
ColdType

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MID-APRIL 2018

PHILIP GIRALDI | AHMED ALNAOUQ | CHRIS HEDGES | CROMWELL & EDWARDS

BLOODY FRIDAY

“ **THIS IS NOT COMPLICATED.** To see Israeli soldiers, inside Israel, firing live ammunition from a distance at unarmed Palestinian protesters inside the blockaded Gaza Strip – with the figures of injuries and fatalities that resulted from that – **you do not need to be a legal expert to look at that and say that this is outrageous, illegal, immoral and unacceptable** ”

Hagai El-Ad, executive director of Israel human rights group B'Tselem

– Source: New York Times, April 5, 2018

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PHILIP GIRALDI

A special relationship born in hell

US politicians should realise that their unwavering support of Israel has left the blood of many unarmed Gaza protesters on their hands

COVER
STORY

4

F you want to understand what the “special relationship” between Israel and the United States really means, consider the fact that Israeli Army snipers shot dead 17 unarmed and largely peaceful Gazan demonstrators on Good Friday without a squeak coming out of the White House or State Department. Some of the protesters were shot in the back while running away, while another 1,000 Palestinians were wounded, an estimated 750 by gunfire, the remainder injured by rubber bullets and tear gas.

The offence committed by the Gazan protesters that has earned them a death sentence was coming too close to the Israeli containment fence that has turned the Gaza strip into the world’s largest outdoor prison.

President Donald Trump’s chief Middle East negotiator David Greenblatt described the protest as “a hostile march on the Israel-Gaza border ... inciting violence against Israel.” And Nikki Haley at the UN used the US veto to block any independent inquiry into the violence, demonstrating again that the White House team is little more than Israel’s echo chamber. America’s enabling of the brutal reality that is today’s Israel makes it complicit in war crimes carried out against the helpless and hapless Palestinian people.

So where was the outrage in the American media about the massacre of civilians? Characteristically, Israel portrays itself as somehow a victim and the US media, when it bothers to report about dead Palestinians at all, picks up on that line. The Jewish state is portrayed as always en-

dangered and struggling to survive, even though it is the nuclear armed regional superpower that is only threatened because of its own criminal behaviour. And even when it commits what are indisputable war crimes such as the use of lethal force against an unarmed civilian population, the Jewish lobby and its media accomplices are quick to take up the victimhood refrain.

The Israeli government described the Gaza protests as “an organised terrorist operation,” while Gazans are dehumanised by claims that they act under the direction of evil Hamas to dig tunnels and rain down bottle rockets on hapless Israeli civilians. The reality is, however, quite different. It is the Gazans who have been subjected to murderous periodic incursions by the Israeli army, a procedure that Israel refers to as “mowing the grass,” a brutal exercise intended to keep the Palestinians terrified and docile.

The story of what happened in Gaza on Good Friday had largely disappeared from the US media by Easter Sunday. On Saturday, the New York Times reported the most recent violence this way: “... some began hurling stones, tossing Molotov cocktails and rolling burning tires at the fence, the Israelis responded with tear gas and gunfire.” Get it? The Palestinians started it all, according to Israeli sources, by throwing things at the fence and forcing the poor victimised Israeli soldiers to respond with gunfire, presumably as self-defence.



Seconds after this photo was taken, the youth carrying the tyre was shot in the back by Israeli snipers during Gaza's Great March of Return protest.

The Times also repeated Israel's uncorroborated claims that there were gunmen active on the Gazan side, but given the disparity in numbers killed and injured – zero on the Israeli side of the fence – the Palestinian shooters must have been using blanks. Or they never existed at all.

The Israelis reportedly also responded to “suspicious figures” on the Gazan side with rounds from tanks, killing, among others, a farmer far from the demonstrations who was working his field. Israeli warplanes and helicopters also joined in, attacking targets on the Palestinian side. Drones flew over the demonstrators, spraying tear gas down on them.

One recalls that the major Israeli assault on Gaza in 2014 included vignettes of Israeli families picnicking on the high ground overlooking the assault, enjoying the spectacle while observing the light-and-sound show that accompanied the carnage. At that time, more than 2,000 Gazans were killed and nearly 11,000 were wounded, including 3,374 children, of whom more than 1,000 were permanently disabled. If the current slaughter in Gaza continues, it would be a shame

to forego the entertainment value of a good massacre right on one's doorstep.

You see, it's the unarmed Palestinians who are creating the “violence.” Israel is the victim acting in self-defence

The reliably neocon Washington Post also framed the conflict as if Israel was behaving in a restrained fashion, leading off in its coverage with, “Israel's military warned Saturday it will step up its response to violence on the Gaza border if it continues ...” You see, it's the unarmed Palestinians who are creating the “violence.” Israel is the victim acting in self-defence.

The newspaper coverage was supplemented by television accounts of what had taken place. ABC News described “violent clashes,” implying that two somewhat equal sides were engaged in the fighting, even though the lethal force was only employed by Israel against an unarmed civilian population.

The backstory to the killing is what should disturb every American citizen. When it comes to disregard for United States national sovereignty and interests, the Israelis and their amen chorus in Washington have dug a deep, dark hole and the US Congress and White House have obligingly jumped right in. Since June 8, 1967, when the Israelis massacred the crew of the USS Liberty, Israel has realised it can do whatever it wants, whenever it wants, wherever it wants, any time it wants, to anybody ... including American servicemen, and the US will do nothing.

The existence of many good Israelis to who oppose their own government's policies notwithstanding, the current Israel is an evil place that Americans should be condemning, not praising. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu should not be receiving 29 standing ovations from Congress. He should be rotting in jail. Israel's shoot-to-kill policy and dehumanisation of the Palestinian people is nothing to be proud of. That the United States is giving this band of racist war criminals billions of dollars every year is a travesty. That the reputation of American has been besmirched worldwide because of its reflexive support of anything and everything that this rogue regime does is a national disgrace.

Gazans are demonstrating in part because they are starving. They have no clean drinking water because Israel has destroyed the purification plants as part of a deliberate policy to make life in the Strip so miserable that everyone will leave or die in place. And even leaving is problematic as Israel controls the border and will not let Palestinians enter or depart. It also controls the Mediterranean Sea access to Gaza. Fisherman go out a short distance from the shore to bring in a meager catch. If they go any farther they are shot dead by the Israeli Navy.

Hospitals, schools and power stations in Gaza are routinely bombed in Israel's frequent reprisal actions against what Netanyahu chooses to describe as aggressive moves by Hamas. Such claims are bogus as Israel enjoys a monopoly of force and is never hesitant to use it.

Over in the other Palestinian enclave the

West Bank, or what remains of it, the story is the same. Brutal heavily armed Israeli settlers rampage, poisoning Palestinian water, maiming and killing their livestock and even murdering local residents. Children throw stones or slap a soldier and wind up in Israeli prisons. The settlers are backed up by the army and paramilitary police who also shoot first. The Israeli military courts, who have jurisdiction over the occupied West Bank, rarely convict a Jew when an Arab is killed or beaten.

There is no net gain for the United States in continuing the immoral relationship with the self-styled Jewish state

And here in America a bought-and-paid-for Congress continues to do its bit. In March, President Trump signed the so-called Taylor Force Act, part of the marathon spending bill, which will cut aid to the Palestinian Authority while also increasing the money to Israel. Back in January, Congress had also cut the funding to support Palestinians who are still living in UN-run refugee camps despite resolutions demanding that they should be allowed to return to their homes, now occupied by Israeli Jews. During the perfunctory debate on the measure, Congressmen were lied to by pro-Israel lobbyists, who claimed that Arabs are terrorism supporters and use the money to attack Israelis.

I could go on and on, but the message should be clear: There is no net gain for the United States in continuing the lopsided and essentially immoral relationship with the self-styled Jewish state. There is no enhancement of American national security, quite the contrary, and there remains only the sad realisation that the blood of many innocent people is, to a considerable extent, on our hands. This horror must end. **CT**

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Yaser Murtaja was shot by an Israeli sniper, despite wearing a high visibility PRESS flak jacket and helmet.

Israel tries to turn slain journalist into a terrorist

On April 6 an Israeli sniper killed Yaser Murtaja, 30, one of six Palestinian journalists shot that day. A week later, the Israeli Defense Minister tried to smear Murtaja as a terrorist, tweeting:

“The photographer (#YasserMurtaja) was a terrorist with a prior association w/ the military wing of Hamas. He held the rank of captain & was paid regularly by Hamas since 2011. He

used to fly drones to collect intel on IDF forces at the front.”

However, no one in the international media is taking the claim seriously. At the New Yorker, Yamine Al-Sayyad, wrote, “We believe he was targeted. First, because he was very clearly wearing the “PRESS” flak jacket and the helmet. Second, the Israeli Army bragged a couple of days ago on Twitter that their soldiers know where they put every bullet and where every bullet landed. Third, that same day Yaser passed away, four or five journalists were injured, some shot in the leg, others in the arm, all from direct shots, even though they all had “PRESS” signs on...”

– Source: www.mondoweiss.net

AHMED ALNAOUQ

Israeli violence won't stop Gaza protests

Life and laughter mixed with pain and tears:
A report from inside the Gaza protesters' camp

COVER
STORY

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A**FTER** the bloody launch of Gaza's Great Return March – 17 Palestinians killed and more than 1,500 injured – the question almost hangs in the air: What now? Will the protesters pack up their tents and retreat to the meager shelter of their homes? Or will they persist in their plans to demonstrate along the border with Israel until May 15, the anniversary of the Nakba (when the families of many Gazans were forced from their homeland to make way for the creation of Israel)?

The masses (estimated at around 60,000 on March 30) are no longer there; Fridays are traditionally the Palestinian day of protest, as they struggle to earn a living during the week. But if the families and individuals who remain in the protest tents to “hold the line” are at all representative, the Great Return March is far from over.

“Israel’s policy of destroying our identity is summed up in a statement from [David] Ben-Gurion [the first prime minister of Israel]: ‘The old will die and the young will forget.’ But we are here to say that the old may have died, but the young are not forgetting,” said Mohammed Madi, a lawyer occupying one of the tents.

East of the Al-Shujeya neighbourhood, the protesters – although smaller in numbers than the launch days – have gathered between the fenced border and the first row of houses re-



Along with his wife and three children, Madi set up his family's tent two days before the demonstration started.
Photo: Ahmed Alnaouq

cently rebuilt after they were destroyed during Israel's 2014 war on Gaza. Visitors to the “alley,” about 500 metres (a third of a mile) in depth, find a mix of contradictions and irony. Marketers working from carts loaded with nuts and candies and vans with fruits and juice shout to passers-by to sell their refreshments. And in their midst, an ambulance and nurses try to save the life of a young man shot by Israeli snipers. (Thanks to Allah, he lived.) Not too far away was a mass of protesters, raising the Palestinian flag and shouting for freedom and the right to return [to their homeland]. Life and laughter mixed with pain and tears.

AHMED ALNAOUQ

It was day two of the Great Return March and entire families marched a few hundred metres from the fence. In a row of tents, each was labelled with the name of a town from historic Palestine [now Israel].

One of the tents was decorated with Palestinian and Algerian flags; at the entrance, pots with Arabic simmered over a fire.

Madi, 47, explained: “I am a dual citizen, with both a Palestinian and an Algerian passport. I raised the Algerian flag as a symbol of liberty because it is the country of a million martyrs (in the fight to end French colonisation). But I chose to stay in my original homeland and fight for it because Palestine needs true human rights defenders. It is a matter of truth that all oppressed peoples shall be liberated one day.”

Along with his wife and three children, Madi set up his family’s tent two days before the demonstration started. During the demonstration, he opens his tent to visitors, encouraging them to continue protesting. For Madi, the success of the March of Return will not be measured in terms of injuries or whether the international community actually tries to force Israel to allow Palestinians to return (after 70 years, few Palestinians have any illusion about that). Rather, he says, the march is intended to keep the flame of resistance alive among youths who have grown up knowing nothing but blockade and occupation. No wonder Madi, whose family originally lived in Bait Jerja (now Israel), even brought his six-year-old daughter to the protest.

“Anyone looking into the faces of the masses here will see that even our young ones will never forget their homeland,” said Madi, who has been imprisoned by Israel four times, for a cumulative two years. He plans to stay at the demonstration every day until May 15.

Yusra (who didn’t want her last name used, for fear Israel would stop her from travelling) is 50 and originally from Bait Dras, near Ashdod (now Israel). She echoed the feelings of Madi: “My parents used to tell me every day about our home in Bait Dras. We had around 50 farms there, all planted with fruit,” she sighed with nostalgia.



“I came with my family on my own; no one forced me to.” Amna (left) with her brother.

Photo: Ahmed Alnaouq

“Some people think we have forgotten our land. We have not and will not. I am participating in this march, and I will keep participating until the last day. I feel more connected to the land the closer I get to the border fence.”

Yusra came to the protest with her 13-year-old son to remind him of his right to return.

“Mom wrote a book about her original town, in which she described everything that was there. The more I read it, the more I get attached to the land and the more I am determined to demonstrate here,” he said. His two older brothers were among those closest to the border fence.

Although the Israeli forces are using all means possible to disperse the protestors – from tear-gas bombs to live ammunition to drones – none of those interviewed said they will stay home. In fact, many, like Yusra, are there with their children.

“I came with my family on my own; no one forced me to,” said nine-year-old Amna Abdel-Al. When her brother asked if she was afraid, she immediately replied she was not. “I came here because I want to protect our land,” she said defiantly.

CT

Ahmed Alnaouq is Gaza project manager for WeAreNotNumbers.org

CHRIS HEDGES

The campaign to exterminate Muslims

The global elites have a plan for the future.
It is visible in the killing fields of Gaza

COVER
STORY

10

THE Israeli army's wanton slaughter of unarmed Palestinians trapped behind the security barriers in Gaza evokes little outrage and condemnation within the United States because we have been indoctrinated into dehumanising Muslims. Islam is condemned as barbaric and equated with terrorism. The resistance struggle against foreign occupation, whether in Afghanistan, Iraq or Gaza, sees Muslims demonised as the enemy. Muslims are branded as irrational and inclined to violence and terrorism by their religious beliefs. We attack them not for what they do, but because we see them as being different from us. We must eradicate them to save ourselves. And thus we perpetuate the very hatred and counter-violence, or terrorism, that we fear.

Muslims in this age of racialised authoritarianism have been stripped of due process in our courts and are subject – as Abid Naseer and Haroon Aswat were in Britain before being extradited to the United States – to pretrial incarceration for years.

They endure police brutality and secret trials, are convicted on secret evidence they cannot see and suffer long-term detention in solitary confinement, often in clandestine prisons known as black sites.

They are kidnapped anywhere in the world and taken, hooded, drugged and shackled, to the secret sites.

They are tortured through savage methods such as beatings, “walling,” sexual humilia-

tion, close confinement, prolonged isolation, water dousing, electric shocks, waterboarding and so-called rectal rehydration.

Their citizenships are revoked. Their communities and mosques are harassed, infiltrated and monitored by law enforcement.

Muslim children are viewed as future terrorists. Muslim women as breeders of terrorists. Muslim men as dangerous.

We are the maniacal Kurtz in Joseph Conrad's “Heart of Darkness,” keeping the heads of “savages” on stakes outside our fortress and crying out “Exterminate all the brutes!”

We have declared a worldwide war on Muslims. Muslims, who read us better than we read ourselves, are rising up to resist. Hundreds of thousands of Muslims in the Middle East have been butchered since our invasion of Afghanistan. Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and Libya have been destroyed as viable states.

Millions of Muslims have been displaced or are refugees. And when desperate Muslim families attempt to flee to Europe or the United States from the hell we created in the Middle East, they are thrown into displacement camps or turned back and branded as disease carriers, thieves, rapists, barbarians and terrorists. Islamic culture and religion in our Manichean narrative have been shorn of all nuance, humanity, complexity and depth.

Islam has been replaced by a xenophobic car-



BEFORE THE MASSACRE: Protesters gather for Gaza's Great March of Return before Israeli army snipers started their shooting. Photo: Screenshot from IAK video

toon version, an image that, to use the words of Frantz Fanon, is the “quintessence of evil.” We respond to the crisis we created out of ignorance, self-exaltation and racism.

As the imprisoned poet Syed Talha Ahsan writes:

*to kill
is to erase an image
off a mirror:
side-step
no body
just a gaping hole
upon an indifferent world*

In a civilised world, Israel would be slapped with sanctions, boycotts and divestment

Israel’s slow-motion genocide of the Palestinian people, justified by the racism and Islamophobia that are central to Israeli identity, has entered

a new, deadlier phase. No longer constrained by any pretence of respecting human rights or a peace process, Israeli soldiers, although they are not threatened, fire indiscriminately into crowds of unarmed Palestinians, killing or wounding men, women, children, the elderly and journalists.

In a civilised world, Israel would be immediately slapped with sanctions, boycotts and divestment – the only mechanism left to protect the Palestinian people from extermination – but we do not live in a civilised world. We live in a world where murder and racism are state policy, where the oppressed are dehumanised and unworthy of life and where our mutant demagogues and despots revel in the rivers of blood they create.

This racialised authoritarianism, one that defines Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, has ominous consequences for the oppressed. It is fed by a willful refusal to accept our responsibility for the social and political disintegration as well as the violence in the Middle East and, increasingly, at home.

Most academics, trapped in the meaningless silo of Islamic writings on apocalyptic terrorism, contribute nothing to the debate. The press, which has turned journalism into nonstop entertainment and the celebration of nonexistent American virtues, is complicit in this perpetuation of anti-knowledge, which Tennessee Williams once called our voluntary matriculation into a school for the blind. It dehistoricises these movements. It certifies radical jihadists, and by extension Islam, as incomprehensible. Since terrorism is incomprehensible, and since it is an intrinsic part of Islam, Muslims are worthy not of investigation but annihilation.

But facts don't speak for themselves, as Edward Said noted. They require context to be understood, and all context is absent.

"You could hardly begin (in the public sphere provided by international discourse) to analyse political conflicts involving Sunnis and Shi'is, Kurds and Iraqis, or Tamils and Sinhalese, or Sikhs and Hindus – the list is long – without eventually having to resort to the categories and images of 'terrorism' and 'fundamentalism,' which derived entirely from the concerns and intellectual factories in metropolitan centres like Washington or London," Said wrote in *Culture and Imperialism*.

"They are fearful images that lack discriminant contents, or definition, but they signify moral power and approval for whoever uses them, moral defensiveness and criminalisation for whomever."

The pattern of persistent decontextualisation traps us in an endless cycle of violence for violence. Mohammad-Mahmoud Ould Mohamedou in his book, *A Theory of ISIS: Political Violence and the Transformation of the Global Order*, writes of the now-standard response following a terrorist attack:

"For every time a new radical Islamism-related attack takes place in New York, Washington, London, Paris, Brussels or Berlin, a ritual of denial of the deeper political issues plays out in an increasingly familiar fashion. The sequence is performed thus: shock gives way to fear followed

by anger; security experts step up hurriedly in television studios and on social media to denounce the lack of preparation by the authorities; specialists in radical Islamism (or simply Islam) follow, declaring that IS (previously Al Qaeda) has been weakened, is on its way to be defeated and is merely lashing out with desperate attacks; Muslim communities in Western countries are called out and racist and violent attacks against them sometimes take place (hours after the March 2016 attacks in Brussels a #stopislam movement started trending, revealing the depth of bias that had come to overtake sectors of the Western world, readily associating Islam and terrorism); sympathy movements for the victims of city where the attack took place are set up (Je suis Charlie, I am Brussels, etc.); calls for tougher legislation (surveillance mechanisms, detention conditions, nationality measures, immigration procedures, travel regulations, dress codes, access to pools, prayer sites, etc.) are spoken urgently; arrests are made in neighbourhoods where Muslim migrants are known to reside and bombing is redoubled in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Yemen or Libya."

Those who defy the "liberal democratic" state have forfeited all rights

The Obama administration under counterterrorism adviser John Brennan, now a national security and intelligence analyst for NBC and MSNBC, set up a database, Disposition Matrix, of terrorism suspects across the globe. It is known informally as the kill list. Those on the list are targeted by clandestine CIA extradition units, special forces, militarised drones and air strikes. These techniques for racialised control of Muslims are drawn from the blueprint of colonialism, although the state now uses the coded language of ideology to mask its racist assault.

As in colonialism, those who defy the "liberal democratic" state have forfeited all rights and deserve to be treated as beasts because they are beasts. This stance of collective criminalisation of a group or race will have ominous

CHRIS HEDGES

consequences as the corporate state, beset by the growing unrest from deindustrialisation and global warming, begins to view larger and larger segments of the population as hostile.

“In some sense, the figure of the terror suspect forms the testing ground upon which Western versions of ‘democracy’ and ‘human rights’ are deliberated,” writes Nisha Kapoor in *Deport, Deprive, Extradite: 21st Century State Extremism*. “It is via the representation of these individuals that cases are made in support of summary killings, bigger bombs, drone strikes, ever more grotesque forms of torture, and clandestine and indefinite detention. It is also through the policing of such individuals that mechanisms have been put in place in Britain [and the United States] for the growing use of secret justice, the retraction of the provisions of citizenship and the move away from human rights protections.”

The terrorists who carry out these attacks are mirror images of ourselves

Policies have consequences. The decision to hunt down Muslims around the globe, giving to the so-called war on terror a transnational dimension, means also that those who oppose us are not restricted by national boundaries.

The terrorists who carry out these attacks are mirror images of ourselves, consumed by the same narcissism and cult of the self that define celebrity culture.

They post self-indulgent videos of rants against the West and of their beheadings of captives clad in orange jumpsuits. They replicate the cultural effort to film “Life the Movie.” The

images we use to communicate with the world, as well as each other, infect all of their messages to us.

They are not from a medieval era. They are creations of modernity. They feed to us their own versions of the pornographic violence that fascinates and deforms our culture. They know this is how you communicate with the West. And we communicate back in the same manner.

The Israeli massacre of Palestinians is a prelude to a dystopian, neocolonial world where global elites, hoarding wealth and controlling the mechanisms of power, increasingly resort to widespread bloodshed to keep the oppressed at bay.

What Israel is doing to Palestinians – impoverished and trapped without adequate food, water and medicine in the open-air prison that is Gaza, a strip of land subject to repeated murderous assaults by the Israeli war machine – will be done to desperate climate refugees and citizens who rise up to protest the pillage by global oligarchs.

Those who resist will be as dehumanised as Muslims. They, too, will be branded as terrorists. The global elites have a plan for the future. It is visible in the killing fields of Gaza. **CT**

Chris Hedges spent nearly two decades as a foreign correspondent in Central America, the Middle East, Africa and the Balkans. He has reported from more than 50 countries and has worked for The Christian Science Monitor, National Public Radio, The Dallas Morning News and The New York Times, for which he was a foreign correspondent for 15 years. This article first appeared at www.truthdig.com

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CROMWELL & EDWARDS

Killing mosquitoes

The latest Gaza massacres, pro-Israel media bias and the weapon of antisemitism

COVER STORY

14

THE Palestinians have long been seen as an obstacle by Israel's leaders; an irritant to be subjugated. Noam Chomsky commented: "Traditionally over the years, Israel has sought to crush any resistance to its programmes of takeover of the parts of Palestine it regards as valuable, while eliminating any hope for the indigenous population to have a decent existence enjoying national rights."

He also noted: "The key feature of the occupation has always been humiliation: they [the Palestinians] must not be allowed to raise their heads. The basic principle, often openly expressed, is that the 'Araboushim' – a term that belongs with 'nigger' or 'kike' – must understand who rules this land and who walks in it with head lowered and eyes averted." (Noam Chomsky, *Fateful Triangle*, Pluto Press, 1999.)

Recent events encapsulate this all too well. On Friday, March 30, Israeli soldiers shot dead 14 Palestinians and wounded 1,400, including 800 hit by live ammunition. By April 5, the death toll had risen to 21. During a second protest, a week later on Friday, April 7, the Israelis shot dead a further 10 Palestinians, including a 16-year-old boy, and more than 1,300 were injured. Among those killed was Yasser Murtaja, a journalist who had been filming the protest. He had been wearing a distinctive blue protective vest marked PRESS in large capital letters. The brutality, and utter brazenness with which the killings were carried out, is yet another demonstration of the apartheid state's contempt for the people it tried



Marchers rush to the aid of a young victim of Israeli gunfire during the Gaza Great March of Return protest on March 31.

Photo: Mohammed Zaanou, ActiveStills

to ethnically cleanse in 1948, the year of Israel's founding.

On the first day of the protest, March 30, many Palestinians had gathered in Gaza, close to the border with Israel, as part of a peaceful Great March of Return protest demanding the right to reclaim ancestral homes in Israel. 100 Israeli snipers lay in wait, shooting at protesters, including an 18-year-old shot in the back while running away from the border. The Israel army boasted in a quickly-deleted tweet that the massacre had been planned, deliberate and premeditated: "Nothing was carried out uncontrolled; everything was accurate and measured, and we



know where every bullet landed.”

BBC News and other mainstream news outlets, including the Guardian, carried headlines about “clashes” at the Gaza-Israel border “leaving” Palestinians dead and injured. As we noted via Twitter, an honest headline would have read: “Israeli troops kill 16 Palestinians and injure hundreds.”

When the Israelis shot dead yet more Palestinians on the second Friday of protests, the BBC reported, “Deadly unrest on Gaza-Israel border as Palestinians resume protest.” BBC “imparti-

ality” meant not headlining Israeli troops as the agency responsible for the “deadly unrest.”

Adam Johnson, writing for Fairness and Accuracy In Reporting, observed of news reports carrying inappropriate headlines about “clashes:” “We do not have one party’s snipers opening ActiveStills1 fire on another, unarmed party; we have ‘violent clashes’ – a term, as FAIR has noted before, that implies symmetry of forces and is often used to launder responsibility.

Later, the Guardian quietly removed the word “clashes” from its headlines, while adding Israeli military spin: that the protest was a Hamas ploy to “carry out terror attacks.”

On the first Friday of mass killing, we noted that the Israeli newspaper Haaretz had reported the presence of Israeli snipers. We asked the public to look for any mention of this on BBC News. Around the time we made the request, the Newsniffer website picked up the first reference to “snipers” on the BBC News website (albeit buried in a tiny mention at the bottom of a news article). Coincidence? Or were BBC editors aware that their output was under public scrutiny?

Within just one day, the BBC had relegated the news of the mass shootings in Gaza to a minor slot on its website. It considered “news” about television personality Dec presenting Saturday Night Takeaway without Ant, and royal couple Harry and Meghan choosing wedding flowers, more important than Israel killing and wounding many hundreds of Palestinians.

When BBC News finally turned to Gaza, with a piece buried at the bottom of its World news page, it was from Israel’s perspective: “Israel warns it could strike inside Gaza” and: “Palestinian groups using protests as a cover to launch attacks on Israel”

This disgraceful coverage strongly suggested that Israel was the victim. As political analyst Charles Shoebridge observed: “Editors, especially at the BBC aren’t stupid, they know exactly what they’re doing, and the use of very many devices such as this isn’t somehow repeatedly accidental. Indeed, it’s a good example of how the BBC is perhaps history’s most sophisticated and successful propaganda tool.”

By contrast, a powerful article in Haaretz by veteran Israeli journalist Gideon Levy pointed to the reality that the mass shooting by Israeli “Defence” Forces: “shows once again that the killing of Palestinians is accepted in Israel more lightly than the killing of mosquitoes.”

Last year, Jeremy Corbyn was hounded by mainstream media journalists, demanding that he condemn acts of violence by the socialist government in Venezuela. But there was no corporate media campaign calling upon Theresa May to denounce much worse Israeli violence. The same media that devoted sustained, in-depth

coverage of Spanish police brutality during the Catalan independence referendum swiftly relegated Israel’s mass murder to “other news.”

Imagine if Russian or Syrian troops had shot dead almost 30 civilians, and injured well over 1000, during peaceful protests. MSM headlines and airwaves would be filled with condemnations from senior UK politicians and prominent commentators. But not so when it is Israel doing the killing.

We tweeted: “Twitter task for today: think of any of the famously impassioned, outraged ‘humanitarian interventionists’ in the Guardian, the Times, the Observer and so on, and check how much they’ve tweeted about the mass killings and woundings in Gaza. Go ahead, try it.”

“The BBC is perhaps history’s most sophisticated and successful propaganda tool”

Examples were glaring by their absence.

Writing for the Intercept, journalist Mehdi Hasan asked rhetorically: “Where is the moral outrage from former US ambassador to the United Nations, Samantha Power, the famously pro-intervention, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *A Problem From Hell*, which lamented US inaction in Rwanda [...]?”

“Where is the demand from Canadian academic-turned-politician Michael Ignatieff, who was once one of the loudest voices in favour of the so-called responsibility to protect doctrine, for peacekeeping troops to be deployed to the Occupied Territories?”

“Where are the righteously angry op-eds from Nicholas Kristof of the New York Times, or Richard Cohen of the Washington Post, or David Aaronovitch of the Times of London, demanding concrete action against the human rights abusers of the IDF?” Hasan concluded: “The ongoing and glaring refusal of liberal interventionists in the West to say even a word about the need to protect occupied Palestinians from state-sponsored violence is a reminder of just how morally bankrupt and cynically hypocritical the whole ‘liberal intervention’ shtick is.”

Global realpolitik was highlighted yet again when the US government blocked a vote at an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council calling for an international investigation into the mass shooting of civilians by Israeli troops on March 30. The US repeated its block a week later after the second wave of Israeli killing. We have found no coverage in the UK mainstream media of the US blocking a UN investigation. In other words, Israel can act with impunity when committing grievous crimes against humanity, backed to the hilt by its biggest sponsor in Washington.

Meanwhile, the MSM was continuing to deploy charges of alleged antisemitism against Corbyn-led Labour; and, seen in a wider political context, against realistic hopes of even moderately progressive changes to UK government policy.

A Facebook comment made in 2012 by Corbyn about a mural depicting Jewish and non-Jewish bankers was unearthed and used to mount a remarkable barrage of vehement media attacks. BBC News took its lead from the obviously right-wing, anti-Corbyn agenda across the “spectrum” of the country’s “free press.”

The attacks continued with a vicious front-page “exclusive” in the extreme right-wing Sunday Times: “Exposed: Corbyn’s hate factory”

The article, based on a trawl of Facebook posts, painted a hugely exaggerated picture of “racism, violent threats and abuse by leader’s fan base.” Alex Nunns, author of *The Candidate*, a book about Corbyn’s “improbable path to power,” pointed out the absurdly cynical nature of this Murdoch “journalism.” Nunns undertook his own Facebook search for posts by Conservatives and quickly discovered examples of misogyny, abuse, an implied threat of violence and implicit racism. The Tory Facebook page he found: “appears to have links to The Bruges Group, which in turn has links to leading Conservative politicians including Iain Duncan Smith. **Headline: ‘EXPOSED: Iain Duncan Smith’s hate factory.’ See how this is done?’**”

Guardian columnist Owen Jones picked up Nunns’ tweets and pointed out in a live BBC in-

terview: “Why has there been no coverage of the despicable racism and abuse found in Conservative Facebook groups?”

The BBC news presenter replied: “Because Labour is the story at the moment.”

That the MSM, including the BBC, had made Labour “the story at the moment” was simply not worthy of comment by corporate journalists or, perhaps, permissible thought.

Shamefully, the BBC published a big splash based on the Sunday Times article on “Jeremy Corbyn’s hate factory.” The BBC piece was almost gleeful in saying that there was “no let up for Labour. ... With negative stories on the front pages of at least four newspapers, this is not a happy Easter Sunday for Labour.”

In other words, as it so often does, the BBC was following the lead of the right-wing, anti-Corbyn mainstream press. The onslaught of “news” linking Corbyn to antisemitism continued with an account of how Corbyn had attended a “left wing Jewish event” organised by Jewdas. The BBC stated: “Jewdas, which describes itself as a ‘radical’ and ‘alternative’ Jewish collective, is at odds with mainstream Jewish groups over allegations of antisemitism in Labour.”

The BBC was following the lead of the right-wing, anti-Corbyn mainstream press

Three of the principal pro-Israel bodies in the UK, the Jewish Board of Deputies, Jewish Leadership Council and Jewish Labour Movement, criticised Corbyn for attending the event. The BBC reported: “Jonathan Arkush, president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, said: ‘If Jeremy Corbyn goes to their event, how can we take his stated commitment to be an ally against antisemitism seriously?’”

The BBC not only ran with this latest “story” linking Corbyn to antisemitism, but promoted it as the lead item on the BBC News website.

However, there is nothing that says we must allow BBC News to determine what is mainstream and what is not. And, in particular, when it comes to the Jewish Board of Deputies, Jewish

Leadership Council and Jewish Labour Movement, journalist Asa Winstanley of Electronic Intifada notes: “Their primary function is to lobby for Israel, an institutionally racist, apartheid state.”

A measure of the Jewish Board of Deputies’ staunch pro-Israel stance can be seen from the tweet they sent in the wake of the brutal Israeli killings in the first Friday border protest: “Alarming developments at Gaza border as Hamas once again using its civilians – inc children – as pawns.”

The lack of condemnation from mainstream voices in politics and the media to such a disgraceful message reveals widespread deep fear of being accused of antisemitism. This fear, used to constrain reasoned debate, needs to be seen in a broader historical context. In 2002, former Israeli minister Shulamit Aloni explained the rationale behind the charge of antisemitism: “Well, it’s a trick – we always use it. When from Europe somebody’s criticising Israel then we bring up the Holocaust.”

And it works. Professor Greg Philo of the Glasgow Media Group related that he was once told by a senior BBC News editor: “The BBC waits in fear for the telephone call from the Israelis.”

None of the above is to deny that there is a significant problem of antisemitism in British politics, or in wider British society. But, as the group Jews for Justice for Palestinians notes, the facts are that: “Levels of antisemitism among those on the left-wing of the political spectrum, including the far-left, are indistinguishable from those found in the general population.”

Moreover, antisemitism has decreased in Labour under Corbyn, and public polling indicates that it is more prevalent among Conservative and UKIP members than among Labour and Liberal members. Indeed, there is ample evidence of an extraordinary scale of Tory racism and abuse.

In summary, then, here is the horrible irony of recent coverage on Israel and antisemitism: the corporate media continued to headline Corbyn’s “antisemitism crisis” – supposedly triggered by a comment about a mural in 2012 – while quickly

relegating Israel’s massacres of civilian Palestinians to “other news” at the bottom of the page and running order.

The real goal is control of natural resources and the global economy

The truth is that the deadliest racism today is indicated by the casual way in which the West and its allies rain violence down on countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria and Yemen. Although human rights are typically used as a pretext, the real goal is control of natural resources and the global economy; the tears of compassion evaporate the instant that an Official Enemy obstructing Western control has been overthrown.

As Chomsky has noted, this is actually closer to a kind of speciesism than racism: “Namely, knowing that you are massacring them but not doing so intentionally because you don’t regard them as worthy of concern. That is, you don’t even care enough about them to intend to kill them. Thus when I walk down the street, if I stop to think about it I know I’ll probably kill lots of ants, but I don’t intend to kill them, because in my mind they do not even rise to the level where it matters. There are many such examples. To take one of the very minor ones, when [President Bill] Clinton bombed the al-Shifa pharmaceutical facility in Sudan, he and the other perpetrators surely knew that the bombing would kill civilians (tens of thousands, apparently). But Clinton and associates did not intend to kill them, because by the standards of Western liberal humanitarian racism, they are no more significant than ants. Same in the case of tens of millions of others.”

A further example, as we have seen, are the yawns of indifference from the corporate media as hundreds of civilian protestors – Palestinian ‘mosquitoes’ – are gunned down by Israeli snipers. **CT**

.....
David Cromwell & David Edwards are editors of Medialens - www.medialens.org - the UK media watchdog.

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reads in the ColdType archives at
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Brent's Place, Michigan Ave., Westside, Detroit, 2017.

20

Something of the night

A photographer's post-apocalyptic vision of his broken hometown

Quiet and studied, Dave Jordano's photographs in his new book, **Detroit Nocturne**, published by powerHouse Books, form a heartfelt tribute to the city of Detroit. Shooting exclusively at night, Jordano favours the built environment of Detroit's small businesses and homes, and creates evocative images of a metropolis famously wrecked over the past century by decades of industrial relocation and economic downturn.

Like the musical form from which the series takes its name, Jordano's photographs are tranquil, sometimes melancholy, and expressive. Aesthetically alluring, they invite us in, and evoke the lives that exist beyond the still compositions and the obscurity of night.



Duke's Place, Westside, Detroit 2016

DAVE JORDANO



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Brent's Place, Michigan Ave, Westside, Detroit, 2017.



Nude Lady, Westside, Detroit 2017



Bailey Lounge, Westside, Detroit 2017

Since then, efforts to revitalise the downtown area have been only marginally effective.

Today media outlets typically tell stories about Detroit that focus on the most recent attempts at urban regeneration, such as community gardens and new housing developments.

Another storyline centres on trendy, small businesses like coffee shops, bike stores, and tech startups that have recently opened in the city. Yet there are many instances of industriousness that have never ceased to exist in the city, and that have been consistently overlooked.

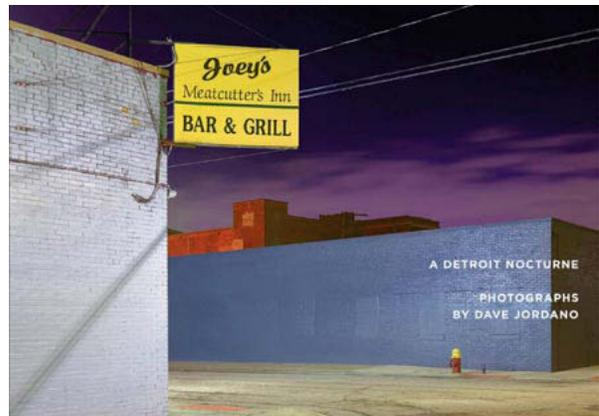
DAVE JORDANO



Hoop Dreams 4, Westside, Detroit 2017



Red Jazz Shoeshine, Oakland Ave, Eastside, Detroit 2017



BOOK COVER: Joey's Meatcutter's Inn, Eastside, Detroit 2017

These accounts have been Jordano's primary focus for nearly a decade.

– Excerpted from the book's introduction by Karen Irvine, Deputy Director and Chief Curator, Museum of Contemporary Photography at Columbia College Chicago.

CT

A DETROIT NOCTURNE

Photographs by Dave Jordano

Text by Karen Irvine

Published by powerHouse Books

\$45

CJ HOPKINS

Jeremy Corbyn's Nazi death cult

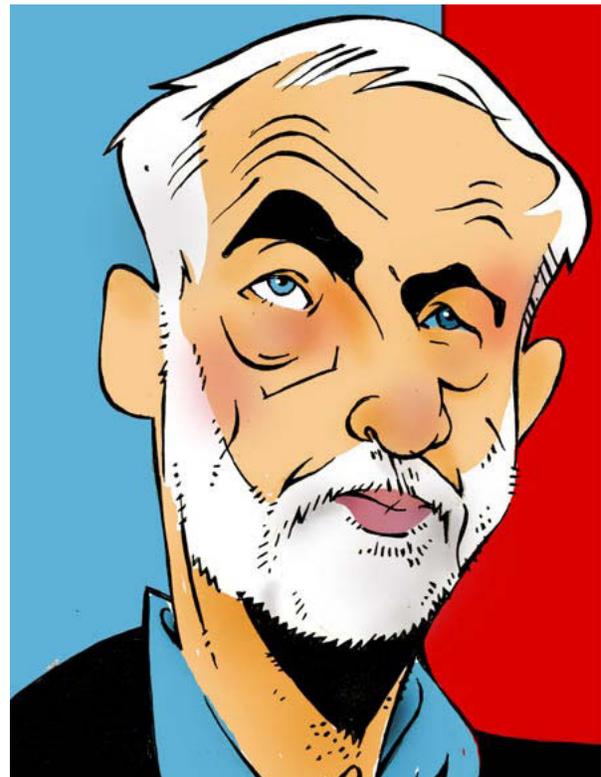
How the corporate media have alternated between manufacturing Russia hysteria and Nazi hysteria, sometimes whipping up both at once

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It appears the British are our last best hope of stemming the blood-dimmed Putin-Nazi tide that has shaken the foundations of Western democracy since Hillary Clinton lost the election. The neoliberal Resistance in the United States, led by the intelligence agencies, the Democratic Party, and the corporate media, fights on, but it's a losing battle. Despite their control of most of the media, most members of the US Congress, and the military industrial complex, they are just no match for the fearsome power of Vladimir Putin's international army of Nazi-brainwashing specialists and the evil genius of Donald Trump.

All is not lost, however – there is still the chance that the CIA might stage a coup, or a heart attack – but for now it seems that the ruling classes (and the millions of Americans who identify with them) are lying low and biding their time like Camembert-slurping surrender monkeys.

Thus, once again, it's up to the Brits to save democracy from annihilation. They're doing a bang up job of it so far. Just look at how they've responded to the so-called "Labour Antisemitism Crisis," which exploded just a few short weeks ago. No sooner had members of the neoliberal Blairite wing of the Labour Party dug up a six-year-old Facebook post in which Jeremy Corbyn had the gall to wonder why a mural depicting a group of bankers (some sporting rather large schnozzes)



NAZI DEATH CULT?: Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn.
Art: Tony Jenkins, www.jenkinsdraws.com

needed to be removed from view, did the British ruling classes spring into action. Clearly, this 2012 Facebook post was proof that the Corbyn-led Labour Party had been infiltrated by a Nazi Death Cult bent on brainwashing gullible leftists into "failing to recognise antisemitism," using unwords such as "Zionist," and inappropriately

criticising Israel.

The public needed to be alerted immediately, so the media started pumping out stories repeating the words “Corbyn” and “antisemitism,” over and over, in a variety of contexts. At this point, there have been literally hundreds of them.

The conservative press has been entirely predictable, running headlines such as “Jeremy Corbyn’s Hate Factory,” “Once in the shadows, antisemitism is now entrenched at the poisoned heart of the Labour Party,” “Theresa May slams Jeremy Corbyn for letting antisemitism, misogyny and hatred run free in Labour,” and so on.

Their primary aim is to generate the “crisis,” and then position Corbyn in the middle

But it’s the liberal media that are doing the heavy lifting. The Independent warned the world that “Labour’s antisemitic cancer shows the party for what it has become – a cult of keyboard warriors and raging Corbynistas.” Michael Segalov, writing in the Guardian, put potential Corbyn-apologists on notice: “If you can’t see antisemitism, it’s time to open your eyes.” Owen Jones has been conducting a virtual one-man anti-antisemitism crusade, reminding the public on an hourly basis that “the poison of antisemitism” exists, and “the left has to get its house in order,” and otherwise reinforcing the connection of Corbyn with antisemitism.

Which, of course, is the purpose of this manufactured “crisis,” ie, to associate Jeremy Corbyn with antisemitism in the public consciousness. The content of all these impassioned articles (whether attacking or defending Corbyn) is, if not irrelevant, secondary. Their primary aim is to generate the “crisis,” and then position Corbyn in the middle of it.

Here’s a quick lesson on how that works.

Say, for example, we wanted to simulate a “Racism Crisis” in Hollywood and smear a certain producer with it. This should be easy enough to do, as there is plenty of racism in Hollywood to work with (just as there is plenty of antisemitism in the Labour Party, and in most other major po-

litical parties).

And let’s say we want to kick off this “crisis” by citing some “inappropriate response” by some well-known producer to a Facebook post about a movie featuring a Magical Negro, that lovable, mystical African American who exists to serve the white protagonist, a familiar stock character in American cinema.

OK, so we go dig up that post, in which our target “fails to recognise the racist nature” of the Magical Negro depicted in whichever movie we choose: Forrest Gump, The Shawshank Redemption, The Green Mile, The Shining, The Matrix, or whatever, and we demand a full confession and apology.

Next, we go digging for any other comments, posts, tweets, quotes, or hearsay that we can easily construe as “glaring proof” of our target’s racism. At the same time (and this is absolutely crucial), we go digging among our target’s current and former associates, and their associates, and any random Facebook groups our target has ever carelessly joined, and tweets our target has ever carelessly “liked,” and anything else we can possibly link to him, until we can claim to have firmly established that Hollywood is experiencing a “Racism Crisis,” and that a “cancer of Racism” is running rampant through the Screen Actors Guild and Writers Guild West.

Then we get our associates in the corporate media to make an incredibly big stink out of it, and argue “both sides” of the “crisis” we’ve just generated. Half the media can attack our target as a racist or a racism enabler. The other half can do the Owen Jones schtick, repeatedly confessing that, yes, indeed, Hollywood has a racism problem, a corrosive, longstanding racism problem, which has suddenly grown to crisis proportions and ... I think you get the general idea.

This is just an example, of course. Because, clearly, there’s no racism crisis in Hollywood, or, rather, the global capitalist ruling classes have no reason to generate one. They do, however, have a reason to generate an antisemitism crisis and use it to demonise Jeremy Corbyn, and anyone else they deem an enemy.

As I've been tracking for going on two years now, the global capitalist ruling classes are putting down a nationalist insurgency ... the populist backlash against global capitalism that led to the Brexit, the election of Trump, and the rise of nationalist parties in Europe.

They are conducting this counter-insurgency against an assortment of forces on both the left and the right. Ideology makes no difference to capitalism, which can accommodate pretty much any ideology as long as it doesn't interfere with the market.

Hard as it is to get our minds around, what we've been living through since 2016 is not a battle between left and right: It's a battle over sovereignty. Since the end of the Cold War, global capitalism has been dissolving national sovereignty and replacing it with supra-national sovereignty ... corporate supra-national sovereignty. A lot of people, on both the left and the right, are not happy with how that is going and are resisting the only way they know how to, by reasserting their national sovereignty. The global capitalist ruling classes cannot allow this rebellion to continue, not when it leads to events like the Brexit, the election of Trump, and the destabilisation of the entire Western neoliberal order.

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Which brings us back to the Putin-Nazis and the war on dissent that the global capitalist ruling classes are currently waging against any and all resistance to their brave, new global capitalist world. Because they are unable to characterise the nature of this conflict as what it is, they need a convincing "official enemy" to scare the living Bejesus out of people. This is where the Putin-Nazis come in.

For the last two years, as you've probably noticed, the corporate media have been not so subtly alternating between manufacturing Russia hysteria and Nazi hysteria, and sometimes whipping up both at once.

Thus, I've dubbed the new Official Enemy of Freedom "the Putin-Nazis." They don't really make any sense, rationally, but let's not get all hung up on that. Official enemies don't have to make sense. The important thing is, they're

coming to get us, and to kill the Jews and destroy democracy ... and something about Stalin, if memory serves. Putin is their leader, of course. Trump is his diabolical puppet. Julian Assange is ... well, Goebbels, or something. Glenn Greenwald is also on the payroll, as are countless "useful idiots" like myself, whose job it is to sow division, discord, racism, antisemitism, anti-capitalism, anti-Hillaryism, collusion rejectionism, ontological skepticism, and any other horrible thing you can think of.

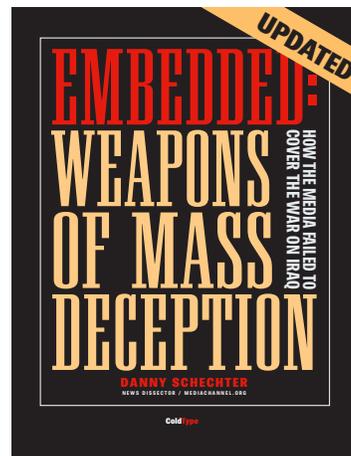
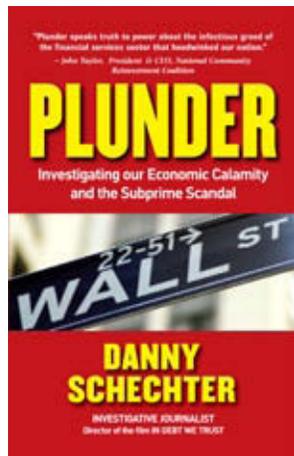
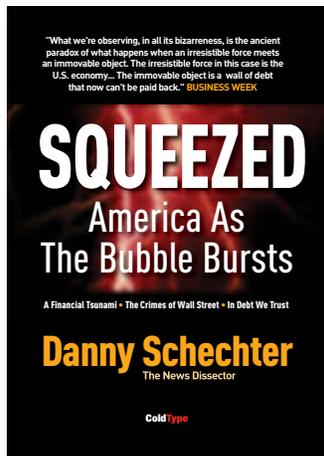
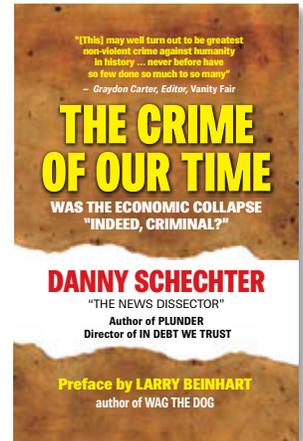
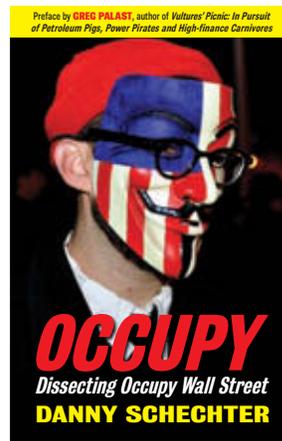
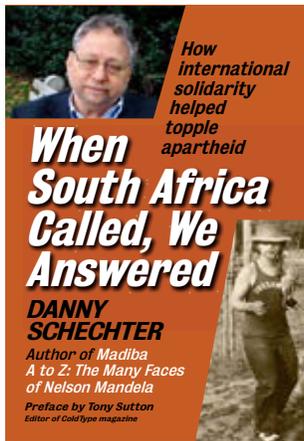
Where does Corbyn fit into all this? Well, obviously, he's been quietly building his extreme-left Putin-Nazi Death Cult in the shadows of British politics for years. If the Blairites hadn't tracked down that telltale comment in his six-year-old Facebook post, who knows what horrors he and his legions of cultists might have unleashed on Britain.

Luckily, we won't have to find that out, because the ruling classes and the corporate media are united against the Putin-Nazi threat. They shall not flag. They shall go on to the end. They shall fight these devils in the streets and the fields, and on the hills, and on the seas and oceans. They shall defend global capitalism, whatever the cost, no matter who they have to smear as an anti-Semite or a Russian agent. They shall smear them on television and on the Internet. They shall smear them in their "respectable" papers, until, in God's good time, the New World, with all its corporate power and might, steps forth to the liberation of the old ...

Oh, gosh, here I am, over my word limit, and I got all wrapped up in that Churchill parody and completely forgot to virtuously signal my steadfast opposition to antisemitism ... but then I've never been very good at responding to emotionally manipulative Pavlovian stimuli. I'll have to work a little harder on that. **CT**

CJ Hopkins is an award-winning American playwright, novelist and satirist based in Berlin. His plays are published by Bloomsbury Publishing (UK) and Broadway Play Publishing (USA). His debut novel, ZONE 23, is published by Snoggsworthy, Swaine & Cormorant. He can be reached at cjhopkins.com or consentfactory.org

REMEMBERING DANNY SCHECHTER 1942 - 2015



Danny Schechter, the NewsDissector, was acclaimed as one of the most politically astute journalists in recent memory. As a tribute to him and an appreciation of his work with ColdType, we are giving away free downloads of these seven books, all published in association with ColdType.net. Download them at:

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Canada's unworkable pipeline compromise

The Trans Mountain pipeline from Alberta to the British Columbia coast is premised on the notion of compromise, which isn't necessarily a bad thing. It's just that climate change isn't something you can compromise on

LAST time I checked, Alberta's oilfields had not been seized by marauding bands of eco-warriors. But you might be confused into thinking so by the inflamed rhetoric coming out of Ottawa and Alberta.

We're told that Canada faces a national crisis over the resistance to the proposed Kinder Morgan pipeline, following an ultimatum by Houston-based Kinder Morgan that it's suspending long-stalled building plans unless it's assured a green light by May 31.

With both Alberta and Ottawa offering full-throttle support for the project, including potential financial backing, a chorus of rage has arisen from the country's business and political ranks over the British Columbia provincial government's refusal to fall into line.

Some commentators insist this shows Canada is broken, even implying Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is a sissy unless he gears up to send in the army to restore the rule of law.

So what precisely has BC done that it is trampling on the rule of law?

After hiring the distinguished former BC Supreme Court justice Thomas Berger as a legal adviser, BC's NDP government sought and won intervener status in a federal court case involving the pipeline, and it has announced plans to consult the public about developing new regulations to protect its environment from oil spills.

These seem like law-abiding measures.

In a legal showdown, Ottawa would almost certainly win, since it has constitutional power

over projects it deems in the national interest. But without a Supreme Court ruling, it doesn't seem outrageous for BC to test its right to protect its environment.

Business pundits complain that there's no time to seek such a ruling since we're staring at the May 31 deadline. No doubt, Kinder Morgan has shareholders to satisfy, but should the timetable – given the momentous issues involved – really be driven by the needs of a foreign company?

The pipeline would dramatically increase oil tanker traffic in the sensitive Burrard Inlet – to more than 400 supertankers a year – risking potentially devastating, long-lasting impacts from an oil spill that put the May 31 deadline in perspective.

Justin Trudeau says the federal government remains “determined” to see the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion built after Kinder Morgan hit pause on the project, but the prime minister wouldn't say what Ottawa's next steps would be.

BC Green Party leader Andrew Weaver, who holds the balance of power in BC's government, notes that the diluted bitumen travelling through the pipeline from Alberta's oilsands is more dangerous than regular oil if spilled into water.

“It sinks. We cannot clean up a spill,” said Weaver, an internationally recognised climate scientist, in an interview on CBC-TV's Power and Politics.

LINDA McQUAIG

Weaver, who was part of a team sharing a Nobel Peace Prize with Al Gore, dismissed the scientific review of the Kinder Morgan project carried out by the National Energy Board as a “sham.”

Then there’s the fact the pipeline would go through unceded Indigenous territory, where resistance to it has been fierce.

Martyn Brown, who was chief of staff to former BC Premier Gordon Campbell, argues that BC should go further and bring in legislation giving Indigenous people shared jurisdiction over environmental protection related to oil spill prevention and cleanups.

Then, of course, there’s the matter of climate change; building a new pipeline means we’ll pump more oil, making it harder to reduce our carbon emissions.

Weirdly, Trudeau fashions himself as a champion of climate solutions. According to his backflip of an argument, the pipeline is key to an implicit bargain that allows Alberta to get its oil to market, in exchange for Alberta’s support

for a carbon tax. Only by pumping more carbon into the atmosphere can we hope to stop climate change – which is like saying that only by smoking more cigarettes can we hope to stop cancer.

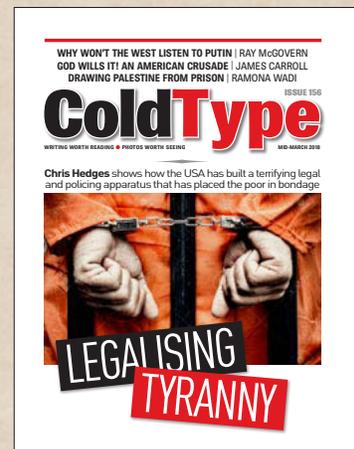
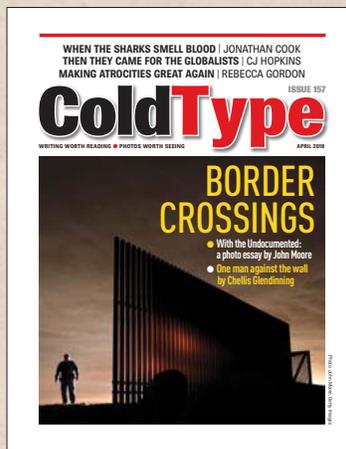
Trudeau’s bargain has always seemed full of holes, but perhaps it has taken the Kinder Morgan ultimatum to finally out it as the truly unworkable, fraudulent deal that it is.

It’s premised on the notion of compromise, which isn’t necessarily a bad thing. It’s just that climate change isn’t something you can compromise on.

In a column in the National Post, Claudia Cataneo expressed outrage over how BC’s intransigence is negatively impacting foreign investors, complaining that BC “doesn’t seem to grasp the implications of messing with a lawfully approved project.”

But she and other business commentators apparently don’t grasp the even bigger implications of messing with nature. **CT**

Linda McQuaig is an author and journalist. This article first appeared in the Toronto Star. Follow her on twitter @LindaMcQuaig.



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‘Crazy’ on the loose in the West Wing

As uber-hawk John Bolton takes over as national security adviser, a former US intelligence analyst remembers when Bolton was one of the ‘crazies’ in the George W. Bush administration

JOHN BOLTON'S March 22 appointment-by-tweet as President Donald Trump's national security adviser has given "March Madness" a new and ominous meaning.

During a recent interview with the Intercept's Jeremy Scahill, I mentioned that Bolton fits seamlessly into a group of take-no-prisoners zealots once widely known in Washington circles as "the crazies," and now more commonly referred to as "neocons."

Beginning in the 1970s, "the crazies" nickname was applied to Cold Warriors hell bent on bashing Russians, Chinese, Arabs – anyone

who challenged US "exceptionalism" (read hegemony). More to the point, I told Scahill that President (and former CIA Director) George HW Bush was among those using the term freely, since it seemed so apt. I have been challenged to prove it.

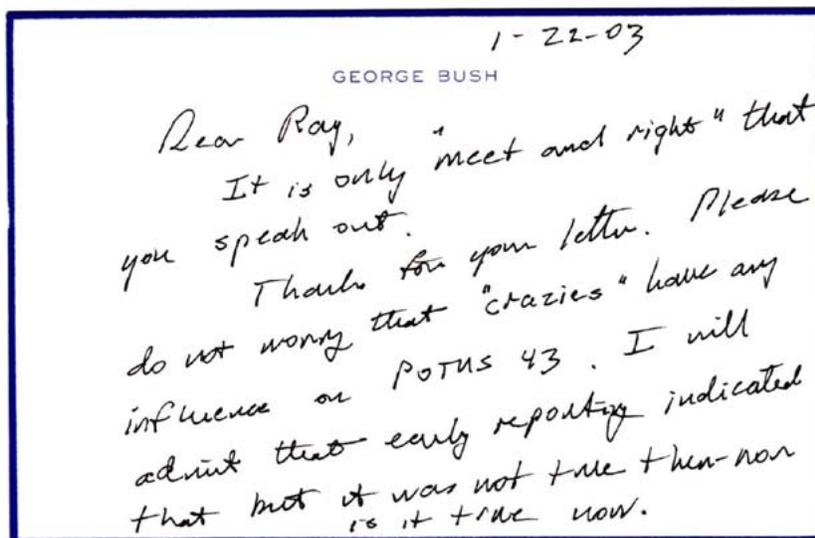
I don't make stuff up. And with the appointment of Bolton, "the crazies" have become far more than an historical footnote. Rather, the crucible that Bush-41 and other reasonably moderate policymakers endured at their hands give the experience major relevance today. Thus, I am persuaded it would be best not to ask people simply to take my word for it when I refer to "the

crazies," their significance, and the differing attitudes the two Bushes had toward them.

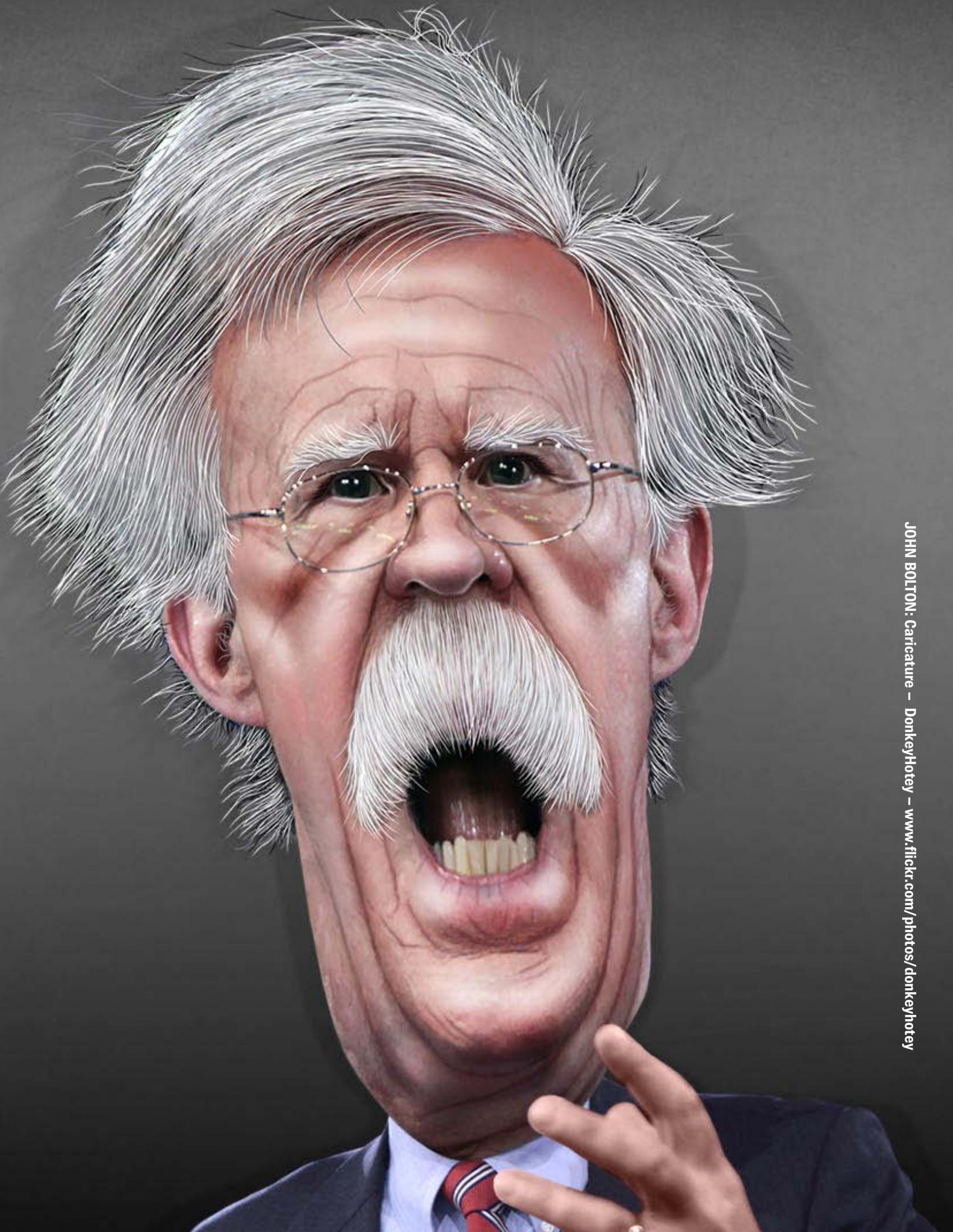
George HW Bush and I had a longstanding professional and, later, cordial relationship. For many years after he stopped being president, we stayed in touch – mostly by letter. This is the first time I have chosen to share any of our personal correspondence. I do so not only because of the ominous importance of Bolton's appointment, but also because I am virtually certain the elder Bush would want me to.

This note (left) was sent to me by George HW Bush eight

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"DO NOT WORRY ABOUT THE CRAZIES": In his note to the writer, President George Bush says they had no effect on his policies.



JOHN BOLTON: Caricature – DonkeyHotey – www.flickr.com/photos/donkeyhotey

weeks before his son, egged on by the same “crazies” his father knew well from earlier incarnations, launched an illegal and unnecessary war for regime change in Iraq – unleashing chaos in the Middle East.

By January 2003, it was clear that Bush-43 was about to launch a war of aggression – the crime defined by the post-World War II Nuremberg Tribunal as “the supreme international crime differing from other war crimes only in that it contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole.” (Think torture, for example.) During most of 2002, several of us former intelligence analysts had been comparing notes, giving one another sanity checks, writing op-eds pointing to the flimsiness of the “intelligence” cobbled together to allege a weapons-of-mass-destruction “threat” from Iraq, and warning of the catastrophe that war on Iraq would bring.

Except for an occasional op-ed wedged into the Christian Science Monitor or the Miami Herald, for example, we were ostracised from the mainstream media. The New York Times and Washington Post were on a feeding frenzy from the government trough and TV pundits were getting high ratings by beating the drum for war. Small wonder the media was allergic to what we were saying, despite our experience in intelligence analysis. Warnings to slow down and think were the last thing wanted by those already profiteering from a war on the near horizon.

The challenge we faced was how to get through to President George W Bush. It had become crystal clear that the only way to do that would be to do an end run around “the crazies” – the criminally insane advisers that his father knew so well – Vice President Dick Cheney, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, and Undersecretary of State John Bolton.

John Bolton was Cheney’s “crazy” at the State Department. Secretary Colin Powell was pretty much window dressing. He could be counted on not to complain loudly – much less quit – even if he strongly suspected he was being had. Powell had gotten to where he was by saluting sharply

and doing what superiors told him to do. As secretary of state, Powell was not crazy – just craven. He enjoyed more credibility than the rest of the gang and rather than risk being ostracised like the rest of us, he sacrificed that credibility on the altar of the “supreme international crime.”

In those days Bolton did not hesitate to run circles around – and bully – the secretary of state and many others. This must be considered a harbinger of things to come. While longevity in office is not the hallmark of the Trump administration, even if Bolton’s tenure turns out to be short-lived, the crucial months immediately ahead will provide him with ample opportunity to wreak the kind of havoc that “the crazies” continue to see as enhancing US – and not incidentally – Israeli influence in the Middle East. Bear in mind, Bolton still says the attack on Iraq was a good idea. And he is out to scuttle the landmark agreement that succeeded in preventing Iran from developing a nuclear weapon any time soon.

Warnings to slow down were the last thing wanted by those already profiteering

In August 2002, as the Bush-43 administration and US media prepared the country for war on Iraq, the elder Bush’s national security advisor, Gen. Brent Scowcroft, and Secretary of State James Baker each wrote op-eds in an attempt to wean the younger Bush off the “crazies’” milk. Scowcroft’s Wall Street Journal op-ed of August 15 was as blunt as its title, Don’t Attack Saddam. The cautionary thrust of Baker’s piece in the New York Times ten days later, was more diplomatic but equally clear.

But these interventions, widely thought to have been approved by Bush-41, had a predictable opposite effect on the younger Bush, determined as he was to become the “first war president of the 21st-century” (his words). It is a safe bet also that Cheney and other “crazies” baited him with, “Are you going to let Daddy, who doesn’t respect ANY of us, tell you what to do?”

All attempts to insert a rod into the wheels of the juggernaut heading downhill toward war

were looking hopeless, when a new idea occurred. Maybe George HW Bush could get through to his son. What's to lose? On January 11, 2003 I wrote a letter to the elder Bush asking him to speak "privately to your son George about the crazies advising him on Iraq," adding "I am aghast at the cavalier way in which the [Richard] Perles of the Pentagon are promoting the use of nuclear weapons as an acceptable option against Iraq."

My letter continued: "That such people have the President's ear is downright scary. I think he needs to know why you exercised such care to keep such folks at arms length. (And, as you may know, they are exerting unrelenting pressure on CIA analysts to come up with the "right" answers. You know how that goes!)"

In the letter I enclosed a handful of op-eds that I had managed to get past 2nd-tier mainstream media censors. In those writings, I was much more pointed in my criticism of the Bush/Cheney administration's approach to Iraq than Scowcroft and Baker had been in August 2002.

Initially, I was encouraged at the way the elder Bush began his January 22, 2003 note to me: "It is only 'meet and right' that you speak out." As I read on, however, I asked myself how he could let the wish be father to the thought, so to speak. (Incidentally, "POTUS" in his note is the acronym for "President of the United States;" number 43, of course, was George Jr.)

The elder Bush may not have been fully conscious of it, but he was whistling in the dark, having long since decided to leave to surrogates like Scowcroft and Baker the task of highlighting publicly the criminal folly of attacking Iraq. The father may have tried privately: who knows. It was, in my view, a tragedy that he did not speak out publicly. He would have been very well aware that this was the only thing that would have had a chance of stopping his son from committing what the Nuremberg Tribunal defined as "the supreme international crime."

It is, of course, difficult for a father to admit that his son fell under the influence – this time not alcohol or drugs, but rather the at least equally noxious demonic influence of "the cra-

zies," which Billy Graham himself might have found beyond his power to exorcise. Maybe it is partly because I know the elder Bush personally, but it does strike me that some degree of empathy might be in order. I simply cannot imagine what it must be like to be a former resident with a son, also a former President, undeniably responsible for such widespread killing, injury and abject misery.

The elder Bush may not have been fully conscious of it, but he was whistling in the dark

It was a dozen years too late, but George HW Bush finally did give voice to his doubts about the wisdom of rushing into the Iraq War. In Jon Meacham's biography, *Destiny and Power: The American Odyssey of George Herbert Walker Bush*, the elder Bush puts most of the blame for Iraq on his son's "iron-ass" advisers, Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney, while at the same time admitting where the buck stops. With that Watergate-style "modified, limited hangout," and his (richly deserved) criticism of his two old nemeses, Bush-41 may be able to live more comfortably with himself, hoping to get beyond what I believe must be his lingering regret at not going public when that might have stopped "arrogant" Rumsfeld and "hardline" Cheney from inflicting their madness on the Middle East. No doubt he is painfully aware that he was one of the very few people who might have been able to stop the chaos and carnage, had he spoken out publicly.

Bush-41's not-to-worry note to me had the opposite effect with those of us CIA alumni alarmed at the gathering storm and the unconscionable role being played by those of our former CIA colleagues still there in manufacturing pre-Iraq-war "intelligence." We could see what was going on in real time; we did not have to wait five years for the bipartisan conclusions of a five-year Senate Intelligence Committee investigation. Introducing its findings, Chairman Jay Rockefeller said: "In making the case for war, the Administration repeatedly presented intelligence as fact when in reality it was unsubstantiated, contradicted,

or even non-existent.”

Back to January 2003: a few days after I received President Bush’s not-to-worry note of January 22, 2003, a handful of us former senior CIA officials went forward with plans to create Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS). We had been giving one another sanity checks before finalising draft articles about the scarcely believable things we were observing – including unmistakable signs that our profession of intelligence analysis was being prostituted. On the afternoon of February 5, 2003, after Powell misled the UN Security Council, we issued our first (of three) VIPS Memoranda for the President before the war. We graded Powell “C” for content, and warned President George W. Bush, in effect, to beware “the crazies,” closing with these words: “After watching Secretary Powell today, we are convinced that you would be well served if you widened the discussion ... beyond the circle of those advisers clearly bent on a war for which we see no compelling reason and from which we believe the unintended consequences are likely to be catastrophic.”

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Crazies and neocons alike lived in desperate fear of losing their favourite enemy, the USSR

When Gerald Ford assumed the presidency in August 1974, the White House was a centre of intrigue. Serving as Chief of Staff for President Ford, Donald Rumsfeld (1974-75), with help from Dick Cheney (1975-76), engineered Bush’s nomination to become CIA Director. This was widely seen as a cynical move to take Bush out of contention for the Republican ticket in 1976 and possibly beyond, since the post of CIA director was regarded as a dead-end job and, ideally, would keep you out of politics. (Alas, this did not turn out the way Rumsfeld expected – damn those “unknown unknowns.”)

If, at the same time, Rumsfeld and Cheney could brand GHW Bush soft on communism and brighten the future for the Military-Industrial Complex, that would put icing on the cake. Rumsfeld had been making evidence-improver-

ished speeches at the time, arguing that the Soviets were ignoring the AMB Treaty and other arms control arrangements and were secretly building up to attack the United States. He and the equally relentless Paul Wolfowitz were doing all they could to create a much more alarming picture of the Soviet Union, its intentions, and its views about fighting and winning a nuclear war. Sound familiar?

Bush arrived at CIA after US-Soviet detente had begun to flourish. The cornerstone Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty was almost four years old and had introduced the somewhat mad but stabilising reality of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD). Crazies and neocons alike lived in desperate fear of losing their favourite enemy, the USSR. Sound familiar?

Bush was CIA Director for the year January 1976 to January 1977, during which time I worked directly for him as was Acting National Intelligence Officer for Western Europe where post-World War II certainties were unravelling. It was my job to get intelligence community-wide assessments to the White House – often on fast breaking events. We almost wore out what was then the latest technology – the “LDX” (for Long Distance Xerography) machine – sending an unprecedentedly high number of “Alert Memoranda” from CIA Headquarters to the White House. (“LDX,” of course, is now fax; there was no Internet.)

As ANIO, I also chaired National Intelligence Estimates on Italy and Spain. As far as I could observe from that senior post, Director Bush honoured his incoming pledge not to put any political gloss on the judgments of intelligence analysts.

Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz, of course, had made no such pledge. They persuaded President Ford to set up a “Team B” analysis, contending that CIA and intelligence community analyses and estimates were naively rosy. Bush’s predecessor as CIA director, William Colby, had turned the proposal down, but he had no political ambitions. I suspect Bush, though, saw a Rumsfeld trap to colour him soft on the USSR. In any case, against

the advice of virtually all intelligence professionals, Bush succumbed to the political pressure and acquiesced in the establishment of a Team B to do alternative analyses. No one was surprised that these painted a much more threatening and inaccurate picture of Soviet strategic intentions.

Paul Warnke, a senior official of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency at the time of Team B, put it this way: “Whatever might be said for evaluation of strategic capabilities by a group of outside experts, the impracticality of achieving useful results by ‘independent’ analysis of strategic objectives should have been self-evident. Moreover, the futility of the Team B enterprise was assured by the selection of the panel’s members. Rather than including a diversity of views ... the Strategic Objectives Panel was composed entirely of individuals who made careers of viewing the Soviet menace with alarm.”

The fact that Team B’s conclusions were widely regarded as inaccurate did not deter Rumsfeld. He promoted them as valid and succeeded in undermining arms control efforts for several years. Two days before Jimmy Carter’s inauguration, Rumsfeld fired his parting shot, saying, “No doubt exists about the capabilities of the Soviet armed forces” and that those capabilities “indicate a tendency toward war fighting ... rather than the more modish Western models of deterrence through mutual vulnerability.”

When George HW Bush came into town as vice president, he got President Reagan’s permission to be briefed with “The President’s Daily Brief” and I became a daily briefer from 1981 to 1985. That job was purely substantive. Even so, my colleagues and I have been very careful to regard those conversations as sacrosanct. By the time he became president in 1989, he had come to know, all too well, “the crazies” and what they were capable of. Bush’s main political nemesis, Donald Rumsfeld, could be kept at bay, and other “crazies” kept out of the most senior posts – until Bush the younger put them in positions in which they could do serious damage. John Bolton had been enfant terrible on arms control, persuading Bush-43 to ditch the ABM Treaty.

Given how difficult Rumsfeld and other hardliners made it for President Carter to work with the Russians on arms control, and the fact that Bolton has been playing that role more recently, Jimmy Carter’s comments on Bolton – while unusually sharp – do not come as a complete surprise. Besides, experience has certainly shown how foolish it can be to dismiss out of hand what former presidents say about their successors’ appointments to key national security positions. This goes in spades in the case of John Bolton.

Jimmy Carter said his “first advice” for Trump on Korea would be to fire Bolton

Just three days after Bolton’s appointment, the normally soft-spoken Jimmy Carter became plain-spoken/outspoken Jimmy Carter, telling USA Today that the selection of Bolton “is a disaster for our country.” When asked what advice he would give Trump on North Korea, for example, Carter said his “first advice” would be to fire Bolton.

In sum, if you asked Bush-41, Carter’s successor as president, how he would describe John Bolton, I am confident he would lump Bolton together with those he called “the crazies” back in the day, referring to headstrong ideologues adept at blowing things up – things like arms agreements negotiated with painstaking care, giving appropriate consideration to the strategic views of adversaries and friends alike. Sadly, “crazy” seems to have become the new normal in Washington, with warmongers and regime-changers like Bolton in charge, people who have not served a day in uniform and have no direct experience of war other than starting them. **CT**

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36 **STILL WAITING:** The skeleton of an unfinished cooling tower at Chernobyl.

Inside Chernobyl's nuclear reactor

Our guide describes a pile inside Reactor Two, as "something, something, blah, blah, it's really radioactive, don't go over there?"

REMEMBER the Chernobyl disaster as a teenager on the other side of the planet: I knew little about nuclear meltdowns, the Soviet Union, Communism or "the" Ukraine as it was known, and could only view the disaster through a fog of Soviet inaccessibility and one-sided Western media reporting.

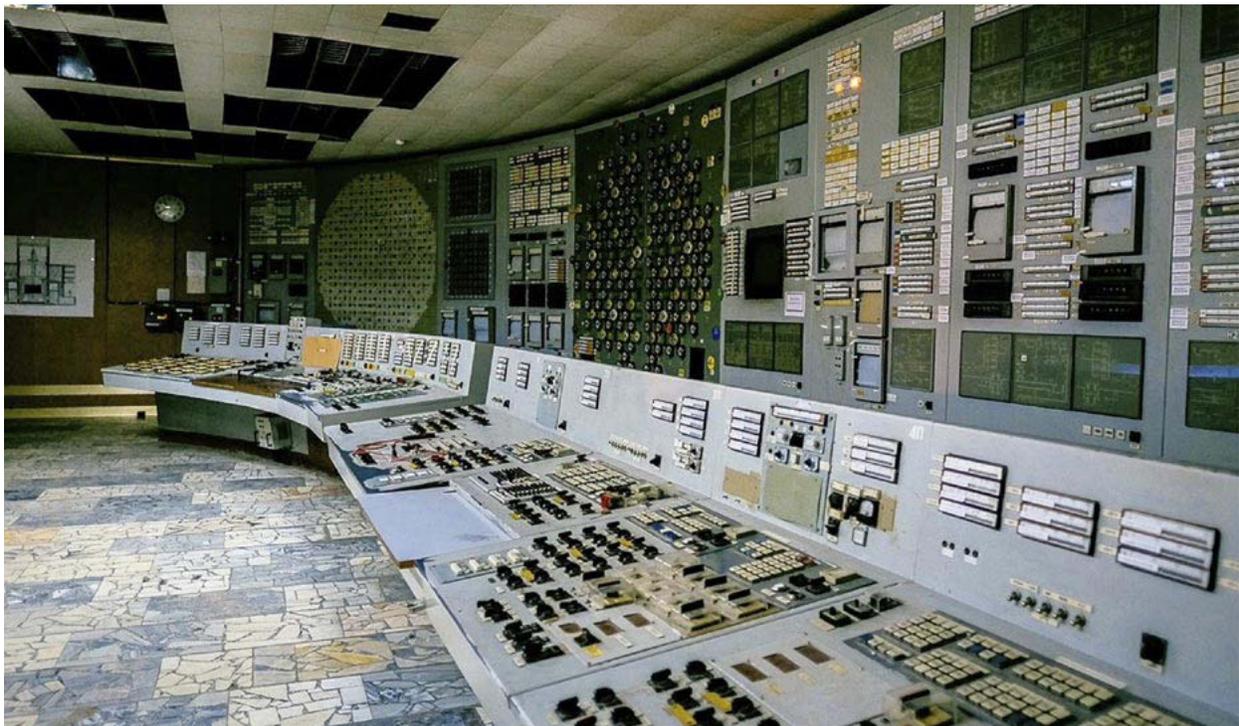
I never expected that I would, one day, organise tours through this abandoned nuclear wasteland of Pripyat, the site of Chernobyl's reactors,. In

winter, the world's largest abandoned city looks dystopian: snow is thick on the ground, ice clings to rusted metal in strange formations, and there are no leaves on the tall, spindly trees, Without the forest to block the ground-level view, it's easy to see the enormity of what happened here.

Recently, I ventured into the zone for the fifth time, after getting permission to tour Chernobyl Reactor Two, just metres away from the most dangerous piece of human waste on the planet.



GROUND ZERO: A huge grid on the floor, where uranium dioxide rods were inserted to generate nuclear power.



HEART OF DARKNESS: The control centre at Reactor Two at Chernobyl.



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SCHOOL'S OUT: Abandoned classroom in a remote part of the Exclusion Zone, truly a time-capsule.

We would be heading inside the reactor, and even our guide Anton, who spends half his life inside the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone was nervous. Reactor Four is the site of the disaster, but people still work inside the other reactors at Chernobyl, which will not be totally dismantled for another 65 years. “This is Ukraine, we have no money, and the 65-year plan was the cheapest option,” Anton, told us.

Before entering the reactor, we had to take off our clothes and don special uniforms. From hardhats to cloth footwear, no clothes would leave the controlled area we were about to enter.

Anton’s English was perfect: “Fucking shit it’s cold in here!” It was incredibly cold inside the reactor, and our thin jacket-less uniforms were more appropriate for spring break in Florida. Unfortunately, there isn’t enough money in Chernobyl to buy warm jackets – not for tourists, not for Anton, and not for many of the other workers inside the reactor. Ironically, the site of four nu-

clear power stations now can’t get enough electricity for room heaters.

The main thoroughfare linking the four reactors is a passage hundreds of metres long, known as the “Golden Corridor.” Made of seemingly endless slabs of golden aluminium-clad walls, the space is decorated intermittently with security cameras, oversized warning lights, and Bakelite telephones. Even the doors along the corridor are clad with the same fluted golden aluminium, so as not to interrupt the architect’s original concept.

We spent time in the control room of Reactor Two, listening to stories of the fateful night when it all went wrong. But our holy-fucking-mother-of-god moment came when we entered ground zero of the reactor. It was an enormous space, the focal point of which was a huge grid on the floor, the array where uranium dioxide rods



BEARING WITNESS: Saints look down on visitors at an orthodox church inside the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone.

were once inserted to generate nuclear power. We gingerly walked onto the structure. Behind the array there's a pile of ... something, loosely covered with a transparent plastic sheet, haphazardly stacked behind a couple of small, crooked, warning signs joined together by a single piece of flimsy barrier tape. Anton describes this pile, as "something, something, blah, blah, it's really radioactive, don't go over there."

Radiation has no colour. No smell. You can't see radiation, it merely has a voice, which was given life by the beeping and screeching of the geiger counter that Anton was carrying. We all had personal dosimeters attached to our thin white coats, to be checked for our accumulated dosage at the end of our unique tour. The fact is, radiation may be an invisible killer, but detecting radiation is easy – even with equipment that sometimes looks as if it's from 1986 (and most of it is).

Recently, the New Safe Containment sarcophagus was slid into place around Reactor Four. However, by early next century, the lifespan of the shield will be over, and they'll need to find another way to contain the very deadly "Elephant's Foot," which slowly melts through the floor. Were it to come in contact with the pools of ground water below the nuclear power station, another explosion will occur, sending radioactive particles which will then fall – again – all around the world.

Assuming nothing else goes wrong), in 20,000 years, the land around the historical town of Chernobyl will again be safe enough for human habitation. I can't wait. **CT**

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Privatising military propaganda

It's impossible to understand the Cambridge Analytica scandal until you know what its parent company does

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THE Gulf War Did Not Take Place.” This audacious claim was made by the French philosopher Jean Baudrillard in March 1991, two months after NATO forces had rained explosives on Iraq, shedding the blood of more than 100,000 people.

To understand Cambridge Analytica and its parent firm, Strategic Communication Laboratories, we need to get our heads round what Baudrillard meant, and what has happened since: how military propaganda has changed with technology, how war has been privatised, and how imperialism is coming home.

Baudrillard’s argument centred on the fact that NATO’s action in the Gulf was the first time audiences in Western countries had been able to watch a war live, on rolling TV news – CNN had become the first 24-hour news channel in 1980.

Because camera crews were embedded with American troops, by whom they were effectively censored, the coverage had little resemblance to the reality of the bombardment of Iraq and Kuwait. The events known to Western audiences as “The Gulf War” – symbolised by camera footage from “precision” missiles and footage of military hardware – are more accurately understood as a movie directed from the Pentagon.

They were so removed from the gore-splattered reality that it’s an abuse of language to call them the same thing. Hence, the “Gulf War” did not take place.

Not long after Baudrillard’s iconic essay was published, Strategic Communications Labora-

tories was founded. “SCL Group provides data, analytics and strategy to governments and military organisations worldwide” reads the first line of its website. “For over 25 years, we have conducted behavioural change programmes in over 60 countries & have been formally recognised for our work in defence and social change.”

Of course, military propaganda was nothing new. And nor is the extent to which it has evolved alongside changes in media technology and economics.

The film *Citizen Kane* tells a fictionalised version of the first tabloid (or, as Americans call it, “yellow journalism”) war: how the circulation battle between William Randolph Hearst’s *New York Journal* and Joseph Pulitzer’s *New York World* arguably drove the US into the 1889 Spanish American War. It was during this affair that Hearst reportedly told his correspondent, “You furnish the pictures and I’ll furnish the war,” as parodied in Evelyn Waugh’s book, *Scoop*.

But after the propaganda disaster of the Tet offensive in Vietnam softened domestic support for the war, the military planners began to devise new ways to control media reporting. As a result, when Britain went to war with Argentina over the Falklands in 1982, they pioneered a new technique for media control: embedding journalists with troops. And, as former BBC war reporter Caroline Wyatt blogged, “The lessons from embedding journalists with the Royal Navy during the Falklands war were taken up enthusiastically by military planners in both Washington



HEARTS AND MINDS: US soldiers assigned to 213th Psychological Operations Company observe reaction after playing an announcement over a loudspeaker just outside Sadr City, Iraq, after a series of rocket and mortar attacks, March 29, 2008.

Photo: Staff Sgt. Jason T. Baile, US Air Force.

and London for the First Gulf War in 1991.”

The UK defence secretary during the Falklands War when the use of embedded journalists was pioneered was John Nott (who backed Brexit). As my colleague Caroline Molloy pointed out to me, his son-in-law is Tory MP Hugo Swire, former minister in both the Northern Ireland Office and the Foreign Office. Swire’s cousin – with whom he overlapped at Eton – is Nigel Oakes, founder of Strategic Communications Laboratories. It’s not a conspiracy: just that the ruling class are all related.

But back to our history: by the time of the 2003 Iraq War, communications technology had moved on again. As the BBC’s Caroline Wyatt

explains in the same blog, “satellite communications are now much more sophisticated, meaning we almost always have our own means of communicating with London. That offers a crucial measure of independence, even if reports still have to be cleared for “op sec” [operational security]. The almost total control by the military of the means of reporting in the Falklands would be unthinkable in most war zones today.”

In February 2004, another major disruption in communications technology began: Facebook was founded. And with it came a whole new propaganda nightmare.

At the same time as this history was unfolding, though, something else vital was happening: neoliberalism. Looked at one way, neoliberalism is the successor to geographical imperialism as

the “most extreme form of capitalism.” It used to be that someone with a small fortune to invest could secure the biggest return by paying someone else to sail overseas, subjugate or kill people (usually people of colour) and steal them and/or their stuff. But they couldn’t keep expanding forever – the world is only so big. And so eventually, wealthy Western investors started to shift much of their focus from opening new markets in “far off lands” to marketising new parts of life at home. Neoliberalism is also, therefore, this process of marketisation: of shifting decisions from one-person, one-vote, to one-pound (or dollar or Yen or Euro), one-vote. Or, as Will Davies puts it: “the disenchantment of politics by economics.”

The first Iraq War – the one that “did not take place” – coincided with a key stage in this process: the rapid marketisation (read “asset stripping”) of the collapsing Soviet Union, and so the successful encirclement of the globe by Western capital. The second Iraq War was notable for the acceleration of another key stage: the encroachment of market forces into the deepest corner of the state. During the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, according to War on Want, private military companies “burst onto the scene.”

At the height of the Iraq war, around 80 private companies were involved in the occupation

In a 2016 report, War on Want describes how the UK became the world centre for this mercenary industry. If you live in Britain, you might know G4S as the company which checks your gas meter, but they are primarily the world’s largest mercenary firm, involved in providing “security” in war zones across the planet.

In Hereford alone, near the SAS headquarters, there are 14 mercenary firms, according to War on Want’s report. At the height of the Iraq war, around 80 private companies were involved in the occupation.

In 2003, when UK and US forces unleashed “shock and awe” both on the Iraqi people and on their own populations down cable TV wires, the Foreign Office spent £12.6-million on British pri-

vate security firms, according to official figures highlighted by the Guardian. By 2012, that figure had risen to £48.9-million. In 2015, G4S alone secured a £100-million contract to provide security for the British embassy in Afghanistan.

And just as the fighting was privatised, so too was the propaganda. In 2016, the Bureau of Investigative Journalism revealed that the Pentagon had paid around half a billion dollars to the British PR firm Bell Pottinger to deliver propaganda during the Iraq war. Bell Pottinger, famous for shaping Thatcher’s image, included among its clients Asma Al Assad, wife of the Syrian president. Part of their work was making fake Al Qaeda propaganda films. (The firm was forced to close last year because they made the mistake of deploying their tactics against white people).

Journalist Liam O’Hare has revealed that Mark Turnbull, the SCL and Cambridge Analytica director who was filmed alongside Alexander Nix in the recent Channel4 sting, was employed by Bell Pottinger in Iraq in this period.

Like Bell Pottinger, SCL saw the opportunity of the increasing privatisation of war. In his 2006 book, *Britain’s Power Elites: The Rebirth of the Ruling Class*, Hywel Williams wrote, “It therefore seems only natural that a political communications consultancy, Strategic Communications Laboratories, should have now launched itself as the first private company to provide ‘psyops’ to the military.”

While much of what SCL has done for the military is secret, we do know (thanks, again, to O’Hare) that it’s had contracts from the UK and US departments of defence amounting to (at the very least) hundreds of thousands of dollars. And a document from the National Defence Academy of Latvia that I managed to dig out, entitled, *Nato Strategic Communication: More To Be Done?* tells us that they were operating in Afghanistan in 2010, and gives some clues about what they were up to: “more detailed qualitative data gathering operation was being conducted in Maiwand Province by a British company, Strategic Communication Laboratories (SCL) is almost unique in the international contractor communi-

ty in that it has a dedicated, and funded, behavioural research arm located in the prestigious home of British Science and research, The Royal Institute, London.”

In simple terms, the SCL Group – Cambridge Analytica’s parent firm – is the psychological operations wing of our privatised military: a mercenary propaganda agency.

The skills they developed in the context of war zones shouldn’t be overplayed, but nor should they be underplayed. As far as we can tell, just as the Pentagon used simple tools such as choosing where to embed journalists during the Gulf War to spin its version of events, so they mastered the tools of modern communication: Facebook, online videos, data gathering and microtargeting. Such tools aren’t magic (and Anthony Barnett writes well about the risks of implying that they are). They don’t on their own explain either Brexit or Trump (I wrote a plea last year that Remainers in the UK shouldn’t use our investigations as an excuse for failing to engage with the real reasons for the Leave vote). I wouldn’t even use the word “rigging” to describe the impact of these propaganda firms. But they are important.

As the Channel 4 undercover investigation revealed, this work has often been carried out alongside more traditional smear tactics, and – as Chris Wylie explained – in partnership with another nexus in this world: Israel’s conurbation of private intelligence firms, a part of a burgeoning military industrial complex in the country which Israeli activist and writer Jeff Halper argues is a key part of the country’s “parallel diplomacy” drive.

(Of course, this isn’t unique to the UK and Israel. Until Cambridge Analytica achieved global infamy last month, the most prominent mercenary propaganda firm in the world was Peter Theil’s company Palantir (named after the all-seeing eye in Lord of the Rings). Theil, founder of PayPal (with Elon Musk) and an executive of Facebook, wrote a notorious essay in 2009 arguing that female enfranchisement had made democracy untenable and that someone should therefore invent the technology to destroy it.

Palantir’s most prominent clients are the United States Intelligence Community and the US Department of Defense. Cambridge Analytica whistleblower Chris Wylie laimed that his firm had worked with Palantir. It’s also noteworthy that one of Palantir’s shareholders is Field Marshal Lord Guthrie, former head of the British army, and adviser to Veterans for Britain, one of the groups which funnelled money to AggregateIQ ahead of the European referendum. Guthrie also works for Acanum, one of the leading private intelligence agencies, which, in common with Cambridge Analytica’s partners Black Cube, listed Meyer Dagam, the former head of Mossad, as one of their advisers before his death in 2016. Again, it’s not a conspiracy, it’s just that these guys all know each other. But I digress.)

It shouldn’t be a surprise that the weapons of information war are going off in Anglo-American votes

Back to SCL: why are NATO’s mercenary propagandists getting involved in the US presidential election and – if the growing body of evidence about the link between Cambridge Analytica and AggregateIQ is to be believed – Brexit?

The obvious answer is surely partly true: they could make money doing so, and so they did. If you privatise war, don’t be surprised if military firms start using the tools of war on “their own” side. When Eisenhower warned of the Military Industrial Complex, he was thinking about physical weapons. But, just as unregulated semi-automatics invented for soldiers end up going off in American schools, it shouldn’t be any kind of surprise that the weapons of information war are going off in Anglo-American votes.

But, in a more general sense, this whole history is exactly what Brexit was about for many of the powerful people who pushed for it. As we’ve been investigating the secret donation which paid for the DUP Brexit campaign, we keep coming across this web of connections. Priti Patel

worked for Bell Pottinger in Bahrain. Richard Cook, the front man for the secret donation to the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), set up a business in 2013 with the former head of Saudi intelligence and a Danish man involved in running guns to Hindu radicals who told us he was a spy. David Banks, who ran Veterans for Britain, worked in PR in the Middle East for four years – and Veterans for Britain more generally is full of these contacts.

I could go on. My suspicion is that this isn't because there's some kind of conspiracy revolving around a group of ex-spooks. It's about the fact that power comes from networks of people, and the wing of the British ruling class which was in and around the military is moving rapidly into the world of privatised war. And those people have a strong ideological and material interest in radical right politics.

Cambridge Analytica is what happens when you privatise your military propaganda operation

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Another way to see it is like this: Britain has lost most of its geographical empire. And most of our modern politics is about the ways in which different groups struggle to come to terms with that fact. For a large portion of the ruling establishment, this involves attempting to reprise the glory days by placing the country at the centre of two of the nexuses which define the modern era.

The UK and its overseas territories have already become by far the most significant network of tax havens and secrecy areas in the world, making us the global centre for money laundering and therefore, as Roberto Saviano, a leading expert on the mafia argues, the most corrupt country on earth. And just as countries with major oil industries have major oil lobbies, the UK has a major money laundry-lobby.

Pesky EU regulations have long frustrated the dreams of these people, who wish our island nation to move even further offshore and become

even more of a tax haven. And so for some Brexiteers – this money laundry lobby – there was always strong incentive to back a Leave vote: European Research Group statements going back 25 years show as much.

But what the Cambridge Analytica affair reminds us of is that this is not just about the money laundry lobby (nor the agrochemical lobby). Another group with a strong interest in pushing such deregulation, dimming transparency, hyping Islamophobia in America and turning peoples against each other is our flourishing mercenary complex – one of the only other industries in which Britain leads the world. And so it's no surprise that its propaganda wing has turned the skills it's learned in towards its desired political outcomes.

In his essay, Baudrillard argued that his observations about the changes in military propaganda told us something about the then new post-Cold War era. Only two years after Tim Berners Lee invented the World Wide Web, he wrote a sentence which, for me, teaches us more about the Cambridge Analytica story than much of the punditry that we've seen since: "Just as wealth is no longer measured by the ostentation of wealth but by the secret circulation of capital, so war is not measured by being unleashed but by its speculative unfolding in an abstract, electronic and informational space."

Cambridge Analytica is what happens when you privatise your military propaganda operation. It walked into the space created when social media killed journalism. It is yet another example of tools developed to subjugate people elsewhere in the world being used on the domestic populations of the Western countries in which they were built. It marks the point at which neo-liberal capitalism reaches its zenith, and ascends to surveillance capitalism. And the best possible response is to create a democratic media which can't be bought by propagandists. **CT**

Adam Ramsay is co-editor of openDemocracyUK. He also works with Bright Green. This essay was first published at www.opendemocracy.org

ColdType Insights

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Dai Kurokawa / EPA



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Don't resurrect rhinos. Try saving them

Jason Gilchrist explains why we shouldn't try to bring the northern white rhino back to life.

A **GERIATRIC** semi-captive rhino died in Kenya recently. Sudan, a 45-year-old northern white rhino was put to sleep as vets decided, after months of ill health, that his condition had deteriorated to the point where the levels of pain and quality of life were unacceptable.

From a conservation perspective, this does not sound like a

big deal. Sudan was old and well past breeding age. So why did his death make headlines?

Sudan was the last surviving male northern white rhinoceros, a subspecies known to scientists as *Ceratotherium simum cottoni* that went extinct in the wild about 20 years ago thanks to poaching. He was captured and removed from the wild in 1975, the last wild-caught northern

white rhino. Sudan's daughter Najin, and granddaughter Fatu, are now the only two left. Both are old and incapable of reproduction even if they had a mate.

It is a strange situation. On the one hand, it matters a lot. The northern white rhino is extinct, it just doesn't know it yet. Conservationists refer to such populations as "the living dead." On the other hand, does it really matter? Despite persistent misreporting in the media (and some debate among scientists) the northern white is generally recognised as "only" a subspecies of the white rhinoceros. It is survived by its relative the southern white rhino, *Ceratotherium simum simum*,

Insights

around 20,000 of which remain. The species as a whole is not currently endangered.

The importance of Sudan's actual death remains unclear, partly because it seems increasingly possible to bring his subspecies back to life. The northern white rhino may be resurrected by Jurassic Park-style technology. That would require conservationists to collect eggs from the remaining females and develop IVF techniques that are as yet unproven on rhino.

DNA has been stored from 13 northern white rhino that died in recent years, including Sudan, and it would be combined with similarly-frozen eggs and sperm. The embryos produced would then be implanted within surrogate female southern white rhino. I recently spoke to Professor Thomas Hildebrandt, a global leader in conservation reproduction and pioneer of this technique, and he was confident it would work.

If these optimistic plans play out, the first northern white rhino calf born since the year 2000 could be produced before the death of the two remaining females. An alternative would be to produce a genetically-engineered baby rhino that is a hybrid of both northern and southern species. Nevertheless, we are not talking not about saving a subspecies from extinction, but resurrecting an extinct subspecies – a much more challenging proposition.

The second issue, that clouds the importance of the almost

certain extinction of the northern white rhino, is that the white rhino survives through its southern subspecies which may (with help) be able to replace the northern white rhino in its historical range across central Africa. In doing so, it could fill the vacant ecological niche.

Most southern white rhino are found in South Africa where they are under sustained pressure from poaching for their horn. Jason Gilchrist, Author provided

We, as a society, have to be pragmatic and economic with the resources available to protect wild animals. Can we justify spending an estimated £7-million (US \$10-million) to try to bring back to life a subspecies from stored DNA with limited genetic diversity? Even if the animals were all alive and breeding, there would still be fears of the “founder effect” that can occur when a population is started from just a few individuals, with some traits lost and others dominant within the resulting population.

As a near-extinct subspecies, the conservation argument for continued investment to save the population is based upon whatever adaptive genetic diversity it holds that differentiates it from the other subspecies. But it is not clear exactly what genetically-useful traits are found in the sample of 13 northern white rhinos that are not also present in the southern white.

If millions of pounds can be

raised to try and resurrect the northern white rhino, should it not instead be invested in protecting the southern white rhino (still at risk from poaching)? Or alternatively, direct the money towards even more vulnerable Asian rhinos.

It is easy to see why cutting edge reproductive technology is so appealing now that the planet's sixth mass extinction crisis is well under way. But the only economic and practical long-term solution to biodiversity loss is to conserve wildlife in the wild and to prevent it from reaching the sorry state of the northern white rhino.

After all, if humans cannot save a species in nature while it is alive, what future for animals that we manufacture? My worry is that they would simply be living museum exhibits, destined to live out their lives in zoos, with habitat loss or poaching preventing life in the wild. Where would this end? Do we want to repopulate the world with lab-produced engineered organisms?

It is difficult to be positive about our ability to manage these incredible animals to survival. We have already failed the northern white rhino, let us ensure that we do not let down the remaining rhinoceros species and all the other endangered animals out there that need our help. **CT**

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Jason Gilchrist is an ecologist, at Edinburgh Napier University. This article first appeared at www.theconversation.com

King's dream included economic equality

MLK didn't just criticise racial segregation. He also called for an end to economic injustice, writes **Jessica Pierre**

A **PRIL 4** marked the 50th anniversary of the day Martin Luther King, Jr was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee.

American history rightly honours King as one of its most celebrated civil rights leaders. Growing up, I remember learning about his famous "I Have A Dream" speech. In school, my teachers always highlighted him as a peaceful, non-violent protester against segregation, and a preacher who promoted messages of love and justice for all.

He was all those things. But that's only one part of King's legacy. King was actually very radical about his vision of change for America. He didn't just criticise segregation – he recognised the need for deep, structural changes to our entire economic and political system.

King identified three evils plaguing western civilisation in a speech at the National Conference on New Politics in 1967. The United States, King said, is suffering from "the sickness of racism, excessive materialism, and militarism" – a sickness that "has been lurking within our body politic from its very beginning."

"We have diluted ourselves into believing the myth that



Martin Luther King: His dream also included income equality.
Photo: Wikipedia

capitalism grew and prospered out of the Protestant ethic of hard work and sacrifice," King observed. But "the fact is capitalism was built on the exploitation and suffering of black slaves and continues to thrive on the exploitation of the poor – both black and white, both here and abroad."

King foreshadowed that if we maintain our exploitive economic and political systems, then we'd get not only racial apartheid, but economic apartheid as well. He was right. Nearly 51 years after that speech, we're still heading in that direction.

A recent report from the Institute for Policy Studies found that just three people – Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates, and Warren Buffet – own more wealth than the bottom half of the country combined. "The Forbes 400 list

altogether own \$2.68-trillion in wealth, more than the GDP of Britain, the world's fifth richest country," the report notes.

On the other end of the spectrum, one in five Americans have zero or negative wealth. The proportion grows larger when we break it down by race, rising to 30 percent of black families and 27 percent of Latino families. As much as we cite the vision that MLK laid out for America, decades later we've not moved in the right direction. Within the past year alone, we've seen GOP tax cuts siphon wealth from middle and working class Americans to the ultra-wealthy and big corporations.

And we've seen a proposed federal budget that increases military spending to a historic 61 percent of discretionary spending in 2019. Housing and community programs would receive a 35 percent cut, according to the National Priorities Project. It's all there: racism, materialism, and militarism.

King called for a "radical redistribution of political and economic power" in order to end those three evils. Now is the time for this necessary radical change. We must channel MLK's revolutionary spirit into an effort to reshape America's values to ensure justice for all — "both black and white, both here and abroad." **CT**

Jessica Pierre is the inequality media specialist at the Institute for Policy Studies. This article was distributed by www.otherwords.org

Is Trump stupid or is he dangerous? He's both!

Trump's capitulation on Syria puts his entire foreign policy agenda up for grabs, writes **Justin Raimondo**

A **CHILD** could see through the fake “chemical attack” supposedly launched by Bashar al-Assad just as his troops defeated the jihadists and Trump said he wanted out of Syria. But our President can't, which raises the question: is he as stupid or stupider than George W. Bush? Or is he crazy?

The bad news is: possibly both. And no, there is no good news.

48 It was six in the morning on Sunday, April 8, when the President of the United States sent out this tweet: “Many dead, including women and children, in mindless CHEMICAL attack in Syria. Area of atrocity is in lockdown and encircled by Syrian Army, making it completely inaccessible to outside world. President Putin, Russia and Iran are responsible for backing Animal Assad. Big price...”

We are expected to believe that the Assad regime committed a horrific atrocity against mostly women and children at the very moment when Syrian forces have decisively defeated the Islamist rebels and Trump declared he wanted US troops out of Syria. Days before this fake attack, the Russian Defence Ministry warned that a false flag

provocation was in the making.

“Big price,” eh? The person paying that price is going to be Trump himself: his deplorables didn't vote for him so we could establish an Islamic Sunni state in Syria, as John Bolton has long advocated. If he gets into a war – and the longer we stay in Syria, the bigger are the chances that we'll be pulled into yet another quagmire – his presidency is doomed.

So let's get down to brass tacks, as they used to say: doesn't this prove I was wrong about Trump and his movement all along? Weren't all the smarty-pants NeverTrumpers right from the very beginning?

I was very wrong to discount the role of character, personality, and intelligence: Trump is simply not fit to be president. The foreign policy he seemed to be promising, summed up in the slogan “America First,” was and is the right path for this country – but life is not about policies divorced from individuals. People like me – writers, journalists, and publicists – think in terms of ideas, but these cannot exist apart from the people who hold them, or pretend to hold them.

Trump is a very imperfect vessel for a very good policy – and that is definitely an under-

statement.

Yet that has nothing to do with what I have said and written about Trump's various foreign policy pronouncements right up until very recently: as I've pointed out repeatedly, and exhaustively, the very fact that a successful presidential candidate criticised the Iraq war (“they lied”) and our policy of global intervention – eg, questioned NATO's existence – was and still is a great step forward. That Trump isn't living up to his campaign promises and his post-election rhetoric is another matter entirely. The “deplorables” are in open rebellion against this new turn: Trump is losing his base.

So here's the question: is he stupid, like George W. Bush, or is he crazy, in the tradition of, say, Richard M. Nixon?

The case for stupidity is fairly strong: after all, where's the evidence that Assad launched a chemical attack? Like the series of fake “attacks” touted by the jihadist rebels over the years, this one lacks verification – but that doesn't bother the War Party. Since when do they need evidence?

Last time Trump fell for this routine it turned out that his own Secretary of Defense admitted – well after the US bombing raid – that there was “no evidence” that the Syrian government had launched a chemical attack. The same dodgy “proof” beleaguers the Skripal “poisoning” case in Britain – and, what

a coincidence, the same villains are being blamed – Putin & Co. The idea that Assad had anything to gain from launching such an attack is not even worth refuting: he'd already won the war. So what would be the point? It isn't hard to understand this, yet Trump is clueless – or pretends to be.

The case for craziness – a real mental affliction – is even stronger, in my opinion. When President Obama was confronted with the same phony “attacks,” as reported by jihadist “activists” and “medics,” Trump urged him to stay out of it. Yet now that's he's in the Oval Office, he's doing what he urged Obama not to do. This is the classic behaviour pattern of a schizoid nutjob with multiple personalities: it's “The Three Faces of the Donald,” and the big question is which one will emerge today?

Another issue I was apparently wrong about is the ascension of John Bolton as National Security Advisor: no big deal, I said. Wrong! I refuse to believe that Trump is caving in to the War Party on Syria just as Bolton gets the keys to his new office. And here's another non-coincidence: this new turn comes just after Trump got into an argument with his generals over Syria. He wanted out: they insisted we stay. It didn't take him long to find an excuse – this bogus “attack” – to cave.

So he's not just stupid, and crazy – he's also a coward. He refuses to confront the War Party head on, despite his campaign trail rhetoric. Just the other day he was telling crowds in Ohio how we were on the way out of Syria because “we have to take care of our own country.” The crowd cheered. Would he go back to that same audience and tell them we need to intervene in a country that's been wracked

with the shenanigans of Christopher Steele. Trump's craven capitulation to these “allies” is yet more evidence of his cowardice under fire. And there's no doubt that his blaming Russia – and naming Putin – as supposedly responsible for this “gas attack” is a ploy to get Robert Mueller off his back.

I have to say that the future looks grim. This puts Trump's entire foreign policy agenda up for grabs, including the once-promising Korean peace initiative. Will he sabotage what might have been his greatest accomplishment – peace on the Korean peninsula?

It's entirely possible.

We are now entering uncharted territory – although, come to think of it, that's been true since Election Day, 2016. Hold on to your hats, folks, and get a grip on your nerves – because it's going to be a

long, scary ride. **CT**

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Justin Raimondo is the editorial director of *Antiwar.com*, and a senior fellow at the *Randolph Bourne Institute*. He is a contributing editor at *The American Conservative*, and writes a monthly column for *Chronicles*. He is the author of *Reclaiming the American Right: The Lost Legacy of the Conservative Movement* [Center for Libertarian Studies, 1993; *Intercollegiate Studies Institute*, 2000], and *An Enemy of the State: The Life of Murray N. Rothbard* [Prometheus Books, 2000].



CHANGED TUNE: Trump urged Obama to stay out of retaliating to phoney attacks. Now he's doing what he urged Obama not to. Photo: Gage Skidmore

by warfare for years, with no real hope of a peaceful settlement? Of course not.

He's a Beta male masquerading as an Alpha.

The top three most powerful foreign lobbies in Washington are pushing the US to not only stay in Syria but to expand the role of US troops: the Saudis, who directly support the jihadist rebels, the Israelis, who have long sought to overthrow Assad, and the British, who are behind the maniacal anti-Russian propaganda campaign, starting

Western museums told to return art to Africa

Trevor Grundy reports on the French president's drive to return priceless objects looted during the colonial era

HEADS of Western Museums are considering how best to respond to French President Emmanuel Macron's call to repatriate all works of art plundered from Africa during the colonial era.

Macron made the call first in November and then again last month. Now Tristram Hunt, the head of the Victoria and Albert Museum, is wondering how to respond without appearing to Africans and others as the keeper of stolen goods in the one-time citadel of imperialism – London.

Last November, Macron said that he wanted to see Africa's cultural treasures on show "in Dakar and Lagos," not just in Paris. He said: "African heritage can't just be in European private collections and museums."

This month, the Victoria and Albert Museum opened a display of royal and religious artefacts that were looted by a British expeditionary force after the 1867-1868 Battle of Magdala in the former Abyssinia (Ethiopia).

Hunt told the Times that the museum was currently conducting a review of its catalogue entries to ensure that the at times contentious history of artefacts was referenced.

"To have a Macron-style 'all-guilty' approach is a very reductive approach because you have to take into account the history of each item. And I would like to make the point that there is great strength in having a cosmopolitan collection, an extensive encyclopedic collection, he said."

The most controversial looted items now held in the UK include the Elgin Marbles, which date from the 5th-century BC and were "acquired" in the 19th-century by Lord Elgin, and for which Greece demands their return; and the Koh-i-noor diamond, kept in the Tower of London which came into Queen Victoria's possession after the 19th-century conquest of the Punjab. India, Pakistan. Iran and Afghanistan have all claimed ownership.

Other items include the Rosetta Stone now in the British Museum, which was found by Napoleon's army in the Nile Delta and ceded

to Britain under the Treaty of Alexandria in 1801.

In an episode of the new BBC Two television series *Civilisations*, the Nigeria-born historian David Ulusogu said that when Victorians first saw the Benin Bronzes it turned their world upside-down.

"They came to marvel at the art of an alien culture produced by supposedly savage people," he told viewers. "The very existence of these works of art represented a challenge to the dominant ideas of the time. The public were fascinated and troubled by what they saw. What bothered them was that this was the world of an African society and almost everyone in the 19th-century believed that Africans lacked the technical skills to produce great art and the cultural sophistication to appreciate it. It was, in fact, widely believed that the people of the Dark Continent had no history and no culture and were incapable of generating this thing called civilisation."

Examining the West African treasures, he said- "They are loaded with a sense of loss because they're not in Nigeria among the people whose ancestors made them. They're here in London in the British Museum."

For how much longer? is the question. **CT**

Trevor Grundy is a British journalist who lived and worked in Central, Eastern, Southern and Western Africa from 1966 until 1996.

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Benin bronze leopard (below)



Speaking out against any more war in Syria

Stop the War condemns the bombing attacks on the people of Douma in Syria, including alleged chemical attacks

STOP the War condemns the bombing attacks on the people of Douma in Syria, including alleged chemical attacks. Yet again, the main victims of this war are the ordinary people of Syria, who have now suffered seven years of war which has left many dead, and many more refugees.

The attack must not be used to justify more military intervention. We condemn all outside military intervention including that of Russia and Iran. But equally we condemn that of our own government and its allies. Already Donald Trump has promised retaliation and there has been a missile attack on a Syrian airfield, most likely by

Israel. France and Britain are likely to support further such action.

It is sometimes claimed that the bombing by Assad is the result of the West's failure to intervene. Nothing could be further from the truth. The West has been intervening directly and through its proxies throughout this war. Britain voted against bombing Syria in 2013 but voted to do so in 2015 and continues its military intervention. Nato member Turkey is intervening in Syria and has launched a massive military attack on the Kurds in Afrin.

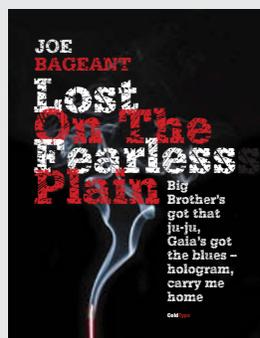
The Middle East has become the site of endless war following the invasion of Iraq in 2003 – an

invasion we opposed and about which we were proved right. In recent months there has been Western bombing in Iraq and Syria, not to mention the Western backed Saudi war in Yemen. It is surely the height of hypocrisy for those supporting such wars to now claim their military can help those under threat in the Syrian war. The idea that Israel – whose troops shot 28 unarmed civilians in the past two weeks and killed thousands in its bombings of Gaza – should now be attacking Syria over its attacks on civilians is grotesque.

This escalation of war is highly dangerous. The only solution in Syria is a ceasefire on all sides and a political settlement – military intervention has already been proved to have failed. **CT**

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This was a statement made by the London-based Stop The War movement on April 11. For more information contact them at www.stopwar.org.uk



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