

**THE WAR ON CYBER-ACTIVISTS | NICOLE COLSON**  
**THE PRESIDENT'S NEW JACKET | CHELLIS GLENDINNING**  
**INSIDE THE SAUSAGE FACTORY | BOB CORRIGAN**

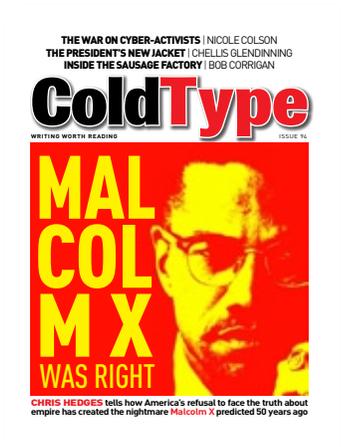
# ColdType

WRITING WORTH READING

ISSUE 94



**CHRIS HEDGES** tells how America's refusal to face the truth about empire has created the nightmare **Malcolm X** predicted 50 years ago



# ColdType

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# 37 years in isolation for using Facebook

In the South Carolina prison system, the punishment for accessing Facebook may be as serious as that for murder, writes **Dave Maas**

In the South Carolina prison system, accessing Facebook is an offense on par with murder, rape, rioting, escape and hostage-taking. Back in 2012, the South Carolina Department of Corrections (SCDC) made “Creating and/or Assisting With A Social Networking Site” a Level 1 offense, a category reserved for the most violent violations of prison conduct policies. It’s one of the most common Level 1 offense charges brought against inmates, many of whom, like most social network users, want to remain in contact with friends and family in the outside world and keep up on current events. Some inmates ask their families to access their online accounts for them, while many access the Internet themselves through a contraband cell phone (possession of which is yet another Level 1 offense).

Through a request under South Carolina’s Freedom of Information Act, the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) found that, over the last three years, prison officials have brought more than 400 disciplinary cases for “social networking” – almost always for using Facebook. The offenses come with heavy penalties, such as years in solitary confinement and deprivation of virtually all privileges, including visitation and telephone access. In 16 cases, inmates were sentenced to more than a decade in what’s called disciplinary detention, with at least one inmate receiving more than 37 years in isolation.

The sentences are so long because SCDC issues a separate Level 1 violation for each day that an inmate accesses a social network. An inmate who posts five status updates over five days, would receive five separate Level 1 violations, while an inmate who posted 100 updates in one day would receive only one.

In other words, if a South Carolina inmate caused a riot, took three hostages, murdered them, stole their clothes, and then escaped, he could still wind up with fewer Level 1 offenses than an inmate who updated Facebook every day for two weeks.

So extreme is the application of this policy that SCDC is forced to regularly suspend solitary confinement sentences because of a lack of space in disciplinary segregation. In many cases, the punishments associated with using social media are so unnecessarily long that inmates will never actually serve them since they exceed their underlying prison sentences.

Prison systems have a legitimate interest in keeping contraband devices out of their facilities and preventing inmates from engaging in illegal activities through the Internet. But South Carolina’s policy goes too far, and not only because of the shockingly disproportionate punishments. The policy is also incredibly broad; it can be applied to any reason an inmate may ask someone outside to access the Internet for them, such as having a family member manage their online finan-

**SCDC is forced to regularly suspend solitary confinement sentences because of a lack of space in disciplinary segregation**

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## PRISON LIFE

**As punishment for social media use, inmates also lose “good time” days that would had otherwise resulted in early release**

cial affairs, working with activists to organize an online legal defense campaign, sending letters to online news sites, or just staying in touch with family and friends to create the type of community support crucial to reintegrating into society.

There is also a censorship component.

Facebook has processed hundreds of requests from SCDC officers who want inmates’ profiles taken down. Facebook’s stated policy is to suspend these pages under the auspices of Terms of Service (ToS) violations – specifically, purported violations of terms banning users from using aliases or sharing passwords with third parties – effectively allowing SCDC to censor inmates’ online speech. Yet, as described below, Facebook goes beyond its stated policy and agrees to SCDC requests to censor inmate pages even when no ToS violation has been alleged. In addition, Facebook seems to have taken no action against SCDC investigators who regularly violate these same terms in uncovering inmate profiles.

What’s more, this process is veiled in secrecy, with both Facebook and SCDC failing to create a public record paper trail documenting the takedown of inmate pages.

It’s time for South Carolinians to demand a review of this policy and for Facebook to reevaluate its role in helping prison systems censor and excessively punish inmates.

Prisons and jails across the country have been looking for new ways to keep inmates off the Internet, not only by investing in controversial new cell-tracking technologies, but also using social networks as an avenue to find and punish inmates.

South Carolina adopted a Level 1 social media offense to punish “Creating and/or Assisting With A Social Networking Site,” defined as: “The facilitation, conspiracy, aiding, abetting in the creation or updating of an Internet web site or social networking site.”

SCDC defines “social networking” very broadly, covering everything from YouTube and Twitter to blogs and email, although all of the cases EFF reviewed involved Facebook.

Investigations are conducted by corrections officers and inmates are convicted during disciplinary hearings that often last mere minutes. Since the policy was implemented, SCDC has brought 432 disciplinary cases against 397 inmates, with more than 40 inmates receiving more than two years in solitary confinement.

Here are some of the most severe social media punishments we’ve seen:

- In October 2013, Tyheem Henry received 13,680 days (37.5 years) in disciplinary detention and lost 27,360 day (74 years) worth of telephone, visitation, and canteen privileges, and 69 days of good time – all for 38 posts on Facebook.

- In June 2014, Walter Brown received 12,600 days (34.5 years) in disciplinary detention and lost 25,200 days (69 years) in telephone, visitation, and canteen privileges, and 875 days (2.4 years) of good time – all for 35 posts on Facebook.

- In May 2014, Jonathan McClain received 9,000 days (24.6 years) in disciplinary detention and lost 18,000 days (49 years) in telephone, visitation, and canteen privileges, and 30 days of good time – all for 25 posts on Facebook.

The average punishment length for a “social networking” case was 512 days in disciplinary detention, and the average length of lost privileges was even longer.

So disproportionate are these punishments that South Carolina doesn’t have space in disciplinary detention for all the offenders and “regularly” is forced to put the punishments on hold. In the cases of the three above inmates, SCDC says that none will serve the full punishment since they will be released from prison within the next five to 10 years.

As punishment for social media use, inmates also lose “good time” days that would had otherwise resulted in early release. Since 2012, inmates have collectively lost 14,564 “good time” days, the equivalent of 44 extra years in prison. In fiscal terms, that’s approximately \$842,000 more that taxpayers will have to pay to keep inmates behind bars –

just because they posted on Facebook.

SCDC investigators use a variety of tools to catch inmates on social media. Sometimes, evidence is obtained during cell phone searches. Other times, investigators simply hear inmates talking about accessing Facebook.

In summer 2014, SCDC launched a mechanism for crowdsourcing social media investigations with a prominent button on the front page of its website, encouraging the public to report inmates using social media to SCDC. In only eight months, SCDC has collected 230 submissions from the public about inmates using social networks and cell phones.

SCDC also uses outside contractors in its investigations, paying \$12,500 to an unnamed entity for unspecified services. All but the price tag was redacted from the document provided to EFF under South Carolina's Freedom of Information Act.

Certain other tactics are more alarming. In response to inquiries from EFF, SCDC acknowledged that staff obtained inmate passwords through various means, including from inmates informing on inmates, family members, and the inmates themselves. In violation of Facebook's Terms of Service, SCDC staff have used those passwords to access inmate accounts.

SCDC investigators have also created fake social media profiles in order to catch inmates in the act – again, a clear violation of Facebook's Terms of Service. Unfortunately, all information regarding these investigations is shielded from disclosure under the state's Freedom of Information Act.

In addition to the potential legal issues these practices may raise, the policies also pose problems for Facebook, which, as of February 3, has processed 512 “deactivation requests” from South Carolina corrections officers since 2012.

### **Facebook: Prison censor**

Facebook has made it all too easy for prisons to report inmates for having profiles: the site has a form titled “Inmate Account Takedown

Request.” A corrections officer only needs to enter a few pieces of information about the inmate – the inmate's name, profile link, and the crime for which they're being imprisoned, but not the purported violation of Facebook's Terms of Service – to get the inmate's profile taken down.

In direct discussions with EFF, Facebook repeatedly asserted it does not enforce prison policies. Rather, according to Facebook, when a corrections officer contacts Facebook about an inmate page, Facebook staff may suspend the account on the grounds that the inmate violated the site's Terms of Service.

Specifically, Facebook pointed to terms that forbid users from sharing their passwords or otherwise allowing other people to access their accounts, a practice common among inmates. Facebook claims that they suspend inmate accounts for violations of this policy not only because of the ToS violation, but also because it protects the inmate's privacy. Facebook also forbids the use of aliases, which inmates also frequently employ.

However, prisons are aware of how to exploit Facebook's Terms of Service, with the Federal Bureau of Prisons even quoting the terms in handbooks and presentations, adding that “Facebook also deactivates prisoner pages, regardless of who set up the page.”

Facebook says this isn't true, but its claim that it does not enforce prison policies is contradicted by correspondence that shows Facebook explicitly censored a South Carolina inmate's page when no ToS violation was alleged.

In July 2014, a South Carolina corrections officer emailed Facebook asking for the removal of the profile of an inmate who had violated prison policy by accessing Facebook through a cell phone. Accessing Facebook through a contraband cell phone in itself does not seem to be a ToS violation. But Facebook still removed the page – not for a ToS violation, but for breach of “inmate regulations.”

Remarkably, this email exchange occurred after Facebook assured EFF it was not doing this exact thing.

**SCDC acknowledged that staff obtained inmate passwords through various means, including from inmates informing on inmates, family members, and the inmates themselves**

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## PRISON LIFE

**Even if you take Facebook at its word – i.e., that it only enforces its own Terms of Service (despite the evidence to the contrary) – the company is guilty of applying a double standard when it comes to ToS violations**

This was the only email chain between Facebook and SCDC that EFF received in response to the FOIA request. That's because Facebook's system allows for secret censorship. Inmate takedown requests usually occur through Facebook's online form, which, as a Facebook employee told SCDC in a follow-up email, does not generate a receipt email. This means that more than 500 inmate take down requests have been filed without any kind of paper trail accessible to the inmate or the public – a lack of transparency that is simply not acceptable when government-instigated censorship is involved.

Even if you take Facebook at its word – i.e., that it only enforces its own Terms of Service (despite the evidence to the contrary) – Facebook is guilty of applying a double standard when it comes to ToS violations. SCDC's practices of logging into inmate's accounts and creating fake profiles is a clear violation of not only its ToS, but also the very same terms inmates are accused of violating. Despite SCDC's rule-breaking, Facebook allows SCDC to maintain its own public Facebook page, where it posts career fair notices and positive news stories about its programs.

When EFF pointed this out, Facebook said it would remove any of SCDC's secret alias pages we could identify – but this is a next to impossible feat given that information about such secret aliases isn't publicly available through South Carolina's FOIA.

### Ensuring accountability

South Carolina may be unique only in the frequency and severity with which it enforces social media punishments. In New Mexico, an inmate was sentenced to 60 days in solitary confinement after his family members accessed Facebook on his behalf. In Alabama, a law was recently passed to make it a misdemeanor to serve as a go-between for an inmate who wants to post information to the Internet.

These policies have not gone unchallenged. An Arizona law forbidding inmates from accessing the Internet through a third

party was struck down as unconstitutional. The Florida Department of Corrections backtracked on a policy proposal similar to South Carolina's after the Florida Justice Institute and other civil liberties groups threatened litigation. The ACLU of Indiana has filed a lawsuit alleging First Amendment violations when prison officials punished an inmate after his sister launched a social media campaign to get him freed.

SCDC has set up a system that allows prison administrators to hold inmates longer, in harsher conditions, and to largely cut them off from the rest of the world. South Carolinians should demand an immediate review of how this policy is applied.

We're also calling on Facebook to embrace the position that inmate communication often has public value, such as when inmates raise issues about possibly unconstitutional prison conditions and other irregularities in the criminal justice system.

Steps Facebook should take include:

- Stop censoring inmates without first evaluating whether a serious ToS violation has occurred (such as harassing a victim or engaging in a criminal enterprise).

- Eliminate the inmate takedown feature, or, at the very least, ensure that a public record (such as a receipt email) is generated every time a prison official files a takedown request and every time Facebook complies.

- Revise its transparency report to include detailed numbers of takedown requests Facebook has received, what agency sent each request, and how Facebook responded.

- Hold law enforcement agencies, such as prisons, accountable for abusing Facebook's ToS.

- Revise its transparency report to include detailed numbers of takedown requests Facebook has received, what agency sent each request, and how Facebook responded.

Balancing the rights of inmates with public safety is a tricky task, but prisons – and the companies that assist them – must consider proportionality and fairness for justice to be truly served.

**CT**

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*Dave Maass is the Media Relations Coordinator and Investigative Researcher for the Electronic Frontier Foundation, at whose website – <http://eff.org> – this article was first published*

# Money to burn

While millions can't even afford to feed their kids, the super rich are hiring a Swiss company to name theirs, says **Sam Pizzigati**



**Rolling in cash:** In Dubai, one hotel is bouncing guests by helicopter.

Photo: Priyambada Nath

Some day soon, will all our jobs involve keeping extraordinarily rich people entertained? These days, that prospect doesn't seem all that far-fetched.

"The rich," as journalist Chanelle Tourish notes, "seem to be willing to pay almost any price for outstanding service and experiences."

And plenty of people are rushing to provide them. Tourish, a reporter who watches wealth in the Middle East luxury hub of Dubai, recently gave us a peek at how inventive today's serve-the-rich set can be.

In Dubai this month, for instance, one gilded hotel is bouncing guests – by helicop-

ter – from one local restaurant to another for an evening of fine and flying dining. Just \$5,000 per couple.

Some super rich don't particularly enjoy going out on the town. These homebodies can now bring the town – or at least the world's top celebrity chefs – into their own homes. For the right price, agencies in the United States and the UK will arrange for the world's top cooking superstars to cater your next dinner party.

The right price? That can run up to \$65,000 per meal.

But food only takes you so far. You need music, too, to pull off a memorable soirée. Not a problem if you have the bucks. Lots of

**For the right price, agencies in the United States and the UK will arrange for the world's top cooking superstars to cater your next dinner party**

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## THAT'S RICH

**A Swiss company, Erfolgswelle, will happily research a unique name for your new addition to humankind. Cost? Just \$30,000**

bucks. Talent agencies no longer just book their clients into arenas and nightclubs. They book their talent into mansions, too.

Want a stud like Ed Sheeran singing at your personal shindig? Count on paying somewhere between \$300,000 and \$500,000 for the privilege.

Or you can go in a slightly more ambitious direction. You can book a superstar for your own private party and then reserve an entire nightclub as your party site. One club in Dubai even offers a valet service for helicopters. Match that, Manhattan!

A really rich life, of course, must have more than parties. Today's ultra rich have a serious side, too. They like to reflect on the lives they're leading – and make sure the rest of us realize just how diligently they've been reflecting. A company called My Special Book can help here. The expert staff at this global service will actually write your autobiography for you. This book-birthing process typically takes six to ten months – for just around \$150,000.

And if you'd rather birth a kid than a book, the serve-the-rich crowd has another innovative little service for you. A Swiss company, Erfolgswelle, will happily research a unique name for your new addition to humankind. This name comes guaranteed not to belong to anyone else on Earth. Expect to pay north of \$30,000 for your one-of-a-kind moniker.

How many people can afford services like these? Researchers at Wealth-X and Sothe-

by's International Realty have just counted up 211,275 people worldwide with personal fortunes over \$30 million.

These "ultra high net worth individuals" – the financial industry's polite label for the filthy rich – typically hold about 30 percent of their net worth in houses, yachts, and other fixed property assets. That leaves a lot of liquid assets sloshing around in their portfolios for renting divas and figuring out what to name their kids.

Do these ultras, we wonder, ever stop to think about the millions of people on our planet who can't even afford to adequately feed their kids?

Probably not too often. Fortunately, we have other people on our planet who do think about this stark contrast between the super rich and everybody else – like the folks at the global charity Oxfam.

These good people have launched an international Even It Up campaign that's seeking – through vehicles like taxes on financial speculation and wealth – to put some of those dollars now spent on helicopter joy rides to some more productive uses.

More productive uses, I suspect, won't be especially hard to find. **CT**

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**Sam Pizzigati**, an Institute for Policy Studies associate fellow, edits the inequality weekly *Too Much* at <http://toomuch.org> His latest book is "The Rich Don't Always Win: The Forgotten Triumph over Plutocracy that Created the American Middle Class".

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# Inside the sausage factory

**Bob Corrigan** tells what he learned when he watched Britain's House of Lords at work

**F**ans of *The Simpsons* might recall an episode entitled *Mr Spritz Goes to Washington*. Krusty the Clown gets elected to Congress and the family receives an education in the activities required to get things done in the political capital. Against the ever-decent Lisa's better judgement, they surreptitiously attach a change to air traffic control law to a bill giving US flags to orphans. The provisions get passed, thereby curing the Simpsons' recent air traffic noise pollution problem created by Mayor Quimby.

A version of the Simpson's 2003 scenario played out recently in Britain's House of Lords after a group of peers attached 18 pages of amendments to the Counter Terrorism and Security Bill currently being fast-tracked through parliament.

These amendments effectively amounted to an attempt to sneak what has been dubbed the snooper's charter into law by the back door. This is basically the same snooper's charter that was only recently emphatically rejected by a parliamentary committee.

It requires all communications service providers to retain metadata on browsing activity, email correspondence and social media accounts for a period of 12 months – thus dramatically expanding the state's surveillance capacity in the name of fighting terrorism and organised crime.

The bill was junked the first time round

because many MPs felt the costly measures it proposed failed to respect the privacy of citizens and that the Home Office was using “fanciful and misleading” excuses to undermine fundamental human rights.

## Inside the sausage factory

Watching laws or sausages being made was not a pastime recommended by Otto Von Bismark but what passes for debate in Westminster really should be compulsory viewing.

But I logged in anyway, to watch the Lords debate this bill again, with a fresh focus on the recent attack in Paris. This latest session in the sausage factory was illuminating in many ways. For a start, I learned that baddies are bad and that we should be afraid of them. And while the Lords don't really understand newfangled technology, those baddies definitely do.

Luckily for their lordships, four of their number have substantial experience as members of the security establishment, and they came to save the day by clipping the thoroughly discredited snooper's charter to the already hugely problematic Counter Terrorism & Security Bill.

They and their supporters argued we need targeted rather than mass surveillance (although how that squares with bringing in a mass surveillance bill is anyone's guess). They also informed their fellow parliamen-

**This latest session in the sausage factory was illuminating in many ways. For a start, I learned that baddies are bad and that we should be afraid of them**

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## LEGAL TWIST

### Parliament should not pass general and obscure laws that give security apparatchiks carte blanche to do anything with no checks and balances

tarians that action is urgently needed, otherwise they will all be blamed for not taking a stand.

Don't wait for evidence on the problem, they urged, the nation's security is too important for that. And certainly don't listen to the "emotive claptrap" being peddled by opponents. This bill is needed to protect children. Thank goodness someone is thinking of the children.

Perhaps it's a little harsh to suggest there is no evidence that this bill is needed. Cross-bench peer and onetime police commissioner Ian Blair, for one, was clear on this point.

"It was communications data that enabled the French police to establish a connection between the two men who shot 12 people dead at the offices of *Charlie Hebdo* in January; and again between those men and the assailant who killed a police officer on the streets of Paris and four others in a Koshersupermarket the same week".

This is, of course, the only way the police could have worked out the Kouachi brothers were brothers and certainly the only way they could have worked out that the two attacks were connected (other than the widely shared online video in which the third man, Amedy Coulibaly, explicitly stated as much).

Additionally, I learned we must immediately stop referring to the amendments to the bill as the "snoopers' charter". It's an affront to the police and security services that attributes exclusively malign motives to these brave men and women.

#### Voices of reason?

Batting for the opponents to the Krusty the Clown manoeuvre were a number of members of the upper house, who were angered at the way the technological gap between the goodies and baddies is being exaggerated.

The police already have excellent data handling and processing systems, they argued, and have said all they wanted was the "who, where and when", not the "sweeping

powers" the snooper's charter represents.

They point out that clause one of the snooper's charter is so obscure and so broad that it effectively has no limits. It essentially gives the government lawful access to all communications data with no meaningful oversight or control.

Parliament should not pass general and obscure laws that give security apparatchiks carte blanche to do anything with no checks and balances. It would be an affront to parliamentary democracy to bounce these kinds of powers into law by attaching them, in undiluted form, to a fast-tracked bill.

During this debate, Conservative peer and Home Office minister Michael Bates confirmed, as various members of the Lords had claimed, that the government has snooper's charter 2.0 waiting in the wings.

This masterpiece of parliamentary drafting can't be made available yet but some people have seen it and it is said to address almost all the concerns parliamentarians raised about the first version.

And so the peers dropped their attempt to slip the amendments through on this occasion, withdrawing the amendment.

And in the course of dropping it, Conservative peer Tom King made a very important point:

"What I do know is that the moment you get a terrorist outrage is when all the wrong things are decided. The pressure comes on that something has to be done, and it is much better to have decided in advance what you are going to do, in a measured way".

Yet it was King who pulled a Krusty the Clown by trying to tack the amendment onto the bill in the first place – using the Paris attacks as leverage. So perhaps what I learnt most of all while watching their lordships, is that securocrats never let a terrorist attack go to waste.

**CT**

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*Ray Corrigan is Senior Lecturer in Technology at Britain's Open University. This article was first published at <http://theconversation.com>*

# Malcolm X was right about America

America's refusal to face the truth about empire has created the nightmare Malcolm X predicted 50 years ago, writes **Chris Hedges**

**M**alcolm X, unlike Martin Luther King Jr., did not believe America had a conscience. For him there was no great tension between the lofty ideals of the nation – which he said were a sham – and the failure to deliver justice to blacks. He, perhaps better than King, understood the inner workings of empire. He had no hope that those who managed empire would ever get in touch with their better selves to build a country free of exploitation and injustice. He argued that from the arrival of the first slave ship to the appearance of our vast archipelago of prisons and our squalid, urban internal colonies where the poor are trapped and abused, the American empire was unrelentingly hostile to those Frantz Fanon called “the wretched of the earth.” This, Malcolm knew, would not change until the empire was destroyed.

“It is impossible for capitalism to survive, primarily because the system of capitalism needs some blood to suck,” Malcolm said. “Capitalism used to be like an eagle, but now it's more like a vulture. It used to be strong enough to go and suck anybody's blood whether they were strong or not. But now it has become more cowardly, like the vulture, and it can only suck the blood of

the helpless. As the nations of the world free themselves, then capitalism has less victims, less to suck, and it becomes weaker and weaker. It's only a matter of time in my opinion before it will collapse completely.”

King was able to achieve a legal victory through the civil rights movement, portrayed in the new film “Selma.”

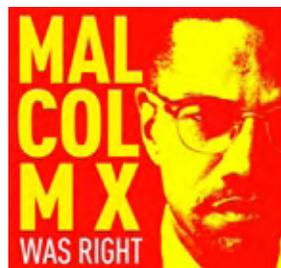
But he failed to bring about economic justice and thwart the rapacious appetite of the war machine that he was acutely aware was responsible for empire's abuse of the oppressed at home and abroad. And 50 years after Malcolm X was assassinated in the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem by hit men from the Nation of Islam, it is clear that he, not King, was right. We are the nation Malcolm knew us to be. Human beings can be redeemed. Empires cannot. Our

refusal to face the truth about empire, our refusal to defy the multitudinous crimes and atrocities of empire, has brought about the nightmare Malcolm predicted. And as the Digital Age and our post-literate society implant a terrifying historical amnesia, these crimes are erased as swiftly as they are committed.

“Sometimes, I have dared to dream ... that one day, history may even say that my voice – which disturbed the white man's

**50 years after Malcolm X was assassinated in the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem by hit men from the Nation of Islam, it is clear that he, not King, was right**

## COVER STORY



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## INSIDE THE EMPIRE

**Until we heed Malcolm X, until we grapple with the truth about the self-destruction that lies at the heart of empire, the victims, at home and abroad, will mount**

smugness, and his arrogance, and his complacency – that my voice helped to save America from a grave, possibly even fatal catastrophe,” Malcolm wrote.

The integration of elites of color, including Barack Obama, into the upper echelons of institutional and political structures has done nothing to blunt the predatory nature of empire. Identity and gender politics – we are about to be sold a woman president in the form of Hillary Clinton – have fostered, as Malcolm understood, fraud and theft by Wall Street, the evisceration of our civil liberties, the misery of an underclass in which half of all public school children live in poverty, the expansion of our imperial wars and the deep and perhaps fatal exploitation of the ecosystem. And until we heed Malcolm X, until we grapple with the truth about the self-destruction that lies at the heart of empire, the victims, at home and abroad, will mount.

Malcolm, like James Baldwin, understood that only by facing the truth about who we are as members of an imperial power can people of color, along with whites, be liberated. This truth is bitter and painful. It requires an acknowledgment of our capacity for evil, injustice and exploitation, and it demands repentance. But we cling like giddy children to the lies we tell ourselves about ourselves. We refuse to grow up. And because of these lies, perpetrated across the cultural and political spectrum, liberation has not taken place. Empire devours us all.

“We’re anti-evil, anti-oppression, anti-lynching,” Malcolm said. “You can’t be anti- those things unless you’re also anti-the oppressor and the lyncher. You can’t be anti-slavery and pro-slavemaster; you can’t be anti-crime and pro-criminal. In fact, Mr. Muhammad teaches that if the present generation of whites would study their own race in the light of true history, they would be anti-white themselves.”

Malcolm once said that, had he been a middle-class black who was encouraged to go to law school, rather than a poor child

in a detention home who dropped out of school at 15, “I would today probably be among some city’s professional black bourgeoisie, sipping cocktails and palming myself off as a community spokesman for and leader of the suffering black masses, while my primary concern would be to grab a few more crumbs from the groaning board of the two-faced whites with whom they’re begging to ‘integrate.’ ”

### Ripped apart

Malcolm’s family, struggling and poor, was callously ripped apart by state agencies in a pattern that remains unchanged. The courts, substandard schooling, roach-filled apartments, fear, humiliation, despair, poverty, greedy bankers, abusive employers, police, jails and probation officers did their work then as they do it now. Malcolm saw racial integration as a politically sterile game, one played by a black middle class anxious to sell its soul as an enabler of empire and capitalism.

“The man who tosses worms in the river,” Malcolm said, “isn’t necessarily a friend of the fish. All the fish who take him for a friend, who think the worm’s got no hook on it, usually end up in the frying pan.” He related to the apocalyptic battles in the Book of Revelation where the persecuted rise up in revolt against the wicked.

“Martin [Luther King Jr.] doesn’t have the revolutionary fire that Malcolm had until the very end of his life,” Cornel West says in his book with Christa Buschendorf, “Black Prophetic Fire.” “And by revolutionary fire I mean understanding the system under which we live, the capitalist system, the imperial tentacles, the American empire, the disregard for life, the willingness to violate law, be it international law or domestic law. Malcolm understood that from very early on, and it hit Martin so hard that he does become a revolutionary in his own moral way later in his short life, whereas Malcolm had the revolutionary fire so early in his life.”

There are three great books on Malcolm X: “The Autobiography of Malcolm X: As Told to Alex Haley,” “The Death and Life of Malcolm X” by Peter Goldman and “Martin & Malcolm & America: A Dream or a Nightmare” by James H. Cone.

On Friday I met Goldman – who as a reporter for a St. Louis newspaper and later for *Newsweek* knew and covered Malcolm – in a New York City cafe. Goldman was part of a tiny circle of white reporters Malcolm respected, including Charles Silberman of *Fortune* and M.S. “Mike” Handler of the *New York Times*, who Malcolm once said had “none of the usual prejudices or sentimentalities about black people.”

Goldman and his wife, Helen Dudar, who also was a reporter, first met Malcolm in 1962 at the Shabazz Frosti Kreem, a Black Muslim luncheonette in St. Louis’ north-side ghetto. At that meeting Malcolm poured some cream into his coffee. “Coffee is the only thing I liked integrated,” he commented. He went on: “The average Negro doesn’t even let another Negro know what he thinks, he’s so mistrusting. He’s an acrobat. He had to be to survive in this civilization. But by me being a Muslim, I’m black first – my sympathies are black, my allegiance is black, my whole objectives are black. By me being a Muslim, I’m not interested in being American, because America has never been interested in me.”

He told Goldman and Dudar: “We don’t hate. The white man has a guilt complex – he knows he’s done wrong. He knows that if he had undergone at our hands what we have undergone at his, he would hate us.” When Goldman told Malcolm he believed in a single society in which race did not matter Malcolm said sharply: “You’re dealing in fantasy. You’ve got to deal in facts.”

Goldman remembered, “He was the messenger who brought us the bad news, and nobody wanted to hear it.” Despite the “bad news” at that first meeting, Goldman would go on to have several more interviews with him, interviews that often lasted two or

three hours. The writer now credits Malcolm for his “re-education.”

Goldman was struck from the beginning by Malcolm’s unfailing courtesy, his dazzling smile, his moral probity, his courage and, surprisingly, his gentleness. Goldman mentions the day that psychologist and writer Kenneth B. Clark and his wife escorted a group of high school students, most of them white, to meet Malcolm. They arrived to find him surrounded by reporters. Mrs. Clark, feeling that meeting with reporters was probably more important, told Malcolm the teenagers would wait. “The important thing is these kids,” Malcolm said to the Clarks as he called the students forward. “He didn’t see a difference between white kids and kids,” Kenneth Clark is quoted as saying in Goldman’s book.

### **Deeply sensitive**

James Baldwin too wrote of Malcolm’s deep sensitivity. He and Malcolm were on a radio program in 1961 with a young civil rights activist who had just returned from the South. “If you are an American citizen,” Baldwin remembered Malcolm asking the young man, “why have you got to fight for your rights as a citizen? To be a citizen means that you have the rights of a citizen. If you haven’t got the rights of a citizen, then you’re not a citizen.” “It’s not as simple as that,” the young man answered. “Why not?” Malcolm asked.

During the exchange, Baldwin wrote, “Malcolm understood that child and talked to him as though he was talking to a younger brother, and with that same watchful attention. What most struck me was that he was not at all trying to proselytize the child: he was trying to make him think. ... I will never forget Malcolm and that child facing each other, and Malcolm’s extraordinary gentleness. And that’s the truth about Malcolm: he was one of the gentlest people I have ever met.”

“One of Malcolm’s many lines that I liked was ‘I am the man you think you are,’ ”

**“We don’t hate. The white man has a guilt complex – he knows he’s done wrong. He knows that if he had undergone at our hands what we have undergone at his, he would hate us”**

**“When white folks pretend that they want Negroes to be free, and Negroes pretend to white folks that they really believe that white folks want ’em to be free, it’s an era of hypocrisy, brother”**

Goldman said. “What he meant by that was if you hit me I would hit you back. But over the period of my acquaintance with him I came to believe it also meant if you respect me I will respect you back.”

Cone amplifies this point in “Martin & Malcolm & America”:

“Malcolm X is the best medicine against genocide. He showed us by example and prophetic preaching that one does not have to stay in the mud. We can wake up; we can stand up; and we can take that long walk toward freedom. Freedom is first and foremost an inner recognition of self-respect, a knowledge that one was not put on this earth to be a nobody. Using drugs and killing each other are the worst forms of nobodiness. Our forefathers fought against great odds (slavery, lynching, and segregation), but they did not self-destruct. Some died fighting, and others, inspired by their example, kept moving toward the promised land of freedom, singing ‘we ain’t gonna let nobody turn us around.’ African-Americans can do the same today. We can fight for our dignity and self-respect. To be proud to be black does not mean being against white people, unless whites are against respecting the humanity of blacks. Malcolm was not against whites; he was for blacks and against their exploitation.”

### **Lost voices**

Goldman lamented the loss of voices such as Malcolm’s, voices steeped in an understanding of our historical and cultural truths and endowed with the courage to speak these truths in public.

“We don’t read anymore,” Goldman said. “We don’t learn anymore. History is disappearing. People talk about living in the moment as if it is a virtue. It is a horrible vice. Between the twitterverse and the 24-hour cable news cycle our history keeps disappearing. History is something boring that you had to endure in high school and then you are rid of it. Then you go to college and study finance, accounting, business man-

agement or computer science. There are damn few liberal arts majors left. And this has erased our history. The larger figure in the ’60s was, of course, King. But what the huge majority of Americans know about King is [only] that he made a speech where he said ‘I have a dream’ and that his name is attached to a day off.”

Malcolm, like King, understood the cost of being a prophet. The two men daily faced down this cost.

Malcolm, as Goldman writes, met with the reporter Claude Lewis not long before his Feb. 21, 1965, murder. He had already experienced several attempts on his life.

“This is an era of hypocrisy,” he told Lewis. “When white folks pretend that they want Negroes to be free, and Negroes pretend to white folks that they really believe that white folks want ’em to be free, it’s an era of hypocrisy, brother. You fool me and I fool you. You pretend that you’re my brother, and I pretend that I really believe you believe you’re my brother.”

He told Lewis he would never reach old age. “If you read, you’ll find that very few people who think like I think live long enough to get old. When I say by any means necessary, I mean it with all my heart, my mind and my soul. A black man should give his life to be free, and he should also be able, be willing to take the life of those who want to take his. When you really think like that, you don’t live long.”

Lewis asked him how he wanted to be remembered. “Sincere,” Malcolm said. “In whatever I did or do. Even if I made mistakes, they were made in sincerity. If I’m wrong, I’m wrong in sincerity. I think that the best thing that a person can be is sincere.”

“The price of freedom,” Malcolm said shortly before he was killed, “is death.” **CT**

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*Chris Hedges, a Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter, writes a regular column for Truthdig – <http://truthdig.com> – every Monday.*

# America goes to Ukraine

A poem by **Philip Kraske**

The State guys last year were sitting around,  
Each one displaying his best Foggy frown,  
Thinking of China, Brazil and Bahrain,  
Of terror, of trends, of tech, the Great Game.  
World-beaters all, these masters of U,  
Like them, they'll tell you, there are but damn few.

"We should take stock," said Sam with gin neat.  
"Afghan democracy cycle's complete,  
"Iraq's come 'round, the Kurds are well fair.  
"Turks are still Turks, zilch to do there.  
"Honduras, Paraguay – still a bit cross,  
"That someone came down and showed 'em who's boss."

"And then there's Af-Pak," said Joe through his rum,  
"Policed by drones that are ever-less dumb.  
"They ought to thank us, in spite of the noise,  
"For making them free, both girls and boys.  
"Now Syria has prospects and Libya release,  
"What else can we do in the cause of earth's peace?"

They sat and they thought and they drank and thought more.

They threw out ideas, like rocks from the shore:  
"Can't we kill Xe?" "Is Kim outta bounds?"  
"How 'bout some cyber on Cantonese towns?"  
And then Ms. Nuland, she of Fuck the EU!,  
Said, "Let's take Ukraine, and fuck the Bear too."

"Heck and shazam, Vick, World War Three!"  
"My point exactly: we're in for a spree!"

"The thing is to pounce while we still have time.  
"Russia's pure Bedlam, a disorganized crime.  
"Their subs only sink, their army's pure bunk,  
"I'll say it out flat: this here's a slam dunk!"

"But Russia has nukes," some flunky reported.  
"And we have nuker," Ms. Nuland retorted.  
"Not that you blow the Kremlin per se,  
"Just neutron their gen'ral's to vodka purée.  
"Then watch as good Russians dance in the streets,  
"And welcome our boys with kisses and treats."

"We install Mr. Karpov, put chicken in pots,  
"We divvy up Gazprom in tiny bit lots.  
"We hire out Putin as disco line-bouncer,  
"And little Medvedev pro-wrestling announcer.  
"No more old Russia all wrapped in enig,  
"Just Fox News and football, for kids the Mac Big."

"Now that's a plan!" they shouted as one.  
"But where to start, Vick? How's the game won?"  
"To Ukraine we send our boys with dog tag,  
"And after a year do a little false flag:  
"How's that? You took down our jet from the base?  
"That's too bad for you, champ. (This with straight face.)"

And hence, the folks from Foggy did rally,  
And planned, and honed, and did the back-alley.  
And now it's a first: our foot in Ukraine,  
War games for now, no, nothing to feign.  
But bases with hookers and flags will come,  
And grim Mother Russia, summing the sum. **CT**

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*Philip Kraske is from Minneapolis but has lived for the past 30 years in Madrid, Spain, where he teaches English on a freelance basis and does some translation. His four novels, of varied plots but centering on American politics and society, began to appear in 2009.*

# Syriza, democracy, and the death of a tyrant

**David Cromwell** contrasts the media reaction to the death of a Middle Eastern tyrant to that of the election of a socialist government in Greece

**As Keane Bhatt of the US media watchdog FAIR pointed out, Kerry's distasteful words were cover for a brutal tyrant 'whose regime routinely flogs dissenters and beheads those guilty of "sorcery"'**

It's always a tricky moment for the corporate media when a foreign leader dies. The content and tone need to be appropriate, moulded to whether that leader fell into line with Western policies or not. Thus, when Venezuela's Hugo Chavez died in 2013, conventional coverage strongly suggested he had been a dangerous, quasi-dictatorial, loony lefty. For instance, the *Guardian's* Rory Carroll, the paper's lead reporter on Venezuela from 2006-2012, appeared to let slip his own personal view on Chavez when he wrote:

'To the millions who detested him as a thug and charlatan, it will be occasion to bid, vocally or discreetly, good riddance.'

By contrast, the sociologist and independent Venezuela expert Gregory Wilpert praised Chavez's 'tremendous legacy' and 'many achievements'. These included nationalising large parts of the private oil industry to pay for new social programs to tackle inequality, much-needed land reform, and improved education and public housing.

When the genuinely dangerous, neocon ideologue and Cold War fanatic Ronald Reagan died, his appalling legacy – not least his blood-soaked support for brutal regimes in Latin America – was burnished to a high sheen, presenting the former US president as a stalwart defender of Western 'values'. For the *Guardian's* editors:

'Mr Reagan made America feel good about itself again. [...] He gave American conservatism a humanity and hope that it never had in the Goldwater or Nixon eras...'

Coverage of the death of Saudi Arabian dictator King Abdullah on January 23 fits the usual pattern. Given the Saudi kingdom's longstanding role as a key US client state in the Middle East, in particular the West's dependence on the country for oil and as a market for arms sales, coverage was pitched to reflect a suitably skewed version of reality. Thus, news articles and broadcasts dutifully relayed the standard rhetoric of US Secretary of State John Kerry who declared:

'This is a sad day. The United States has lost a friend ... and the world has lost a revered leader. King Abdullah was a man of wisdom and vision.'

As Keane Bhatt of the US media watchdog FAIR pointed out, Kerry's distasteful words were cover for a brutal tyrant 'whose regime routinely flogs dissenters and beheads those guilty of "sorcery"'. Amnesty reports that more than 2,000 people were executed in Saudi Arabia between 1985 and 2013:

'It is absolutely shocking to witness the Kingdom's authorities' callous disregard to fundamental human rights. The use of the death penalty in Saudi Arabia is so far removed from any kind of legal parameters that it is almost hard to believe.'

Writer Anas Abbas observed that when it comes to the barbarity of crime and punishment, there is little to choose between Saudi Arabia and the Islamic State.

Human Rights Watch notes that despite modest Saudi reforms, women and ethnic minorities still suffer from an 'enforced subservient status' and discrimination against women remains entrenched. Human rights violations continue to take place against Saudi Arabia's nine million domestic migrant workers.

According to Campaign Against Arms Trade, Saudi Arabia is the UK's largest customer for weaponry, with over £5.5 billion worth of arms in the five and a half years from January 2008 to June 2012. In 2012, the *New York Times* reported:

'Most of the arms shipped at the behest of Saudi Arabia and Qatar to supply Syrian rebel groups fighting the government of Bashar al-Assad are going to hard-line Islamic jihadists...'

Veteran Middle East correspondent Patrick Cockburn points to Saudi Arabia's critical role in the rise of Isis, 'stoking an escalating Sunni-Shia conflict across the Islamic world.' He adds:

'15 out of 19 of the 9/11 hijackers were Saudis, as was Bin Laden and most of the private donors who funded the operation.'

Abdullah was also an accomplice to US war crimes in the Middle East, not least the invasion of Iraq which 'relied upon secret, extensive Saudi military assistance'. Moreover, a classified cable from the US embassy in Riyadh, published by WikiLeaks, referred to 'the king's frequent exhortations to the US to attack Iran', with Abdullah appealing to American officials 'to cut off the head of the snake'.

Murtaza Hussain, a journalist at the Intercept, notes that:

'in the case of almost every Arab Spring uprising, Saudi Arabia attempted to intervene forcefully in order to either shore up existing regimes or shape revolutions to conform with their own interests.'

For example:

'In Bahrain, Saudi forces intervened to crush a popular uprising which had threatened the rule of the ruling al-Khalifa monarchy...'

President Obama turned a blind eye to all of this when he praised 'King Abdullah's vision' which was dedicated 'to greater engagement with the world.'

So how did the BBC, the global paragon of 'impartial' news, respond to King Abdullah's death?

### **Quick! Give that critic thirty seconds! But no more!**

The BBC broke the news of the Saudi king's death with a headline obituary stating that Abdullah was 'seen as a reformer & vocal advocate of peace in Middle East.' It could have been a spoof headline if the reality, outlined above, had not been so tragic.

In BBC News coverage there were token, if sometimes cryptic, references to the cruel nature of the Saudi regime. BBC security correspondent Frank Gardner said in an online 'analysis' piece:

'The government has yet to find a way to cope with mild calls for reforms, and is abusing anti-terror laws to silence reformers and punish its critics.'

On the flagship BBC News at Ten programme, editors presumably realised they'd better find someone to say something critical about the Saudi regime. So they granted an Amnesty spokesperson a prize slot... of less than 30 seconds.

Likewise, you will search long and hard to find substantive discussion of the uncomfortable questions surrounding King Abdullah's successor, his half-brother Salman. A rare exception, an editorial in *Investor's Business Daily*, warned that 'President Obama should think before bowing to Saudi Arabia's new king' because:

'King Salman has a history of funding al-Qaida, and his son has been accused of knowing in advance about the 9/11 attacks.'

While the corporate news media contin-

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## DYING WORDS

**Repetition of 'radical left', and significant mentions of Syriza leader Alexis Tsipras as a 'former Communist', set the required tone. Namely, watch out – Red Scare!**

ued to look away, an in-depth article in *Foreign Policy* by David Andrew Weinberg examined 'Salman's record of bolstering and embracing extremists', noting that:

'Salman was the [Saudi] regime's lead fundraiser for mujahideen, or Islamic holy warriors, in Afghanistan in the 1980s, as well as for Bosnian Muslims during the Balkan struggles of the 1990s. In essence, he served as Saudi Arabia's financial point man for bolstering fundamentalist proxies in war zones abroad.'

Weinberg continued:

'Salman also helped recruit fighters for Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, an Afghan Salafist fighter who served as a mentor to both Osama bin Laden and 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed.'

But Salman's troubling record is 'now getting downplayed for political convenience', said Weinberg, and corporate journalists seem ignorant of the facts, or simply know not to go there.

Ironically, King Abdullah died just two days after the BBC had dedicated considerable resources to 'BBC Democracy Day'. This was a celebration of the 750th anniversary of the first parliament of elected representatives at Westminster in London. The day was 'produced', the BBC proudly declared, 'in collaboration with the House of Commons and the House of Lords'. In an eloquent letter, Media Lens reader Sam Gurney pointed out so much that was wrong or missing about 'BBC Democracy Day':

'Why should the British public be able to read about the "extraordinary concentration of ownership" of the media in Chile, but not in the UK? Why should the British public be able to read about "the flaws of French democracy", but not of democracy in the UK? Why should democracy indicators for the UK only be prominently featured in the BBC's output when it scores at the very top, rather than when it fails relative to comparable countries? Why should the state of democracy only really be of concern to the British public in

other countries? If the BBC wishes to celebrate transparency and democracy, then it should fastidiously ensure these values are reflected in its coverage.'

King Abdullah spared BBC blushes by not dying on the very day that the UK's state broadcaster was celebrating 'transparency and democracy'. Imagine the conundrum in juggling all of that with coverage of a strongly Western-aligned tyrant. A close call indeed. As Neil Clark said on Twitter:

'No need to pen long pieces on western elite's double standards on "democracy" & "extremism". Just read their glowing tributes 2 #King Abdullah'

### **Reds under the bed!**

Further difficulties for ostensibly democracy-loving corporate media soon followed with the stunning victory of Syriza, the 'radical' party of the left, in the Greek general election. Repetition of 'radical left', and significant mentions of Syriza leader Alexis Tsipras as a 'former Communist', set the required tone. Namely, watch out – Red Scare!

Some reports were blatant in their scare-mongering. The *Daily Mail* declared:

'The new Greek government has picked its first fight with the European Union, delaying agreement on further EU sanctions against Russian-backed separatists in Ukraine.'

'The move raised European and Nato fears that Moscow might seek to exploit the extremist coalition under Alexis Tsipras as a Trojan horse within the key western alliances.'

The Trojan horse theme was taken one step further in the *Sunday Times* (February 1, 2015; subscription required) with a front cover story in its News Review section by Matthew Campbell, proclaiming: 'Greece: Putin's Trojan Horse'. The propaganda was highlighted by a ridiculous composite image of a bare-chested Putin sitting astride a large Trojan horse being wheeled along by the smiling Tsipras.

Syriza's supposed 'ties to the Kremlin' pose an 'insidious threat to stability across the continent', asserted Campbell:

'The benefits to Russia of Syriza's victory became clear when Tsipras complained on Tuesday about a European statement blaming Moscow for an attack in eastern Ukraine that had killed 30 civilians.'

The hyped-up, Murdoch-owned *Sunday Times* 'analysis' went into overdrive:

'The EU managed to maintain a fragile unity in Brussels at an emergency meeting of foreign ministers on Thursday when Greece agreed to sanctions on a wider circle of Russians connected to Putin. But now the Kremlin's strategy seems clear: it sees in Greece a Trojan horse for attacking the EU from within.'

The supposedly 'progressive' *Guardian* was not immune to waving a warning flag about this Red Menace, proclaiming that the new Greek government were now set on a 'collision course with Europe'. The report added that 'European politics has been plunged into a volatile new era' by these 'far-left radicals'.

A week later, a *Guardian* editorial on Syriza and the Podemos party in Spain plumbed new depths. Both of these left-wing parties, claimed the editorial, 'draw their conflicting passions from a well of nationalism' and were united with the extreme right 'by a worrying xenophobia'. Moreover, Syriza and Podemos are 'intellectually dishonest' for often laying all the blame for Greece and Spain's hardships on Germany's Angela Merkel. Perhaps worse, they are guilty of 'indulgence of Vladimir Putin's propaganda over Ukraine'. Podemos, in particular, has shown 'sympathy for official Russian views', intoned the editorial ominously, without specifying what these dangerous views are.

The paper concluded with the ugly statement that 'voters will want reassurance of the insurgent parties' respect for the basic rules of liberal democracy' and that the 'intoxications of nationalism' must be defeated.

The smear campaign was now up and running. The conundrum for corporate media, including liberal newspapers, is how to present themselves as passionate defenders of 'democracy' and 'open debate', even while they work hard to deflect any serious democratic challenges to elite power. This *Guardian* editorial is a classic example.

So what were these 'far-left' and 'radical' threats identified by the *Guardian*? As BBC News pointed out factually, in a propaganda-free moment, the new Greek prime minister:

'has pledged to renegotiate Greece's debt arrangement with international creditors.

'He has also vowed to reverse many of the austerity measures adopted by Greece since a series of bailouts began in 2010.'

Economist Paul Krugman injected a dose of rational analysis, almost entirely missing from 'mainstream' coverage:

'European officials would be well advised to skip the lectures calling on [Tsipras] to act responsibly and to go along with their program. The fact is they have no credibility; the program they imposed on Greece never made sense. It had no chance of working.'

Krugman added:

'If anything, the problem with Syriza's plans may be that they're not radical enough. Debt relief and an easing of austerity would reduce the economic pain, but it's doubtful whether they are sufficient to produce a strong recovery...

'Still, in calling for a major change, Mr. Tsipras is being far more realistic than officials who want the beatings to continue until morale improves. The rest of Europe should give him a chance to end his country's nightmare.'

But Syriza's modest set of promises was enough to set off warning bells amongst Europe's ruling political and economic class. British Prime Minister David Cameron 'welcomed' Syriza's victory with this nervous couplet on Twitter:

'The Greek election will increase economic uncertainty across Europe. That's

**The supposedly 'progressive' *Guardian* was not immune to waving a warning flag about this Red Menace**

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## DYING WORDS

**Any public challenge to the dominant elite is to be regarded as a threat to the correctly established order of 'stable society', and a cause for fear**

why the UK must stick to our plan, delivering security at home.'

The code phrase 'economic uncertainty' means, as usual, the risk of reduced profits and diminished control held by financial and political interests. And 'security at home' translates to security for huge corporations and the rich city investors in London's financial centre. BBC News echoed the concerns of this elite perspective, broadcasting that 'Syriza's victory has raised fears about Greece's future in the euro.'

This is the standard, state-corporate news narrative that stretches back many decades. Any public challenge to the dominant elite is to be regarded as a threat to the correctly established order of 'stable society', and a cause for fear. The constant, scaremongering refrain of 'radical leftists' coming to power in a European country, no less, provoked this priceless retort from writer Stephanie Gilley:

'BBC claims the idea of people not living in poverty at the mercy of the rich is RADICAL.'

BBC News revealed its true colours again when Business Editor Robert Peston declared over archive footage that clearly showed Greek police attacking protestors:

'The Greeks rioted against austerity...'

But then, the corporate media have form in declaring protests to be 'riots', as striking miners from the 1980s will attest, many of whom were brutally attacked by the police under Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's orders. Similarly, the corporate media's skewed focus when covering 'anti-capitalist' protests in later years was on supposed 'ri-

ots' and isolated acts of violence (at times instigated by police agents provocateurs).

Finally, note that the misuse of the term 'radical' is endemic throughout the corporate media. As Noam Chomsky explains, 'radical' properly applies to powerful parties and politicians who sell themselves as 'mainstream', but whose policies deviate strongly from public opinion. Chomsky describes today's state-corporate power elites as:

'radical statist reactionaries, who believe that the US should rule the world, by force if necessary, in the interests of the narrow sectors of concentrated private power and wealth that they represent...'

The powerful state that these narrow sectors have worked hard to forge is required to:

'serve those interests, not the interests of the public, who are to be frightened into submission while the progressive legislation and achievements of popular struggle of the past century are dismantled, along with the democratic culture that sustained them.'

As ever, such a rational view of the real threats to democracy from powerful elites was missing from 'BBC Democracy Day' and its coverage by the rest of the 'mainstream' media. The fact that a brutal, Western-allied Saudi tyrant died around the same time only highlighted the corporate media's central role in propping up undemocratic systems of power, class and privilege. **CT**

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*David Cromwell is co-editor of Medialens, the British media watchdog. This article first appeared at <http://medialens.org>*

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# A shock to the system

A new form of marine mass destruction is being justified by the EU and its member states in the name of scientific research, writes **George Monbiot**



**Before the collapse of the fishing industry: Seagulls follow a trawler at Pentland Firth in 1963.**

Photo: Philip Capper

**O**ne of the biggest jokes in conservation is the Japanese government's claim to be engaged in "scientific whaling". All the killing by its harpoon fleet takes place under the guise of "research", as this is the only justification available, under international rules.

According to Joji Morishita, a diplomat representing Japan at the whaling negotiations, this "research programme" has produced 666 scientific papers. While we must respect Mr Morishita's right to invoke the number of the Beast, which may on this occasion be appropriate, during its investigation of Japanese whaling, the International Court of Justice discovered that the entire "research programme" had actually gener-

ated just two peer-reviewed papers, which used data from the carcasses of nine whales.

Over the same period, the Japanese fleet killed around 3,600. So what were the pressing scientific questions this killing sought to address? Here are the likely research areas:

- How much money can be made from selling each carcass?
- Does whale meat taste better fried or roasted?
- To what extent can we take the piss and get away with it?

We are rightly outraged by such deceptions. But while we focus our anger on a country on the other side of the world, the same trick – the mass slaughter of the creatures of the sea under the guise of "scientific

**While we focus our anger on a country on the other side of the world, the same trick – the mass slaughter of the creatures of the sea under the guise of "scientific research" – is now being deployed under our noses**

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## WATER SLAUGHTER

**Pulse trawling, as the technique is known, uses electricity to flush flatfish or shrimp out of the sediments in which they hide**

research” – is now being deployed under our noses. The British government, alongside the European Commission and other member states, is perpetrating this duplicity.

Fishing in Europe with poisons, explosives and electricity is banned. But the European Commission has gradually been rescinding the ban on using electricity. It began with one or two boats, then in 2010, after ferocious lobbying by the government of the Netherlands, 5% of the Dutch trawler fleet was allowed to use this technique. In 2012 the proportion was raised to 10%. Eighty-five massive Dutch supertrawlers have now been equipped with electric pulse gear, at a cost of around £300,000 per ship.

Over the past few months, the UK government has licensed a further 12 ships. These are registered in the UK and fly the Union flag, which means that they are allowed to fish within our 12-mile limit, but according to some in the fishing industry at least some of the boats have been financed and equipped by Dutch companies.

Pulse trawling, as the technique is known, uses electricity to flush flatfish or shrimp out of the sediments in which they hide. The electric shock makes them convulse and flip upwards, into the net. Electric fishing can greatly increase the catch of these species.

The industry and the Dutch and British governments claim that this technique is less damaging than conventional beam trawling. That is not exactly a high bar. If they needed to market influenza, they would doubtless argue that it's better than bubonic plague.

Beam trawling is a perfectly designed system for maximum environmental destruction. It rips up not just the life on the surface of the seabed, but also, through the use of “tickler chains” (actually massive scouring devices, whose purpose is to extract buried flatfish), the underlying sediments.

So it is certainly conceivable that pulse trawling causes less damage than the full-spectrum ecocide delivered by beam trawling. But unfortunately we have, at present, no way of knowing.

There has so far been no serious effort to discover what the impacts of repeated electric shocks might be on any of the animal communities of the sea: those that live in the open water, on the seabed or under it. The tiny amount of research conducted so far has involved just a few species in fish tanks and, as far as I can discover, just one vague, poorly-designed and inconclusive study at sea.

Yet these 97 ships (85 Dutch, 12 “British”) have been licensed to operate across the entire southern North Sea: in other words, from Kent to Schleswig-Holstein, Edinburgh to Jutland.

Outrageously, this includes the region's Special Area of Conservation: Dogger Bank. Special Areas of Conservation are supposed to confer the highest level of protection of any European wildlife sites. Thanks to a veto by the Dutch government, every part of the Dogger Bank and its remarkable habitats remains open to beam trawling – and now electric fishing – and this area is ripped up on a daily basis.

### 12-mile radius

By 2014 the pulse trawlers were already operating across the whole southern North Sea, at greater intensity even than the traditional beam trawling fleet, with the exception of the seas within the 12-mile national limits around Britain, Germany and Denmark. With the licensing of the 12 “British” boats, our inshore waters will now also be exploited, including the two Special Areas of Conservation in England's North Sea territorial waters: the North Norfolk sandbanks and the Haisborough, Hammond and Winterton reefs and banks, also off the coast of Norfolk.

Objections by groups such as the Marine Conservation Society, which have begged the government and the EC to ensure that protected sites are actually, er, protected, have simply been brushed aside.

So what possible justification does the European Commission give for permitting this mass deployment of an untested technology?

Oh yes. It's a "trial" for the purpose of "scientific research". The commission tells me that the trial is "envisaged to last for 5 years."

The Dutch government explains that this "research programme" will study "the selectivity of the pulse trawl and the environmental benefits of leaving the seabed undamaged". Note that it says nothing about the possible downsides. It already assumes that the technique is beneficial and undamaging.

Given that the experimental area extends to the whole of the southern North Sea, what kind of an experiment is this? What's the hypothesis? What's the methodology? Where's the control? How will the results be measured? As there appear to be no answers to these questions, let me propose some.

**Hypothesis:** That if pulse trawling is rolled out across the entire region before meaningful trials are conducted, the political momentum for its continued deployment – whatever the impacts may be – will become unstoppable.

**Methodology:** Equip 97 ships run by powerful corporations with gear worth £300,000 per boat to create what is, in effect, an irreversible decision. Fish everywhere to create a precedent and lobby and co-opt as many politicians as you can.

**Results:** Squillions of euros in the bank (preferably an offshore account) for Big Fish, while the small fishers with whom it competes are driven to the wall. Effects on the ecosystem: sorry, what was that?

**Conclusion:** The European Commission and its member governments are staffed by incompetent, gullible numpties, incapable of defending either the natural world or the public interest.

But if the European Commission is incompetent, careless and useless (who knew?), at least it's not engaging in the outright falsehoods with which the British government seeks to justify the policy.

When asked what conditions it had attached to its licensing of "British" vessels to use electric fishing, the UK's environment department, Defra, told me that these in-

cluded "ensuring electric trawling is only allowed in certain areas". "Certain areas" turns out to mean, yes, the entire southern North Sea, including the three Special Areas of Conservation.

The government went on to claim that permission would be rescinded if a scientific assessment established that harm was being done, but given that there is no credible means of assessment, it's impossible to see how this could happen.

The government then told me an outright lie. "Currently studies indicate that pulse stimulation does not result in an increased mortality in sole, cod, brown shrimp and ragworm. No mortality or spinal injury had been found in plaice, sole, cod, for example."

It must have assumed that journalists do not read scientific papers. Perhaps in most cases this is a safe assumption, so lying about their content is generally risk-free. Not in this case.

Among the few studies of the impacts of pulse trawling conducted so far is one showing that between 50 and 70% of large cod that come close to a passing electrode at realistic field strengths suffer fractured vertebrae. The cracking of their spinal columns through electric shocks also creates internal haemorrhages.

### **Viral infection**

Another trial showed that shrimp exposed to electric shocks have a significantly higher risk of subsequent infection with a virus. A further study showed a "statistically significant lower survival" rate for ragworm.

As for flatfish like sole and plaice, we simply have no idea. In 2012, a small-scale fisherman in Kent told the *Sunday Times* that the areas through which the pulse trawlers have passed are "a graveyard. What they don't catch, they annihilate. Virtually everything is dead." Another reported "You can have as many as 50 dead Dover sole in an hour and a half. We would hardly ever see a dead fish before. It is a waste of time going to that area now. It stinks of dead fish."

**Given that the experimental area extends to the whole of the southern North Sea, what kind of an experiment is this**

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## WATER SLAUGHTER

**Fishing in EU waters is smash and grab piracy of the most primitive kind, unregulated, unlicensed, and controlled only by the crudest possible method: namely the setting of quotas**

And the rest of the ecosystem? Who knows? Some research finds that pulse trawlers have a lower bycatch (species they do not intend to take) than beam trawlers. This may be true, and it would scarcely be difficult, given the extraordinary amount of damage wreaked by conventional methods. But a study of pulse trawlers fishing for shrimp revealed “considerably higher bycatch rates for some species, compared to traditional beam trawls with sieve nets.”

Electric fishing allows boats to catch flatfish on muddy bottoms, which is difficult with conventional beam trawling, so it is likely to spread fishing damage into some of the few areas that were not previously being repeatedly wrecked. Pulse trawlers extracting flatfish still use a thick cable (the footrope) that drags across the bottom, so the physical damage they cause remains extremely high, while the electrical damage is unknown.

Pulse trawling allows shrimp fishers to operate in clear water and during daylight, when shrimp are inaccessible to conventional fishing, so this could greatly increase the catch rate. Amazingly, there are no limits on the amount of shrimp that can be taken in the North Sea. When the same technologies were deployed in the East China Sea, they led to the collapse of the fishery, with the result that electric fishing is now banned in China.

### **Long-term damage**

As for the effects of repeated exposure to electric shocks on the animals of the sea, the impacts these might have on their ability to breed, implications for the survival of long-lived species, the long-term damage that might be done to species that detect their prey through electroreception (such as sharks and rays) and a host of other such questions, there is simply no data at all. Studies in freshwater suggest that electric shocks can be highly damaging to both fish eggs and fish embryos, but we have no idea whether the same effect occurs in salt water.

Given that there are no controls on this

“experiment”, no areas from which the fishing boats are excluded, no methodology and no obvious measurement parameters, the only way in which we are likely to discover whether or not the technique is damaging is through the collapse of the marine ecosystem across the entire fished area. How else could it be determined?

What this issue highlights is the absence of meaningful protection for the wildlife of the sea. Astonishingly, fishing, like farming, is entirely exempt from the environmental impact assessments that every other industry must undertake. A friend who works for the offshore wind industry tells me that the impact assessment for a large marine wind farm runs to about 20,000 pages, even though windfarms appear to have almost no impact on subsea life except a positive one, by providing places on which wildlife can anchor and offering some protection from trawlers.

To conduct an experimental trawl to discover what lives on the seafloor where a wind farm is planned, my friend must submit an exhaustive application for a licence specifying where and when and for how long the trawl will be conducted. He hires a trawler and crew to do the work. When the job is done, they wave goodbye, drop the nets back over the side and carry on fishing, without the need for any permission at all.

In other words, fishing in EU waters is smash and grab piracy of the most primitive kind, unregulated, unlicensed, and controlled only by the crudest possible method: namely the setting of quotas.

Everything wrong that takes place on land is multiplied by ten at sea, because politicians reckon that what the eye don't see the heart don't grieve. It's time that changed.

Support the Marine Conservation Society, Greenpeace, Oceana, Save Our Seas, Blue Marine, Sea Shepherd or one of the other groups desperately fighting to protect the life of the seas, and let them know you care. **CT**

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*George Monbiot's latest book, "Feral," has recently been published in paperback.*

# We murdered some folks

David Swanson reviews *Murder at Camp Delta* by Joseph Hickman

**M**urder at Camp Delta” is a new book by Joseph Hickman, a former guard at Guantanamo. It’s neither fiction nor speculation. When President Obama says “We tortured some folks,” Hickman provides at least three cases – in addition to many others we know about from secret sites around the world – in which the statement needs to be modified to “We murdered some folks.” Of course, murder is supposed to be acceptable in war (and in whatever you call what Obama does with drones) while torture is supposed to be, or used to be, a scandal. But what about tortures to death? What about deadly human experimentation? Does that have a Nazi enough ring to disturb anyone?

We should be able to answer that question soon, at least for that segment of the population that searches aggressively for news or actually – I’m not making this up – reads books. “Murder at Camp Delta” is a book of, by, and for true believers in patriotism and militarism. You can start out viewing Dick Cheney as a leftist and never be offended by this book, unless documented facts that the

author himself was deeply disturbed to discover offend you. The first line of the book is “I am a patriotic American.” The author never retracts it. Following a riot at Guantanamo, which he led the suppression of, he observes:

“As much as I blamed the inmates for the riot, I respected how hard they’d fought.

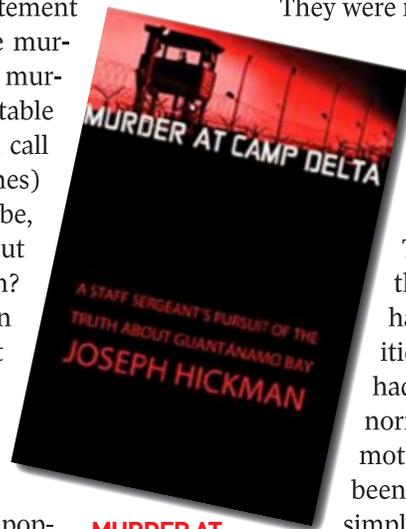
They were ready to fight nearly to the

death. If we had been running a good detention facility, I would have thought they were motivated by strong religious or political ideals.

The sad truth was that they probably fought so hard because our poor facilities and shabby treatment had pushed them beyond normal human limits. Their motivation might not have been radical Islam at all but the simple fact that they had nothing to live for and nothing left to lose.”

As far as I know, Hickman has not yet applied the same logic to debunking the absurd pretense that people fight back in Afghanistan or Iraq because their religion is murderous or because they hate us for our freedoms.

**Of course, murder is supposed to be acceptable in war (and in whatever you call what Obama does with drones) while torture is supposed to be, or used to be, a scandal**



## **MURDER AT CAMP DELTA**

A Staff Sergeant's Pursuit Of The Truth About Guantanamo Bay

**Joseph Hickman**

Simon & Schuster  
\$21.17 (Amazon.com)

**To make things worse at Guantanamo would require a particular sort of idiocy that apparently Admiral Harry Harris possessed**

Hickman describes a hideous death camp in which guards were trained to view the prisoners as sub-human and much greater care was taken to protect the well-being of iguanas than homo sapiens. Chaos was the norm, and physical abuse of the prisoners was standard. Col. Mike Bumgarner made it a top priority that everyone stand in formation when he entered his office in the morning to the sounds of Beethoven's Fifth or "Bad Boys." Hickman relates that certain vans were permitted to drive in and out of the camp uninspected, making a mockery of elaborate attempts at security. He didn't know the reasoning behind this until he happened to discover a secret camp not included on any maps, a place he called Camp No but the CIA called Penny Lane.

To make things worse at Guantanamo would require a particular sort of idiocy that apparently Admiral Harry Harris possessed. He began blasting the "Star Spangled Banner" into the prisoners' cages, which predictably resulted in the guards abusing prisoners who did not stand and pretend to worship the USA flag. Tensions and violence rose. When Hickman was called on to lead an assault on prisoners who would not allow their Korans to be searched, he proposed that a Muslim interpreter do the searching. Bumgarner and gang had never thought of that, and it worked like a charm. But the aforementioned riot took place in another part of the prison where Harris rejected the interpreter idea; and the lies that the military told the media about the riot had an impact on Hickman's view of things. So did the media's willingness to lap up absurd and unsubstantiated lies: "Half the reporters covering the military should have just enlisted; they seemed even more eager to believe the things our commanders said than we did."

After the riot, some of the prisoners went on hunger strike. On June 9, 2006, during the hunger strike, Hickman was in charge of guards on watch from towers, etc., overseeing the camp that night. He and every

other guard observed that, just as the Navy Criminal Investigative Service report on the matter would later say, some prisoners were taken out of their cells. In fact, the van that took prisoners to Penny Lane took three prisoners, on three trips, out of their camp. Hickman watched each prisoner being loaded into the van, and the third time he followed the van far enough to see that it was headed to Penny Lane. He later observed the van return and back up to the medical facilities, where a friend of his informed him that three bodies were brought in with socks or rags stuffed down their throats.

Bumgarner gathered staff together and told them three prisoners had committed suicide by stuffing rags down their own throats in their cells, but that the media would report it a different way. Everyone was strictly forbidden to say a word. The next morning the media reported, as instructed, that the three men had hanged themselves in their cells. The military called these "suicides" a "coordinated protest" and an act of "asymmetrical warfare." Even James Risen, in his role as *New York Times* stenographer, conveyed this nonsense to the public. No reporter or editor apparently thought it useful to ask how prisoners could have possibly hung themselves in open cages in which they are always visible; how they could have acquired enough sheets and other materials to supposedly create dummies of themselves; how they could have gone unnoticed for at least two hours; how in fact they had supposedly bound their own ankles and wrists, gagged themselves, put on face masks, and then all hanged themselves simultaneously; why there were no videos or photos; why no guards were disciplined or even questioned for ensuing reports; why supposedly radically lax and preferential treatment had been given to three prisoners who were on hunger strike; how the corpses had supposedly suffered rigor mortis faster than is physically possible, etc.

Three months after Hickman returned to the USA he heard on the news of another

very similar “suicide” at Guantanamo. Who could Hickman turn to with what he knew? He found a law professor named Mark Denbeaux at the Seton Hall University Law School’s Center for Policy and Research. With his, and his colleagues’, help Hickman tried reporting the matter through proper channels. Obama’s Justice Department, NBC, ABC, and 60 Minutes all expressed interest, were told the facts, and refused to do a thing about it. But Scott Horton wrote it up in *Harpers*, which Keith Olbermann reported on but the rest of the corporate media ignored.

Hickman and Seton Hall researchers found out that the CIA had been administering huge doses of a drug called mefloquine to prisoners, including the three killed, which an army doctor told Hickman would induce terror and amounted to “psychological waterboarding.” Over at Truthout.org Jason Leopold and Jeffrey Kaye reported that every new arrival at Guantanamo was given mefloquine, supposedly for malaria, but it was only given to every prisoner, never to a single guard or to any third-country staff people from countries with high risk of

malaria, and never to the Haitian refugees housed at Guantanamo in 1991 and 1992. Hickman had begun his “service” at Guantanamo believing the prisoners were “the worst of the worst,” but had since learned that at least most of them were nothing of the sort, having been picked up for bounties with little knowledge of what they’d done. Why, he wondered,

“were men of little or no value kept under these conditions, and even repeatedly interrogated, months or years after they’d been taken into custody? Even if they’d had any intelligence when they came in, what relevance would it have years later? . . . One answer seemed to lie in the description that Major Generals [Michael] Dunlavey and [Geoffrey] Miller both applied to Gitmo. They called it ‘America’s battle lab.’” **CT**

*David Swanson is an author, activist, journalist, and radio host. He is director of WorldBeyondWar.org and campaign coordinator for RootsAction.org. Swanson’s books include “War Is A Lie.” He blogs at DavidSwanson.org and WarIsACrime.org. He hosts Talk Nation Radio.*

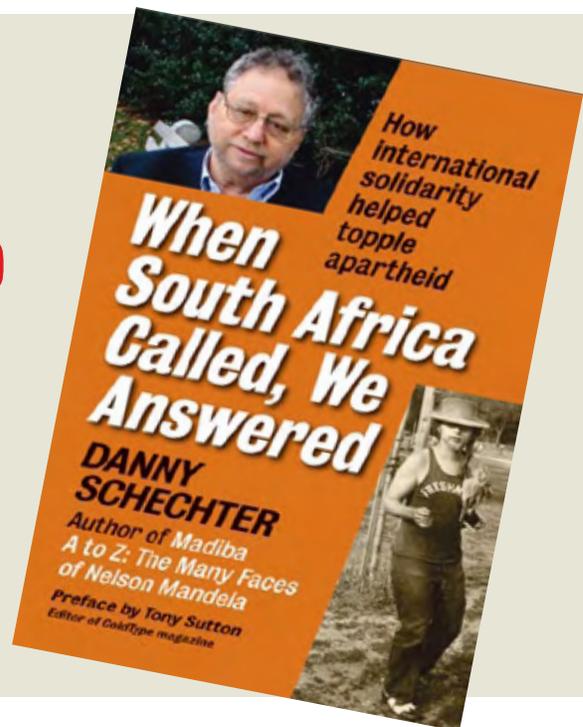
**The CIA had been administering huge doses of a drug called mefloquine to prisoners, including the three killed, which an army doctor told Hickman would induce terror and amounted to “psychological waterboarding”**

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# The president's new jacket

**Chellis Glendinning** sees big differences in public reaction to the three inaugurations of President Evo Morales

**The street kids rehabilitated by El Teatro Trono atop stilts made of scrap wood, gyrating to the thunder of homemade drums**

**La Paz, 22 January 2006**

**E**vo Morales Ayma was born Aymara and poor in the department of Oruro. For lunch he and his father would scrounge the thin meat from orange peels cast from the windows of passing autobuses, and his most ambitious childhood dream was to ride in a bus. During his life he worked as a baker, brick layer, farmer, trumpet player, and soldier; then rose up through the ranks of coca-farmer unions to become a leader of El Comité de Coordinación de las Seis Federaciones and finally of the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS).

It is for such humble beginnings that his election to the presidency of the poorest country in South America was of so much interest to Tom Hayden that he convinced me to travel to the *transmit del mando* in 2006. The truth is I didn't want to go, although I admit that I was impressed: between the election and the inauguration Evo was already traveling the globe lining up potential allies – and doing so garbed in the ratty, old red-and-blue pullover that he became known for. His vice president had been a *guerrillero* in the Tupak Katari Guerrilla Army, and his First Lady would be his sister, a vegetable vendor.

In the end, Tom swayed me, insisting that “We will never witness anything like this again in our lifetimes.”

At the time we in the US of A were in a

decidedly Eeyore state of mind. George W. Bush was busy dishing out his deadly brew with a neoliberal serving spoon and spitting out such indigestible scraps as: “I don't listen to focus groups. It doesn't matter if you mass a million, billion, six billion people or whatever. It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter.” Despite the official claim that the global corporate economy was providing a miraculous boost to Wall Street, for those of us at Ground Zero, the fissure between rich and poor was cracking apart like the San Andreas Fault. Not to mention the rollback – or out-and-out demolition – of the rights and equalities we, our parents, and grandparents had fought for.

And so it was with an unforeseen boost to my waning sense of possibility that I was lifted to the *altiplano* skies by the exploding spirit of the Bolivian people. In Plaza San Francisco, where in the past syndicates and citizens had gone *mano-a-mano* against the military, they were now awaiting the arrival of their new leaders. Beaming Aymara women in bowler hats. The street kids rehabilitated by El Teatro Trono atop stilts made of scrap wood, gyrating to the thunder of homemade drums. Quecha women in their flat-topped straw *monteras*. Miss Bolivia Universo. Bigger-than-life eagle puppets. *Charango* players and marching bands. Dance groups in huge head dresses. Bolivia's glorious *tricolor*, blue MAS *banderas*,



**Evo Morales: It's a long road from ratty sweater to designer jacket**

multi-colored *wiphala* flags – all flapping like foam caps atop a sea of humanity.

Rather than one mass lunging like a revved engine toward the singularity of the stage as would be done in the USA, the crowd organized itself into hundreds of small circles resembling village clans. I was jammed into one, and an infant wrapped in an *aguayo* shawl grasped to hold my finger. With a gold-toothed grin, an Aymara woman admired the artistry of my newly-purchased poncho. To the emphatic toots of *zampoña* music, a cholito in a red woven helmet danced with an African American girl in dreadlocks; a willowy blond boy spun a laughing *indígena*. A serpent of miners in

hardhats pressed through, and every now and again the crowd let roar a mass chant: “¡EVO! ¡EVO! ¡EVO!”

Suddenly Eduardo Galeano materialized on the stage. His gravely voice bouncing from one end of the plaza to the other, he proclaimed that Evo’s presidency marked the end of “*la dictadura de miedo*”/the dictatorship of fear. Next came Vice President Álvaro García Linera. “*Una pollera, una falda, un poncho – lo mismo que una corbata... Todos los bolivianos debemos ser iguales,*” he announced. A cholita skirt, a simple skirt, a poncho – they are the same as a necktie ... All Bolivians should be equal.

Then Evo...and the crowd stilled like a

**A serpent of miners in hardhats pressed through, and every now and again the crowd let roar a mass chant: “¡EVO! ¡EVO! ¡EVO!”**

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## INAUGURATING EVO

**I situate myself at Calle Comercio and Sanjines and watch waves of people puff-and-pant up the steep street, turn around, and descend**

hunk of granite on Illimani. The once-coca farmer, now decorated with the medallion of Simón Bolívar, pledged unprecedented striving for justice – and the sky opened to a downpour as thousands of Bolivians were drenched in hope.

My own inner ascension could not have soared any higher... until Evo's next words: "*La lucha que dejó Che Guevara, vamos a cumplir nosotros*" / We will finish the fight that Che Guevara started.

### La Paz, 22 January 2015

Nine years have passed, I have lived in Bolivia for five of them – and I still cannot let go of that crumb of wisdom an 18-year old taxista shared back in 2006 when I asked how he liked his new president. "Evo is a loaf of bread fresh from the oven," he said. "We'll find out how it tastes."

And we have.

In the early years it wasn't kosher to critique the breakthrough presidency. From that stretch of time until 2011's police violence against indigenous marchers in Chaparina, resulting in the first appearance in print of words like "dictatorship"; from the building of mega-iron mines, gas pipelines, and lithium factories through the launch of the nation's own Chinese-made satellite, the announcement of Iran-funded uranium mining and nuclear power, and the initiation of a super-highway through constitutionally-protected native lands/nature reserve to transport Brazilian commodities to Chilean ports; and including rings of corruption within the administration, police authorities condemned for cocaine trafficking, execution-style killings of opposition proponents, and constipation of judicial action on cases embarrassing to the Palace – it has been a wild ride.

Perhaps no event could be more illustrative of the paradoxes of Bolivian politics than when the very *amauta*/medicine-man who conducted the 2006 spiritual purification at Tiawanaku honoring the *altiplano*'s first indigenous leader in 500 years was

jailed for running a cocaine purification factory in El Alto.

I decide to head to La Paz to see how the inaugural ambiance has changed in nine years.

And it has. The atmosphere of spontaneous fiesta – long replaced by the work of planning, passing laws, building institutions, and making policies – has given way to a continuation of support, yes – but support less spurred by heart-felt release than by a conscious effort organized, regulated, and controlled by the government.

Curiously no one seems to know what is happening. The concierge at Hotel España doesn't know, newspapers give no indication. Just as I did in 2006, I watch the official transmission on TV in my room. When it's over, as in 2006, I head out to Plaza San Francisco. Not a soul is there, rather the action seems centered in the Plaza Murillo where the Palace, National Assembly, and site of Evo's proposed multi-storied super-heliport prevail. But the people are not allowed in; the entire area is encased by a police barricade with SWAT teams cruising the periphery in open trucks.

Instead of an air of celebration, there is frustration. I situate myself at Calle Comercio and Sanjines and watch waves of people puff-and-pant up the steep street, turn around, and descend. I see one lone miner in his best for-show hardhat. Here and there an *amauta* in traditional dress, his magic stick in a tube on his back. Whole branches of bananas and wooden boxes full of tomatoes are heroically lugged up, only to be turned back. There is no connection between people, no village clans, no music generated from the celebrants; this time the government is in charge.

Then something out-of-the-ordinary takes place. I cannot give details as to how it happens – perhaps as the result of somebody's magic stick? – but director of Teatro Trono Iván Nogales and I are inexplicably swept through the olive barricade to the other side. And suddenly we are charged with

carrying the Comité Cívica Juvenil de Oruro banner and, a cadre of red-coated military musicians blasting trumpets and drums at our backs... we are marching straight into Plaza Murillo where Evo Morales, Álvaro García Linera, various Latin American, and Bolivian officials await the exhibition of citizen support.

For those participating in this spectacular pageantry, is it a full-on basking in achievement and hope? Or is it attraction to pomp and power? Or required participation? For sure, the celebration is no longer 2006's spontaneous expression by the joyous citizens who fought for years to upend the dictatorships. But is it now the captive of what some activists and intellectuals are calling "autoritarianismo"? Or is it a true reflection of what others assert is "the best presidency in Bolivian history"?

### **Chuquisaca, 27 January 2015**

Colonization, empire, and the corporate global economy generate paradoxes within both exploited and perpetrator that few have yet figured out how to resolve; it seems rather that humanity has been irretrievably damaged – and impossibly ensnared.

Take, for instance, the requisite to construct a nation-state strong enough to survive militarily. Ergo: Evo's formerly victimized Bolivia launches a campaign of military fortification – acquiring new fighter planes, updated weapons, satellite technologies; crafting relationships that crisscross political boundaries from Iran, China, and Venezuela to Australia, Japan, and perhaps now the United States; requiring military and police to sign oaths to defend socialism; and launching public campaigns to inculcate nation-state patriotism.

Take the economic fact that Real Politic offers no alternative to survival other than tooth-and-nail competition within an out-of-control global economy. Wanton exploitation of natural resources, mega-industrialization, canals and superhighways,

robots and drones – and mass fabrication of horror-filled Halloween masks to sublimate the panic that such unrestrained development produces.

The wars rage on. Palestine, Iraq, the Congo, Syria, Nigeria – as the age-old and ongoing battle to steal/dominate/wreak-vengeance/recuperate persists, and millions of sentient beings give their lives to campaigns-for/resistance-against imperial pursuits. So, too, economic development of an exploitative, mass-commodity-based bent. Whether classical, modern, or post-modern, its unlimited expansion is killing bees and lemons, oak and molle, seas and rivers, the sky, the oceans – just as it leaves a moon scattered with trash, the tops of mountains lopped off, and tomatoes mixed with the DNA of fish. Not to mention the demolition of cultures, communities, and countries.

It is not news that the planet is a finite being. More than ten years ago various scientists stated at least three times that "in ten years" the planet would reach the breaking point, after which recovery from the ecological damage will have gone too far for recovery. Read: stop militarism and war immediately. Read: join Uruguayan President José Mujica asking, "What is this development we long for? *The same the industrial West has created?*"

Paradox reigns.

And Evo Morales – his ratty sweater now replaced by a designer jacket, his longing to ride in a bus fulfilled by helicopters and jets – is not immune from its demands and contradictions. **CT**

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**Chellis Glendinning** is the author of seven books, including the award-winning "Off the Map: An Expedition Deep into Empire and the Global Economy", and "Chiva: A Village Takes on the Global Heroin Trade". She is currently working on a book in praise of activists, thinkers, and artists she has known in social movements. She can be reached via her website <http://chellisglendinning.org>

**Real Politic offers no alternative to survival other than tooth-and-nail competition within an out-of-control global economy**

# Who killed Africa's poet-politician?

Forty years after the death of Herbert Chitepo in a Lusaka bomb blast, Zimbabweans are still wondering who killed him, writes **Trevor Grundy**

**At the start of 1975, Chitepo was in a state of severe depression. His few close friends said that he was drinking heavily**

*It's forty years since the African politician and epic poet Herbert Chitepo was blown to pieces outside his house in Lusaka (Zambia). Since then, politicians, historians and journalists have been divided on the subject of who killed him. Some – most of them Europeans – say it was a death authorized by Rhodesia's rebel leader, Ian Smith. Others – most of them blacks – insist his death was the result of fierce inter-ethnic rivalries in one of the main nationalist movements, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and that the man responsible for Chitepo's death was Josiah Tongogara, one of Zimbabwe's most acclaimed liberation heroes.*

**F**orty years ago on the morning of March 18, 1975, Herbert Chitepo who was a key leader of the Rhodesian liberation movement ZANU, was blown to pieces after a bomb planted underneath his pale blue Volkswagen Beetle exploded outside his home in Lusaka.

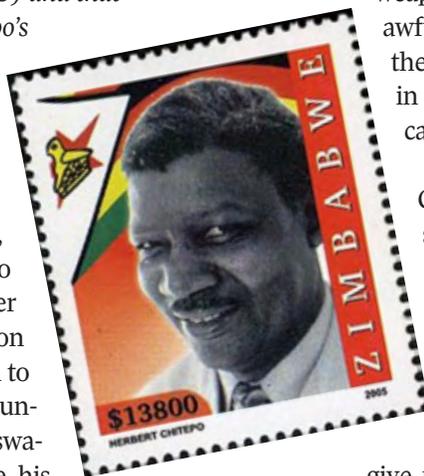
The murder of Chitepo happened during one of the darkest period of Zimbabwe liberation politics.

In November 1974, a rebel group within ZANU led by Thomas Nhari, attempted to depose the movement's High Command

headed by Josiah Tongogara, a key military figure in the fight against white rule in Rhodesia. Tongogara was a member of the Karanga clan of the majority Shona tribe in Rhodesia. The Nhari Rebellion was squashed, thanks to a large number of troops loyal to Tongogara arriving in Zambia from Tanzania. Chitepo, from the Manyika clan of the Shonas, was asked to sign the death warrants of over 200 young freedom fighters whose main complaint had been about poor quality weaponry, irregular pay and awful food. They said that their leaders lived in luxury in Lusaka and other African capital cities.

At the start of 1975, Chitepo was in a state of severe depression. His few close friends said that he was drinking heavily. He was despondent about growing inter-ethnic rivalries in the movement. But he didn't

give up easily. He was a most resilient man. As a boy he had gone barefoot to school and had struggled through every obstacle to qualify as a barrister in England. But in Rhodesia he encountered European privilege and African anger. "I saw him gradually change from being a person of goodwill who wanted to make partnership work, to a





**James Chikerema (left) and his lifelong friend and fellow freedom fighter, George Nyandoro. They were at the heart of the nationalist movement in southern Rhodesia but have been effectively airbrushed out of the nationalist story by Zimbabwe's sycophantic "historians" and journalists following the imposition of "Patriotic History" in schools and colleges. Both men went to their graves insisting that Josiah Tongogara organised the death of Herbert Chitepo.**

Photo: Trevor Grundy

bitter anti-white extremist," wrote the former Anglican Dean of Johannesburg, Gonville Ffrench-Beytagh in his book "Encountering Darkness" (Collins, 1973).

Chitepo was also a strong critic of the détente exercise launched in 1974 by Zambia's President Kenneth Kaunda and South Africa's Prime Minister, John Vorster. He argued it was not the time to talk to diehard whites in Salisbury, basing his argument on the revolutionary propitious conditions signaled by the coup d'état in Portugal and the imminent independence of Mozambique that year.

Kaunda was determined to move ahead, furious about divisions within the liberation movements that had cost his young country so dearly since its independence in October 1964. His aim was to unite the main African freedom parties and put them under the control of the Methodist cleric, Bishop Abel Muzorewa, who was more familiar with the weight of prayer books and Bibles than

AK47s. Kaunda and Vorster supposed that under a single command the warring movements could thrash out their disagreements with Ian Smith and lay plans for majority rule in Rhodesia. Chitepo asserted there could be only one way to end white rule in Rhodesia – the military way.

On December 8, 1974, Kaunda saw to it that ZANU and its main rival, the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU) and the much smaller Front for the Liberation of Zimbabwe (FROLIZI) led by James Chikerema went under Muzorewa's command. That unity was short-lived with Nkomo attempting to make his own arrangements with Ian Smith and the ZANU leaders determined to bring power to the people through the barrel of guns supplied by Peking.

In a move to salvage what was left of détente and African nationalist unity, Kaunda and his political adviser Mark Chona met a group of liberation leaders at State House, Lusaka, on the evening of March 17. Muzore-

**Chitepo was a strong critic of the détente exercise launched in 1974 by Zambia's President Kenneth Kaunda and South Africa's Prime Minister, John Vorster**

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## 40 YEARS ON

**The story that Rhodesian prime minister Ian Smith's men killed Chitepo is repeated ad nauseum by people who had no connection with any of the African liberation movements at that time**

wa had flown into Lusaka from Salisbury. They agreed to meet again the following day. Before he left, Kaunda asked Chitepo if he wanted a Zambian bodyguard. Chitepo said “no” asking what sort of leader he would be if he needed protection from his followers. Chikerema said he saw Chitepo drive away in his VW. He said Chitepo was in a thoughtful mood, no more depressed than usual.

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The question, Who killed Chitepo? won't lie down. There has been no closure on the death of Zimbabwe's lost leader. Professor Terence Ranger told me at his home in Oxford in September 2007, “Last time I spoke to secondary schoolchildren in Zimbabwe, the headmaster rather foolishly said I could answer any question about history. A dozen hands shot up. They all wanted to know who killed Chitepo.”

The journalists David Martin and his partner Phyllis Johnson claim in their book, “The Chitepo Assassination” (Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1985) that the murder was arranged by Rhodesian Prime Minister Smith using white agents. Their first book “The Struggle for Zimbabwe” (Faber & Faber, 1981) was dedicated to Tongogara. The authors said the point of their book about Chitepo was to lay to rest “the spirits that have remained disturbed for a decade.”

The Zimbabwean historian, Dr Masipula Stihole, author of “Zimbabwe's Struggles within the Struggle” (Rujeko Publishers, Salisbury, 1979) wrote a tongue-in-cheek review about their qualifications as political detectives: “The authors of this book say that in 1985 they ‘stumbled across someone who knew’ who had assassinated Chitepo and that this discovery was the ‘first link in a chain to others’ who knew, and of a ‘meticulous piecing together of details of the action and its motive. Could it be that these two professional journalists are of such industry that two-and-a-half-months after stumbling across this ‘someone who knew’ they could have time to interview a ‘chain’ of others and have meticulously pieced together the



**British author and journalist, the late David Martin – a fan of Mugabe and defender of Tongogara.**

Photo: Adarsh Nayar

‘details’, let alone write a 134-page book that could be purchased by mid-March of the same year? – even if they do run the Zimbabwe Publishing House?” He added: “The book is fascinating reading and convincing as fiction.”

Assertions that Tongogara was innocent and white Smith agents were responsible for the assassination made strange ideological bed fellows. Ken Flower, head of Ian Smith's dirty tricks department – the Central Intelligence Office (CIO) – agreed with Martin and Johnson. In his memoir “Serving Secretly” (John Murray, 1987) Flower told how he flew to Lusaka to tell one of Kaunda's lawyers investigating the assassination that Tongogara was not responsible for Chitepo's death. It was a strange intervention considering that at that time Tongogara was branded white Rhodesians' number one enemy. Flower records he said, “Your precious findings are not worth the paper they are printed on. Tongogara had nothing to do with Chitepo's death.”

The story that Smith's men killed Chitepo is repeated ad nauseum by people who had no connection with any of the African liberation movements at that time.

Their common source is a book written by Peter Stiff, a cockney Londoner and one-time

member of the Special Branch of the British South Africa Police (BSAP) who said in a book called "See You in November" (Galago, 1985) that white agents of Smith killed Chitepo. The agents were named as Alan "Taffy" Brice who was in the Rhodesian Intelligence Corps and a man called Hugh "Chuck" Hind, a British national on the payroll of the Rhodesian CIO, born in Glasgow in 1940. Stiff informs us that Hind was assisted by a European farming in Zambia called Ian Sutherland. Stiff's book came out at the same time as the book by Martin and Johnson.

In her book "The Assassination of Herbert Chitepo - Texts and Politics in Zimbabwe" (Indiana University Press, 2003), Luise White, Professor of History at the University of Florida, stands back and asks why so many whites claim responsibility for the murder of Chitepo and so few blacks. She writes, "These texts, taken together or in various combinations, have constructed a national history in which Africans were the victims of white subterfuge, of a white power that can undermine the most complicated of African commitments."

David Martin died in 2007. At his state-assisted funeral, Robert Mugabe paid him a rare compliment, saying- "He broke past the perfunctory bond that links a journalist to a source."

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Several assertions that Smith's agents killed Chitepo are dismissed by prominent Africans. In 2001, Chitepo's widow, Victoria, said that her husband's assassination was an internal ZANU job. She demanded that his killers be brought to justice.

The Report of the Special International Commission on the Assassination of Herbert Wiltshire Chitepo which was commissioned by Kaunda in 1976 cites Tongogara and four other leading Karangas in ZANU as the men who killed Chitepo.

"I knew Chitepo for years. He was murdered by Tongogara and the Karanga Mafia," the former Vice-President of the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU) and founder

of the Front for the Liberation of Zimbabwe (FROLIZI)," James Chikerema told me at my home in Harare in 1995.

I recorded Chikerema's version of the struggle for Zimbabwe - and his role in it - on 48 tapes during a six month period. He said: "I saw Tongogara soon after Chitepo had been killed. We were at State House on that morning of March 18. I heard about Chitepo's death on the radio at 8am. I said to him (Tongogara), "You are a murderer. You will never get away with this." Then I reached for my gun but the Zambian police got hold of me and stopped me. There would have been a shoot out there and then."

What Chikerema told me over that six month period about African liberation movements, and how they were funded, convinced me - if needs be once again - that if history is written by the winners, it's so much more interesting when told by the losers.

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Mugabe, anxious to eradicate all accusations that he benefitted from the death of Chitepo, has introduced a widely criticized "Patriotic History" which endorses the ZANU-blessed line that whites killed Chitepo.

Yet, this 91-year who was appointed Chairman of the African Union (AU) earlier this year still fears Chitepo's enduring legacy. Kenneth Kaunda remains concerned that the truth has not been told. While visiting Nkomo's grave in 1999, he told a reporter that Chitepo was a committed leader. "And some day we will talk about how he died. It is one blot in the history, a sad reflection of the whole liberation of this region."

Africans visiting London tell me - sometimes looking over their shoulders as they speak - that in the villages of Manicaland, heartland of the Manyika ethnic group, songs are still sung by young people as well as the old calling on Chitepo to rise from the grave and lead Zimbabwe once Robert Mugabe joins Josiah Tongogara and Herbert Chitepo at Zimbabwe's national burial site - Heroes' Acre - in Harare.

They hope that will be soon.

**CT**

**If history is written by the winners, it's so much more interesting when told by the losers**

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**Trevor Grundy**  
was *Zambian correspondent for the Financial Times (London) and the BBC's Focus on Africa radio programme in 1975*



Getting lost in Yazd, Iran.

# Why visiting Iran is no big deal

Western propaganda suggests that Iran is one of the world's most dangerous destinations for travellers. Nothing could be further from the truth, says **Nate Robert**

There were four or five pretty young ladies, touching me, stroking my forehead, grabbing my arm, all doe-eyed and fawning, soft-lighting, holding my legs high, cruising at 40000 feet, and well, in that moment forgot about reality. After I'd passed-out and came-to laying down in the aisle of a plane, despite the loveliness of the situation, the ridiculous world I naively wander through had just become very real.

At least three unplanned events had occurred in the lead-up to this moment. Thirty-six sleepless hours. Rapid onset of a killer flu. A crooked Tajikistan police officer attempting to extract a bribe from me, holding my passport hostage in a dark room at the end of a dark corridor (another story, another time). I only had one "official" travel plan – beguilingly simple – reach Iran, today. After the bribes and blackouts, despite my failing health, I was more determined than ever to



**Sounds familiar:** On the mean streets of Vakil Bazaar, Shiraz, Iran. He was amazed that I could speak English.

complete the plan. Because, I know what most of the world doesn't know – in Iran, I would be safe, comfortable, and taken care of.

But, this flu was no joke. Leaving the first plane in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, I faced up to my choices. Stop in modern and tourist friendly UAE, recover, rest, and head to Iran another day. Or, catch a cab cross town, jump on another flight, and fly straight into the mysterious ancient city of Shiraz, Iran – with no visa, no bookings for accommodation, nor any proof of onwards travel. I needed to make a decision. I did what any sane traveller would do. Spent the last of my UAE Dirams on an Egg McMuffin, smoked a cigarette, drank two black coffees to stay awake a few more hours, coughed a lung up outside the terminal entrance, sat down and caught a few well-needed rays (after spending four months in a bleak post-Soviet winter), and made up for all of those Central Asian Lada-taxis by rid-

ing a pimped-out black-on-black Lexus from Dubai to Sharjah. It was time to visit Iran – the sanest travel choice, in an increasingly insane world.

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To many people, visiting Iran seems to be a really big deal. My friends, family, and every person I've ever met, has said the same things about Iran. The comments range between “be careful” and “you're fucking crazy”. One reader explained that due to the events in Paris, I should be extra careful in Iran. Fortunately, Iran is much safer than Paris.

It's an insight to the extent of the almost global brainwashing – Iran, a peaceful country who has not been involved in a war since the US backed war with Iraq in the 1980's, is still considered a key member of the “Axis of Evil”. Unlike nearby nuclear armed Israel and India, Iran has signed a nuclear weapons non-proliferation agreement. They don't have any

**It was time to visit Iran – the sanest travel choice, in an increasingly insane world**

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## NO VISA REQUIRED



Ancient bazaar in Yazd, Iran.

**At Sharjah airport, I'd anticipated this same moment. I knew exactly what to say. However, due to the flu and lack of sleep, I couldn't think straight**

nuclear weapons. For thirty-six years, Iran has undergone crippling economic sanctions from most of the world, for a never ending roster of nonsensical non-reasons. And now, Paris. But, there's always something – the irrational Western fear of Muslim nations knows no bounds. These are the preconceptions that Iranians have to deal with – a French citizen in Paris goes crazy, therefore, Iran is more dangerous this week. And this is why visiting Iran remains a big deal – just because a few exceptionally influential governments and media organisations insist that visiting Iran really is a big deal.

“Oh, you're visiting Iran.... hmmm... where is your visa? And... you don't seem to have any further flights booked... hmmm...”

This had happened before. In Malaysia in 2012, they wouldn't allow me board the flight to Tehran, visa-less, until several layers of managers had discussed my “situation”. The

conversation ended with “we'll let you board, but if it doesn't work out, you must understand you're on your own”. Of course, it all worked out. Because Iran is a normal country. With exceptionally welcoming people. And they love tourists.

At Sharjah airport, I'd anticipated this same moment. I knew exactly what to say. However, due to the flu and lack of sleep, I couldn't think straight. I just explained myself in the most persuasive way possible.

“Don't worry about me. It's all cool. We'll be fine. I will get an Iranian visa on arrival.”

Seriously, I waved my hand across the desk, just like Ben Kenobe.

“OK. It is all cool. You will be fine. They will give you a visa on arrival. Enjoy Iran.”

My luggage was checked, and a boarding-card issued.

Further along, at the Sharjah customs, the veiled girl with the badge and the pretty eyes gave me the same pause, once she realised I



**Iranian men, growing beards, and hanging out in cool cafes. Esfahan, Iran.**

was heading to Iran.

“Oh.... you’re visiting Iran... there is some paperwork you need to complete, especially for you, I’ll just have to get it.”

I waved my hand over the desk.

“There is no paperwork for me to complete.”

I looked into her eyes.

“Um, OK, just wait here, I’ll be back with the paperwork.”

The force was strong with this one.

Visiting Iran, is kind of a big deal for the Sharjah authorities. I completed the “special” form, in duplicate. Ticking boxes that indicated I was aware of the “security situation” in Iran. I wondered, what exactly was the security situation in Iran. They wanted contact details, preferences for funeral proceedings, and a complete list of the other fifty-eight countries I had previously visited. A lot of questions later, I was cleared through customs. The flu was catching up again, so I headed to

the departure lounge to rest, and await the inevitable next-step.

Over the airport intercom, a “special” announcement was made. Just for travellers bound for Iran. We were to report to a different gate than previously advised, for “advanced security processing”. To Sharjah airport security, travelling to Iran was a big deal. Around an hour earlier than the usual time, we were checked and processed by multiple staff and multiple scanning machines. Then we had to wait in a closed-off section with no option to return to the “normal” part of the airport.

A man was walking around. He was exclusively chatting to tourists bound for Iran. There were four other tourists on this flight. Compared to 2012, an increase of four. That’s a statistically significant 200% increase in tourist numbers to Iran.

“So... you’re going to Shiraz. Do you have a visa? Hmmm. No? Show me your passports.....”

**Around an hour earlier than the usual time, we were checked and processed by multiple staff and multiple scanning machines**

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## NO VISA REQUIRED



Ancient air-conditioning systems in Iran. Tes, they work. .

**In general, you are obliged to offer whatever you have, to all guests. As a guest, you're equally obliged to politely refuse**

I handed them over.

“Oh, so you're going to get a visa on arrival? Cool. Enjoy Iran.”

Yes, he said “cool”, smiled, and returned our passports. Then he walked away, muffled something into his collar about “affirmative, target has been contacted, returning to ghost-surveillance mode and awaiting further instructions for...”

Reality was returning. The shackles of Iranian preconceptions were dissolving. The globally constructed media meme of “terrible naughty Iran” was slipping away, I knew everything would be fine from this point, so I passed out for a few minutes rest.

Arriving in Shiraz, the airport bus from plane to terminal confirmed that yes, I was really on the ground in Iran, and so obviously surrounded by Iranians. To understand Iranians, you need to understand “Tarof”. A specifically Iranian social construct that's

far beyond politeness, chivalry, and civility. Tarof permeates Iranian society. The rules are unfathomable to a foreigner. In general, you are obliged to offer whatever you have to all guests. As a guest, you're equally obliged to politely refuse. This will go back and forth. On a bus that only has eight seats, with about fifty passengers, this was a glorious game of Iranian musical chairs, both fascinating and heart-warming to be a part of.

With Tarof, does a young lady struggling with a small baby trump a middle-aged lady with a walking stick? Who gets the seat? What about a man who looks kind of young for his age, clearly very fit, but is probably, I guess, sixty or so... does he get the chair, or, as a guest in Iran, do I trump everyone? It was a maelstrom of “please, take the seat”, “no, I insist, you take the seat”, “no, no, please, you take the seat”. When you mix Tarof with the Iranian respect for the elderly, as well as the



**Takin' care of business: Back street of Shiraz, Iran.**

chivalrous nature of the men, things could get complicated. I decided the best thing to do was just smile wildly, which really, is impossible not to do in this situation, and continue to offer the last remaining seat to every other person on the bus. I knew it would sort itself out, and everyone would be happy no matter what, because Iranians, are just so fucking nice.

I'll just expand on Tarof, because it really is fascinating. We don't have Tarof in the "West". The closest we have is the "who is paying the restaurant bill" – the dance where everyone reaches for their wallet, awkwardly insists on paying, simultaneously hoping that the richest guy at the table will pay for everyone. In Iran, Tarof is that bill-paying moment, several times a day, every day, for the rest of your life. Catching a taxi, a driver told me "no no, your presence as a guest here in Iran is enough. I cannot accept your money". At the market,

I've been told at the checkout not to pay, and "may your footsteps fall onto my eye balls". I'm not joking. Maybe, it seems like it would be annoying, but it's not. It's a game, and who doesn't love games.

Entering the Shiraz terminal, I would soon find out if visiting Iran was a big deal to the authorities – who most definitely do not engage in Tarof with visa-less foreigners.

"Hello Sir. I would like a visa."

"What is your purpose for visiting Iran?"

"Tourism."

"OK!"

He smiled, and walked away with our passports. The next I would see of him, the passports would contain Iranian tourist visa's. No further questions. One small form. A payment of 100 Euro per person, which came with a receipt and a packet of Banana flavoured gum. No checking, or even asking, about my accommodation or onward travel plans.

**At the market, I've been told at the checkout not to pay, and "may your footsteps fall onto my eye balls"**

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## NO VISA REQUIRED



Large, modern, Iranian supermarket, with shelves stacked high with international brands.

**I placed my jacket on the bench, used it as a pillow, and instantly passed out. When I awoke to collect our visas, Phillipa told me that the young girl slept next to me the whole time, her head next to mine**

By extension, even the Iranian government understands what most of the world doesn't – these days, visiting Iran really is no big deal. But, it remains a nation full of unparalleled experiences – thanks to the Iranian people.

When I was waiting for the visa, a small girl approached. She sat next to me. Her mother sat a few seats away, veil covering her face. The little girl looked at me, and smiled.

“What does that say?”

I was surprised at her English. She was pointing at a sign that said “Welcome to Shiraz”.

“It says Welcome to Shiraz”.

She giggled. And looked at her mother, who smiled. I pointed up at the Arabic script on the other end of the same wall. Same colour letters, same positioning.

“I guess that says Welcome to Shiraz as well... maybe in your language.”

She giggled again. Eyes so wide.

“So, anyway, I really need to get some rest

now, I'm not feeling great”.

She giggled.

“No seriously, I feel pretty shit.”

More giggles.

“Phillipa, I'm going to pass out. This little girl next to me won't stop giggling. I don't know what her fucking problem is.”

I didn't really say that last bit. Well actually I did, but purely for comedic value. I winked at the little girl.

She giggled. Her smile absolutely beamed.

I placed my jacket on the bench, used it as a pillow, and instantly passed out. When I awoke to collect our visas, Phillipa told me that the young girl slept next to me the whole time, her head next to mine. And, her father would come over every now and then – he could tell I was sick, and was making sure I was OK. This, is Iran.

Outside, I caught a taxi straight to the hotel I stayed at here in Shiraz, back in 2012. The man at the front desk recognised me.



**In the Northern suburbs of Tehran. The smoke of grilled meats fills the air, but pork is not on the fork.**

“Oh my... you have returned! How are you! Have you come straight from Australia?”

I explained that since staying here 2012, I had continued to travel around the world.

“Mr Nate, can I say, you are not a normal tourist. Don't you get tired of so much travel?”

I explained that no, normally, I don't get tired. But today, I was absolutely exhausted. He giggled. Must be an Iranian thing, laughing at sickness.

“Do you remember what room you were in last time?”

I had kept the receipt from 2012, and checked the room number. Within a few minutes, I was laying down in a familiar bed.

Oh, one last thing. The Iran tourist visa-on-arrival – it's for 15 days. I asked if I could extend it, and was told yes, for an additional 15 days. So, I asked if I could extend it a third time.

“Ohhhh no. No no. Only one extension.”

He must have seen the look of disappointment on my face, because he winked, and added... “unless, say, you were sick...” **CT**

**End Note**

*I you're a citizen of the United States, Canada, or England, you are unable to get a visa-on-arrival for Iran. The only way you can obtain a tourist visa, is by taking part in an “official” tour of Iran. This is exactly the reason why I have partnered with a local agency in Iran, to offer the most unique “untour” of Iran to my American, Canadian, and British readers. In my opinion, it's the best travel opportunity of 2015. You can read all about the October Yomadic trip through Iran, at <http://yomadic.com> – Nate Robert*

**Nate Robert** specialises in travel photography. Since July 2012, he has been travelling the world full time, traveling through 54 countries. His web site is <http://yomadic.com>

**I had kept the receipt from 2012, and checked the room number. Within a few minutes, I was laying down in a familiar bed**

# Venezuela gets another taste of CIA dirty tricks

**Eva Gollinger** describes how the mainstream media is helping the US government engineer another coup in Latin America

**An absurdly sensationalist and misleading headline ran in several USA papers, in print and online, linking Venezuela to nuclear weapons and a plan to bomb New York City**

There is a coup under way in Venezuela. The pieces are all falling into place like a bad CIA movie. At every turn a new traitor is revealed, a betrayal is born, full of promises to reveal the smoking gun that will justify the unjustifiable. Infiltrations are rampant, rumors spread like wildfire, and the panic mentality threatens to overcome logic. Headlines scream danger, crisis and imminent demise, while the usual suspects declare covert war on a people whose only crime is being gatekeeper to the largest pot of black gold in the world.

Last month, as the *New York Times* showcased an editorial degrading and ridiculing Venezuelan President Maduro, labeling him “erratic and despotic” (“Mr. Maduro in his Labyrinth”, *New York Times*, January 26, 2015), another newspaper across the Atlantic headlined a hack piece accusing the President of Venezuela’s National Assembly, Diosdado Cabello, and the most powerful political figure in the country after Maduro, of being a narcotics kingpin (“The head of security of the number two Chavista defects to the USA and accuses him of drug trafficking”, *ABC*, January 27, 2015). The accusations stem from a former Venezuelan presidential guard officer, Leasmy Salazar, who served under President Chavez and was recruited by the USA Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), now becoming the new “golden child” in Washington’s war on Venezuela.

Two days later, the *New York Times* ran a front-page piece shaming the Venezuelan economy and oil industry, and predicting its downfall (“Oil Cash Waning, Venezuelan Shelves Lie Bare”, Jan. 29, 2015, *New York Times*). Blaring omissions from the article include mention of the hundreds of tons of food and other consumer products that have been hoarded or sold as contraband by private distributors and businesses in order to create shortages, panic, discontent with the government and justify outrageous price hikes. Further, multiple ongoing measures taken by the government to overcome the economic difficulties were barely mentioned and completely disregarded.

Simultaneously, an absurdly sensationalist and misleading headline ran in several USA papers, in print and online, linking Venezuela to nuclear weapons and a plan to bomb New York City (“USA Scientist Jailed for Trying to Help Venezuela Build Bombs”, Jan. 30, 2015, *NPR*). While the headline leads readers to believe Venezuela was directly involved in a terrorist plan against the USA, the actual text of the article makes clear that no Venezuelans were involved at all. The whole charade was an entrapment set up by the FBI, whose officers posed as Venezuelan officials to capture a disgruntled nuclear physicist who once worked at Los Alamos and had no Venezuela connection.

That same day, State Department spokes-

woman Jan Psaki condemned the alleged “criminalization of political dissent” in Venezuela, when asked by a reporter about fugitive Venezuelan general Antonio Rivero’s arrival in New York to plea for support from the United Nations Working Committee on Arbitrary Detention. Rivero fled an arrest warrant in Venezuela after his involvement in violent anti-government protests that led to the deaths of more than 40 people, mainly government supporters and state security forces, last February. His arrival in the USA coincided with Salazar’s, evidencing a coordinated effort to debilitate Venezuela’s Armed Forces by publicly showcasing two high profile military officers – both former Chavez loyalists – that have been turned against their government and are actively seeking foreign intervention against their own country.

These examples are just a snapshot of increasing, systematic negative and distorted coverage of Venezuelan affairs in USA media, painting an exaggeratedly dismal picture of the country’s current situation and portraying the government as incompetent, dictatorial and criminal. While this type of coordinated media campaign against Venezuela is not new – media consistently portrayed former Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, elected president four times by overwhelming majorities, as a tyrannical dictator destroying the country – it is clearly intensifying at a rapid, and concerning, pace.

The *New York Times* has a shameful history when it comes to Venezuela. The Editorial Board blissfully applauded the violent coup d’etat in April 2002 that ousted President Chavez and resulted in the death of over 100 civilians. When Chavez was returned to power by his millions of supporters and loyal Armed Forces two days later, the *Times* didn’t recant it’s previous blunder, rather it arrogantly implored Chavez to “govern responsibly”, claiming he had brought the coup on himself. But the fact that the *Times* has now begun a persistent, direct campaign against the Venezuelan government with one-sided,

distorted and clearly aggressive articles – editorials, blogs, opinion, and news – indicates that Washington has placed Venezuela on the regime change fast track.

The timing of Leamsy Salazar’s arrival in Washington as an alleged DEA collaborator, and his public exposure, is not coincidental. This February marks one year since anti-government protests violently tried to force President Maduro’s resignation, and opposition groups are currently trying to gain momentum to reignite demonstrations. The leaders of the protests, Leopoldo López and María Corina Machado, have both been lauded by the *New York Times* and other ‘respected’ outlets as “freedom fighters”, “true democrats”, and as the *Times* recently referred to Machado, “an inspiring challenger”. Even President Obama called for Lopez’s release from prison (he was detained and is on trial for his role in the violent uprisings) during a speech last September at an event in the United Nations. These influential voices willfully omit Lopez’s and Machado’s involvement and leadership of violent, undemocratic and even criminal acts. Both were involved in the 2002 coup against Chavez. Both have illegally received foreign funding for political activities slated to overthrow their government, and both led the lethal protests against Maduro last year, publicly calling for his ouster through illegal means.

The utilization of a figure such as Salazar who was known to anyone close to Chavez as one of his loyal guards, as a force to discredit and attack the government and its leaders is an old-school intelligence tactic, and a very effective one. Infiltrate, recruit, and neutralize the adversary from within or by one of its own – a painful, shocking betrayal that creates distrust and fear amongst the ranks. While no evidence has surfaced to back Salazar’s outrageous claims against Diosdado Cabello, the headline makes for a sensational story and another mark against Venezuela in public opinion. It also caused a stir within the Venezuelan military and may result in further betrayals from officers who could support a coup

**The *New York Times* has a shameful history when it comes to Venezuela. The paper’s Editorial Board blissfully applauded the violent coup d’etat in April 2002 that ousted President Chavez and resulted in the death of over 100 civilians**

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## SAME AGAIN

**Despite certain shortages – some caused by currency controls and others by intentional hoarding, sabotage or contraband – 95% of Venezuelans consume three meals per day, an amount that has doubled since the 1990s**

against the government. Salazar's unsubstantiated allegations also aim at neutralizing one of Venezuela's most powerful political figures, and attempt to create internal divisions, intrigue and distrust.

The most effective tactics the FBI used against the Black Panther Party and other radical movements for change in the United States were infiltration, coercion and psychological warfare. By inserting agents into these organizations, or recruiting from within, that were able to gain access and trust at the highest levels, the FBI was able to destroy these movements from the inside, breaking them down psychologically and neutralizing them politically. These clandestine tactics and strategies are thoroughly documented and evidenced in FBI and other US government documents obtained through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and published in in Ward Churchill and Jim Van der Wall's excellent book, "Agents of Repression: The FBI's Secret Wars Against the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement" (South End Press, 1990).

Venezuela is suffering from the sudden and dramatic plummet in oil prices. The country's oil-dependent economy has severely contracted and the government is taking measures to reorganize the budget and guarantee access to basic services and goods, but people are still experiencing difficulties. Unlike the dismal portrayal in the *New York Times*, Venezuelans are not starving, homeless or suffering from mass unemployment, as countries such as Greece and Spain have experienced under austerity policies. Despite certain shortages – some caused by currency controls and others by intentional hoarding, sabotage or contraband – 95% of Venezuelans consume three meals per day, an amount that has doubled since the 1990s. The unemployment rate is under 6% and housing is subsidized by the state.

Nevertheless, making Venezuela's economy scream is without a doubt a rapidly intensifying strategy executed by foreign interests and their Venezuelan counterparts, and it's

very effective. As shortages continue and access to dollars becomes increasingly difficult, chaos and panic ensue. This social discontent is capitalized on by USA agencies and anti-government forces in Venezuela pushing for regime change. A very similar strategy was used in Chile to overthrow socialist President Salvador Allende. First the economy was destroyed, then mass discontent grew and the military moved to oust Allende, backed by Washington at every stage. Lest we forget the result: a brutal dictatorship led by General Augusto Pinochet that tortured, assassinated, disappeared and forced into exile tens of thousands of people. Not exactly a model to replicate.

This year President Obama approved a special State Department fund of \$5 million to support anti-government groups in Venezuela. Additionally, the congressionally-funded National Endowment for Democracy is financing Venezuelan opposition groups with over \$1.2 million and aiding efforts to undermine Maduro's government. There is little doubt that millions more for regime change in Venezuela are being funneled through other channels that are not subject to public scrutiny.

President Maduro has denounced these ongoing attacks against his government and has directly called on President Obama to cease efforts to harm Venezuela. Recently, all 33 Latin American and Caribbean nations, members of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), publicly expressed support for Maduro and condemned ongoing USA interference in Venezuela. Latin America firmly rejects any attempts to erode democracy in the region and will not stand for another US-backed coup. It's time Washington listen to the hemisphere and stop employing the same dirty tactics against its neighbors. **CT**

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*Eva Golinger is an attorney from New York who lives in Caracas, Venezuela. She is the author of "The Chavez Code," and blogs at <http://chavezcode.com>*

# Framing the news

Remembering things that didn't happen is not the ideal qualification for a journalist, says **Michael I. Niman**

A few years back I invited a controversial popular blogger as a guest speaker in my Alternative Media class. The students wanted to talk to him about recent press reports accusing him of regularly getting his facts wrong, usually to the advantage of politicians who bought paid ads on his site. In class, to the shock of the students, the blogger defended himself, telling the students that he gets his facts right “over 90 percent of the time.”

The shock came because any student of journalism knows that anything less than 100 percent accuracy is a failure in the world of journalism, where your professional worth is entwined with your credibility as an accurate reporter.

I mention this story because the ongoing controversy over NBC Nightly News host Brian Williams's transgressions from reality has opened a dark, gaping hole piercing the veil of credibility in which much of the media has unduly shrouded themselves for years.

Williams appears to be a liar. He fabricates realities that never occurred and reports them as having happened. Much like “the dog ate my homework.” In doing so he follows a long tradition of excellent creative writers. The problem is when these creative minds pass off their fiction as journalism – or academic fieldwork, as in the

classic case of Carlos Castaneda, a cultural anthropologist, famous for his popular series of books chronicling his peyote-fueled apprenticeship under Yaqui shaman, don Juan Matus.

This body of work earned him MA and PhD degrees from UCLA, with the University of California Press introducing his work to the world, publishing his first and now classic book, “The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge”, in 1968. The problem is that there is no evidence that don Juan ever existed, and lots of evidence that Castaneda fabricated his fieldwork, passing off fiction as academic fieldwork. In doing so he created a false record about Yaqui culture. Like Williams's work, Castaneda created and propagated a lie.

It only took a few years for other anthropologists to expose Castaneda and his fabrications. Whether or not don Juan was a shaman who walked the earth or a figment of Castaneda's brilliant imagination didn't seem to matter much to his audience, however. Castaneda's books continued as best-sellers for decades, finding a built-in audience that gestated with the psychedelic era.

When confronted with a truth that diverged from that which he reported, Castaneda defended himself by arguing that he had crossed over into a different reality – purportedly different from the quantifi-

**Any student of journalism knows that anything less than 100 percent accuracy is a failure in the world of journalism, where your professional worth is entwined with your credibility as an accurate reporter**

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## TELLING LIES

**While I'd argue that Williams had lots of competition from other compliant journalists in the corporate press, his reporting from Iraq was often inaccurate, omitting embarrassing details while echoing official falsehoods**

able physical reality that most of us inhabit. For his fans, brains alit with peyote, this was good enough.

Brian Williams claims that his lies gestated in that blurry space between his memories and the divergent reality offered by the physical record and the memories of the rest of the world. Hence, like Castaneda's lies, they're not lies. They just stem from a reality other than the one that the rest of us inhabit. And unlike Castaneda's reality, we can't just eat some peyote and go with the flow. Perhaps Williams crossed over into a parallel universe much like Castaneda's different reality. It doesn't matter. What they reported didn't happen in this universe.

It doesn't really matter if Williams is an outright liar like Carlos Castaneda, or whether he is cognitively impaired, confusing hallucinations, dreams, or other people's narratives with his own memories. The end result is the same. A trusted reporter is manufacturing a false reality, undermining our understanding of the world.

While the Castaneda story is an interesting footnote to mid-20th century anthropology, Castaneda was just that, a footnote, an outlier who didn't represent the field of anthropology or undermine its credibility. The Brian Williams story is much more disturbing.

For Williams, falsely claiming that he was in a helicopter that was struck by a missile in Iraq in 2003 was just one more departure from the reality that the rest of us inherit. But unlike Castaneda, Williams was able to report falsehoods for years, unabated and mostly unchallenged. More shocking is how, when finally busted, others felt compelled to join him in his dark hole, twisting and squirming to defend and excuse what they write off as a normal faulty memory.

It's in the defenses of Williams, a lying journalist, that a larger problem is emerging. Bob Wright, the past chair of NBC Uni-

versal, quickly came to Williams's aid, arguing that the disgraced journalist should return to the air, telling the *New York Post* (2/9/15) that overall, Williams "has helped NBC News." In a shockingly truthful revelation, Wright expanded on Williams's worth to NBC, not as a truthful journalist but apparently as a well placed propagandist, explaining that he "has been the strongest supporter of the military of any of the news players."

While I'd argue that Williams had lots of competition from other compliant journalists in the corporate press, his reporting from Iraq was often inaccurate, omitting embarrassing details while echoing official falsehoods. Wright went on to explain that Williams' support of the military meant that, as a journalist, "He never comes back with negative stories," and "he wouldn't question if we're spending too much [on the military]." Williams might have suffered from chronic confusion about reality, but in Iraq, his confusion seems to have left his masters well pleased.

### **Saved from the zombie apocalypse**

Williams also deviated into an alternate reality while talking about Hurricane Katrina, repeatedly painting a false picture of violent mayhem in New Orleans. He claimed to see a dead body float by his French Quarter hotel, but the French Quarter wasn't under water. He told tale of his hotel being overrun by gangs, and of having to be rescued from these imaginary gangs "in the stairwell of a five-star hotel." Not true. A year after Katrina, he told the *Los Angeles Times*, "I saw fear, I saw death, I saw depravity, I saw firearms being brandished, I saw looting."

Williams's narrative painting New Orleans as suffering a sort of zombie apocalypse, like much of his Iraq reporting, wasn't unique. It represented the common narrative that the corporate media propagated. This is the storyline that spread fear to the region, contributing to real deaths as

frightened police officers, possibly crippled by their own racism, mistook New Orleans flood victims crossing a bridge out of the city to high ground as threats worthy of shooting in cold blood. The same narrative dissuaded some rescuers from venturing into the flooded city.

Only after the floodwaters receded and the media quieted down did evidence emerge documenting just how wrong this narrative of violent mayhem was. Bodies riddled by bullets never surfaced. There never were mass rapes in the Superdome. In fact, as Rebecca Solnit documents in her book, “A Paradise Built in Hell: The Extraordinary Communities That Arise in Disaster,” New Orleans residents, faced with Katrina’s floods and their aftermath, mostly created a remarkable model of leaderless cooperation, with the real narrative peppered with selfless heroic acts of beauty. Crime during the disaster all but disappeared, despite what Williams may have told us.

Williams’s false narrative from Iraq exaggerating his placement in harm’s way is essentially similar to his stories about New Orleans. His reality twists and turns to place him at the center of danger, much like a story that an entertaining drunk or an insecure date would tell. But it’s not just Williams. Such embellishments are common in journalism, from your local paper’s angry white male columnist reporting from the “hard streets” of the city, to the obedient war reporter echoing official narratives. It all paints a decontextualized world alight with danger and overly simplistic solutions – comfortably placing TV news within the TV entertainment frame. At the end of the day, Williams’s former boss, Bob Wright, also praised his New Orleans coverage for being “a very important factor in drawing attention to New Orleans,” albeit, I’d add, for all the wrong reasons.

### **My car got hit by rocket fire at Wegmans**

Memory is a weird thing. Two presidential

hopefuls, Paul Ryan and Rand Paul, both remember graduating college, but they didn’t (though Duke University apparently went on to admit the non-graduate Paul into medical school). With Brian Williams, the further the timeline moved on from the events he fabricated or embellished, the more his fibs grew. Now we’re suffering viral media memes explaining away these lies as just fallacies of human memory. Granted, we all forget things. That’s why journalists carry notepads and digital recorders.

The issue here is not about forgetting things that have happened. It’s about remembering things that haven’t happened, and mysteriously sticking with that hallucination despite the lack of a physical record.

People who have actually graduated from college, for example, would not just have memories of celebratory dinners or parties but a paper degree as well. A journalist whose helicopter, or car, for that matter, got hit by a rocket, would probably take some notes. It’s understandable that someone would mistake where in the supermarket lot they parked their car. It’s profoundly strange to mistakenly remember that car getting hit by rocket-fire.

A journalist, like a police officer, a scholar conducting fieldwork, or anyone with the responsibility to create reliable data based on their observations, must be an accurate reporter as democracies rely on them to inform electorates, and societies depend on them to contribute to a historical record. Williams, like Castaneda, might make it as a brilliant fiction writer, but remembering things that didn’t happen is not a disability that can be accommodated in the field of journalism, just like a blind person cannot be a bus driver. **CT**

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*Michael I. Niman is a professor of journalism and critical media studies at SUNY Buffalo State. His columns are archived at [mediastudy.com](http://mediastudy.com).*

**Williams’s false narrative from Iraq exaggerating his placement in harm’s way is essentially similar to his stories about New Orleans**

# US imperialism and catastrophe in Libya

**Joseph Kishore** says we should remember who is responsible for the ill-conceived war that led to recent ISIS atrocities in Libya

**Prior to the intervention of NATO, there were no sectarian murders of Christians in Libya and Islamist militias tied to Al Qaeda were small groups with no broader influence**

Last month, the Islamic State (ISIS) released a video of the horrific beheadings of 21 Coptic Christian workers seized in the town of Sirte in eastern Libya. This barbaric act was the latest in a series of such killings, including the beheading or immolation of hostages from the US, Britain, Japan and Jordan.

The latest ISIS atrocity has triggered predictable expressions of shock and anger by news anchors and editorialists in the United States, along with further massacres. Within hours of the release of the video, Egypt, led by US-backed dictator General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, launched a wave of air strikes killing 64 people, including seven civilians.

Washington and its political allies are politically and morally responsible for these atrocities. The Islamist beheadings in Libya are the product of a monumental crime: the 2011 NATO war in Libya to oust the regime of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi.

Prior to the intervention of NATO, there were no sectarian murders of Christians in Libya and Islamist militias tied to Al Qaeda were small groups with no broader influence. These forces were armed and promoted when, in 2011, the Obama administration and its allies in Europe, led by French President Nicolas Sarkozy, took the decision to topple Gaddafi.

The imperialist powers funneled massive amounts of money and weaponry to

Islamist militias and Al Qaeda operatives, providing them with air support through a mass bombing campaign that killed tens of thousands of Libyans.

As the World Socialist Web Site wrote at the time: “Far from a ‘revolution’ or struggle for ‘liberation,’ what the world is witnessing is the rape of Libya by a syndicate of imperialist powers determined to lay hold of its oil wealth and turn its territory into a neo-colonial base of operations for further interventions throughout the Middle East and North Africa.”

## **Carpet bombing**

The disastrous consequences of the rape of Libya are now all too clear to see.

The war culminated in the carpet bombing of Sirte and the torture and murder of Gaddafi, after which then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton gloated, “We came, we saw, he died.” Since then, Libya has collapsed into an ever-bloodier civil war between various Islamist factions and rival militias vying for state power. The country has also served as a training ground for CIA-backed Islamist forces preparing to fight the Syrian regime of President Bashar al-Assad.

Less than four years after the war, the American media report on ISIS atrocities in Libya as if US imperialism had nothing to do with them. No one reading a recent editorial produced by the *New York Times*



**Muammar Gaddafi and Hillary Clinton: "We came, we saw, he died."**

Photos: Wikipedia

**Responsibility for the disaster in Libya lies squarely with former French President Nicolas Sarkozy; President Obama; and the NATO allied powers that joined in this murderous adventure**

("What Libya's Unraveling Means") would have any inkling of Washington's role in producing this catastrophe, or the US media's role in supporting the operation. One of the key figures in the war, the late US Ambassador to Libya Christopher Stevens, who was killed in an Islamist raid in Benghazi after the war, was himself a friend of many *Times* journalists.

The *Times* worries that "this oil-rich nation [is veering] towards complete chaos," and that "the growth and radicalization of Islamist groups raise the possibility that large parts of Libya could become a satellite of the Islamic State." It manages to describe the conflict that led to Gaddafi's ouster simply as a "civil war," without even mentioning NATO's six-month bombing of Libya.

### **Military affiliates**

ISIS is now strongest precisely where Washington has intervened most aggressively. Another article published in the *Times* warns, "The Islamic State is expanding beyond its base in Syria and Iraq to establish military affiliates in Afghanistan, Algeria, Egypt and

Libya." The *Times* does not mention that the US has invaded or financed Islamist proxy wars in four of the six countries mentioned: Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya.

The world is now witnessing the consequences of the recklessness, brutality, greed and limitless stupidity of Washington and its NATO allies.

Responsibility for the disaster in Libya lies squarely with former French President Nicolas Sarkozy, the initial champion of a NATO war in Libya; President Obama, whose administration provided the bulk of the firepower that shattered Libya's armed forces and its major cities; and the NATO allied powers that joined in this murderous adventure.

What is unfolding across the Middle East today is an indictment of imperialism, its ruling elites, its political servants and its lying media. **CT**

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*Joseph Kishore is National Secretary of the Socialist Equality Party. and writer for the World Socialist Web Site – <http://wsws.org> – where this report was first published*

# There's something about Henry

**Medea Benjamin** tells why she considers Henry Kissinger a war criminal

**If McCain really objects to physical intimidation, perhaps he could recall what happened to the gentle Chilean singer-songwriter Victor Jara**

Security guards recently tossed me and my fellow activists out of a Senate hearing where former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger was about to testify. It became a hot story when Senator John McCain denounced us as “low-life scum.”

Why was McCain so mad?

Probably because we were holding signs that said “Arrest Kissinger for War Crimes” while dangling handcuffs.

For this, the Arizona Republican called us “disgraceful, outrageous, and despicable.” He even accused us of “physically intimidating” the 91-year-old Kissinger.

If McCain really objects to physical intimidation, perhaps he could recall what happened to the gentle Chilean singer-songwriter Victor Jara.

After Kissinger facilitated the 1973 coup that brought the ruthless Augusto Pinochet to power in Chile, soldiers herded Jara and 5,000 other prisoners into Chile's National Stadium. Sadistic thugs smashed Jara's hands and tore off his nails. Then they ordered him to play his guitar.

The popular singer's corpse was later found dumped on the street, his dead body riddled with gunshot wounds and signs of torture.

As Pinochet's military government tortured, killed, and “disappeared” thousands of Chileans, Kissinger told the dictator that

he had done “a great service to the West” by overthrowing the democratically elected government that preceded him.

McCain also called us “despicable.” What about Kissinger's role in the brutal 1975 Indonesian invasion of East Timor?

It was Kissinger who gave the Indonesian strongman Suharto a green light – and plenty of weapons – for an invasion that led to a 25-year occupation in which over 100,000 people were murdered or starved to death. A UN truth commission later observed that USA “political and military support were fundamental to the Indonesian invasion and occupation.”

I wish McCain would read the report by the UN Commission on Human Rights describing the horrific consequences. It includes the gang rape of female Timorese detainees and prolonged sexual torture of a vile and disgusting nature.

Talk about physical intimidation.

You might also think that McCain, who endured torture as a prisoner of war in Vietnam, would be more sensitive to Kissinger's role in prolonging that conflict.

From 1969 through 1973, Kissinger, along with President Richard Nixon, oversaw the expansion of the war in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. About 1 million people died in the bloodshed. I hope McCain has heard the recording of Kissinger ordering a “massive bombing campaign in Cambodia” against

“anything that moves.” Given this shameful record, it’s no wonder that Kissinger is used to being called a war criminal.

In 2001, French Judge Roger Le Loire issued a warrant to have Kissinger appear before his court. When the French served Kissinger with his summons at the Ritz Hotel in Paris, Kissinger fled the country.

More indictments followed in Spain, Argentina, and Uruguay. In 2001 the family of General René Schneider, the assassinated commander in chief of the Chilean army, even filed a civil suit against him in Washington.

“Kissinger should have the door shut in his face by every decent person and should be shamed, ostracized, and excluded,” the late writer Christopher Hitchens once fumed. Rather than doting on the man, Hitchens suggested, “why don’t you arrest him?”

Henry Kissinger probably won’t ever be tried for war crimes, at least not in the United States. But we can show – with words and banners – that some people remember his crimes.

McCain called us “disgraceful.” You know what’s really disgraceful? A bunch of senators hearing a war criminal drone on about “Global Challenges and the USA National Security Strategy.”

Following over a decade of failed wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, it’s time for elected officials like John McCain to bring in fresh faces and fresh ideas. **CT**

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*Medea Benjamin is co-founder of peace group CodePink - <http://codepink.org> and the human rights organization Global Exchange – <http://globalexchange.org> She is the author of “Drone Warfare: Killing by Remote Control”*

**When the French served Kissinger with his summons at the Ritz Hotel in Paris, Kissinger fled the country**

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## HURWITT’S EYE

MARK HURWITT



# The Front Page Rule

Jailed anti-drone activist **Kathy Kelly** shares her thoughts about killing by stealth, the angry words of John McCain, and Code Pink activists

**I'm in prison for protesting drone warfare, so a kind friend ordered Richard Clark's novel, 'The Sting Of The Drone,' for me to read**

**A**fter a week here in FMC Lexington Satellite camp, a federal prison in Kentucky, I started catching up on national and international news via back issues of *USA Today* available in the prison library, and an "In Brief" item, on Page 2A of the Jan. 30 weekend edition, caught my eye. It briefly described a protest in Washington, DC, in which members of the antiwar group "Code Pink" interrupted a US Senate Armed Services budget hearing chaired by Senator John McCain. The protesters approached a witness table where Henry Kissinger, Madeleine Albright and George Schulz were seated. One of their signs called Henry Kissinger a war criminal. "McCain," the article continued, "blurted out, 'Get out of here, you low-life scum.'"

At mail call, a week ago, I received Richard Clarke's novel, "The Sting of the Drone", (May 2014, St. Martin's Press), about characters involved in developing and launching drone attacks. I'm in prison for protesting drone warfare, so a kind friend ordered it for me. The author, a former "National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism," worked for 30 years inside the US government but seems to have greater respect than some within government for concerned people outside of it. He seems also to feel some respect for people outside our borders.

He develops, I think, a fair-minded ap-

proach toward evaluating drone warfare given his acceptance that wars and assassinations are sometimes necessary. (I don't share that premise). Several characters in the novel, including members of a House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, criticize drone warfare, noting that in spite of high level, expensive reconnaissance, drone attacks still kill civilians, alienating people the US ostensibly wants to turn away from terrorism.

Elsewhere in the plot, US citizens face acute questions after they themselves witness remote control attacks on colleagues. Standing outside a Las Vegas home engulfed in flames, and frustrated by his inability to protect or save a colleague and his family, one main character ruefully identifies with people experiencing the same rage and grief, in faraway lands like Afghanistan and Pakistan, when they are struck by Predator drones that he operates every day. US characters courageously grapple with more nuanced answers to questions such as, "Who are the terrorists?" and "Who are the murderers?"

As the plot accelerates toward a potential terrorist attack against railway systems in US cities, with growing suspicion that the attacks are planned for Christmas Day, Clarke builds awareness that those who launch cyber-attacks and drone attacks, no matter which side claims their loyalty, pas-



Protesters call for the arrest of Henry Kissinger at the US Senate Armed Services meeting.

Photo: C-Span screengrab

sionately believe their attacks will protect people on their own side.

When US media and US government officials ask, “who are the murderers,” the default answer is enemy soldiers. I’m reminded of Senator McCain’s own response to a 2012 prisoner exchange of five Afghan militants, where he was alleged to have exclaimed, “They’re the five biggest murderers in world history! They killed Americans!”

### No surrender

It brings home a core fact about drones: that you can’t surrender to a drone. Enemy soldiers, and people merely suspected of being, or intending to become, enemy soldiers, are killed at home gardening, or eating dinner with their families.

At the military base where I was arrested, soldiers drive home every evening from piloting drones in lethal sorties over Afghanistan, Iraq, and presumably a sizable list of other countries less well known to the US public. With no overwhelming zeal to kill civilians, they assist the US in killing many

more civilians each year than Al Qaeda and ISIS can collectively dream of doing, in the course of advancing US interests over a whole world region US drones render into one large battlefield. No thinking person would wish that same logic to be visited on these soldiers returning home from daily battle, although Clarke’s novel chillingly imagines the US’ own technology and rules of engagement turned against it. It’s a warning we’re too prone to ignore.

In Clarke’s novel, the US drone operators and intelligence officials are smart, efficient, generally honest, caring and often funny. Romance and occasional flings color their lives. The two masterminds of the enemy plot in contrast, are more mysterious. Readers learn almost nothing about their personal lives, although it’s clear that they don’t expect to live much longer. They, too show remarkable expertise exploring high-tech ways to achieve goals. They, too, are clever and terrifyingly competent; personal loss and deeply felt grievances motivate them; like their counterparts, they’ve

**At the military base where I was arrested, soldiers drive home every evening from piloting drones in lethal sorties over Afghanistan, Iraq, and presumably a sizable list of other countries less well known to the US public**

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## PRISON LETTER

**I'm glad Code Pink members continually interrupt high level hearings. I hope their essential questioning will plant seeds that germinate, take root and gather underground strength**

moved into high positions with increasing wealth and perks. But, unlike the US characters, they express no remorse or second thoughts about killing their targets and strategizing for a major attack.

The fact remains that if we didn't see enemy soldiers as "murdering terrorists" lacking the human emotions and rights of our own troops, and enemy civilians as "collateral damage" whose deaths are automatically the fault of all who resist us, then there couldn't be a drone program. There wouldn't be a technology for eliminating human threats and human obstacles conveniently, cheaply, and instantly from the skies. We would no longer be killing militants and suspected militants unquestioned, too often at the first hint that they might pose a risk to us.

The "means-ends" question intensifies as both sides demonstrate increasingly high-tech ways to thwart and attack each other. One intelligence officer asks how his superior manages to draw the line between what is acceptable and what would be out of bounds when he issues orders that will "take out" presumed enemies.

"It used to be the 'Front Page Rule,'" the higher official responds. "Assume it will be on the front page of the *Post* some day and only do it if you could stand that level of exposure. But it's amazing what has been on the front page without any real consequences: torture, illegal wiretaps, black sites. No one goes to jail. No one gets fired. So I don't know anymore."

When Clarke invokes the "Front Page Rule", it seems to be his acknowledgement that peace protesters like those of Code Pink play a valuable role informing public opinion. Believing that the means you use determines the end you get, they hold out for alternatives to war and killing. Far from being low-life scum, they have distinguished themselves in fields of diplomacy, research, journalism, law and education. More than this, they are distinguishing themselves in service to the victims of war.

I hope that some day Senator McCain will gain the insight to repent of insulting them, just as one of the witnesses that day, former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, may now regret having exalted the "indispensable" US nation's right to lead in using force, having since admitted, "We have been talking about our exceptionalism during the recent eight years. Now, an average American wants to stay at home – they do not need any overseas adventures. We do not need new enemies."

Militarists trust in weapon strength. Still, though perennially disregarded, another option is readily available, offering much greater safety and letting us insist without self-deception on the respect for life that we invoke in defense of our nation's drone strategy and its war on terror. It's the option of treating other people fairly and justly, of trying to share resources equitably, even that precious resource of safety; of trying to see the humanity of our so-called enemies and of seeing ourselves as we're seen by them.

Clarke's story moves toward a suspenseful conclusion at the height of the Christmas season, ironically moving toward a day traditionally set aside to herald a newborn as the Prince of Peace.

As drone warfare proliferates, as the stings of the drone become more lethal and terrifying, the peace activists hold a newsworthy message. I'm glad Code Pink members continually interrupt high level hearings. I hope their essential questioning will plant seeds that germinate, take root and gather underground strength. **CT**

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*Kathy Kelly, co-coordinator of Voices for Creative Nonviolence (info@vcnv.org), is in federal prison for participation in an anti-drone protest. She can receive mail at: KATHY KELLY 04971-045; FMC LEXINGTON; FEDERAL MEDICAL CENTER; SATELLITE CAMP; P.O. BOX 14525; LEXINGTON, KY 40512.*

*This article first appeared on Telesur.*

# Gaza in Arizona

**Todd Miller** and **Gabriel M. Schivone** tell how Israeli high-tech firms will help armour the USA-Mexican border

It was October 2012. Roei Elkabetz, a brigadier general for the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), was explaining his country's border policing strategies. In his PowerPoint presentation, a photo of the enclosure wall that isolates the Gaza Strip from Israel clicked on-screen. "We have learned lots from Gaza," he told the audience. "It's a great laboratory."

Elkabetz was speaking at a border technology conference and fair surrounded by a dazzling display of technology – the components of his boundary-building lab. There were surveillance balloons with high-powered cameras floating over a desert-camouflaged armored vehicle made by Lockheed Martin. There were seismic sensor systems used to detect the movement of people and other wonders of the modern border-policing world. Around Elkabetz, you could see vivid examples of where the future of such policing was heading, as imagined not by a dystopian science fiction writer but by some of the top corporate techno-innovators on the planet.

Swimming in a sea of border security, the brigadier general was, however, not surrounded by the Mediterranean but by a parched West Texas landscape. He was in El Paso, a 10-minute walk from the wall that separates the United States from Mexico.

Just a few more minutes on foot and Elkabetz could have watched green-striped USA Border Patrol vehicles inching along the trickling Rio Grande in front of Ciudad Juar-

ez, one of Mexico's largest cities filled with USA factories and the dead of that country's drug wars. The Border Patrol agents whom the general might have spotted were then being up-armored with a lethal combination of surveillance technologies, military hardware, assault rifles, helicopters, and drones. This once-peaceful place was being transformed into what Timothy Dunn, in his book, "The Militarization of the USA Mexico Border," terms a state of "low-intensity warfare."

## The border surge

On November 20, 2014, President Obama announced a series of executive actions on immigration reform. Addressing the American people, he referred to bipartisan immigration legislation passed by the Senate in June 2013 that would, among other things, further up-armour the same landscape in what's been termed – in language adopted from recent USA war zones – a "border surge." The president bemoaned the fact that the bill had been stalled in the House of Representatives, hailing it as a "compromise" that "reflected common sense." It would, he pointed out, "have doubled the number of Border Patrol agents, while giving undocumented immigrants a pathway to citizenship."

In the wake of his announcement, including executive actions that would protect five to six million of those immigrants from fu-

**Around Elkabetz, you could see vivid examples of where the future of such policing was heading, as imagined not by a dystopian science fiction writer but by some of the top corporate techno-innovators on the planet**

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## BEHIND THE FENCE

**Like the Gaza Strip for the Israelis, the USA borderlands, dubbed a “constitution-free zone” by the ACLU, are becoming a vast open-air laboratory for tech companies**

ture deportation, the national debate was quickly framed as a conflict between Republicans and Democrats. Missed in this partisan war of words was one thing: the initial executive action that Obama announced involved a further militarization of the border supported by both parties.

“First,” the president said, “we’ll build on our progress at the border with additional resources for our law enforcement personnel so that they can stem the flow of illegal crossings and speed the return of those who do cross over.” Without further elaboration, he then moved on to other matters.

If, however, the United States follows the “common sense” of the border-surge bill, the result could add more than \$40 billion dollars worth of agents, advanced technologies, walls, and other barriers to an already unparalleled border enforcement apparatus. And a crucial signal would be sent to the private sector that, as the trade magazine *Homeland Security Today* puts it, another “treasure trove” of profit is on the way for a border control market already, according to the latest forecasts, in an “unprecedented boom period.”

Like the Gaza Strip for the Israelis, the USA borderlands, dubbed a “constitution-free zone” by the ACLU, are becoming a vast open-air laboratory for tech companies. There, almost any form of surveillance and “security” can be developed, tested, and showcased, as if in a militarized shopping mall, for other nations across the planet to consider. In this fashion, border security is becoming a global industry and few corporate complexes can be more pleased by this than the one that has developed in Elkabetz’s Israel.

### **The Palestine-Mexico border**

Consider the IDF brigadier general’s presence in El Paso two years ago an omen. After all, in February 2014, Customs and Border Protection (CBP), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) agency in charge of policing US borders, contracted with Israel’s giant private military manufac-

turer Elbit Systems to build a “virtual wall,” a technological barrier set back from the actual international divide in the Arizona desert. That company, whose USA-traded stock shot up by 6% during Israel’s massive military operation against Gaza in the summer of 2014, will bring the same databank of technology used in Israel’s borderlands – Gaza and the West Bank – to Southern Arizona through its subsidiary Elbit Systems of America.

With approximately 12,000 employees and, as it boasts, “10+ years securing the world’s most challenging borders,” Elbit produces an arsenal of “homeland security systems.” These include surveillance land vehicles, mini-unmanned aerial systems, and “smart fences,” highly fortified steel barriers that have the ability to sense a person’s touch or movement. In its role as lead system integrator for Israel’s border technology plan, the company has already installed smart fences in the West Bank and the Golan Heights.

In Arizona, with up to a billion dollars potentially at its disposal, CBP has tasked Elbit with creating a “wall” of “integrated fixed towers” containing the latest in cameras, radar, motion sensors, and control rooms. Construction will start in the rugged, desert canyons around Nogales. Once a DHS evaluation deems that part of the project effective, the rest will be built to monitor the full length of the state’s borderlands with Mexico. Keep in mind, however, that these towers are only one part of a broader operation, the Arizona Border Surveillance Technology Plan. At this stage, it’s essentially a blueprint for an unprecedented infrastructure of high-tech border fortifications that has attracted the attention of many companies.

This is not the first time Israeli companies have been involved in a USA border build-up. In fact, in 2004, Elbit’s Hermes drones were the first unmanned aerial vehicles to take to the skies to patrol the southern border. In 2007, according to Naomi Klein in “The Shock Doctrine”, the Golan Group, an Israeli consulting company made up of for-

mer IDF Special Forces officers, provided an intensive eight-day course for special DHS immigration agents covering “everything from hand-to-hand combat to target practice to ‘getting proactive with their SUV.’” The Israeli company NICE Systems even supplied Arizona’s Joe Arpaio, “America’s toughest sheriff,” with a surveillance system to watch one of his jails.

As such border cooperation intensified, journalist Jimmy Johnson coined the apt phrase “Palestine-Mexico border” to catch what was happening. In 2012, Arizona state legislators, sensing the potential economic benefit of this growing collaboration, declared their desert state and Israel to be natural “trade partners,” adding that it was “a relationship we seek to enhance.”

In this way, the doors were opened to a new world order in which the United States and Israel are to become partners in the “laboratory” that is the USA-Mexican borderlands. Its testing grounds are to be in Arizona. There, largely through a program known as Global Advantage, American academic and corporate knowhow and Mexican low-wage manufacturing are to fuse with Israel’s border and homeland security companies.

### **The border: Open for business**

No one may frame the budding romance between Israel’s high-tech companies and Arizona better than Tucson Mayor Jonathan Rothschild. “If you go to Israel and you come to Southern Arizona and close your eyes and spin yourself a few times,” he says, “you might not be able to tell the difference.”

Global Advantage is a business project based on a partnership between the University of Arizona’s Tech Parks Arizona and the Offshore Group, a business advisory and housing firm which offers “nearshore solutions for manufacturers of any size” just across the border in Mexico. Tech Parks Arizona has the lawyers, accountants, and scholars, as well as the technical knowhow, to help any foreign company land softly and set up

shop in the state. It will aid that company in addressing legal issues, achieving regulatory compliance, and even finding qualified employees – and through a program it’s called the Israel Business Initiative, Global Advantage has identified its target country.

Think of it as the perfect example of a post-NAFTA world in which companies dedicated to stopping border crossers are ever freer to cross the same borders themselves. In the spirit of free trade that created the NAFTA treaty, the latest border fortification programs are designed to eliminate borders when it comes to letting high-tech companies from across the seas set up in the United States and make use of Mexico’s manufacturing base to create their products. While Israel and Arizona may be separated by thousands of miles, Rothschild assured us that in “economics, there are no borders.”

Of course, what the mayor appreciates, above all, is the way new border technology could bring money and jobs into an area with a nearly 23% poverty rate. How those jobs might be created matters far less to him. According to Molly Gilbert, the director of community engagement for the Tech Parks Arizona, “It’s really about development, and we want to create technology jobs in our borderlands.”

So consider it anything but an irony that, in this developing global set of boundary-busting partnerships, the factories that will produce the border fortresses designed by Elbit and other Israeli and USA high-tech firms will mainly be located in Mexico. Ill-paid Mexican blue-collar workers will, then, manufacture the very components of a future surveillance regime, which may well help locate, detain, arrest, incarcerate, and expel some of them if they try to cross into the United States.

Think of Global Advantage as a multinational assembly line, a place where homeland security meets NAFTA. Right now there are reportedly 10 to 20 Israeli companies in active discussion about joining the program. Bruce Wright, the CEO of Tech Parks Arizona,

**Consider it anything but an irony that the factories that will produce the border fortresses designed by Elbit and other Israeli and USA high-tech firms will mainly be located in Mexico**

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## BEHIND THE FENCE

**More than 10,000 drone flights have been launched into border air space since March 2013, with plans for many more, especially after the Border Patrol doubles its fleet**

says that his organization has a “nondisclosure” agreement with any companies that sign on and so cannot reveal their names.

Though cautious about officially claiming success for Global Advantage’s Israel Business Initiative, Wright brims with optimism about his organization’s cross-national planning. As he talks in a conference room located on the 1,345-acre park on the southern outskirts of Tucson, it’s apparent that he’s buoyed by predictions that the Homeland Security market will grow from a \$51 billion annual business in 2012 to \$81 billion in the United States alone by 2020, and \$544 billion worldwide by 2018.

Wright knows as well that submarkets for border-related products like video surveillance, non-lethal weaponry, and people-screening technologies are all advancing rapidly and that the USA market for drones is poised to create 70,000 new jobs by 2016. Partially fueling this growth is what the Associated Press calls an “unheralded shift” to drone surveillance on the USA southern divide. More than 10,000 drone flights have been launched into border air space since March 2013, with plans for many more, especially after the Border Patrol doubles its fleet.

When Wright speaks, it’s clear he knows that his park sits atop a twenty-first-century gold mine. As he sees it, Southern Arizona, aided by his tech park, will become the perfect laboratory for the first cluster of border security companies in North America. He’s not only thinking about the 57 southern Arizona companies already identified as working in border security and management, but similar companies nationwide and across the globe, especially in Israel.

In fact, Wright’s aim is to follow Israel’s lead, as it is now the number-one place for such groupings. In his case, the Mexican border would simply replace that country’s highly marketed Palestinian testing grounds. The 18,000 linear feet that surround the tech park’s solar panel farm would, for example, be a perfect spot to test out motion sensors. Companies could also deploy, evaluate, and

test their products “in the field,” as he likes to say – that is, where real people are crossing real borders – just as Elbit Systems did before CBP gave it the contract.

“If we’re going to be in bed with the border on a day-to-day basis, with all of its problems and issues, and there’s a solution to it,” Wright said in a 2012 interview, “why shouldn’t we be the place where the issue is solved and we get the commercial benefit from it?”

### From the battlefield to the border

When Naomi Weiner, project coordinator for the Israel Business Initiative, returned from a trip to that country with University of Arizona researchers in tow, she couldn’t have been more enthusiastic about the possibilities for collaboration. She arrived back in November, just a day before Obama announced his new executive actions – a promising declaration for those, like her, in the business of bolstering border defenses.

“We’ve chosen areas where Israel is very strong and Southern Arizona is very strong,” Weiner explained, pointing to the surveillance industry “synergy” between the two places. For example, one firm her team met with in Israel was Brightway Vision, a subsidiary of Elbit Systems. If it decides to set up shop in Arizona, it could use tech park expertise to further develop and refine its thermal imaging cameras and goggles, while exploring ways to repurpose those military products for border surveillance applications. The Offshore Group would then manufacture the cameras and goggles in Mexico.

Arizona, as Weiner puts it, possesses the “complete package” for such Israeli companies. “We’re sitting right on the border, close to Fort Huachuca,” a nearby military base where, among other things, technicians control the drones surveilling the borderlands. “We have the relationship with Customs and Border Protection, so there’s a lot going on here. And we’re also the Center of Excellence on Homeland Security.”

Werner is referring to the fact that, in 2008, DHS designated the University of Arizona the

lead school for the Center of Excellence on Border Security and Immigration. Thanks to that, it has since received millions of dollars in federal grants. Focusing on research and development of border-policing technologies, the center is a place where, among other things, engineers are studying locust wings in order to create miniature drones equipped with cameras that can get into the tiniest of spaces near ground level, while large drones like the Predator B continue to buzz over the borderlands at 30,000 feet (despite the fact that a recent audit by the inspector general of homeland security found them a waste of money).

Although the Arizona-Israeli romance is still in the courtship stage, excitement about its possibilities is growing. Officials from Tech Parks Arizona see Global Advantage as the perfect way to strengthen the USA-Israel “special relationship.” There is no other place in the world with a higher concentration of homeland security tech companies than Israel. Six hundred tech start-ups are launched in Tel Aviv alone every year. During the Gaza offensive last summer, Bloomberg reported that investment in such companies had “actually accelerated.” However, despite the periodic military operations in Gaza and the incessant build-up of the Israeli homeland security regime, there are serious limitations to the local market.

The Israeli Ministry of Economy is painfully aware of this. Its officials know that the growth of the Israeli economy is “largely fueled by a steady increase in exports and foreign investment.” The government coddles, cultivates, and supports these start-up tech companies until their products are market-ready. Among them have been innovations like the “skunk,” a liquid with a putrid odor meant to stop unruly crowds in their tracks. The ministry has also been successful in taking such products to market across the globe. In the decade following 9/11, sales of Israeli “security exports” rose from \$2 billion to \$7 billion annually.

Israeli companies have sold surveillance drones to Latin American countries like Mexico, Chile, and Colombia, and massive

security systems to India and Brazil, where an electro-optic surveillance system will be deployed along the country’s borders with Paraguay and Bolivia. They have also been involved in preparations for policing the 2016 Olympics in Brazil. The products of Elbit Systems and its subsidiaries are now in use from the Americas and Europe to Australia. Meanwhile, that mammoth security firm is ever more involved in finding “civilian applications” for its war technologies. It is also ever more dedicated to bringing the battlefield to the world’s borderlands, including southern Arizona.

As geographer Joseph Nevins notes, although there are many differences between the political situations of the USA and Israel, both Israel-Palestine and Arizona share a focus on keeping out “those deemed permanent outsiders,” whether Palestinians, undocumented Latin Americans, or indigenous people.

Mohyeddin Abdulaziz has seen this “special relationship” from both sides, as a Palestinian refugee whose home and village Israeli military forces destroyed in 1967 and as a long-time resident of the USA-Mexico borderlands. A founding member of the Southern Arizona BDS Network, whose goal is to pressure USA divestment from Israeli companies, Abdulaziz opposes any program like Global Advantage that will contribute to the further militarization of the border, especially when it also sanitizes Israel’s “violations of human rights and international law.”

Such violations matter little, of course, when there is money to be made, as Brigadier General Elkabetz indicated at that 2012 border technology conference. Given the direction that both the USA and Israel are taking when it comes to their borderlands, the deals being brokered at the University of Arizona look increasingly like matches made in heaven (or perhaps hell). As a result, there is truth packed into journalist Dan Cohen’s comment that “Arizona is the Israel of the United States.”

**Israeli companies have sold surveillance drones to Latin American countries like Mexico, Chile, and Colombia, and massive security systems to India and Brazil**

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*Todd Miller is the author of “Border Patrol Nation: Dispatches From the Front Lines of Homeland Security”.*

**Gabriel M. Schivone**, a writer from Tucson, has worked as a humanitarian volunteer in the Mexico-USA borderlands for more than six years. He blogs at *Electronic Intifada* and *Huffington Post’s “Latino Voices”*

*This essay originally appeared at <http://tomdispatch.com>*

**CT**

# Back to school: Leg irons, handcuffs and shackles

US schoolyards have been transformed into a battleground – not by gangs, but by the police state, says **John W. Whitehead**

**A 6-year-old kindergarten student in a Georgia public school was handcuffed, transported to the police station, and charged with simple battery of a schoolteacher and criminal damage to property for throwing a temper tantrum at school**

*“In many parts of the country, teachers are viewed as beyond reproach, much like doctors, police officers, or clergy ... and, therefore, are rarely challenged about their classroom conduct. In some cases, this means that actions that would be considered criminal if committed by a parent remain unchallenged by law enforcement if they occur in a school setting.” – Senator Tom Harkin, “Dangerous Use of Seclusion and Restraints in Schools Remains Widespread and Difficult to Remedy: A Review of Ten Cases”*

**R**oughly 1500 kids are tied up or locked down every day by school officials in the United States. At least 500 students are locked up in some form of solitary confinement every day, whether it be a padded room, a closet or a duffel bag. In many cases, parents are rarely notified when such methods are used.

On any given day when school is in session, kids who “act up” in class are pinned facedown on the floor, locked in dark closets, tied up with straps, bungee cords and duct tape, handcuffed, leg shackled, tasered or otherwise restrained, immobilized or placed in solitary confinement in order to bring them under “control.”

In almost every case, these undeniably harsh methods are used to punish kids for simply failing to follow directions or throwing tantrums. Very rarely do the kids pose

any credible danger to themselves or others.

Unbelievably, these tactics are all legal, at least when employed by school officials or school resource officers (a.k.a. police officers) in the nation’s public schools.

For example, in what may be the youngest example of a child being restrained in this way, in October 2014, a 4-year-old Virginia preschooler was handcuffed, leg shackled and transported to the sheriff’s office after reportedly throwing blocks and climbing on top of the furniture. School officials claim the restraints were necessary to protect the adults from injury.

- In New York, “school safety agents” tied a 5-year-old ADHD student to a chair with Velcro straps as a punishment for throwing a tantrum in class. Police officers claim the straps were necessary because the boy had tried to bite one of the adults.

- A 6-year-old kindergarten student in a Georgia public school was handcuffed, transported to the police station, and charged with simple battery of a schoolteacher and criminal damage to property for throwing a temper tantrum at school.

- A second-grader in Arizona who suffers from ADHD was duct-taped to her chair after getting up to sharpen her pencil too often.

- Kentucky school officials placed a 9-year-old autistic student in a duffel bag as a punishment for acting up in class. Turns out, it wasn’t the first time the boy had been

placed inside the “therapy bag.”

● An 11-year-old special needs student had his hands cuffed behind his back and was driven home in a police car after refusing to come inside after recess and acting in an out of control manner by “passively” resisting police officers.

Unfortunately, these are far from isolated incidents. According to a ProPublica investigative report, such harsh punishments are part of a widespread phenomenon plaguing school districts across America. Indeed, as investigative reporter Heather Vogell points out, this is a local story everywhere. It’s happening in every school district in America.

In 2012, there were more than 267,000 attempts by school officials to restrain or lock up students using straps, bungee cords, and duct tape. The numbers are likely far greater when one accounts for the schools that underreport their use of such tactics.

Vogell found that “most [incidents] of restraints and seclusions happen to kids with disabilities – and are more likely to happen to kids with autism or emotional/behavioral problems.” Often due to their age, their emotional distress, or their disabilities, these young people are unable to tell their parents about the abusive treatment being meted out to them by school officials.

At least 500 students are placed in “Scream Rooms” every day (there were 104,000 reported uses of scream rooms in a given year). For those unfamiliar with the term, a “scream room” is an isolated, unmonitored, locked room – sometimes padded, often as small as four-feet-by-four-feet – which school officials use to place students in seclusion.

These scream rooms are a far cry from the tested and approved “time out,” which involves monitoring the child in a non-locked setting in order to calm him down. As psychiatrist Keith Albow points out, “Scream rooms are nothing but solitary confinement, and by extension, that makes every school that uses them a prison. They turn principals into wardens and make every student an inmate.”

Schools acting like prisons. School officials acting like wardens. Students treated like inmates and punished like hardened criminals. This is the end product of all those so-called school “safety” policies, which run the gamut from zero tolerance policies that punish all infractions harshly to surveillance cameras, metal detectors, random searches, drug-sniffing dogs, school-wide lockdowns, active-shooter drills and militarized police officers.

### **Traumatic for kids**

Paradoxically, instead of making the schools safer, school officials have succeeded in creating an environment in which children are so traumatized that they suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, nightmares, anxiety, mistrust of adults in authority, as well as feelings of anger, depression, humiliation, despair and delusion.

Even in the face of parental outrage, lawsuits, legislative reforms, investigative reports and endless cases showing that these tactics are not working and “should never be used for punishment or discipline,” full-grown adults – police officers and teachers alike – insist that the reason they continue to handcuff, lock up and restrain little kids is because they fear for their safety and the safety of others.

“Fear for one’s safety” has become such a hackneyed and threadbare excuse for behavior that is inexcusable. Dig a little deeper and you’ll find that explanation covers a multitude of sins, whether it’s poorly trained police officers who shoot first and ask questions later, or school officials who are ill-equipped to deal with children who act like children, meaning they don’t always listen, they sometimes throw tantrums, and they have a hard time sitting still.

That’s not to say all schools are bad. In fact, there are a small but growing number of schools that are proactively switching to a policy of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), which relies on the use of “engaging instruction, combined with ac-

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## EDUCATING AMERICA

**How do you convince a child who has been routinely handcuffed, shackled, tied down, locked up, and immobilized by government officials that he has any rights at all**

knowledge or feedback of positive student behavior,” in order to reduce the need for unnecessary discipline and promote a climate of greater productivity, safety, and learning. One school in Pennsylvania for children with significant behavior challenges found that they were able to “reduce the use of physical restraint from approximately 1,000 incidents per year in 1998 to only three incidents total in 2012” after switching to a PBIS-oriented program. If exposed to this positive reinforcement early enough in school, by the time a student makes it to the third grade, little to no intervention is required.

Unfortunately, these schools are still in the minority in an age that values efficiency, expediency and conformity, where it’s often faster and easier to “lock down” a kid who won’t sit still, won’t follow orders, and won’t comply.

Certainly, this is a mindset we see all too often in the American police state.

So what’s the answer, not only for the here-and-now – the children growing up in these quasi-prisons – but for the future of the country? How do you convince a child who has been routinely handcuffed, shackled, tied down, locked up, and immobilized by government officials – all before he reaches the age of adulthood – that he has any rights at all, let alone the right to challenge wrongdoing, resist oppression and defend himself against injustice?

Most of all, as I point out in my book, “A Government of Wolves: The Emerging American Police State”, how do you persuade a fellow American that the government works for him when for most of his young life, he has been incarcerated in an institution that teaches young people to be obedient and compliant citizens who don’t talk back, don’t question and don’t challenge authority?

Peter Gray, a professor of psychology at Boston College, believes that school is a prison that is damaging our kids, and it’s hard to disagree, especially with the numbers of police officers being assigned to schools on the rise. What this means, notes *Mother Jones*, is

greater police “involvement in routine discipline matters that principals and parents used to address without involvement from law enforcement officers.”

Students, in turn, are not only finding themselves subjected to police tactics such as handcuffs, leg shackles, tasers and excessive force for “acting up” but are also being ticketed, fined and sent to court for behavior perceived as defiant, disruptive or disorderly such as spraying perfume and writing on a desk.

Clearly, the pathology that characterizes the American police state has passed down to the schools. Now in addition to the government and its agents viewing the citizenry as suspects to be probed, poked, pinched, tasered, searched, seized, stripped and generally manhandled, all with the general blessing of the court, our children in the public schools are also fair game.

What can be done?

Without a doubt, change is needed, but that will mean taking on the teachers’ unions, the school unions, the educators’ associations, and the police unions, not to mention the politicians dependent on their votes and all of the corporations that profit mightily from an industrial school complex.

As we’ve seen with other issues, any significant reforms will have to start locally and trickle upwards. For a start, parents need to be vocal, visible and organized and demand that school officials 1) adopt a policy of positive reinforcement in dealing with behavior issues; 2) minimize the presence in the schools of police officers and cease involving them in student discipline; and 3) insist that all behavioral issues be addressed first and foremost with a child’s parents, before any other disciplinary tactics are attempted.

“Children are the messages we send to a time we will not see,” Professor Neil Postman once wrote. If we do not rein in the police state’s influence in the schools, the future to which we are sending our children will be characterized by a brutal, totalitarian regime. **CT**

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**John W. Whitehead**  
is a constitutional attorney and author. He is founder and president of *The Rutherford Institute* and editor of *GadflyOnline.com*. His latest book “*A Government of Wolves: The Emerging American Police State*” (*SelectBooks*) is available at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)

# Madness and mayhem

Jim Miles reviews Pepe Eskobar's new book, *Empire of Chaos*

The best writers, the best recorders of historical information are those that are inside the arenas of conflict, whether it is military or economic. The likes of Robert Fisk, Franklin Lamb, Chris Hedges, Alex Cockburn and Jeffrey St Clair have all entered into, witnessed, and written very strongly and effectively on many geopolitical problems that plague our era. Within the group of contemporary writers that examine the hearts of darkness and illuminate a different possible path, the writings of Pepe Eskobar need to be considered as among the top echelon.

Pepe Eskobar's most recent work, "Empire of Chaos: The Roving Eye Collection", is a compilation of many of his articles published widely on various web sites, with the "Roving Eye" portion rising from his column title with Asia Times Online. It is, as per Eskobar himself, a procedure of "attempting first drafts of history." Because of that, while the observations are solid and well integrated, a few points of conjecture miss the mark – but no claim is made that his writing is infallible, and even the misses

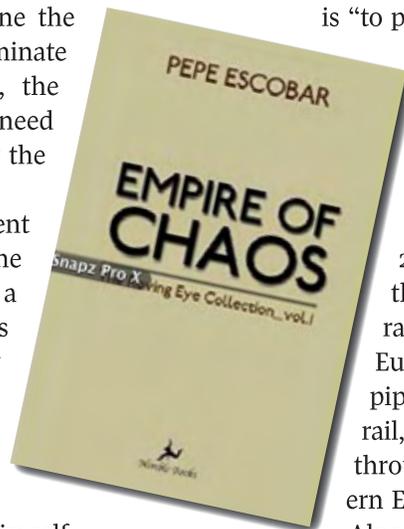
highlight the significance of some important geopolitical shifts within the "empire of chaos."

The essential features of the empire of chaos, "where a plutocracy progressively projects its own internal disintegration upon the whole world," are "a progressive drift towards not conventional war but above all economic war – manifestations of Liquid War." The purpose of that chaos is "to prevent an economic integration

of Eurasia that would leave the USA a non-hegemon, or worse still, an outsider."

The book covers the era from early 2009 up to late 2014. The central idea being the empire of chaos and its range of activities to thwart the Eurasian integration by way of pipelines (Pipelinestan), road, rail, and cyberlinks from China through various routes to western Europe, the "New Silk Road." Along the way it touches on what are considered by the western mainstream media to be separate topics, perhaps united by an underlying violence, but nothing of a unified geopolitical attempt at preventing the loss of western (Washington) hegemony.

**The book touches on what are considered by the western mainstream media to be separate topics, perhaps united by an underlying violence**



## EMPIRE OF CHAOS

The Roving Eye Collection Vol. 1

Pepe Eskobar  
Nimble Books

\$28.97 (Amazon.com)

**Europe, writes Escobar, “now exists primarily as a forward operating base for war around the globe.” It “will be in decline as long as it remains inextricably intertwined with and continues to defer to ... Washington”**

It is a wonderful read, occasionally repetitive due to the nature of it being a series of compiled distinct articles into a whole, sometimes humorous – generally rather dark – accounting of modern history or current events. It is sometimes whimsical when writing about a particular cultural aspect of his sojourns or when critiquing another author or activist. If history could be written/read this way, there would be far more historians in academic circles – this is not the history of the dominant media, but that of an educated roving eye capable of putting ideas and actions together into a coherent, somewhat scary whole.

Most of what is written is still current and part of today’s geopolitical turmoil. Two of his ‘misses’ are indicative of that. Early in the work he writes, “no French or German government would even contemplate being hostage of a New Cold War between Russia and the USA” This of course is not what is occurring at the moment as the USA and its western minions attempt to constrain the “New Silk Road” with economic sanctions (war by another means than diplomacy) that are having serious blowback on both France (think Mistrals and agriculture) and on Germany (think investments and energy). Of course, the final outcome of this is not yet seen or written, as blowback may yet take events where Washington does not want them to go.

### **Blindsided by events**

Again these misses are not critical faults of analysis but more a result of being blindsided by very unexpected turns of events, with most of the unexpectedness coming from Russia’s reaction to events. The second miss that highlights a possible large geopolitical shift is Russia’s cancellation of the Southstream gas route through the Ukraine, and a new accord to build a major gas line through Turkey up to a transit point at the Greek border. As recently as last May, Escobar had indicated that “cancellation [by Europe] was not in the cards.” That of

course is technically correct, in that Russia cancelled the project, not Europe/Washington, so perhaps not a miss at all.

The whole breadth of Eurasia is Pepe Escobar’s palette, with vignettes from south and east Asia, Central Asia (Turkmenistan plays a significant role for gas/oil and the New Silk Road), Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan (including the idea of Balochistan), India, obviously the north – Russia, on into all the problems of the Middle East and the violence and wars there are interconnected with attempts at oil resource control by the USA hegemon, and then on up to Europe and Germany in particular.

Some comments along the way highlight some ideas that do not come to light within western mainstream media. For Turkmenistan, the pipeline agreements there “virtually guarantees Russia’s crucial geopolitical status as the top gas supplier to Europe and a crucial supplier to China as well.” No wonder the USA wants to take Russia down! The locals see it as “one of the key guarantees of global security,” which “is not what they [Washington] had in mind.”

While discussing China, Escobar looks at the contrast of China’s peaceful emergence with the USA’s “full spectrum dominance,” discusses how low interest rates (ZIRP) are “seriously impacting global asset prices and encouraging speculation,” at the same time that the USA is attempting military encirclement versus China’s independent and integrative economic policy. Ironically, China is the “banker of the current global superpower,” but is in full stride towards making a “yellow BRIC Road” where “everybody else in the Global South is.” The BRICs have “a common agenda...not to antagonize Washington...that, with the exception of military hegemony, is largely impotent,” while the G7 countries are “reduced...to irrelevancy.”

Europe on the other hand, part of the irrelevancy, “now exists primarily as a forward operating base for war around the globe.” It “will be in decline as long as it remains inextricably intertwined with and

continues to defer to...Washington.” With Europe currently not supporting “capital making concessions” to workers and employees, “at similar crossroads in the past, you are as likely to find...outright fascism.” With the EU “slouching toward irrelevance” and the USA in decline, Escobar concludes, “When capitalism hits the intensive care unit, the ones paying the hospital bill are always the most vulnerable – and the bill is invariably paid in blood.”

Other countries attract notice. Iran is not isolated. Japan, “as long as it is occupied by Wall Street and the Pentagon, it will live in eternal recession.” Syria is “a Western proxy war, with the GCC acting as a ‘vanguard’ for NATO,” all “with exponential in-built blowback.” Mali’s dirty little war, supposedly again about terrorism, is once again about resources – oil, gold and uranium. Neo-naziism is supported in Ukraine, jihadists in Syria. The “Grand Chessboard” is “drenched in blood.”

### Syria and Ukraine

The more recent articles are more centred – for obvious reasons – on Syria and the Ukraine, both seen as means of dividing Russia from Europe, and Germany in particular, while retaining/regaining control of oil/gas routes, and thus the protection of the petrodollar as global reserve currency.

“Empire of Chaos” is not a pleasant read in the sense that it is about the current madness and mayhem caused by the “exceptionalist” hegemony of the globally military dominant power. It does provide hope while critically examining events that have not necessarily transpired as desired by the USA/NATO alliance. Some of the blowback to come will be of the sensationalized variety that is good for the ability of the twenty-four hour mainstream news channels to maintain the ‘fear’ factor domestically. Much of the blowback will be of the form of a gradual increase in the economic relationships of China, Russia, (all the BRICS), and the majority of the nations of the ‘global south’.

In the meantime, “Empire of Chaos: is an essential and entertaining if severe read that will bring you up to date on the actual impacts of USA geopolitical policy. From there, it is easy to follow and stay abreast of the side of the issues as seen by the majority of the world by continuing to read “The Roving Eye” as written as the first drafts of history in motion. **CT**

*Jim Miles is a Canadian educator, whose work is distributed globally in print and on alternative news websites.*

*This review was originally published at <http://.palestinechronicle.com>*

**“When capitalism hits the intensive care unit, the ones paying the hospital bill are always the most vulnerable – and the bill is invariably paid in blood”**



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# Media propagandists for Israel

The US media, conservative and liberal, have become a loudspeaker for the Israeli government, writes **CJ Werleman**

**It's the role of responsible and objective journalism to report the facts. The public should expect the facts, but in America facts are superseded by agenda-driven spin and self-serving opinion**

Late in February, Israel carried out a deadly drone strike inside the Syrian controlled portion of the Golan Heights, killing six Hezbollah fighters and an Iranian general. In response to Israel's aggression, Hezbollah fired two anti-tank missiles that killed two Israeli soldiers as they drove in a occupied area along the Lebanese border. In turn, Israel responded with artillery fire, shelling several targets in southern Lebanon that killed a Spanish UN peacekeeper.

This is the irrefutable timeline of events in the latest Lebanon-Israel border clash. These are the facts, and facts do not possess a pro-Lebanon bias, nor do facts lean pro-Israel. Facts are facts, and the rest, as they say in the classics, is conversation. It's the role of responsible and objective journalism to report the facts. The public should expect the facts, but in America facts are superseded by agenda-driven spin and self-serving opinion, and this dynamic is never more evident than when the centre of the story is Israel.

So that we are all clear and on the same page: Israel attacked Hezbollah in Syrian-controlled territory. Hezbollah responded with a strike against Israeli army military positions inside occupied territory. The Israeli army then kills a Spanish UN peacekeeper.

Here's how the US media reported the above timeline of events:

CNN: "Israel under attack."

The *New York Times*: "Hezbollah kills Israeli soldiers near Lebanon."

Fox News: "Netanyahu blames Iran for Hezbollah attack on Israel's border."

The *Washington Post* wins the prize for delivering a headline that best represented the facts – "Deadly border clashes stoke fears of war in Israel, Lebanon" but then totally blew its commitment to objectivity by reporting a totally phoney account of the clash.

"The clashes, which began with a Hezbollah attack that killed two Israeli soldiers, marked one of the most serious flare-ups of violence in the area since a month-long war in 2006 and raised tensions in a volatile tri-border zone close to positions held by Syrian rebels, including Islamist factions. A UN peacekeeper was also killed, although it was unclear how he died," states the *Washington Post*.

The US media, conservative or liberal, has become a loudspeaker for the Israeli government. When it comes to unfolding events in the Holy Land, Americans are told wholly and solely what the Israeli government wants them to hear. It's astonishingly bizarre. It's even more astonishing and more puzzling when you consider that even the Israeli press reports these periodical skirmishes in a more even-handed manner. The Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, for instance, reported: "Hezbollah considers the attack an adequate retaliation to the airstrike in Syria last week, at-

tributed to Israel, that killed seven Hezbollah operatives.”

It’s also striking when you compare the US coverage of the latest Israel-Lebanon clash with coverage from other international media outlets:

The *Guardian*: “Spain calls for UN inquiry into death of Spanish peacekeeper in Lebanon.”

Al Jazeera America: “Hezbollah offers Israel a draw but will Netanyahu accept?”

*Sydney Morning Herald*: “Israel threatens Hezbollah with full scale conflict.”

All in all, these non-US media outlets have reported in a way that entirely squares with the facts.

In America, it’s not just a case of the media shining a positive light on the Israeli government’s military actions, it’s that outlets actively propagandise for Israel. The cable news giant CNN is largely the primary source from where a majority of Americans are fed their international news.

As breaking news of the clash was reported, CNN brought on five pro-Israeli spokespeople, and not a single pro-Lebanon guest. Even more concerning is that CNN ran a piece on its website that propagandised against Hezbollah by blaming the group for the 1983 bombing of US barracks in Beirut. “Hezbollah has claimed responsibility for numerous terrorist attacks. It is blamed for a 1983 bombing that killed 241 US service personnel at a Marine compound in Beirut, Lebanon, the deadliest attack against US Marines since the Battle of Iwo Jima in World War II,” writes CNN.

The thing is Hezbollah has always denied responsibility for the bombing of the Beirut barracks. It has never been proved that Hezbollah carried out the attack, but CNN reports it as an irrefutable fact.

Similarly, the US media has always reported the Israeli bombing of the USS Liberty as a “grave mistake,” which is a remarkable piece of linguistic gymnastics given Israeli messages intercepted on 8 June, 1967 make it clear that the Israeli army absolutely intended to “de-

stroy the USS Liberty and kill its entire crew”. 2014 was the 47th anniversary of this unprovoked attack and as was the case of the 46 anniversaries that came before that, nowhere in the US media was this “act of war” against the US reported.

This is not journalism. This, instead, is agenda-driven spin: pro-Israel spin. It’s an effort to carry forth the Israeli hasbara (propaganda) narrative into the domain of American public opinion. Since the 1990s, Netanyahu skillfully and assiduously “cultivated Israel’s image as a Fort Apache on the frontlines against the Muslim menace – and the United States as a larger Fort Apache that could learn from the Israeli model,” writes Max Blumenthal in “Goliath: Fear and Loathing in Israel”.

With the former public relations director of the Israeli lobby (AIPAC), Wolf Blitzer, at the head of CNN’s news desk, the cable news network has played the willing hasbara accomplice. The day after last November’s Jerusalem synagogue attack, which left four Rabbis dead, CNN hosted seven pro-Israel guests: Harvard Professor Alan Dershowitz (twice); Israeli historian Michael Oren; Israel UN representative Ron Prosor; chief spokesperson for the Israeli Prime Minister Mark Regev; Israeli politician Nir Barakat; and chief spokesperson for the Israeli police Mickey Rosenfeld, and not a single Palestinian to comment on the violence in Israel.

Each CNN guest presented the synagogue as a religiously motivated attack; despite the fact the families of the killers said they were motivated by the Israeli killings of Palestinian teenager Mohamed Abu Khadeir and the death of 31-year-old Yusuf Ramouni, a Palestinian citizen of Israel who was found hanged in the bus he drove for a living. While Israeli authorities ruled Ramouni’s death a suicide, most Palestinians believe darker forces were at play.

Remi Kanazi, a journalist and editor of *Poets for Palestine*, fired off a couple of tweets that highlighted the blatant double standard in the US media as it pertains to covering the Israel-Lebanon clash. Kanazi tweeted a pic-

**The US media has always reported the Israeli bombing of the USS Liberty as a “grave mistake,” which is a remarkable piece of linguistic gymnastics**

## DISTORTING REALITY

If the American people were forced to watch, listen, and read all the stories of neo-Nazi behavior in Ukraine the past few years, I think they would start to wonder why their government was so closely allied with such people

ture of Israeli children writing “from Israel with love” onto the sides of Israeli army missiles during Israel’s 2006 invasion of Lebanon. “Media covered this as ‘this photo makes Arabs angry.’ But if it was Lebanese children, the media would have said “Look at these barbarians!” tweeted Kanazi.

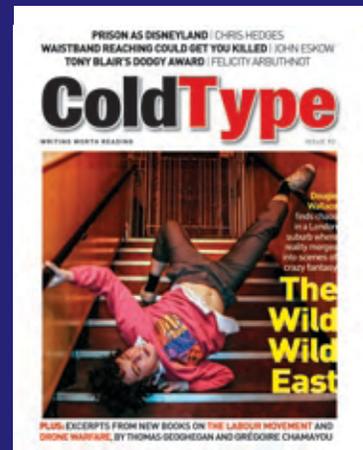
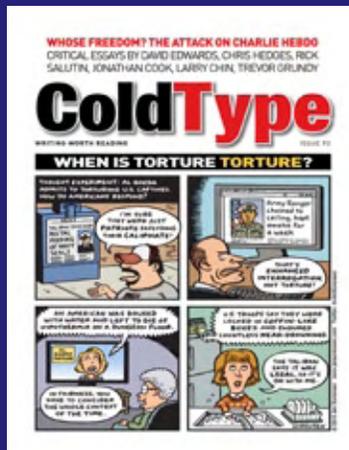
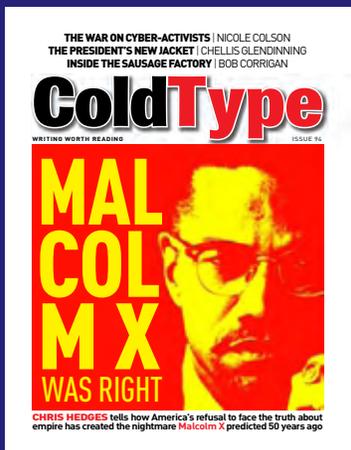
This one-sided narrative and double standard is what help drives Islamophobic sentiment in the US. It presents Israel as besieged by religious fanatics, rather than Israel being embroiled in conflict with people who have legitimate political, social and economic grievances against Israel.

A newly published Pew Research Cen-

tre poll shows that 67 percent of Republicans and nearly half of all Democrats believe Islam is more likely than other religions to encourage violence.

It is any wonder such fear of Muslims percolates in the collective American conscience given that US media presents Israel as a “Fort Apache” constantly besieged by radical Muslims on their doorstep? **CT**

*CJ Werleman* is the author of “Crucifying America,” *God Hates You. Hate Him Back*”, and “Koran Curious”. This article originally appeared in *Middle East Eye* at <http://middleeasterneye.com>



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# The terrorist feels no shame

**Mats Svensson** turns conventional wisdom upside down

It is crowded on the Gaza Strip. Very few playgrounds. Besides being crowded, it is also dangerous. Traps everywhere. Houses that were bombed to rubble during the last war have not been reconstructed. Children playing in the rubble get injured. Walls collapse, unexploded ordinances detonate when played with. Everything is missing to recreate the home that disappeared during the bombing. There is no cement, iron bars, aggregates, pipes, tools, wood. There is no electricity, water or sewage management. Everything must be imported and the tunnels are few and narrow.

Now the war has restarted.

The young cousins meet outside the house. A mother asks them to take it easy, but it is not easy to remain calm. After days of waiting and hiding, they must now and then be children and break the rules. They run out and sneak off. Children do this. They leave the dilapidated houses, houses that have become targets just like everything else. For the terrorist, everything is lawful and the kids do not have the energy to care anymore, they have already cared for so long.

They leave the sad and the insecure. They hope that it will be quieter down by the beach, sand and sea. They want to get away from the danger, away from boredom; they want to laugh.

They play the same game that I played when I was their age. With my cousin I played American Indians and cowboys. For them it has become Arabs and Israelis. They laugh. It is serious but it is also a game. They can be heard shouting, how they capture the enemy and put him in prison. They are someone else; they are somewhere else. Soon they will play football. They will be in Liverpool, playing at Anfield against Manchester United.

They never get that far.

A few adults pass by on the road above the beach, thinking that they were recently there. They played the same role-plays. They had strong legs. Everything was possible. That was before the neighbor took all their rights, before he got all the rights, before he could kill freely.

The journalists have front row seats at Al-Deira's hotel terrace. They look out over the Mediterranean. The war is underway just behind the hotel. But right now, everything is quiet.

And then it ends. They never really had enough time. Everything went so fast. Everything happened right in front of them. A journalist who sat in the front row reports in the *Guardian*. Everything happened in the daylight. The beach was like a movie set. As if a Hollywood director staged a bloody scene of the Christmas bombings in Vietnam. It is as if someone

**For the terrorist,  
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## LINE OF FIRE

**It becomes so clear that what is happening here is not happening by chance. The terror is well thought out. Meanwhile, the world looks on**

wanted the whole world to be a part of it. Not in secret, not in the dark. The terrorist strikes in the open. Four dead cousins on the Mediterranean shore who had been playing the same game that boys play all over the world. The terrorist knows that he is doing wrong but feels no shame.

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She has returned. Could not stay away from Palestine. It is the first time in many years that she returns to Gaza. Passes through the gate of humiliation. Goes through the ghetto of despair. She immediately sees how terror has hit, destroyed, razed to the ground. The war has been going on for 48 days. Now it is supposed to have ended.

When she was here last time there was a slow reconstruction going on. Nothing remains. She passes by bombed houses, clinics, hospitals and schools. She thinks about photos she has seen of Dresden and from Berlin. What would never happen again.

She photographs, documents. The newly purchased camera for a short while becomes a form of protection. She notes that this is so much worse than anything she has ever seen before. She has earlier been several times in Gaza, lived in Hebron and in refugee camps in eastern Chad, worked with displaced persons in the Congo, stayed in villages in Senegal, lived many years in Bangladesh and Ethiopia. She compares all images inside of her with what she is seeing.

Everything here is so much worse. The destruction has been methodical, thought through. Clinics and hospitals that have been constructed to save lives, schools and homes where people felt safe have been bombed. The destruction has happened with a purpose, it has been planned.

It becomes so clear that what is happening here is not happening by chance. The terror is well thought out. Meanwhile, the world looks on. Condemns gently but

does not seem to understand the extent of the massive terrorist attacks. The world does not really seem to care. Instead, it deepens the relationship with those who have killed, killed and killed.

She feels strong emotions, anger, despair. What she had not had to feel for so many years. Now the feelings are back. The war had not ended. It is still quiet in the afternoon. When darkness begins to fall the bombs begin to drop. She has lived her whole life in different countries. Often in difficult circumstances. For the first time she feels worried. The explosions seem to be so close. She leaves the window cracked open so that it does not shatter in case of a nearby explosion. She tries to make the room as dark as possible. Lies down on a mattress on the floor in the office. She tells herself that she should be safe here. For a moment she believes it but reality cannot be shut out. She thinks about how UN schools sheltering children have been bombed. In the dark, she begins to get the feeling that no one in the Gaza Strip can be sure. Here, everyone is a target; here, the only one you can blame is yourself.

The night is long. She keeps looking at her watch. Thinking of the more than 2000 people who have been killed in the past seven weeks, more than 40 people per day. Most of them completely innocent. Their only crime was to remain, they could not move. Hundreds of women and children. She thinks about all the children who have been orphaned, all the women and men who recently had a baby, the funerals, the injured, the mutilated. But when the bombings end, she mostly thinks that she is afraid. The minutes pass so slowly. The bombs are so many. At three am, she wakes up and notices that a full hour has passed. She is surprised that she could fall asleep despite the bombs.

It is a bit calmer in the morning. She eats a simple breakfast. Had brought

some extra things in her backpack. Cannot escape the thought that she lived through the night, a whole night, just one night. That it was so powerful, so diabolical, that she could be so scared.

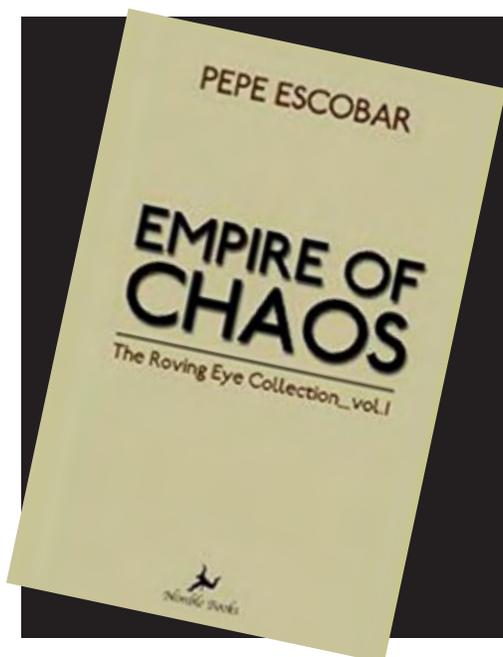
Only one night. Thinks of this “only” when she sees the children carefully peering out of their windows. Sees children that are only seven years old, who have lived through not only one but three wars. Who have wakened up every night when the murderers have released their bombs. Thinks about children who have seen their siblings killed, mothers who did not return, fathers who have been carried home with blood flowing from their bodies. Walks out on the street, sees people who walk away from her, who walk towards her, people who all carry a story. Thinks that she could randomly select any person and each person could tell a story of deep joy, sorrow, hopes and dreams on hold. That every person carries the deepest secret thoughts that most of them would probably be unable to share.

This is when she begins to wonder if she wants to stay, if she is a good fit for this, if she is the right person. Whether

she wants to sit at Al-Deira and see children blown up. Does she want to be the one who constantly writes reports about terror. Compiles reports about what should be rebuilt, while negotiating with those who just recently were the ones bombing, destroying, killing and deep inside knowing that nothing will happen. Reports will be read and circulated. Many will be shocked by the pictures she takes, will ask if they can use her photos. For a moment she will feel proud, for a little while... before the war begins again. How much will be rebuilt before the destruction will restart? How many will be killed the next time? How long will the terrorist be able to continue without shame? **CT**

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***Mats Svensson**, a former Swedish diplomat, went to Palestine in 2003 and followed the Occupation of Palestine until 2009. Since then he has been working as a documentary writer and photographer. His is the author of “Crimes, Victims and Witnesses – Apartheid in Palestine,” published in South Africa by Real African Publishers. Svensson now lives now in Zambia and may be contacted at [bjorn2001@hotmail.com](mailto:bjorn2001@hotmail.com).*

**How many will be killed the next time? How long will the terrorist be able to continue without shame?**



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# Finally, an end to my nightmare

**Sami Al-Arian, a victim of the post-9/11 witchhunt on dissidents in the US, reflects on his attempt to live a free and dignified life in his adopted country**

**In order to bring an end to the ordeal, Al-Arian agreed to plead guilty to a single count in exchange for voluntary deportation**

In 2003, University of South Florida professor Sami Al-Arian, a renowned activist for Palestinian rights, was arrested on trumped-up charges that he materially supported terrorism. That arrest was the beginning of a legal nightmare that lasted more than a decade – Al-Arian spent much of that time in brutal conditions in various detention centers, including solitary confinement.

Despite a six-month trial in 2005, a jury failed to convict Al-Arian of a single count of the 17 charges against him. In order to bring an end to the ordeal, Al-Arian agreed to plead guilty to a single count in exchange for voluntary deportation. But in 2007, just before he was scheduled to be released, federal prosecutor Gordon Kromberg subpoenaed Al-Arian as a material witness in order to force him to testify in another case – despite the fact that the plea agreement specifically barred the government from compelling him to testify any further. Al-Arian refused and was held in prison on a contempt charge. While in custody, the brutal treatment by guards and the government continued, leading him to go on hunger strike.

It wasn't until 2008 that, with the threat of a subpoena still looming, a judge allowed Al-Arian to be released from prison into house arrest. After several more years of judicial limbo, during which a judge con-

tinued to consider the government's case without making a ruling, prosecutors finally gave in and dropped contempt charges last June, clearing the way for Al-Arian's release and deportation to Turkey in early February.

In a powerful statement to the many people in the USA and beyond who stood in support of him, Al-Arian reflected on the lessons of his case and the strength of his family. – *Socialist Worker*

## **A STATEMENT BY DR. SAMI A. AL-ARIAN**

After 40 years, my time in the USA has come to an end. Like many immigrants of my generation, I came to the USA in 1975 to seek a higher education and greater opportunities. But I also wanted to live in a free society where freedom of speech, association and religion are not only tolerated but guaranteed and protected under the law. That's why I decided to stay and raise my family here, after earning my doctorate in 1986. Simply put, to me, freedom of speech and thought represented the cornerstone of a dignified life.

Today, freedom of expression has become a defining feature in the struggle to realize our humanity and liberty. The forces of intolerance, hegemony, and exclusionary politics tend to favor the stifling of free speech and the suppression of dissent. But nothing is more dangerous than when



**Homeward Bound: Dr Sami Al-Arian**

such suppression is perpetrated and sanctioned by government. As one early American once observed, “When the people fear their government, there is tyranny; when the government fears the people, there is liberty.” Because government has enormous power and authority over its people, such control must be checked, and people, especially those advocating unpopular opinions, must have absolute protections from governmental overreach and abuse of power. A case in point of course is the issue of Palestinian self-determination. In the United States, as well as in many other western countries, those who support the Palestinian struggle for justice, and criticize Israel’s occupation and brutal policies, have often experienced an assault on their freedom of speech in academia, media, politics and society at large. After the tragic events

of September 11th, such actions by the government intensified, in the name of security. Far too many people have been targeted and punished because of their unpopular opinions or beliefs.

During their opening statement in my trial in June 2005, my lawyers showed the jury two poster-sized photographs of items that government agents took during searches of my home many years earlier. In one photo, there were several stacks of books taken from my home library. The other photo showed a small gun I owned at the time. The attorney looked the jury in the eyes and said: “This is what this case is about. When the government raided my client’s house, this is what they seized,” he said, pointing to the books, “and this is what they left,” he added, pointing to the gun in the other picture. “This case is not about terrorism but about my client’s right to freedom of speech,” he continued. Indeed, much of the evidence the government presented to the jury

during the six-month trial were speeches I delivered, lectures I presented, articles I wrote, magazines I edited, books I owned, conferences I convened, rallies I attended, interviews I gave, news I heard, and websites I never even accessed. But the most disturbing part of the trial was not that the government offered my speeches, opinions, books, writings, and dreams into evidence, but that an intimidated judicial system allowed them to be admitted into evidence. That’s why we applauded the jury’s verdict. Our jurors represented the best society had to offer. Despite all of the fear-mongering and scare tactics used by the authorities, the jury acted as free people, people of conscience, able to see through Big Brother’s tactics. One hard lesson that must be learned from the trial is that political cases

**In the United States, as well as in many other western countries, those who support the Palestinian struggle for justice, and criticize Israel’s occupation and brutal policies, have often experienced an assault on their freedom of speech**

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## HOMeward BOUND

**My faith sustained me during my many months in solitary confinement and gave me comfort that justice would ultimately prevail**

should have no place in a free and democratic society.

But despite the long and arduous ordeal and hardships suffered by my family, I leave with no bitterness or resentment in my heart whatsoever. In fact, I'm very grateful for the opportunities and experiences afforded to me and my family in this country, and for the friendships we've cultivated over the decades. These are lifelong connections that could never be affected by distance.

I would like to thank God for all the blessings in my life. My faith sustained me during my many months in solitary confinement and gave me comfort that justice would ultimately prevail.

Our deep thanks go to the friends and supporters across the USA, from university professors to grassroots activists, individuals and organizations, who have stood alongside us in the struggle for justice.

My trial attorneys, Linda Moreno and the late Bill Moffitt, were the best advocates anyone could ask for, both inside and outside of the courtroom. Their spirit,

intelligence, passion and principle were inspirational to so many.

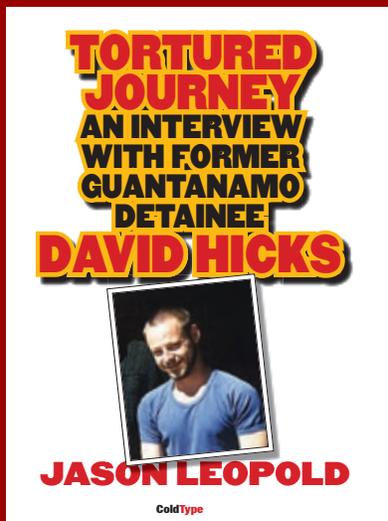
I am also grateful to Jonathan Turley and his legal team, whose tireless efforts saw the case to its conclusion. Jonathan's commitment to justice and brilliant legal representation resulted in the government finally dropping the case.

Our gratitude also goes to my immigration lawyers, Ira Kurzban and John Pratt, for the tremendous work they did in smoothing the way for this next phase of our lives.

Thanks also to my children for their patience, perseverance and support during the challenges of the last decade. I am so proud of them.

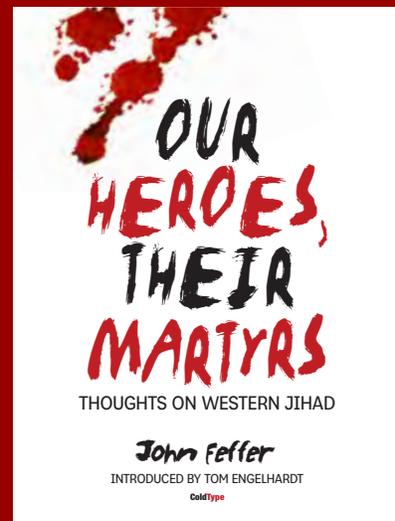
Finally, my wife Nahla has been a pillar of love, strength and resilience. She kept our family together during the most difficult times. There are no words to convey the extent of my gratitude.

We look forward to the journey ahead and take with us the countless happy memories we formed during our life in the United States. **CT**



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# The war on cyber-activists

**Nicole Colson** on the persecution of journalist Barrett Brown, and the effect it will have on those trying to investigate the crimes of the powerful

**F**reelance journalist Barrett Brown was sentenced in federal court last month to 63 months in prison and more than \$890,000 in fines – for the crime of linking to material obtained by the “hacktivist” collective Anonymous as part of his investigation into government corruption.

Brown has been in prison since September 2012. No one has alleged that Brown had a hand in illegally obtaining the information – which included thousands of files from security firms and government contractors, including HBGary Federal and Stratfor. But that didn’t stop the government from threatening Brown with 100 years in prison at one point. This led him to eventually accept a plea deal.

The charges he pleaded guilty to were related to trying to hide two laptops when FBI agents searched his mother’s house; non-specific “threats” made in a YouTube video against an FBI agent (Brown vowed to “look into” the agent’s kids and “ruin” his life); and being an “accessory after the fact” because Brown allegedly discussed with hacker Jeremy Hammond contacting Stratfor to see if the firm wanted redactions of hacked materials.

Brown’s anger toward the FBI might be explained by the fact that over the space of several months, the Feds reportedly threatened his mother with arrest on multiple

occasions for “obstruction of justice” – as a result of “harboring” her son and allegedly helping him conceal documents.

As The Intercept’s Michelle Garcia pointed out, Brown’s biggest alleged crime was that he linked to material that had been illegally obtained by Anonymous, some of which detailed the unscrupulous actions by various government contractors:

“Through the online collective he founded, called Project PM, Brown analyzed and reported on the thousands of pages of leaked documents. The HBGary hack revealed a coordinated campaign to target and smear advocates for WikiLeaks and the Chamber of Commerce, while the Stratfor hack provided a rare window into the shadowy world of defense contractors”.

Brown himself is not a hacker, but has defended Anonymous publicly and been referred to as an Anonymous “spokesperson,” though he disputes that. In court, the government alleged that Project PM was, in essence, a “respectable” front for Anonymous – and that the faction Brown led was dedicated to “revolutionary” activities.

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There are many reasons to be wary of the government’s prosecution of Brown. For one, much of the evidence used to convict him has never been made available to the public. “The evidence that was discussed was often selectively disclosed by prosecutors, who tore

**Brown’s anger toward the FBI might be explained by the fact that over the space of several months, the Feds reportedly threatened his mother with arrest on multiple occasions**

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## CHILLING SENTENCE

**Although it has never been proven that Brown's actions led to any fraud, the government argued that the simple act of posting the link made Brown guilty after the fact**

from their original context lengthy chats and e-mails to depict Brown as a malicious hacker rather than a journalist," Garcia wrote.

As for the sentencing hearing, Garcia said, "[t]he proceeding itself far more resembled an aggressive prosecution than it did a standard sentencing hearing. Prosecutors repeatedly attacked Brown based on allegations that had long ago been dismissed, seemingly attempting to malign his character based on charges that he no longer faces and for which he was never convicted."

An even bigger issue is the prosecution of Barrett for "disseminating" stolen information by posting links to hacked information. This sets a chilling precedent for journalists.

Prosecutors made much of a link to credit card information exposed by one of the hacks that Brown posted in a chat room and later on a file-sharing website. Brown says he was unaware of the credit card information – his main focus in this hack was Stratfor's client list, which Brown had wanted to investigate. When some Anonymous members advocated that people use the credit card numbers to donate money to charity, Brown condemned that idea.

Although it has never been proven that Brown's actions led to any fraud, the government argued that the simple act of posting the link made Brown guilty after the fact for the hack itself, and for any further fraudulent use of the credit card information.

In court, defense attorney Marlo Cadeddu stated that the prosecution's claim about the link "has serious repercussions to journalists, researchers, people who link to public information. The government's argument should chill the bones of every journalist and every researcher."

Lawyer Ahmed Ghappour, director of the Liberty, Security and Technology Clinic at the University of California Hastings College of Law, agreed. "Looking at that as criminal conduct would probably bring an end to all digital journalism, period," Ghappour told Garcia. "There would be no reporting on leaks."

As Brown himself once said in a documentary about Anonymous called *We Are Legion*:

"Some of the most important things that...in terms of what's been discovered, not just by Anonymous, but by the media in the aftermath, is the result of hacking. That information can't be obtained by institutional journalistic process, or it can't be obtained or won't be obtained by a congressional committee or a federal oversight committee. For the most part, that information has to be... obtained by hackers".

Journalist Glenn Greenwald made the same point in a 2013 article in Britain's *Guardian* newspaper. Warning that the prosecution of Brown "poses new and troubling risks," Greenwald wrote:

"That's because Brown – who has been imprisoned since September on a 17-count indictment that could result in many years in prison – is a serious journalist who has spent the last several years doggedly investigating the shadowy and highly secretive underworld of private intelligence and defense contractors, who work hand-in-hand with the agencies of the Surveillance and National Security State in all sorts of ways that remain completely unknown to the public..."

"So here we have the US government targeting someone they clearly loathe because of the work he is doing against their actions. Then – using the most dubious legal theories, exploiting vague and broad criminal statutes, and driving him to ill-advised behavior with deliberately vindictive harassment (including aimed at his mother) – they transform what is at worst very trivial offenses into a multi-count felony indictment that has already resulted in his imprisonment for six months and threatens to imprison him for many years more..."

"[T]his prosecution is driven by the same plainly improper purpose that drove the one directed at Aaron Swartz and so many others: the desire to exploit the power of criminal law to deter and severely punish anyone who meaningfully challenges the government's

power to control the flow of information on the Internet and conceal its vital actions”.

At his sentencing, Brown expressed remorse for his actions – while also criticizing the government: “If I criticize the government for breaking the law, but then break the law myself in an effort to reveal their wrongdoing, I should expect to be punished just as I’ve called for the criminals at government-linked firms, like HBGary and Palantir, to be punished.”

Already, Brown’s prosecution has had a chilling effect on the work of some cyber-activists and journalists. Security reporter Quinn Norton – whose partner Aaron Swartz committed suicide in January 2013 after being indicted by the government and repeatedly hounded by the FBI for “data theft” as a result of his cyberactivism – wrote after Brown’s sentencing that she had decided to step back from her work:

“Part of Barrett Brown’s 63-month sentence is 12-months for a count of Accessory After the Fact, of the crime of hacking Stratfor. This sentence was enhanced by Brown’s posting a link in chat and possessing credit card data. This, and a broad pattern of misunderstanding and criminalizing normal be-

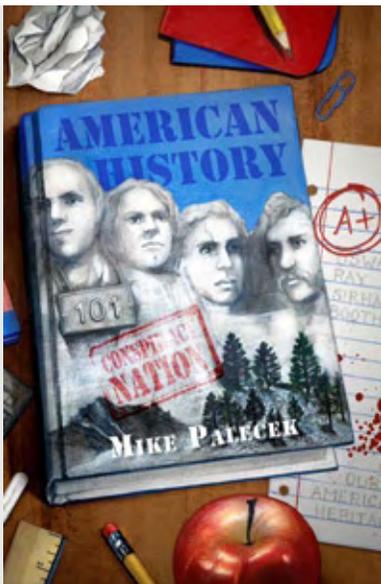
havior online, has led me to feel that the situation for journalists and security researchers is murky and dangerous.

“I am stepping back from reporting on hacking/data breach stories, and restricting my assistance to other journalists to advice. (But please, journalists, absolutely feel free to ask me for advice!) I can’t look at the specific data another journalist has, and I can’t pass it along to a security expert, without feeling like there’s risk to the journalists I work with, the security experts and myself.”

In a world where US government officials who gave the green light for torture and war crimes remain free, Barrett Brown’s unjust prosecution should send a clear warning about the lengths the US government will go to in order to prevent its crimes from coming to light.

**CT**

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*Nicole Colson is a reporter for Socialist Worker - <http://socialistworker.org> – and frequently writes on civil liberties, the environment, women’s rights and culture. Her work has appeared in “Red State Rebels: Tales of Grassroots Resistance in the Heartland” (edited by Jeffrey St. Clair and Joshua Frank) and “The Global Fight for Climate Justice” (edited by Ian Angus)*



# **AMERICAN HISTORY 101**

## CONSPIRACY NATION

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# Getting serious about terrorism

**Andy Piascik** believes there would be fewer threats of terror attacks against the USA if America stopped being the world's top terrorist state

**In recent decades, the US has invaded Laos, Haiti, Vietnam, Panama, Cambodia, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Nicaragua, and many more while many others have been invaded by US proxies**

**W**henever the political class or the corporate media talk about combating terrorism, they invariably exclude the two best and most obvious steps the United States can take: stop doing it and stop giving arms, money and diplomatic cover to others who do.

This was highlighted yet again in an op-ed in the *Connecticut Post* in Bridgeport by my US Representative, Jim Himes (US Needs Strategy to Halt Terrorism, February 15). Instead, Himes trots out the usual suspects, all official enemies of US imperialism, though that could change tomorrow; the US ruling class, after all, wrote the book on switching teams and on simultaneously funding both sides of conflicts.

In polls, people around the world regularly select the US as the number one terrorist state. With ongoing US wars of terror in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and other places too numerous to list, that is surprising only to US nationalists like Himes.

Much was made recently of the horrific burning alive by ISIS of a Jordanian; virtually nothing is made in the mainstream here of the burning alive by US drone strikes of tens of thousands in recent years, the majority non-combatants including many children.

Here's what a real strategy to stop terrorism might include:

**First**, we can demand that our ruling class stop invading other countries. Illegal invasions of Iraq in 1991 and 2003, plus the interceding sanctions of mass destruction, have resulted in three million Iraqi deaths and a society in utter disarray.

Where Sunni and Shia coexisted for centuries in relative harmony, they now live in savage conflict catalyzed by US aggression. Where al-Qaeda and ISIS were nonexistent, they now thrive, again because of US-induced chaos. And still the killing by the US goes on, long after all the announced pretexts for the invasions have been stripped away as lies and the real reason – access to and control of oil – has become apparent to all.

Iraq is only one example. In recent decades, the US has invaded Laos, Haiti, Vietnam, Panama, Cambodia, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Nicaragua, and many more while many others have been invaded by US proxies. In every case, those invasions were to defend, install, or re-install dictators in service to Wall Street and answerable to Washington who were despised by their people.

**Second**, we can stop arming, funding and providing diplomatic support to mass murderers. Rwandan dictator Paul Kagame is one current example.

In 1990, Kagame's Rwandan Patriotic Front provoked war by illegally invading

Rwanda from Uganda. After killing hundreds of thousands of Rwandans, Kagame twice illegally invaded the Congo and bears most of the responsibility for the 6-8 million deaths in that country the last two decades. None of Kagame's crimes were possible without US support.

Again, Kagame is just one in a long line of butchers supported by the US: the Somozas, Jonas Savimbi, Suharto, the ARENA terrorists in El Salvador, the Duvaliers, Ian Smith, Idi Amin, Pol Pot, Mobutu, Roberto D'Aubisson, the Kosovo Liberation Army and on and on.

Right now, the US is sabotaging the peace accords negotiated recently in Ukraine, upping its aid to the neo-Nazis in Kiev and showing again it prefers war to peace and has nothing but contempt for democracy.

**Third**, stop overthrowing governments and putting into power dictatorships that oppose the people and serve US corporations. The US spent \$5 billion to overthrow the Ukrainian government and install war-hungry, neo-Nazis in power.

It has spent tens of millions trying to overthrow the democratically-elected government of Venezuela including a foiled coup attempt last month.

In 2009, it embraced coup leaders who have turned Honduras into one of the poorest and most violent nations in the world. Again, the pattern is long and clear: Iran in 1953, Guatemala in 1954, Congo in 1960, Brazil in 1964, Indonesia in 1965, Ghana in 1966, Greece in 1967, Chile

in 1973, Argentina in 1976, Haiti in 1991 and 2004.

**Fourth**, stop arming and financing Israeli terror in Palestine. Time and again, Israel launches strikes against occupied Palestine and every time the US is there with support. Every time, millions around the world rally to demand justice for Palestine. In addition, leaders of virtually every country except the US have come to see Israeli attacks on Palestine as a likely road to calamity in the Middle East. In addition to Israel, the US props up the monarchy in Saudi Arabia that funds ISIS, al Qaeda, the 9/11 terrorists and who knows who else.

Himes and the rest of the political class serve the Super Rich and by definition rule in opposition to the popular will, as President Obama's recent budget proposal illustrates.

In the midst of a major crisis in education and with a majority of Americans opposed to US aggression, Obama proposes eight times as much for weapons as for education. Change of the sort suggested above can, therefore, only come from an aroused populace. Then and only then will we stop the carnage inflicted worldwide in our names and perhaps begin to live with others in something approximating harmony. **CT**

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*Andy Piascik is a long-time activist and award-winning author who writes for Z, Counterpunch and many other publications and websites. He can be reached at [andypiascik@yahoo.com](mailto:andypiascik@yahoo.com)*

**In the midst of a major crisis in education and with a majority of Americans opposed to US aggression, Obama proposes eight times as much for weapons as for education**

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# The Greek tragedy . . .

**William Blum** recounts some of recent history the new leaders won't have forgotten

**The 1964 Greek coup had been a joint effort of the Royal Court, the Greek military, the KYP, the CIA, and the American military stationed in Greece**

American historian D.F. Fleming, writing of the post-World War II period in his eminent history of the Cold War, stated that “Greece was the first of the liberated states to be openly and forcibly compelled to accept the political system of the occupying Great Power. It was Churchill who acted first and Stalin who followed his example, in Bulgaria and then in Rumania, though with less bloodshed.”

The British intervened in Greece while World War II was still raging. His Majesty's Army waged war against ELAS, the left-wing guerrillas who had played a major role in forcing the Nazi occupiers to flee. Shortly after the war ended, the United States joined the Brits in this great anti-communist crusade, intervening in what was now a civil war, taking the side of the neo-fascists against the Greek left. The neo-fascists won and instituted a highly brutal regime, for which the CIA created a suitably repressive internal security agency (KYP in Greek).

In 1964, the liberal George Papandreou came to power, but in April 1967 a military coup took place, just before elections which appeared certain to bring Papandreou back as prime minister. The coup had been a joint effort of the Royal Court, the Greek military, the KYP, the CIA, and the American military stationed in Greece, and was followed immediately by the traditional martial law, censorship, arrests, beatings, and killings,

the victims totaling some 8,000 in the first month. This was accompanied by the equally traditional declaration that this was all being done to save the nation from a “communist takeover”. Torture, inflicted in the most gruesome of ways, often with equipment supplied by the United States, became routine.

George Papandreou was not any kind of radical. He was a liberal anti-communist type. But his son Andreas, the heir-apparent, while only a little to the left of his father, had not disguised his wish to take Greece out of the Cold War, and had questioned remaining in NATO, or at least as a satellite of the United States. Andreas Papandreou was arrested at the time of the coup and held in prison for eight months. Shortly after his release, he and his wife Margaret visited the American ambassador, Phillips Talbot, in Athens. Papandreou later related the following:

“I asked Talbot whether America could have intervened the night of the coup, to prevent the death of democracy in Greece. He denied that they could have done anything about it. Then Margaret asked a critical question: What if the coup had been a Communist or a Leftist coup? Talbot answered without hesitation. Then, of course, they would have intervened, and they would have crushed the coup.”

Another charming chapter in US-Greek relations occurred in 2001, when Goldman Sachs, the Wall Street Goliath Lowlife, se-

cretly helped Greece keep billions of dollars of debt off their balance sheet through the use of complex financial instruments like credit default swaps. This allowed Greece to meet the baseline requirements to enter the Eurozone in the first place. But it also helped create a debt bubble that would later explode and bring about the current economic crisis that's drowning the entire continent. Goldman Sachs, however, using its insider knowledge of its Greek client, protected itself from this debt bubble by betting against Greek bonds, expecting that they would eventually fail.

Will the United States, Germany, the rest of the European Union, the European Central Bank, and the International Monetary Fund – collectively constituting the International Mafia – allow the new Greek leaders of the Syriza party to dictate the conditions of Greece's rescue and salvation? The answer at the moment is a decided "No".

I believe Syriza is sincere, and I'm rooting for them, but they may have overestimated their own strength, while forgetting how the Mafia came to occupy its position; it didn't derive from a lot of compromise with left-wing upstarts. Greece may have no choice, eventually, but to default on its debts and leave the Eurozone. The hunger and unemployment of the Greek people may leave them no alternative.

### **The Twilight Zone of the US State Department**

*"You are traveling through another dimension, a dimension not only of sight and sound but of mind. A journey into a wondrous land whose boundaries are that of imagination. Your next stop ... the Twilight Zone." (American Television series, 1959-1965)*

State Department Daily Press Briefing, February 13, 2015. Department Spokesperson Jen Psaki, questioned by Matthew Lee of the Associated Press.

Lee: President Maduro [of Venezuela] last night went on the air and said that they had arrested multiple people who were allegedly

behind a coup that was backed by the United States. What is your response?

Psaki: These latest accusations, like all previous such accusations, are ludicrous. As a matter of longstanding policy, the United States does not support political transitions by non-constitutional means. Political transitions must be democratic, constitutional, peaceful, and legal. We have seen many times that the Venezuelan Government tries to distract from its own actions by blaming the United States or other members of the international community for events inside Venezuela. These efforts reflect a lack of seriousness on the part of the Venezuelan Government to deal with the grave situation it faces.

Lee: Sorry. The US has – whoa, whoa, whoa – the US has a longstanding practice of not promoting – What did you say? How longstanding is that? I would – in particular in South and Latin America, that is not a longstanding practice.

Psaki: Well, my point here, Matt, without getting into history –

Lee: Not in this case.

Psaki: – is that we do not support, we have no involvement with, and these are ludicrous accusations.

Lee: In this specific case.

Psaki: Correct.

Lee: But if you go back not that long ago, during your lifetime, even – (laughter)

Psaki: The last 21 years. (Laughter.)

Lee: Well done. Touché. But I mean, does "longstanding" mean 10 years in this case? I mean, what is –

Psaki: Matt, my intention was to speak to the specific reports.

Lee: I understand, but you said it's a longstanding US practice, and I'm not so sure – it depends on what your definition of "longstanding" is.

Psaki: We will – okay.

Lee: Recently in Kyiv, whatever we say about Ukraine, whatever, the change of government at the beginning of last year was unconstitutional, and you supported it. The

**I believe Syriza is sincere, and I'm rooting for them, but they may have overestimated their own strength, while forgetting how the Mafia came to occupy its position**

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## HEADER

**For a journalist there might actually be something as bad as not knowing what's going on in his area of news coverage, even on his own station**

constitution was –

Psaki: That is also ludicrous, I would say.

Lee: – not observed.

Psaki: That is not accurate, nor is it with the history of the facts that happened at the time.

Lee: The history of the facts. How was it constitutional?

Psaki: Well, I don't think I need to go through the history here, but since you gave me the opportunity -- as you know, the former leader of Ukraine left of his own accord.

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Leaving the Twilight Zone ... The former Ukrainian leader ran for his life from those who had staged the coup, including a mob of vicious US-supported neo-Nazis.

### **The ideology of the American media is that it believes that it doesn't have any ideology**

So NBC's evening news anchor, Brian Williams, has been caught telling untruths about various events in recent years. What could be worse for a reporter? How about not knowing what's going on in the world? In your own country? At your own employer? As a case in point I give you Williams' rival, Scott Pelley, evening news anchor at CBS.

In August 2002, Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz told American newscaster Dan Rather on CBS: "We do not possess any nuclear or biological or chemical weapons."

In December, Aziz stated to Ted Koppel on ABC: "The fact is that we don't have weapons of mass destruction. We don't have chemical, biological, or nuclear weaponry."

Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein himself told CBS's Rather in February 2003: "These missiles have been destroyed. There are no missiles that are contrary to the prescription of the United Nations [as to range] in Iraq. They are no longer there."

Moreover, Gen. Hussein Kamel, former head of Iraq's secret weapons program, and a son-in-law of Saddam Hussein, told the UN in 1995 that Iraq had destroyed its banned

missiles and chemical and biological weapons soon after the Persian Gulf War of 1991.

There are yet other examples of Iraqi officials telling the world, before the 2003 American invasion, that the WMD were non-existent.

Enter Scott Pelley. In January 2008, as a CBS reporter, Pelley interviewed FBI agent George Piro, who had interviewed Saddam Hussein before he was executed:

PELLEY: And what did he tell you about how his weapons of mass destruction had been destroyed?

PIRO: He told me that most of the WMD had been destroyed by the U.N. inspectors in the '90s, and those that hadn't been destroyed by the inspectors were unilaterally destroyed by Iraq.

PELLEY: He had ordered them destroyed?

PIRO: Yes.

PELLEY: So why keep the secret? Why put your nation at risk? Why put your own life at risk to maintain this charade?

For a journalist there might actually be something as bad as not knowing what's going on in his area of news coverage, even on his own station. After Brian Williams' fall from grace, his former boss at NBC, Bob Wright, defended Williams by pointing to his favorable coverage of the military, saying: "He has been the strongest supporter of the military of any of the news players. He never comes back with negative stories, he wouldn't question if we're spending too much."

I think it's safe to say that members of the American mainstream media are not embarrassed by such a "compliment".

In his acceptance speech for the 2005 Nobel Prize for Literature, Harold Pinter made the following observation:

"Everyone knows what happened in the Soviet Union and throughout Eastern Europe during the post-war period: the systematic brutality, the widespread atrocities, the ruthless suppression of independent thought. All this has been fully documented and verified.

"But my contention here is that the US crimes in the same period have only been

superficially recorded, let alone documented, let alone acknowledged, let alone recognized as crimes at all.

“It never happened. Nothing ever happened. Even while it was happening it wasn’t happening. It didn’t matter. It was of no interest. The crimes of the United States have been systematic, constant, vicious, remorseless, but very few people have actually talked about them. You have to hand it to America. It has exercised a quite clinical manipulation of power worldwide while masquerading as a force for universal good. It’s a brilliant, even witty, highly successful act of hypnosis.”

### **Cuba made simple**

*“The trade embargo can be fully lifted only through legislation – unless Cuba forms a democracy, in which case the president can lift it.”*

Aha! So that’s the problem, according to a *Washington Post* columnist – Cuba is not a democracy! That would explain why the United States does not maintain an embargo against Saudi Arabia, Honduras, Guatemala, Egypt and other distinguished pillars of freedom. The mainstream media routinely refer to Cuba as a dictatorship. Why is it not uncommon even for people on the left to do the same? I think that many of the latter do so in the belief that to say otherwise runs the risk of not being taken seriously, largely a vestige of the Cold War when Communists all over the world were ridiculed for blindly following Moscow’s party line. But what does Cuba do or lack that makes it a dictatorship?

No “free press”? Apart from the question of how free Western media is, if that’s to be the standard, what would happen if Cuba announced that from now on anyone in the country could own any kind of media? How long would it be before CIA money – secret and unlimited CIA money financing all kinds of fronts in Cuba – would own or control almost all the media worth owning or controlling?

Is it “free elections” that Cuba lacks? They regularly have elections at municipal, regional and national levels. (They do not have di-

rect election of the president, but neither do Germany or the United Kingdom and many other countries). Money plays virtually no role in these elections; neither does party politics, including the Communist Party, since candidates run as individuals. Again, what is the standard by which Cuban elections are to be judged? Is it that they don’t have the Koch Brothers to pour in a billion dollars? Most Americans, if they gave it any thought, might find it difficult to even imagine what a free and democratic election, without great concentrations of corporate money, would look like, or how it would operate.

Or perhaps what Cuba lacks is our marvelous “electoral college” system, where the presidential candidate with the most votes is not necessarily the winner. If we really think this system is a good example of democracy why don’t we use it for local and state elections as well?

Is Cuba not a democracy because it arrests dissidents? Many thousands of anti-war and other protesters have been arrested in the United States in recent years, as in every period in American history. During the Occupy Movement two years ago more than 7,000 people were arrested, many beaten by police and mistreated while in custody. And remember: The United States is to the Cuban government like al Qaeda is to Washington, only much more powerful and much closer; virtually without exception, Cuban dissidents have been financed by and aided in other ways by the United States.

Would Washington ignore a group of Americans receiving funds from al Qaeda and engaging in repeated meetings with known members of that organization? In recent years the United States has arrested a great many people in the US and abroad solely on the basis of alleged ties to al Qaeda, with a lot less evidence to go by than Cuba has had with its dissidents’ ties to the United States. Virtually all of Cuba’s “political prisoners” are such dissidents. While others may call Cuba’s security policies dictatorship, I call it self-defense. **CT**

**How long would it be before CIA money – secret and unlimited CIA money financing all kinds of fronts in Cuba – would own or control almost all the media worth owning or controlling?**

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**William Blum**  
is the author of  
*“Killing Hope: US Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II”*, *“Rogue State: a guide to the World’s Only Super Power,”* *“West-Bloc Dissident: a Cold War Political Memoir,”* and *“America’s Deadliest Export – Democracy: The Truth About US Foreign Policy and Everything Else”*

# I'm still confused ...

Contradictory messages pose problems for **Neil Clark**

**Why is it considered more serious for a news anchor to tell a lie about being in a helicopter, than it is for politicians and pundits to tell us lies which led to an illegal war in which up to 1 million people have been killed?**

I'm confused. The first thing I'm confused about is the suspension of NBC news anchor Brian Williams. Williams said he'd been in a helicopter which had come under fire in the Iraq war when he hadn't been.

He told a lie about what had happened to him, but it was a lie which didn't cause anyone to lose their lives. But those politicians and "experts" who lied us into the Iraq war in the first place, by falsely claiming that Saddam Hussein had WMDs which could be assembled within "45 minutes" have not been suspended. Why is it considered more serious for a news anchor to tell a lie about being in a helicopter, than it is for politicians and pundits to tell us lies which led to an illegal war in which up to 1 million people have been killed?

I'm confused. Can anyone help me?

I'm also confused about the stance of the western elites towards fascists and Nazis. We've recently been commemorating the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp. Auschwitz was liberated by the Soviet Red Army, but President Putin of Russia was not invited to the ceremony in Poland. The western elites keep telling us how much they oppose Nazism – and why it's a case of "Never Again" – yet in the Ukraine conflict they supported a violent putsch in which fascists and neo-Nazis played a leading role.

If the western elites are so opposed to far-

right extremists, why have they been on the same side as them in Ukraine? Does "Never Again" actually mean, "Never Again, but we'll make some exceptions for Ukraine?" You'd also think that laughing at the Holocaust was a definite no-no, but an exhibition in NATO member state Estonia encourages us to do just that – and there's been no condemnation from western elites. And the leading western oil company Royal Dutch Shell is using a ship named after a Nazi war criminal.

I'm confused. Can anyone help me?

I'm confused about possession of weapons of mass destruction and their ability to deter attack. The British political class says we must renew Trident (Britain's nuclear weapons system) because without it the UK might be attacked. Trident is a "deterrent," we are told. But a few years ago, the British political class told us we had to attack Iraq precisely because it did possess WMDs.

If the elite believed Iraq had WMDs in 2003 – and ones that could be deployed in "45 minutes," then why, according to their own logic of "deterrence," did they attack the country?

As the writer David Lindsay noted on Twitter:

"No country with nukes has ever been invaded? Weren't we supposed to believe that Iraq **did** have them, hence our own 'need' to invade Iraq?"

The same elites have also accused Iran of trying secretly to develop nuclear weapons – saying that Iran has no need to have such weapons. But if nukes can deter an attack on Britain, why can't they also deter an attack on Iran?

I'm confused. Can anyone help me?

I'm confused about the west's commitment to democracy. We're told repeatedly that the west supports democratic governments and doesn't like undemocratic ones. But when Hugo Chavez, the four-time democratically elected leader of Venezuela, died in 2013, there were no glowing tributes to him from western leaders. By contrast, King Abdullah, the unelected ruler of Saudi Arabia – a country where there is no democracy – was hailed as a “man of wisdom and vision.”

Surely if we're supporters of democracy we should be lauding the democrat and not the unelected despot? Yet, with Chavez and King Abdullah it's been the other way round. I'm confused. Can anyone help me?

I'm confused too about the MH17 air disaster. When the plane came down last July, western leaders and neocon commentators were very quick to blame Russia. Rupert Murdoch's *Sun* newspaper even had “Putin's Missile” on its front page. But six months on, it's all gone very quiet about MH17. An investigation into the disaster began – but like the Chilcot Report, we're still waiting for the findings. People who couldn't stop talking about the crash last July – and blaming Russia for it – have gone rather quiet. If Russia really was responsible, then surely we'd have seen the evidence by now? And why aren't the people who accused Russia interested in this issue any more? I'm confused. Can anyone help me?

I'm confused about Israel and its role in the war against Islamic State. Israel – which we're told is on the same side as the west in the “war on terror” – bombed Syria in January, but not to bomb ISIS positions, but Hezbollah fighters and members of Iran's Revolutionary Guard who were in Syria to help

government forces fight ISIS and other jihadi extremists.

It's not the first time Israel has bombed Syria in recent months – but each time it's attacked forces supporting the secular Syrian government.

If Israel is on the west's side in the fight against Islamic State, why is it bombing people who are fighting against Islamic State? I'm confused. Can anyone help me?

I'm confused – very confused – about freedom of speech and freedom of expression. The west's political elite made a big thing of their support for freedom of speech and freedom of expression in the light of the Charlie Hebdo killings.

We were told by some people that freedom of speech meant nothing if it didn't mean the freedom to cause offense. Yet shortly after the Paris killings, a French comedian was arrested for expressing his feelings on a Facebook post.

Over 60 people were arrested in France, not for things they did, but for things they wrote about the Charlie Hebdo attacks on social media. Do we believe in free speech and free expression – and the right to cause offense – or don't we? Or does it apply only if we want to express some views but not others? I'm confused. Can anyone help me?

I'm confused also about certain western “journalists” who seem to spend half their waking hours obsessively attacking RT and the people who appear on it. If these critics hate RT so much, then why do they keep watching it? After all, watching RT is not compulsory. These “critics” claim to support media plurality, yet some of them have openly called for national broadcasting regulators to take action against RT. In other words they're supporters of free speech and free expression who want to silence free speech and free expression!

I'm confused. Can anyone help me? **CT**

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*Neil Clark is a journalist, writer and broadcaster. His award winning blog can be found at <http://.neilclark66.blogspot.com>*

**Surely if we're supporters of democracy we should be lauding the democrat and not the unelected despot? Yet, with Chavez and King Abdullah it's been the other way round**

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ISSUE 94



**CHRIS HEDGES** tells how America's refusal to face the truth about empire has created the nightmare **Malcolm X** predicted 50 years ago

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