, we fundamentally disagree with the position taken by PennBDS," they wrote in the *Daily Pennsylvanian*.

The debate registered in every available medium and extended far beyond the parameters of the university itself.

Bizarrely, the Jewish Federation of Great-

er Philadelphia wished to counter the BDS conference by hosting no other than Alan Dershowitz to deliver an emergency speech on campus. Dershowitz, known for his inflammatory rhetoric and smearing approach to pro-Palestinian activists, was forced to change tactics, as the conference and the controversy it generated allowed BDS activists a platform to organize and convey a clear and peaceful message. “The BDS conference gives us an opportunity to respond to hate with positive messages,” Dershowitz said, as reported in Philadelphia’s *Jewish Exponent* newspaper.

Fear and weakness

Those involved in promoting causes of peace and justice know well that such hysteria is an indication of fear and palpable weakness. The pro-Israeli logic – justifying racial superiority, rationalizing military occupation, defending ethnic cleansing – is simply worthless in the face of an articulate opposing message.

Therefore, whenever confronted by such events, Israeli-sympathizers resort to igniting ‘controversy’. This is fed mostly by biased reporting, inflammatory language and unfounded accusations. Professor Gur was unmatched in representing the model, as he attacked even the student newspaper itself:

“I could barely believe my eyes. It is bad enough that Penn has allowed itself to be associated with this hateful genocidal organization, but for you to give room for their ‘explanation’ and then dignify this outpouring of misinformation and anti-Semitism...”

Still, “while the opponents of BDS were busy name-calling, the people at the conference were engaged in pointing out the facts on the ground,” according to Uri Hores, an Israeli peace activist (writing in *+972* magazine). These include: “practical facts, historical facts and legal facts, presented by experts in international human rights law like Noura Erakat, who provided the confer-

ence with a comprehensive overview of the complex legal system under which Palestinians live.”

According to Hores, the Penn conference was “modeled after a similar conference held in 2009 at Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts.”

This is very important since the success of these initiatives, despite the defamations and exaggerated controversy, invite discussions elsewhere. One such precedent was in April 2010, when the student senate at the University of California, Berkeley debated the issue of divestment from US companies that were “materially or militarily profiting” from the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories.

A divestment bill was put to a vote. Notable individuals including Noam Chomsky, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Naomi Klein and Alice Walker issued statements in support of the bill, while Nobel laureates Shirin Ebadi, Mairead Maguire, Rigoberta Menchu Tum and Jody Williams signed a letter echoing the outpouring of support: “We stand united in our belief that divesting from companies that provide significant support for the Israeli military provides moral and strategic stewardship of tuition and taxpayer-funded public education money. We are all peace makers, and we believe that no amount of dialogue without economic pressure can motivate Israel to change its policy of using overwhelming force against Palestinian civilians.”

It should be noted that the outpouring of support for BDS initiatives was hardly done at the behest of any individual or group. Rather it was a response to a call made by 171 Palestinian civil society organizations in July 2005.

The Middle East region is already testimony to the rise of people power which has inspired the world. BDS is a mere continuation of a global struggle for justice, and PennBDS are but mere facilitators of an expanding movement that will surely usher real change in a long-stagnant colonial par-

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APARTHEID AGAIN?

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adigm. Prominent Palestinian activist Ali Abunimah told the conference in his keynote speech: "This insane hysteria about the conference tells us something about the moment we are in. In terms of the battle of ideas, we are in the end game."

A growing number of people are already realizing this fact. One of the US's most celebrated rock musicians, Cat Power, cancelled her Israel show, "joining a list of artists shunning the country," according to the *Washington Post* (Feb 10). She canceled a scheduled Tel Aviv concert because she

felt "sick in her spirit". Numerous artists, companies and ordinary individuals also feel that way, proving that global solidarity is not a sentimental value, but real podium for those who wish to bring about positive change. **CT**

Ramzy Baroud (www.ramzybaroud.net) is an internationally-syndicated columnist and the editor of PalestineChronicle.com. His latest book is "My Father Was a Freedom Fighter: Gaza's Untold Story" (Pluto Press, London).



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Pressing flesh

A short story by PuzzleMonkey

Barack Obama had long before perfected the side-long glance at his reflection while seeming to pay attention to a speaker. Withers ticked their foreign options from a list but Obama was thinking *presidential*.

Presidential really did describe his profile. Lean, searing. Regal. His greatest regret was that he ruled an era where those in the employ of large public corporations weren't allowed to grow a beard. He pictured a Lincoln-esque swathe of curls bestriding his chin on a five thousand dollar note, on a portrait, on Mount Rushmore.

"Sir?"

"Yes, Withers?"

"We were looking at your options, Mr. President."

"I'm sorry, Withers, I was occupied. What are we looking at?"

"We were thinking Middle East or Africa, Sir."

"We should try Iran," said Michelle. She looked stunning in a flowing turquoise evening dress with an elegant undertow of lace at her feet.

She didn't wear light colours often enough, Obama thought. Part of him wondered, again, if she was worried about her skin showing up darker against pastels. The thought of Iran made him wince. It always left a bad taste in his mouth. "What do we have in African options?"

"Sudan, Somalia, Uganda, Booroondi or the Congo, Mr. President." His staff knew well enough never to mention Kenya in front of him.

Once more Obama showed his mastery at slicing through clutter and making an instantaneous decision that would most likely prove correct when all the information was in. "Let's go with Uganda, Withers."

Actually, it hadn't been that hard. He had personal ex-

perience of the Sudanese and the Somalis, and they were tough. Just thinking about the Congo gave him indigestion and no one had ever heard of anything good coming out of Booroondi.

"I will stick with Iran, thank you very much, Mister Withers," said Michelle and smiled innocently at her husband.

Was she testing him? He shrugged. Time would vindicate him.

"Very well, Madame. Mister President." Withers gave a hint of a bow and withdrew.

The president glanced at his profile more openly and rubbed his chin. Perhaps after his successor's election? Would three months be enough to grow a real beard?

The food arrived, steaming and fragrant. Once more his judgement had been spot on. Michelle took two bites of the Iranian, pronounced it bitter and stringy, leaned over and tucked into the president's Ugandan.

He nodded as he sliced more of the dark meat and it fell away from the bone.

"Hm-mmmm," she said. "Just melts."

He gave a wry smile as he ladled gravy. The old Southern joke was right. Once you've tasted black meat, you won't go white again. "Withers?"

"Yes, Mister President?"

"Find out if Cheney still runs his hunting parties, will you?"

CT

PuzzleMonkey is perpetually perplexed by the behaviour patterns of the hairless apes, and tries to work through this by writing odd pieces of short and longer fiction. For light relief he shoots and edits video, and has recently started a blog at www.pzmk.co.za

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